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EXCAVATIONS IN THE ANCIENT THEATRE OF SPARTA, 2008

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This article presents the results of the 2008 excavation in the ancient theatre of Sparta conducted by the British School at Athens and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia. Focused on the west side of the cavea, *work aimed to locate the southern edge of the Late Antique settlement between the theatre and the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos; to establish the northern limits of the Late Antique settlement over the former orchestra; and to establish a more precise ceramic characterisation and chronology for the Early–Middle Byzantine period in Sparta. The area between settlement clusters on the acropolis and over the former orchestra was essentially open, with just a Byzantine terrace wall and path recorded. In the north-west part of the former* cavea, *a tomb built in the late eighth or early ninth century AD was used at least until the late thirteenth century for the burial of c. 29 individuals. This article presents the first results of a bioarchaeological study of the human remains, and studies of Byzantine pottery from the tomb interior and from the backfill of the pit in which the tomb was built (the latter including a notable quantity of Early Byzantine domestic ware). The 2008 findings are set in the larger context of research on post-antique phases in the theatre (drawing on the British School at Athens Archive) and on the material culture and urban topography of Byzantine Sparta. Almost all excavated contexts contained residual material of all periods. The article concludes with short catalogues of material which pre-dates the construction of the theatre and of inscriptions of all periods.*

1. INTRODUCTION

An excavation of four weeks' duration was conducted in the ancient theatre of Sparta between July and August 2008 as a collaboration between the British School at Athens and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia (then the E' EPKA and 5th EBA), under the direction of the authors and with Thomas Loughlin serving as field director. The overall aim was to clarify the extent and nature of Late Roman and Byzantine activity on the site of the theatre after its abandonment around the end of the fourth century AD. Following extensive exploration of an Early–Middle Byzantine settlement in the area of the orchestra and lower *cavea* (Woodward 1926–7a; Waywell et al. 1995, 445–7; Sanders 1995a) and early twentieth-century recording of Roman and Byzantine remains on the acropolis (Dickins 1906–7, 142–6; Dawkins and Droop 1910–11; Woodward 1926–7b, 45–8), questions remain about the relationship between the two locations and the use (if any) made of the upper parts of the *cavea*.

To map the potential for buried archaeology within the near surface of the *cavea*, a combined topographic (differential GPS) and resistivity survey was conducted in May 2007 by Chris Gaffney, Helen Goodchild and Scott Harrison of Birmingham Archaeology (Gaffney, Goodchild and Harrison 2007). An area of *c.* 2600 m² was explored using a Geoscan RM15 twin-probe array. This revealed two notable anomalies of archaeological potential on the western side of the *cavea* (Fig. 1.1). The GPS survey further indicated potential areas of undisturbed or little disturbed seating, implying that these areas may not have been reused after the abandonment of the theatre. To document this more systematically, an extensive topographic survey in 2008

Fig. 1.1. Interpretation of features from the high-pass filtered results overlaid onto the theatre extent and standing structures (black outline). Areas in black show the most likely archaeological features (after Gaffney, Goodchild and Harris 2007, fig. 15).

produced a map of visible walls, a contour survey, a 3D model, and two profiles through the theatre in its current condition (Fig. 1.2).

In 2008, excavation concentrated in the western part of the *cavea* in order: i) to investigate the anomalies detected in the geophysical survey; ii) to locate the south-western edge of the Late Antique settlement between the theatre and the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos on the acropolis; iii) to establish the northern limits of the Late Antique settlement on the west side of the orchestra excavated in the 1920s and again in 1992–4; iv) to establish a more precise ceramic characterisation and chronology for the Early–Middle Byzantine period in Sparta.

The report opens with an account of the excavated stratigraphy and features (§2). In addition to a Byzantine terrace wall and path through the essentially open area between settlement clusters on the acropolis and over the former orchestra, excavation revealed a tomb built in the late eighth or early ninth century AD and used at least until the late thirteenth century for the burial of some 29 individuals. §3 presents the first results of a bioarchaeological study of these remains, while §4 examines pottery from the tomb interior and Early Byzantine domestic ware from the backfill of the pit in which it was built. §4 also serves as an epilogue, setting the 2008 campaign into the larger contexts of research on post-antique phases in the theatre (drawing on the School's unpublished archive) and on the urban topography of Byzantine Sparta. In addition to the Late Roman and Byzantine pottery and small finds that provide essential dating evidence, almost all excavated contexts (with the exception of the theatre subsoil packing) contained much residual material of all periods, mostly fragmentary and poorly preserved. We confine discussion of this earlier material to short catalogues of items which pre-date the theatre (especially types which are rare or otherwise poorly documented) (§5) and of inscriptions of all periods (§6), with occasional reference to other items of significance in context, as illustrated in Fig. 2.2. All catalogued items are cross-referenced in §2. A full record of the Late Roman and Byzantine pottery by context forms part of the project documentation deposited in the Archive of the British School at Athens.

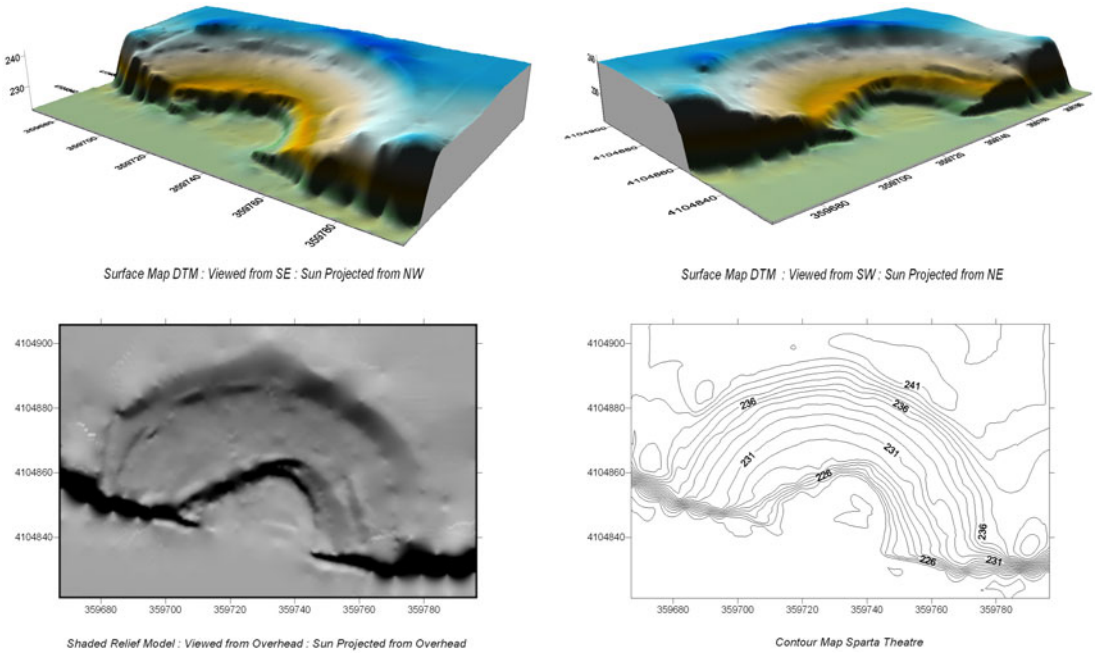


Fig. 1.2. 3D reconstruction of the current theatre landscape.

2. THE EXCAVATION by Thomas Loughlin

Five trenches were opened covering an area of 146 m² (Fig. 2.1).[1] Trench 1 in the upper west side of the *cavea* was located to explore a feature noted in the 2007 geophysical survey and to trace the northernmost retaining wall of the theatre. It measured 10 m (north–south) by 5 m (east–west) and was extended northwards by 2 m in order to clarify features revealed in the early stages of excavation. Trench 2 was positioned in the upper *cavea* below the acropolis to investigate interactions between the *cavea* and Archaic–Byzantine activity on the acropolis (the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos and subsequent Roman–Byzantine settlement). It measured 10 m (approximately north–south) and 5 m (east–west) and was subsequently extended northwards by 1 m. Trench 3 (measuring 6 m north-west–south-east x 2 m south-west–north-east) reopened Trench IX from the 1992–3 excavation (Waywell et al. 1995, 440), removing the backfill (C901, C902) and further exploring the fabric of the theatre substructure. In 1993, the lower retaining wall of the *cavea* was identified here but only investigated to a depth of 1 m: we therefore investigated the wall and surrounding deposits to the maximum allowable (in fact to a depth of 2.3 m). Trenches 4 and 5 were tests positioned in the lower west and central *cavea* (on the putative fringes of the Byzantine settlement over the orchestra) to locate any coherent Byzantine features and clarify the extent to which material from the acropolis had spread downslope. Trench 4, on the western side of the *cavea*, measured 5 m (north-east–south-west) x an initial 2 m (south-east–north-west), later reduced to 1 m. Trench 5, in the central *cavea* just above the orchestra, was planned to intersect with two linear features noted in the geophysical survey. It measured 5 m (north–south) and initially 2 m (east–west), here too reduced to 1 m.

[1] Single context recording was employed, based on Museum of London Archaeology Service 1994 and drawing on procedures and recording mechanisms used by the Kouphovouno and Corinth excavations. In parallel, a more discursive notebook diary was kept. The following abbreviations are used: C (Context or Stratigraphic Unit); OF (Other Find, inventoried); P (Pottery, inventoried); WS (Worked Stone, *spolia*).

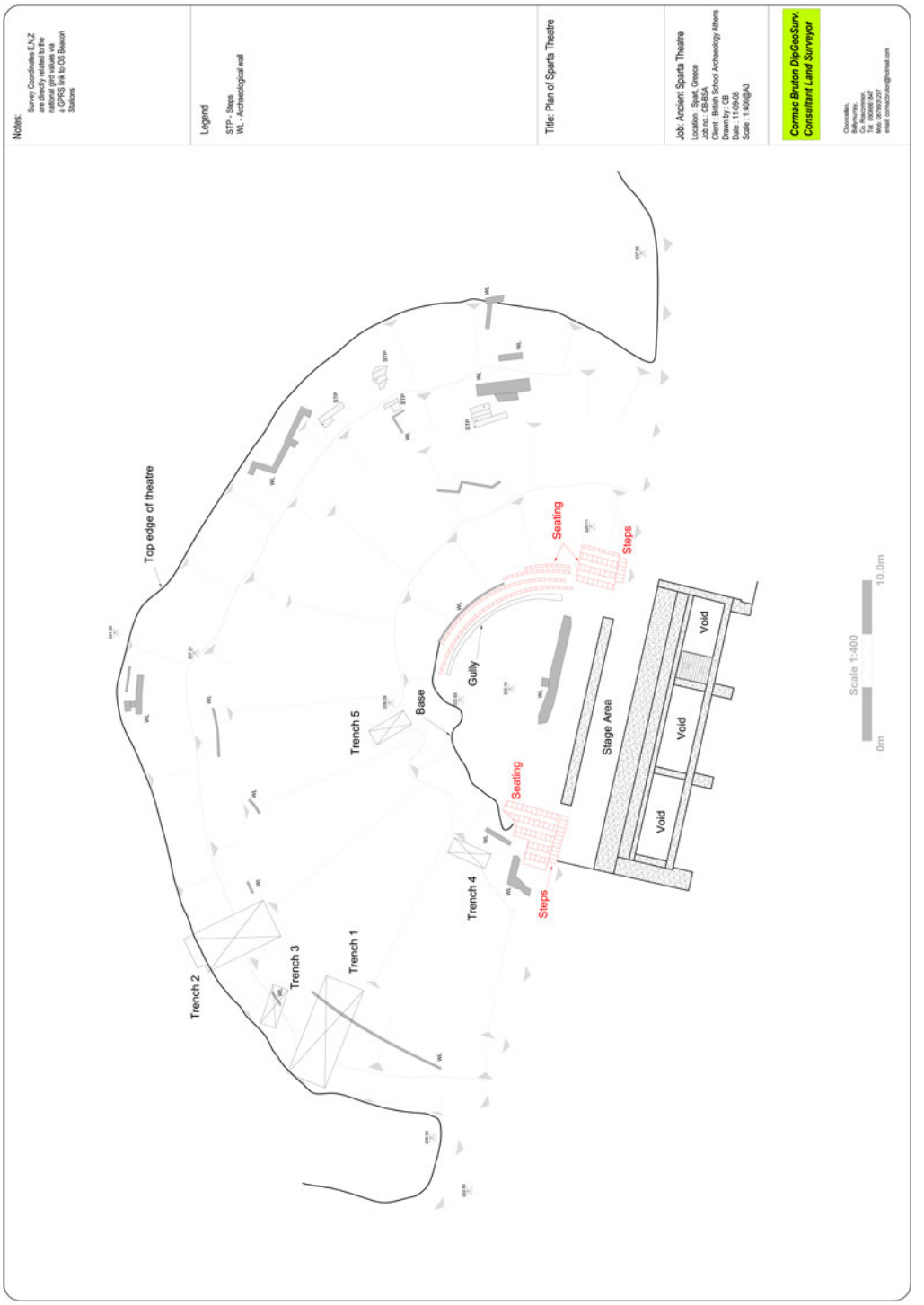


Fig. 2.1. Plan of the theatre showing the location of the 2008 trenches.

Fig. 2.2. Selected small finds from all trenches: a) OF28 Early Roman glass beaker; b) OF4 Early Roman glass bowl or beaker rim; c) OF49 Early Roman glass aryballos or flask; d) OF50 Byzantine wineglass base; e) OF51 iron nail; f) OF45 fibula; g) OF12 fibula; h) OF44 Byzantine worked bone; i) P157 Greek loomweight; j) OF34 Late Roman–Byzantine loomweight; k) whetstone; l) OF21 *lapis lacedaimonius* facing; m) column drum; n) OF39 fragment of Roman acanthus column; o) marble basin.

Topsoil, surface detritus and hill-wash

Trenches 1 (C001) and 2 (C501) were both covered by a *c.* 0.10 m-thick layer of finds-rich topsoil and surface detritus (**4.10**, **5.7**, **5.26**, **5.28**, **5.34**, **6.3** and **6.12**). Topsoil deposits in Trenches 4 (C701) and 5 (C301) were more substantial (*c.* 0.20–0.60 m thick), reflecting their location at the base of a steep slope. These deposits were very mixed and rich in stone and portable finds

Fig. 2.3. Trench 4 post excavation, from the west.

(e.g. the Early Roman glass beaker Fig. 2.2*a*, and the marble column Fig. 2.2*m*), no doubt eroded from the acropolis or upper *cavea* given the presence of votives and pottery predating the theatre's construction (**5.2**, **5.16**, **5.17**, **5.27**, **6.1**, **6.5** and **6.6**).

Beneath the surface layers, deposits of mixed hill-wash/tumbled material were noted in other trenches. Trench 2 is particularly noteworthy as it lies just beneath the acropolis. This deposit (C502) contained a wide range of finds including pre-theatre pottery (**5.5**, **5.9**, **5.14**), stamped tiles (**6.7**, **6.8**, **6.9**), an Early Roman glass bowl rim (Fig. 2.2*b*), and a Venetian coin.[2] Together, C501, C502 and C503 contained around half of the metallurgical slag recovered in the 2008 campaign (16 of *c.* 30 pieces, with more in contexts downslope), strongly suggesting that ironworking took place on or near the acropolis. This is most likely Byzantine in date, noting that ironworking (with much slag) is documented in the settlement over the orchestra (see §4), although three pieces of slag in the packing of the theatre substructure (C906) indicate that metalworking somewhere in the area predated the theatre and was thus likely to be connected with the sanctuary on the acropolis.

Downslope, Trench 4 (C702, C703) (Fig. 2.3) contained few artefacts (noting the iron nail, Fig. 2.2*e*, typical in most mixed deposits, and the fragment of marble acanthus leaf from a Roman column capital, Fig. 2.2*n*). However, Trench 5 in the lower central *cavea* was somewhat richer: C302, C303 and C304 all contained slag; C302 produced worked bone (Fig. 2.2*h*) and an architectural member (Fig. 2.4); while **4.19** (from C304) exemplifies the Middle Byzantine (late twelfth to early thirteenth century) pottery that dominated these contexts.

Theatre construction

The substructure of the theatre was partially excavated in Trenches 1–3 in the upper *cavea*, giving insights into its formation. It was exposed but not excavated in Trenches 4 and 5 in the lower *cavea*.

[2] A billon tornesello of the Doge Andrea Dandolo, *c.* 1342–54: Baker 2020, 359–430. [RV]

Fig. 2.4. Trench 5 post excavation, from the south.

Cavea walls

The southern elevation of the north retaining wall of the *cavea* was exposed in Trench 1 (C015) (Fig. 2.5). Roughly finished and built of randomly sorted, rounded stones in mortar (C042), the wall was surprisingly shallow, measuring only *c.* 0.60 m wide and 1 m high (six courses), with no indication that further courses had been destroyed (Fig. 2.6). Some 7 m to the south of this wall, a second curvilinear, mortared wall (C7/41) was noted in Trenches 1 and 2 (C506/518) but not explored in either. Both elevations of this wall were exposed in Trench 3 (C905): at 0.50 m wide and standing to a height of 2.1 m, it was much more substantial than C015. It comprises uncoursed, mortared (C916), unsorted, rounded stones and is roughly finished: it is in good repair, although, as would be expected, the top has been somewhat eroded. It is notable that the upper section seemed to contain much larger stones than the lower (Fig. 2.7).

Theatre subsoil packing, and tumble (lower cavea*)*

In Trench 1, the north retaining wall of the *cavea* sits on C035, a yellow-brown compact silty clay similar to the packing material between the two *cavea* walls (C005 and C008). Both deposits are similar in colour (yellow to mid-brown) and composition (compact silty/sandy clay with few inclusions). Downslope of C015, deposits C002, C012, C019, C034, C037 and C046 make up the theatre packing. They vary slightly in make-up and colour but are predominantly yellow/green–red/brown fine silty-clays with oxidised clay inclusions, and extremely compacted as though tamped into place. They contain little pottery (e.g. **5.18** from C002).

In Trench 2, C508 lies between the *cavea* walls, with C516, C517 and C519 making up the deposits downslope of wall C518. As in Trench 1, these deposits consist of very compacted, light coloured, silty clays. Finds were recovered only from C508 but include part of an Archaic terracotta sima from a public building (**5.1**). This discovery, as findings from Trench 3 (see also §5), confirm Woodward and Hobling's (1923–5, 252) observation on the quantity of material from the Athena sanctuary contained in fill laid down for the theatre *cavea*.

In Trench 3, the packing material was more intensively explored: certain contexts previously excavated in ST92/93 IX were identified in section, and some lower deposits were further

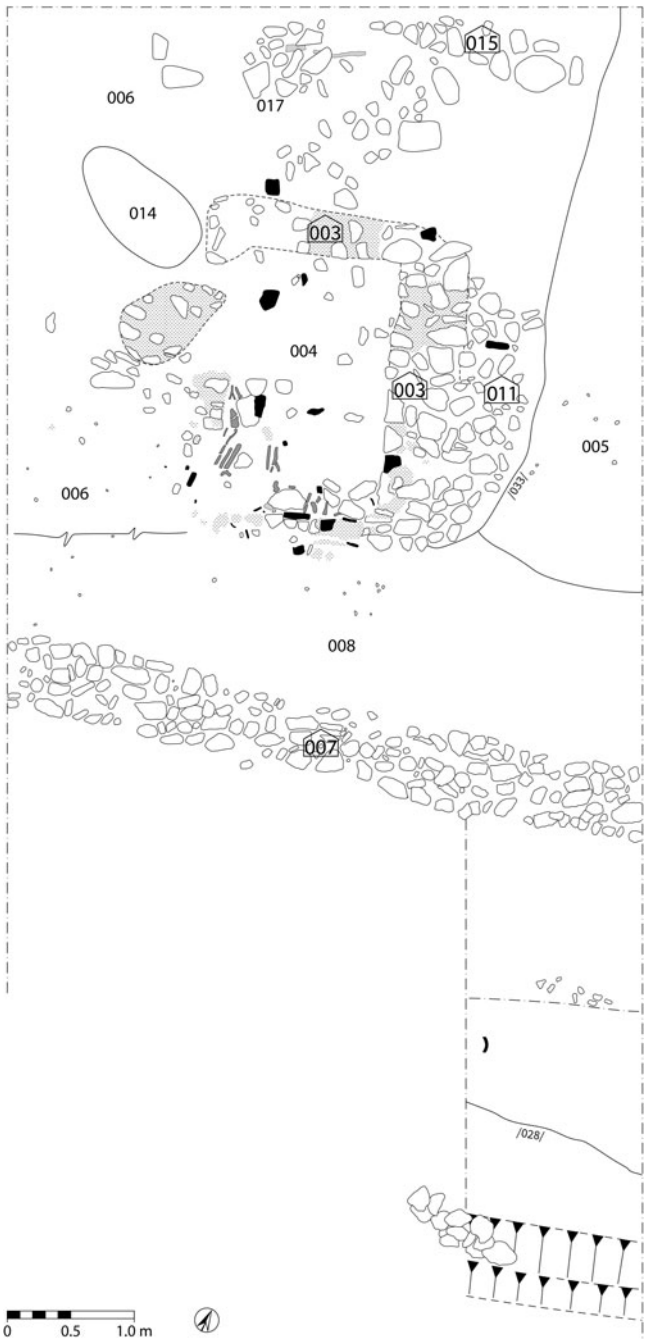


Fig. 2.5. Plan of Trench 1 pre-excavation.

explored with rewarding results (Fig. 2.8). Ceramic dates are heavily concentrated in Classical–Early Hellenistic, consistent with the construction date for the theatre proposed by Waywell and Wilkes (Waywell et al. 1995, 438, 449–51) based on pottery from their trench ST92/93 IV. The south retaining wall of the *cavea* (C905) overlay deposit C908. Downslope (south) of this wall the theatre was packed by C906. Finds from these deposits included **5.3**, **5.19**, **5.21**, **5.32**, a bronze fibula (Fig. 2.2*g*), and three pieces of slag which, as noted above, indicate that metalworking predated the construction of the theatre. Upslope of the wall, C903, C907, C910, C911, C912, C913, C914 and C915 were all identified in section, and C909 was

Fig. 2.6. Southern elevation of north retaining wall of the *cavea*, C15/41, in Trench 1.

excavated. These deposits were largely comparable in colour (yellow/brownish red), with oxidised clay inclusions, but the composition of the upper contexts is more varied than the lower (C906, C908 and C909 are much more uniform in composition and colour). One deposit differed:

Fig. 2.7. Southern elevation of wall in the northern *cavea*, C905/916, in Trench 3.

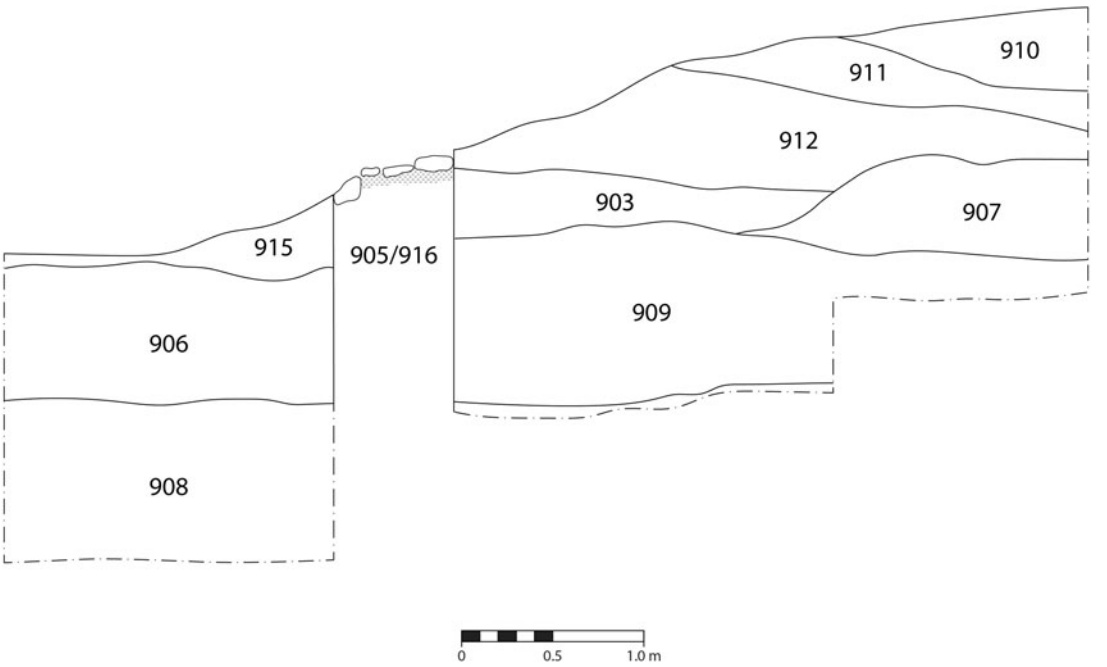


Fig. 2.8. Western baulk of Trench 3.

C904, a mixture of rounded cobbles and angular sandstone (including one piece which had been shaped), may be rubble from the acropolis. Finds from these deposits include **5.4**, **5.13**, **5.24** and **6.11**.

Downslope, the more secure deposits in Trench 4 contained a mixture of stony tumble and *spolia*: C704 overlay a tile-rich deposit C705, which contained a variety of finds, including **4.21**–**4.23**, **4.25**–**4.28**, the marble basin Fig. 2.2*o*, the bronze fibula Fig. 2.2*f*, and metallurgical slag. In Trench 5, C305 is similar in colour and composition to the theatre packing: it could also have washed downslope (the late second/first century BC stamped tile **6.10** fits either interpretation), although the ceramic assemblage contains nothing post-Augustan. Beneath C305, a deposit of cobble rich, coarse soil (C307) contained a worked sandstone block (WS12): it overlay a deposit of light brown compacted silty clay (C308), which also contained a large architectural block (WS11). C305, C307 and C308 could not clearly be assigned as original or coherent post-Roman deposits but may instead be tumble from higher in the *cavea*.

Postholes

Close to the north retaining wall of the *cavea* in Trench 1 was a shallow, oval, round-bottomed pit-like feature (C029/30), 0.46–0.50 m in diameter and 0.10 m deep, containing ceramics and animal bone. A comparable feature in a similar position in Trench 2 (C510/511), 0.65 m in diameter and 0.09 m deep, contained pottery, tile, and metallurgical slag (Fig. 2.9). Given their respective locations in similar positions in relation to the *cavea* wall, these pits may relate to the theatre structure, perhaps as bases of eroded postholes and potentially part of an awning covering the upper sections of the *cavea*. Such an awning should be expected (Montilla 1969), but for its supports to extend beneath the stone seating (as, for example, in the large theatre at Argos or the theatre at Butrint) implies a significant installation (Sear 2006, 386–7, 410–11).

Terrace wall

Sections of a terrace wall which arc through the west and central areas of the mid *cavea* are similar in composition and construction. This wall was investigated where it crossed the southern parts of Trenches 1 and 2. *Spolia* visible outside the trenches were recorded *in situ* (Fig. 2.10).

In the south-east part of Trench 1, a dry-stone terrace wall (C009) at least three courses (*c.* 0.50 m) high ran approximately east–west across the trench. It was built of rounded stone

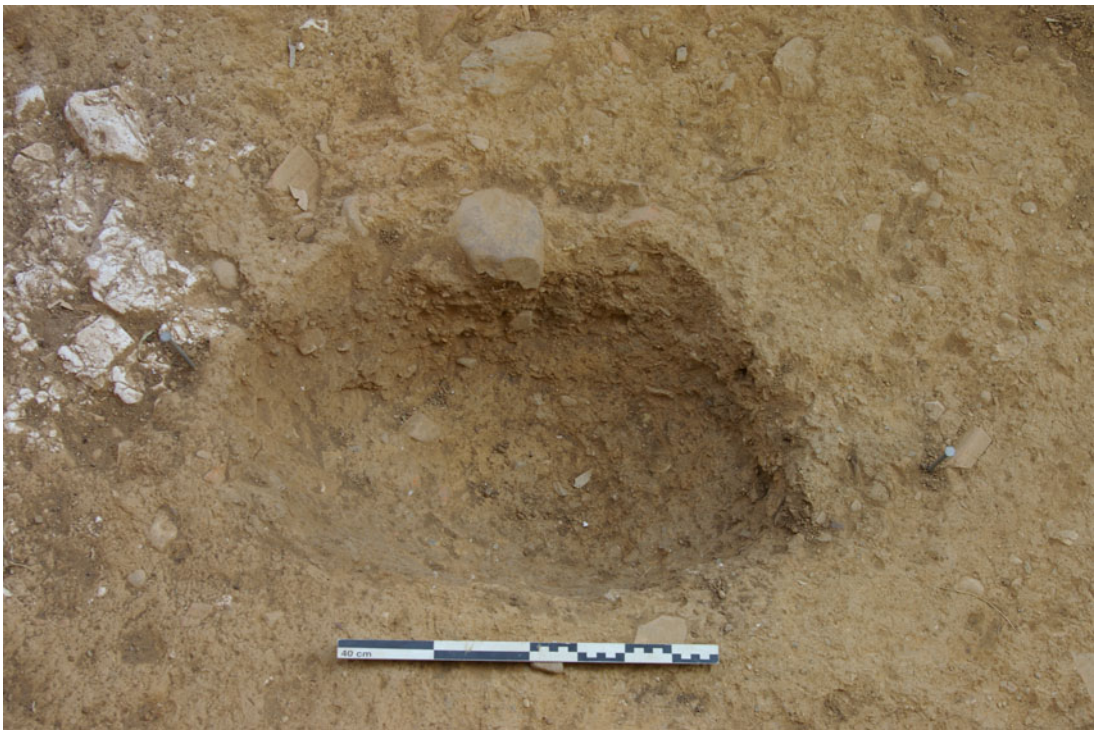


Fig. 2.9. Posthole C511 post excavation.

Fig. 2.10. The theatre from the east: the terrace wall is visible in the bottom of Trench 1 and in the central *cavea* area.

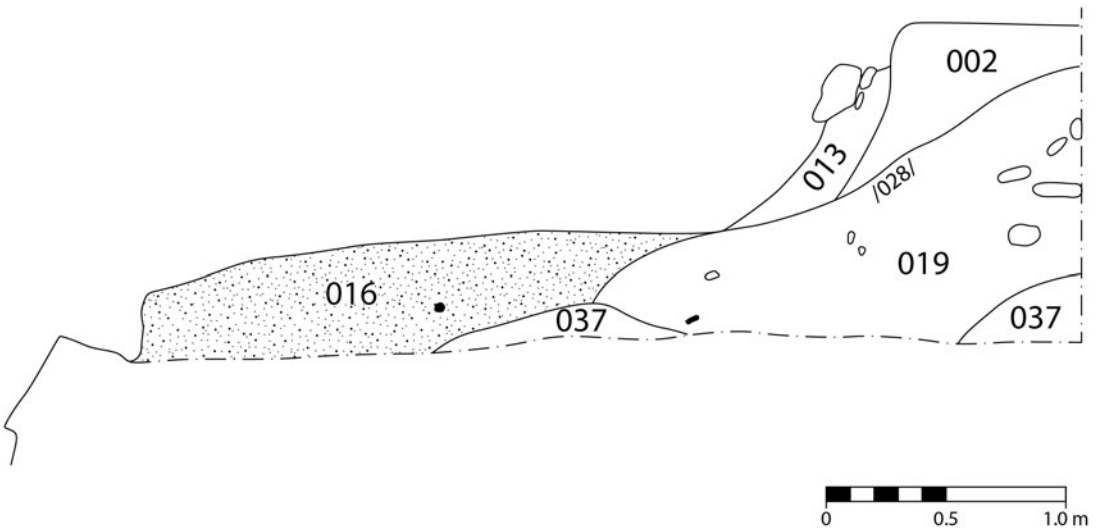


Fig. 2.11. East-facing section showing terrace wall C009 in Trench 1 and truncation of the theatre packing.

cobbles and tile with occasional architectural *spolia*. The wall was set into a cutting (C028) through the upper theatre packing (C002, C019), and sat in a loose, dark brown sandy clay (C013). Pottery from C013 (which includes **4.18** and **5.20**) gives a *terminus post quem* of the first quarter of the thirteenth century for the construction of the wall. At the eastern limit of the trench, the wall was partially breached by a large architectural member from the theatre (WS18) which had tumbled downslope (Figs 2.11, 2.12). Upslope, two deposits of mixed tumbled material (C012, C016) had built up behind WS18; finds include **5.12**, **5.15** and **5.25**.

In Trench 2, the wall (C513) was built into a steep vertical cut *c.* 2 m deep (C514) made through the theatre packing (C508, C516, C517 and C519). The wall is a dry-stone construction with some loose stones, perhaps tumble from C512 and C516, overlying it, and appears much more robust here than elsewhere to allow for substantial material upslope. It contains a sizeable, worked stone (WS13) and, in comparison with other areas, sits in a much deeper cut and is taller (at least five courses high) while roughly the same width (0.35 m). Only a short length (0.37 m) was present in the south-west corner of Trench 2, although it is visible just beyond the western limit of the trench. The wall finishes abruptly and neatly, suggesting a terminus (Fig. 2.13).

Radial pathway

At the north limit of Trench 2, north of the *cavea* wall (C506/7) and south of the acropolis, lay a deposit of loose angular and rounded cobbles and much tile (**6.2**) in a matrix of compacted, silty clay (C503). This deposit was 1 m wide, 0.20 m deep, and extended for at least 5 m across

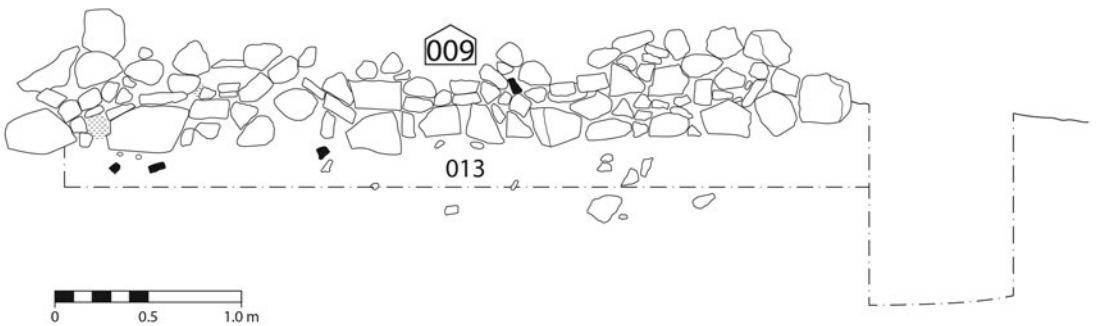


Fig. 2.12. Southern elevation of terrace wall C009.

Fig. 2.13. Northern elevation of terrace wall in C513 in Trench 2. Note the large block of worked stone in the centre left of the image.

the entire trench. It was rich in finds, with significant pottery (**4.20**, **5.22**), glass (as the Early Roman aryballos, Fig. 2.2*c*), slag, and worked stone (including part of a fluted column drum, Fig. 2.14). While such material might suggest a midden, the location of the deposit favours a different explanation (see below). A deposit to its east (C504) with grey, mortared material may be related. Downslope of C503 but north of the *cavea* wall (C506), a crescent shaped, shallow-sided cut (C505) into the theatre packing (C508) may be a step cut into a rather steep climb. It measured 1.30 m long (east–west) and 0.80 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.14 m (Fig. 2.15).

Immediately south of the *cavea* wall (C506) the underlying theatre packing (C519) had been removed to a depth of 0.40 m to create a flat level platform (C520), 0.65 m wide and extending across the entire 5 m of the trench. Subsequently, C507 was deposited on this 'platform', abutting C506 on its southern (downslope) side. C507 consisted of grey, loose cobbles with adhering mortar, in a silty clay matrix, with pottery: the cobbles largely lay at the base of the feature, with the clay and mortar placed above to bind them and make a smoother surface. Initially we suspected that C507 was tumble from the *cavea* wall; however, the modification of the theatre substructure to create the platform and the layering of stones with mortar on top indicate a deliberate construction (Fig. 2.16). Although the context pottery is very worn and contains a high proportion of residual material, the presence of two Middle Byzantine sherds is consistent with a late date.[3]

These features all directly align along the length of Trench 2 and between the acropolis and the orchestra. Furthermore, the terrace wall is largely absent in this area and has what appears to be a terminus within Trench 2. Taken together, the wall terminus, step, and deposits suggest that a formalised, radial pathway gave access between these two significant areas of settlement after the abandonment of the theatre (Fig. 2.17).

[3] Body sherds of a Gunsenin III amphora, and a stamnos, as Sanders 1993, cat. no. 45.

Fig. 2.14. East-facing section of C503, Trench 2.

Fig. 2.15. 'Step' C503 to the right of wall C505, with C507 to the left, from the east.

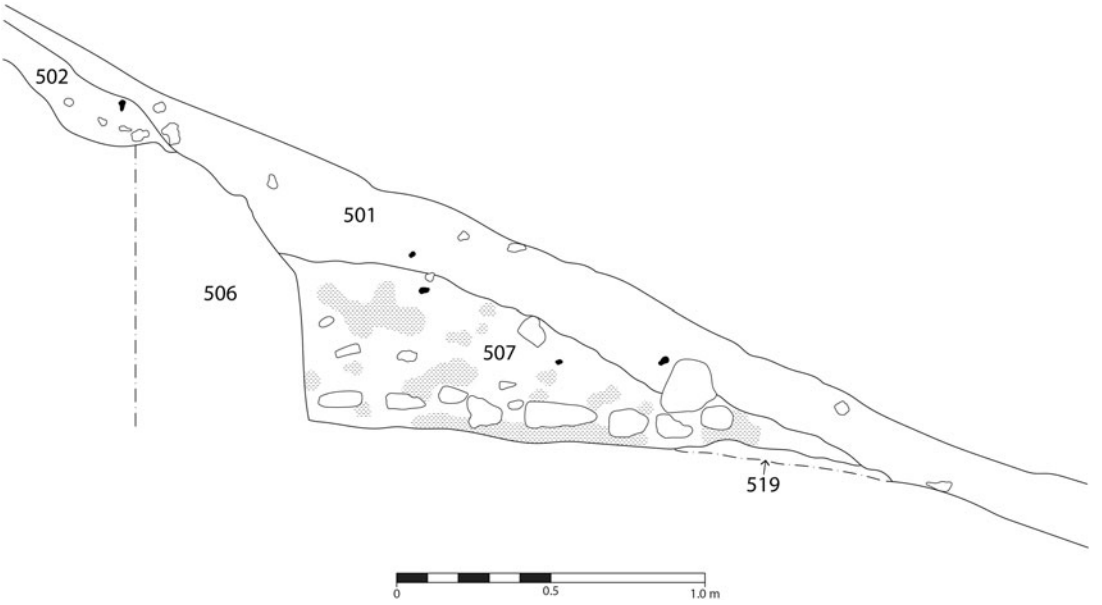


Fig. 2.16. Eastern section of C507 in Trench 2: note the flat surface (C520) and sequence of deposition of large stones with mortar on top.

Fig. 2.17. 'Pathway' in Trench 2, showing deposits C503, C507 and 'step' C505.

Funerary structure[4]

South of the *cavea* retaining wall in Trench 1 (C015), a large pit (C033) with a flat-concave base and shallow sides was cut through the theatre packing (C005, C008). Its maximum dimensions were 4.5 m north–south and 4.8 m east–west, and it was 0.90 m deep.

[4] Use of the term 'tomb' in this section follows the discussion of burial history in §3.

A rectangular structure (C003) was built into this pit – the pit itself remaining visible to the west and north of it and south of the retaining wall (C015) (see Figs 2.5 and 2.18*ab*). The external dimensions of this structure were 2.56 m north–south and 2.06 m east–west, creating an internal space of 2.05 x 1.90 m. The walls are preserved to a maximum height of 1.08 m (nine courses). The southern wall was the most eroded, with both the eastern and western elevations eroded towards their southern ends in keeping with the slope of the theatre. The walls were built of randomly coursed rounded and angular stones (including some grey marble with evidence of tooling) bonded with a creamy white mortar (C041). The internal faces on all sides were well finished. The corners were bonded, indicating a one-time construction. The eastern wall is the thickest (0.45 m maximum) and longest. In the south-west corner the structure was truncated by a pit (0.50 x 0.19 m) which was not excavated but may have been a depression left by a large stone in the wall that had eroded downslope.

An additional, short wall (C043) (Fig. 2.19*a*) bonds perpendicular to the western side: it is 0.78 m long and 0.48 m wide, preserved to a height of 0.76 m. It was built of mortared (C047) unsorted squared and rounded stones with both faces left unfinished, suggesting that they were not intended to be seen (Fig. 2.19*b*). This wall terminates abruptly, with no clear terminus or evidence of destruction/quarrying. Its function is unclear, but its unfinished state may suggest that it belongs to an incomplete structure or annexe.

Tomb stratigraphy

Inside the structure, four depositional episodes were identified in three phases (with hints of a fourth). These reflect differing uses. The basal fill of the structure (C031) was sampled to a depth of 0.13 m against the north wall, where the bottom of C003 was exposed (Fig. 2.20). This fill of compact silty clay contained some human bone fragments and pottery.

The structure was remodelled with the addition of a wall (C038) parallel to the west wall. This was 1.25 m long, 0.42 wide, and 0.55 high (preserved to a maximum of five courses). It was a dry-stone construction with random courses of rounded and angular dressed stone, including a large grey marble block (WS19): it abutted but did not bond with the north wall of C003. Some ephemeral crushed bone was recovered from underneath it. C038 created a 0.17 m-wide space into which a significant quantity of human bone (predominantly long bones and mandibles) was deposited (C032), suspended in a matrix of friable, reddish clay-silt which also contained plain and fine pottery of the first half of the thirteenth century, tile and shell (Fig. 2.21*a–c*). East of this wall, in the larger chamber (1.90 x 0.85 m), C050 comprised the deposition of damaged human crania deliberately arranged in the northern half of the context: other disarticulated human bones were also noted (Fig. 2.22*ab*). Near the southern wall was a further small group of long bones. The bones in C050 were suspended in a matrix of yellowish-brown soil which also contained a large Late Roman column capital against the southern wall of the structure (Fig. 2.23).[5] Although C050 was deposited after the construction of C038, the modification of the tomb and the deposition of bones in C032 and C050 plausibly belong to the same phase of activity.

A subsequent inhumation (C048) abuts wall C038. The body lay supine (measuring 1.30 x 0.35 m) oriented north-west–south-east with the right arm across the abdomen. It had been severely truncated (C049), with only the right arm, ribs, pelvis, and legs remaining. Its close proximity to the wall left space for additional burial(s) alongside it, which would have been disturbed (Fig. 2.24).

[5] OF41. Column capital with lotus and lance-shaped leaves in low relief. White (Taygetos?) marble. Height 0.225 m, maximum diameter 0.225 m, lotus leaf height 0.125 m, width 0.045–0.08 m. 4th–5th century AD. OF41 belongs to a small group of columns akin to the Pergamene or lotus-and-acanthus type but without the acanthus: Doulfis 2019, 263–5, especially K193 from the Katsari property on Ag. Nikon street in Sparta (see also the non-diagnostic K273, context unknown, for the tripartite lance-shaped leaf). OF41 is unrelated to the earlier, 2nd- and 3rd-century lotus-and-acanthus columns of the theatre (K137–151). [CM]

Fig. 2.18. Structure C003 in Trench 1: a) pre-excavation; b) post-excavation.

The final phase of activity (C004) was a large deposition of disarticulated bone and some semi-articulated bone groups in very fragmentary condition. Associated pottery indicates that C004 is at least thirteenth century in date (**4.29**): iron slag likely derives from Byzantine metalworking

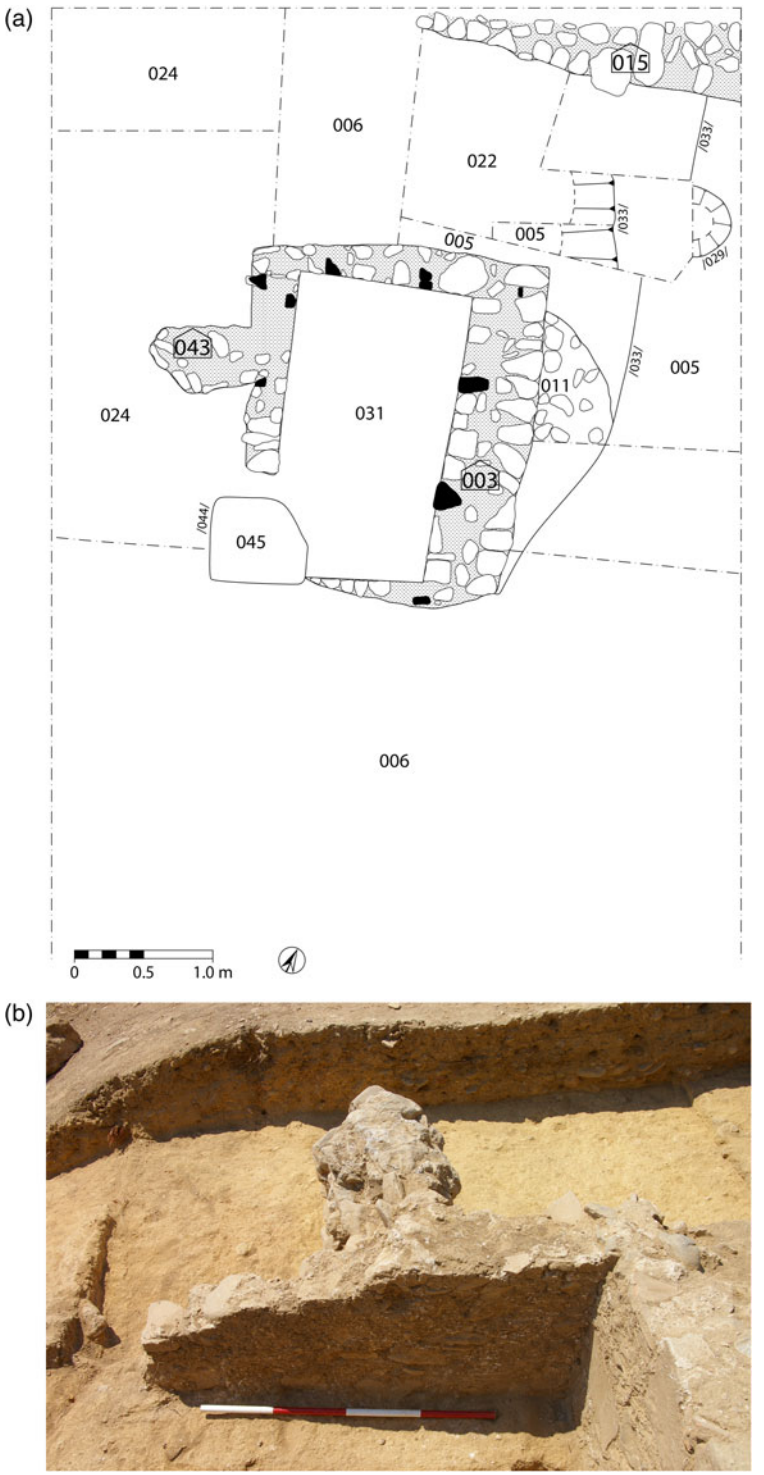


Fig. 2.19. Structure C003 in Trench 1: a) post-excavation plan; b) detail of spur wall (C043/047) to the west.

somewhere close by (see §4). Earlier material in this context includes **5.10**, **5.23**, the loomweight Fig. 2.2*i*, and architectural *spolia* including *lapis lacedaemonius* cladding (Fig. 2.2*l*). This deposit covered a maximum area of 1.90 m (north–south) by 0.85 m (east–west), to a maximum depth

Fig. 2.20. Structure C003 post excavation showing test C031, from the west.

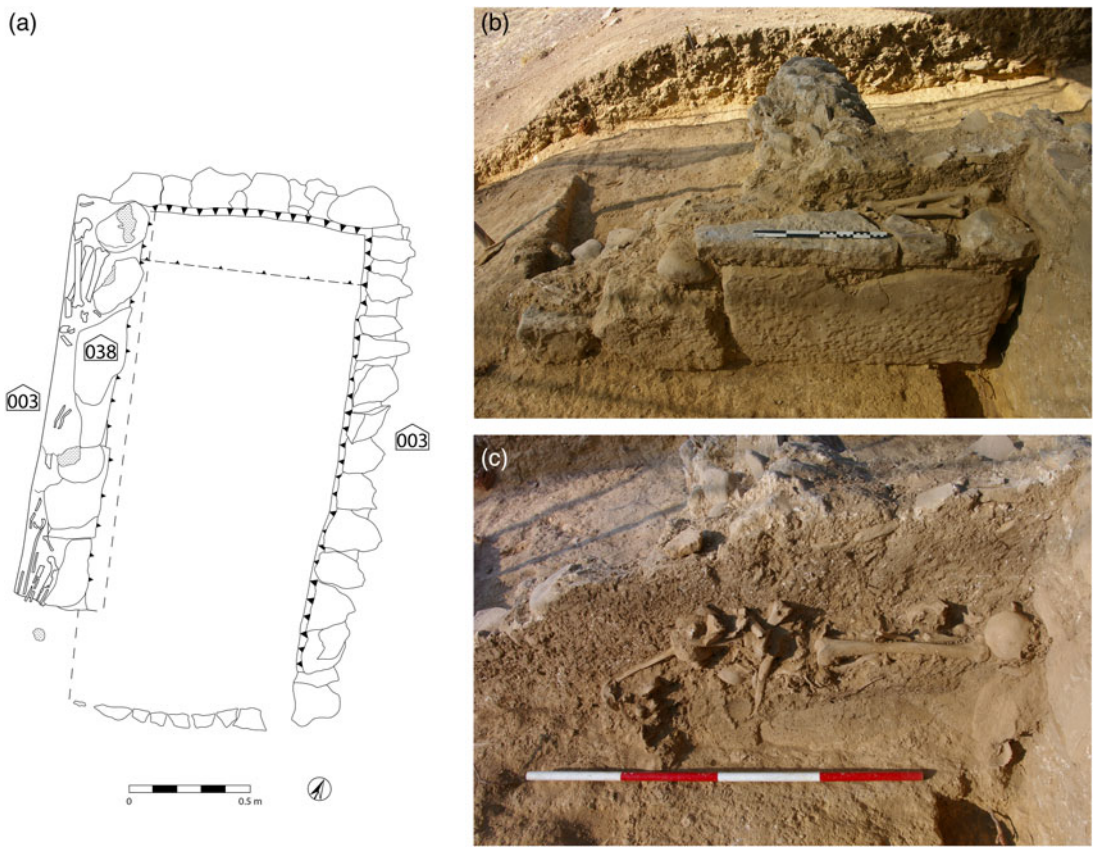


Fig. 2.21. Phase 1 episode 1a: a) wall partition (C038) and bone deposit (C032); b) photograph from the east; c) after the removal of wall C032, from the east.

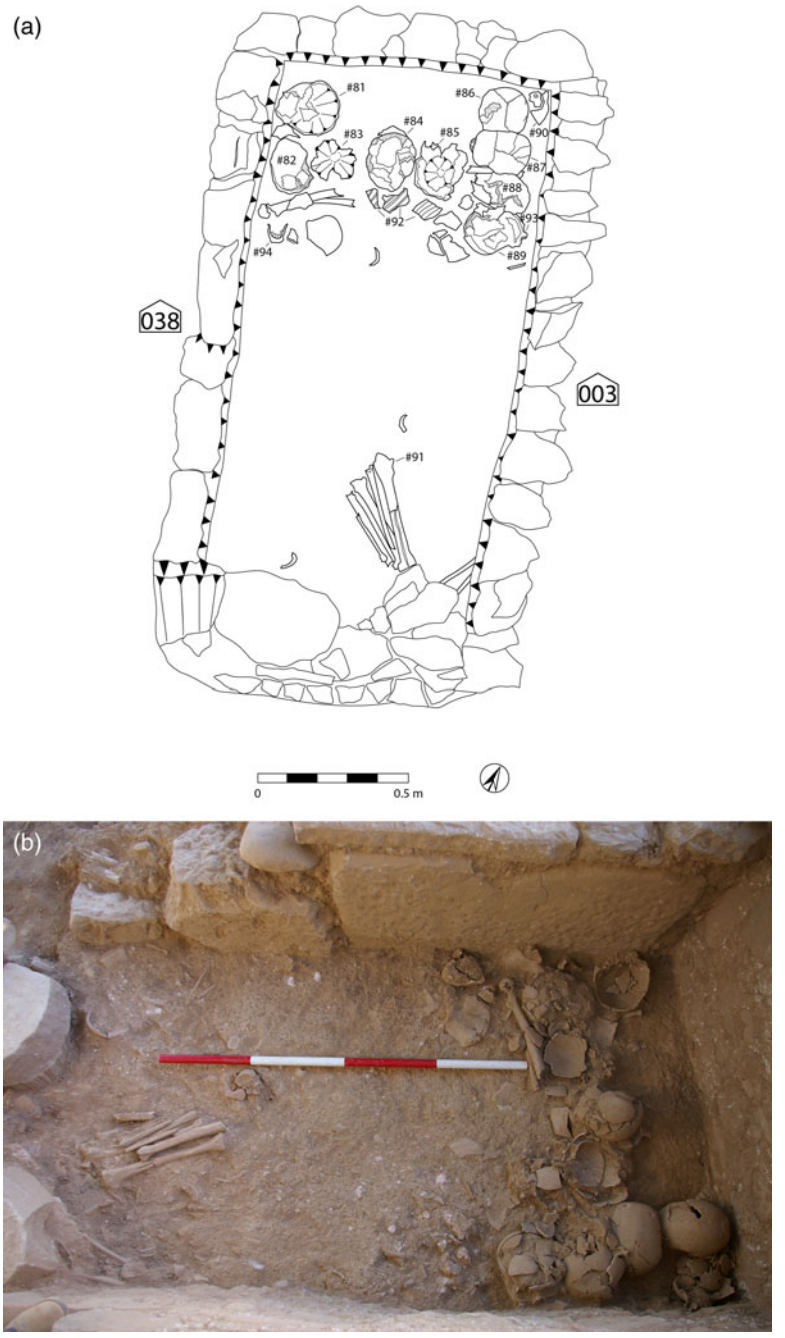


Fig. 2.22. Phase 1, episode 1b: a) deposit of crania and long bones (C050); b) photograph from the east.

of 0.25 m. It was overlain by C014, which consisted of dark brown, loose soil with some angular stone inclusions, and residual topsoil (Fig. 2.25*ab*).

The phases of activity can be summarised as follows (analysis of the bone remains and further reconstruction of the funerary activities follows in §3):

Phase 0
Original construction and use of the tomb (C003 and C031?). The ephemeral bone in C031 may indicate that the bone deposited in Episodes 1a and 1b (below) originated in Phase 0.

Fig. 2.23. Late Roman column capital (OF41) from C050.

Phase 1: C038, C032, C050

Episodes 1a: construction of the dividing wall (C038) and packing of long bones and mandibles behind it (C032).[6]

Episode 1b: stacking of crania and other loose bone in the main chamber (C050).

Phase 2
Episode 3: placement of an inhumation against the dividing wall (C048), possibly with further burials.

Phase 3
Episode 4+: truncation of the left side of the inhumation (C049) and deposition of mixed human bone in one or more events (C004).

Refuse/backfill deposits in Trench 1
The pit to the north and west of the ossuary (C003) and south of the *cavea* retaining wall (C015) was backfilled with a series of material-rich deposits, some identified only in section. These are described sequentially below (Figs 2.26, 2.27). The latest pottery in all is Early Byzantine, and it is clear that they collectively represent backfilling undertaken as a single act or within a short timeframe. The Early Byzantine ceramic assemblage is coherent and includes large well-preserved sherds with some joins between deposits (see §4 with Fig. 4.9).

C024/034 was a 0.15 m-deep deposit of fine, yellow, silty clay. Immediately above it lay C022: orange-brown, compacted silty clay, 0.30–0.50 m deep (**5.30**, **5.33**). C021 abutted C022 on its west side: identified in the northern baulk, it comprised yellow-brown, ash rich silty clay. Above it,

[6] While episodes 1a and 1b are the results of separate actions, it is unclear whether they were contemporary or successive, and if the latter, which came first. For this reason, and to ensure that the numbering accurately conveys the overall number of episodes (at least four), there is no separately labelled episode 2 in this list.

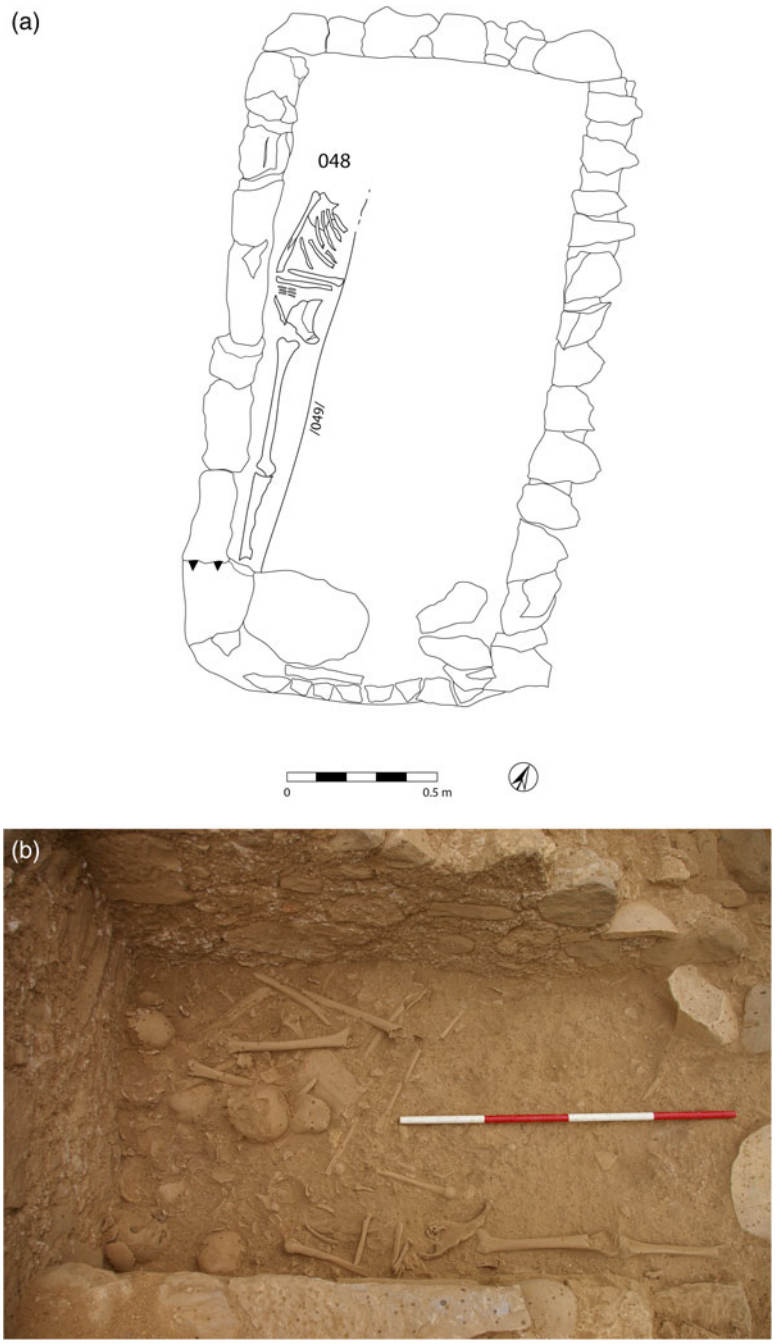


Fig. 2.24. Phase 2, episode 3: a) supine inhumation, truncated (C048); b) C048 from the west.

abutting the ossuary, lay C021, a small, 0.13 m-deep deposit of light brown, loose silt with few finds but including a coin of Constantine I.[7] C020 was a more substantial deposit (0.12–0.22 m deep) containing a larger quantity of artefacts, including **4.2**, **4.3**, **5.8**, **5.31**, and the Roman loomweight Fig. 2.2*j*. Above it, C018, a 0.14 m-deep deposit of grey, compacted, ashy/clay silt with much stone and charcoal, was very rich in artefacts (**4.1**, **4.9**), many of which were heavily

[7] OF23: a *nummus* RIC VII 123 of the emperor Constantine I, from the mint of Thessaloniki, 324 AD: Bruun 1966. [RV]

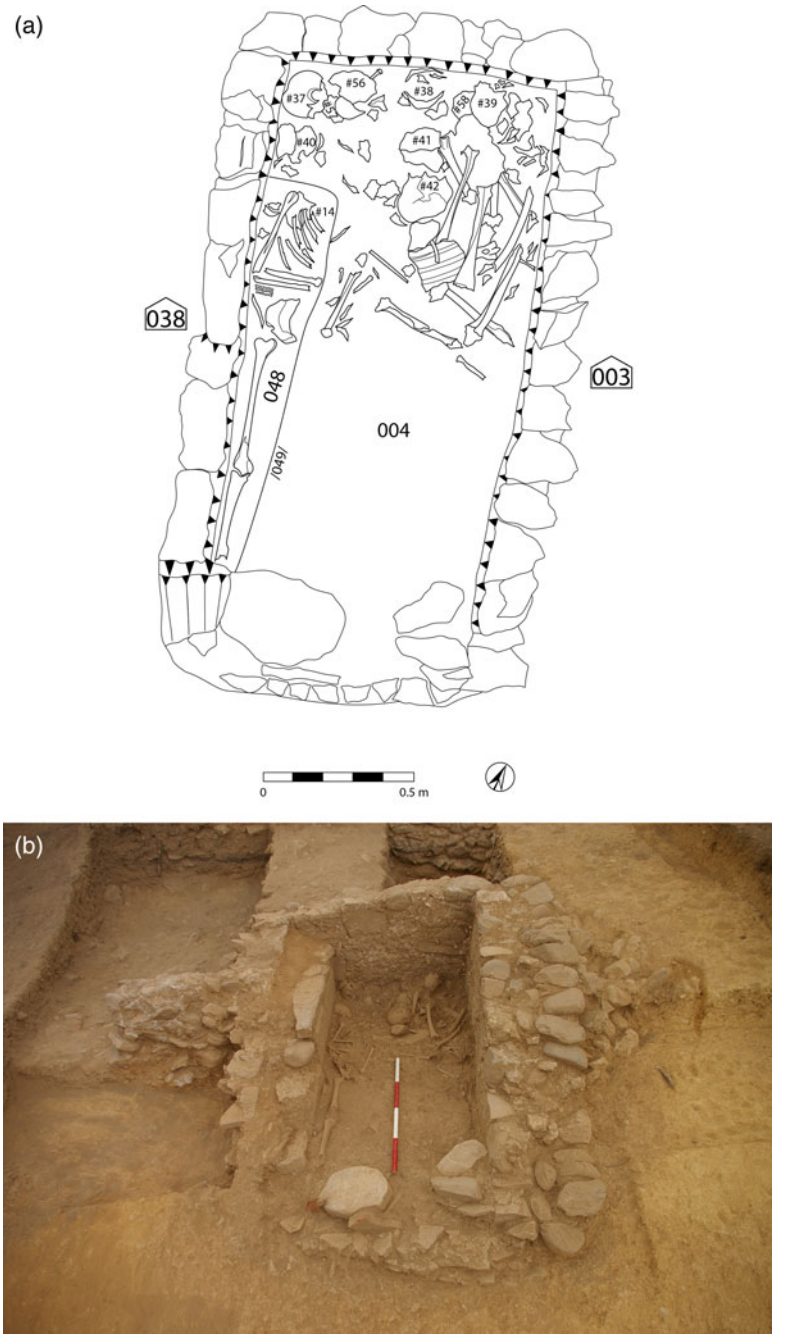


Fig. 2.25. Phase 3, episode 4: a) truncation of C048 (C049) and deposit of mixed human bone (C004); b) photograph from the south: note the column capital OF41 in the bottom left of the structure.

burnt (as the Roman tile in Fig. 2.28). C018 is very similar in composition to C023, identified in a further slot trench to the east of structure C003 and probably from the same context. C023 is a deposit of ash rich material with finds including a whetstone (Fig. 2.2*k*) and a Late Roman/Early Byzantine wineglass (Fig. 2.2*d*). The topmost deposit, C006 (0.06–0.16 m deep), contained dark-brown, moderately compact friable clay-silt (**4.5**, **4.6**, **4.13**, **4.15**, **4.16**, **5.6**). Over these deposits lay a tumble of medium sized angular and rounded un-mortared stones in a coarse brown clay matrix (C017, 0.60–0.80 m in diameter, 0.16 m deep) which (despite the lack of

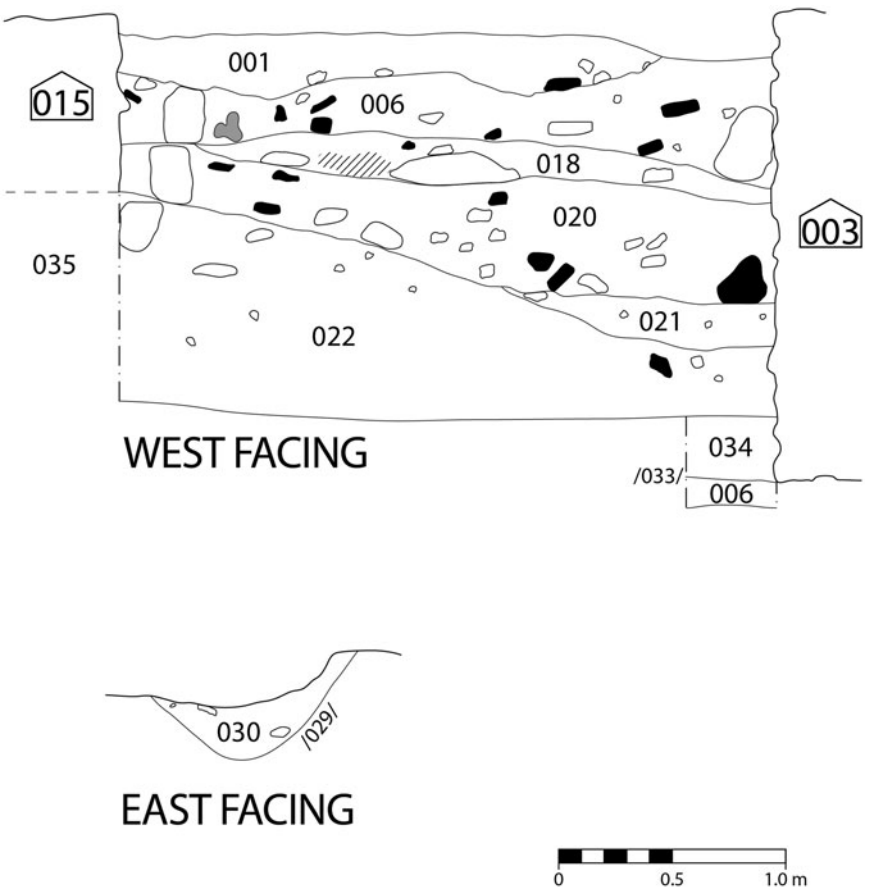


Fig. 2.26. West- and east-facing sections of deposits between the *cavea* wall (C015) and structure C003.

Fig. 2.27. East-facing photograph of the deposits north of C003: note the ash rich layer C018.

Fig. 2.28. Heavily burned Roman tile from C018.

mortar) probably originated from the *cavea* wall (C015) to the north-west and was repurposed for backfill (**4.12**).

Excavation of the spur wall of the ossuary revealed other backfill deposits in the north-west of Trench 1. These included: C027, brown sandy clay (**4.8**, **4.11**, **4.14**, **4.17**, **5.29**) and C025 (0.10 m deep). A small, narrow deposit C026 (0.95 m), wedged between C006 and the spur wall C043, comprised compact, yellow-brown, sandy clay, with few finds. To the eastern side of the structure lay C011, rich in rounded stone in a clay matrix, covering an area 1.38 x 0.56 m.

3. THE HUMAN REMAINS IN TRENCH 1: A PRELIMINARY BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION OF BONES AND FUNERARY ACTS by Ioanna Moutafi

The funerary character of the rectangular structure in Trench I (C003) was apparent upon its discovery, as it contained a large assemblage of commingled human remains in various states of articulation and preservation. The exact form of the mortuary activities performed was far less clear. Most of the bones were found completely disarticulated, scattered at different levels within the main area of the structure and the west side compartment, and only occasionally placed in more orderly arrangements. However, a few instances of semi-articulation were also noticed, as well as a single case of a primary burial, partially preserved *in situ*.

Four main bone deposits were stratigraphically distinguished during excavation (see §2). The bone group found upon the initial floor of the structure, C050 (with a very few bone fragments also found in basal fill C031 below it), contained both scattered post-cranial bones and a group

of crania in a more orderly arrangement along the back wall (Fig. 2.22*ab*). Immediately above it, a partially intact primary burial (C048) was placed in the west part of the structure. Only the right half of the skeleton remained *in situ* (Fig. 2.24*ab*): the body was placed supine and extended in an approximately north-east direction, with the head to the north and arms flexed below the chest. Next to it and piled higher, C004 is characterised by scattered disarticulated bone material and an assemblage of crania towards the back, similar to the one found below it (Fig. 2.25*ab*). Finally, a group of densely packed commingled human remains (mostly post-cranial) was located at the west side of the structure (C032), in the narrow side-space delineated by wall C038 (Fig. 2.21*a–c*).

Due to the large quantity of bone and the intense commingling, the structure initially gave the impression of a charnel, despite the limited instances of semi-articulation and the single primary burial (partially preserved). Therefore, the context immediately posed questions about the nature of use of the structure, the burial activities performed, and the biological profile of the deceased. A contextual bioarchaeological analysis was undertaken to address these questions, with the following aims.

1) To reconstruct the biological profile of the deceased and their lived experiences, assessing demographic characteristics (sex and age-at-death), health (palaeopathology), and occupational activities (study of entheseal changes). Osteological analysis of Middle Byzantine burials is rare: this sample offers the first opportunity to study a portion of the Laconian population of that period, adding to the existing literature on Byzantine skeletal data from other parts of Greece (e.g. Bourbou 2002; 2010a; 2010b; 2021; Tritsaroli 2006; 2022; Tritsaroli and Karadima 2017).
2) To understand the exact character of this funerary structure, to shed light on specific episodes of use, and to reconstruct the burial activities performed. Estimation of the Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) in conjunction with analysis of bone frequencies and taphonomic characteristics of the bone material should be explored in association with stratigraphic data to assess whether the structure was used as a primary tomb, an ossuary, or both, and to reconstruct as accurately as possible the nature, frequency, and sequence of the funerary episodes.
3) To contextualise the above evidence so as to approach the social and ideological choices, or specific ritual norms, reflected in the funerary acts.

In this report, I present the key preliminary results of this study. Beyond basic demographic characteristics, my focus is on the taphonomic interpretation of the bone assemblage in order to assist the overall archaeological understanding of the monument. Full publication of the osteological data and the analytical bioarchaeological study (including aspects not discussed here, such as diet or palaeopathology), together with detailed taphonomic discussion of each context, will follow and will offer a detailed contextual discussion of this funerary context in its temporal framework (Moutafi et al. in preparation).

Methods

Sorting and recording procedures followed standard osteological methodology (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994; Mitchell and Brickley 2017), informed by recent advances in the analysis of commingled human remains (Moutafi 2021, 51–6, with further references; Ubelaker 2008, noting further references in Adams and Byrd 2008). The material was cleaned with water and soft brushes, and all identifiable fragments were then individually numbered in order to proceed to refitting analysis and to segregation and re-individuation of the remains when possible (i.e. finding conjoining fragments and visually matching elements from the same individual, following metric and morphological similarities, articulation patterns etc.: Adams and Byrd 2008). A detailed analytical bone inventory was compiled including, when present, information on the identity and size of the bone fragment, completeness (preserved percentage of the total), measurements and stature estimation, sex and age-at-death, entheseal changes, cranial and post-

cranial non-metric traits, and pathological and taphonomic alterations (degree of weathering, type of fractures), as well as observations on visual pairing and segregation of the remains.

Sex was determined for adults on the basis of the sexually dimorphic morphology of the skull and pelvis (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 16–21, with analytical references), as well as measurements of dimorphic dimensions of long bones (Bass 1995). Sex determination was not attempted for juvenile remains as no reliable methods are yet available (Brickley and Buckberry 2017, 33). Adult age-at-death was estimated from morphological alterations on the pelvis, degree of cranial suture closure, and dental wear (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 21–38, with analytical references). In the case of juveniles, age-at-death was estimated from the level of dental development (Smith 1991; Liversidge and Molleson 2004), long bone diaphyseal length, and degree of epiphyseal union (Scheuer and Black 2000, with extended references). Stature was estimated using total long bone length (Trotter 1970); cranial and post-cranial non-metric traits were recorded after Berry and Berry (1967) and Finnegan (1978), respectively; and the description and interpretation of palaeopathological observations followed Ortner (2003) and Aufderheide and Rodriguez-Martin (1998). Detailed recording of taphonomic characteristics included assessment of surface condition (Brickley and McKinley 2004, 16), bone completeness and fragmentation, and bone representation (Moutafi 2021, 48–56). Finally, MNI was estimated using maximum bone frequencies (i.e. maximum occurrence of the same bone element), further informed by age, sex, or pronounced morphological differences (Moutafi 2021, 54).

Preliminary osteological results

The key preliminary results of the osteological study are presented below. Since final data analysis is in progress, the full osteological record is not published here, and illustrations (i.e. photographs, graphs and tables) are kept to a minimum. The numbers given below are minimum estimations and subject to slight change upon final publication.

The bone assemblage consists of a large quantity of commingled and largely disarticulated cranial, dental, and post-cranial remains, including approximately 6000 identified bone fragments and 400 teeth. The fairly high level of fragmentation necessitated the reconstruction of many bones from several conjoining fragments. Nevertheless, the material is generally well preserved in terms of weathering and general completeness (Fig. 3.1*ab*).

The MNI of the entire assemblage is 29 based on the maximum occurrence of mandibles (25) informed by additional non-adult bones. All categories of skeletal element (cranial, dental, and post-cranial) are represented, including small elements such as hand and foot bones. No strong differentiations were observed in the representation of different skeletal elements or between parts or sides of the skeleton. Analysis of exact bone frequencies, and especially exploration of variation between the MNI estimations according to different bones, is highly significant for the reconstruction of funerary activities (Bello and Andrews 2006). The key patterns observed will be discussed briefly in the next section, and fully explored between and within contexts in Moutafi et al. (in preparation).

The remains of at least 23 adults and six juveniles were recovered (Fig. 3.2). Non-adult material included an adolescent of around 16 years at death, an older child of around 13 years, three children of 10, eight, and five to six years respectively, and a two-year-old infant (Fig. 3.3). The adult remains span all age categories from very young adults (18–20 years old) to older individuals (>50 years old), with the majority falling into prime to mature adulthood (i.e. 30–40 years old).

Both sexes are attested in the sample, with females outnumbering males (Fig. 3.4). Based on cranial morphology, 14 females and five males were identified among the adults: a positive sex determination was not possible for the other remains due to a lack of sexually diagnostic elements. Morphological observations in the preserved *os coxae* and metric observations of the long bones confirm the cranial-based sex ratio.

Only the right part (arm, leg, pelvis and thorax) of the semi-articulated skeleton C048 was preserved *in situ* (Fig. 2.24*b*). The skull and the remainder of the skeleton were disturbed and probably mixed with the surrounding commingled remains (bones of the left upper limb were discovered in C004 and positively re-individuated). The skeleton is that of a 30–35-year-old

Fig. 3.1. Example of typical state of preservation in terms of weathering and bone completeness: a) humeri from C003; b) femora from C050.

woman, around 1.55 m in stature. Her bones are quite robust, indicating pronounced musculoskeletal activity, with no pathological evidence apart from mild traces of spinal osteoarthritis in the form of slight degenerative changes in her vertebrae (slight porosity, productive changes, and lipping on cervical, thoracic, and lumbar vertebral bodies).

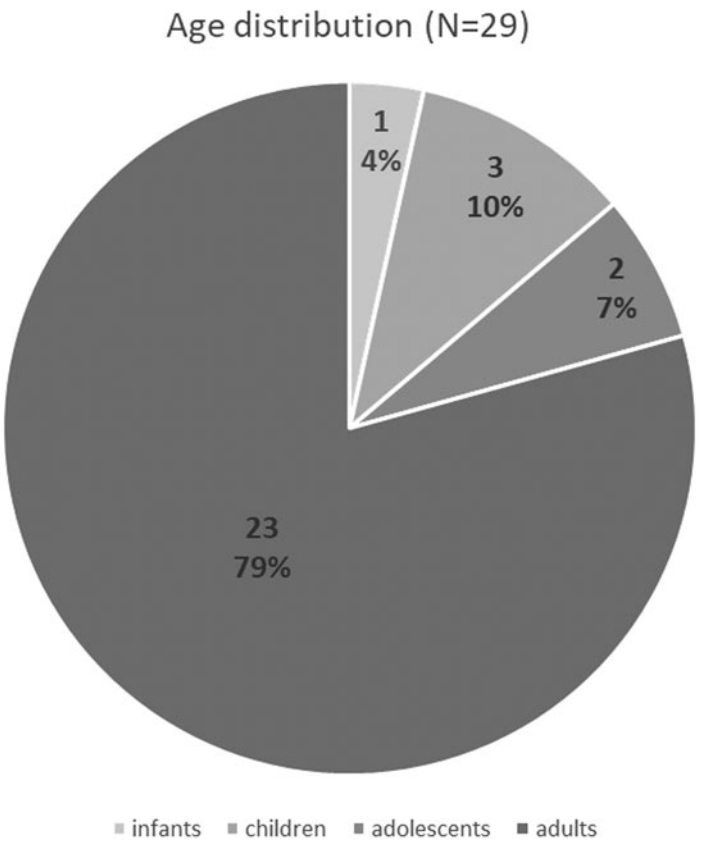


Fig. 3.2. Age distribution (N = 29; counts and percentages shown).

Palaeopathological data for the entire sample will be presented analytically in Moutafi et al. (in preparation), together with further occupational and diet related evidence. In summary, the sample displays normal prevalence rates of common palaeopathological conditions, including dental pathologies (mostly caries and antemortem tooth loss with fewer cases of calculus and abscesses), indications of metabolic disease and diet deficiencies (e.g. *cribra orbitalia*, dental hypoplasias), trauma, and common degenerative pathologies (e.g. joint disease or osteoarthritis).

Fig. 3.3. Non-adult bones found in various contexts.

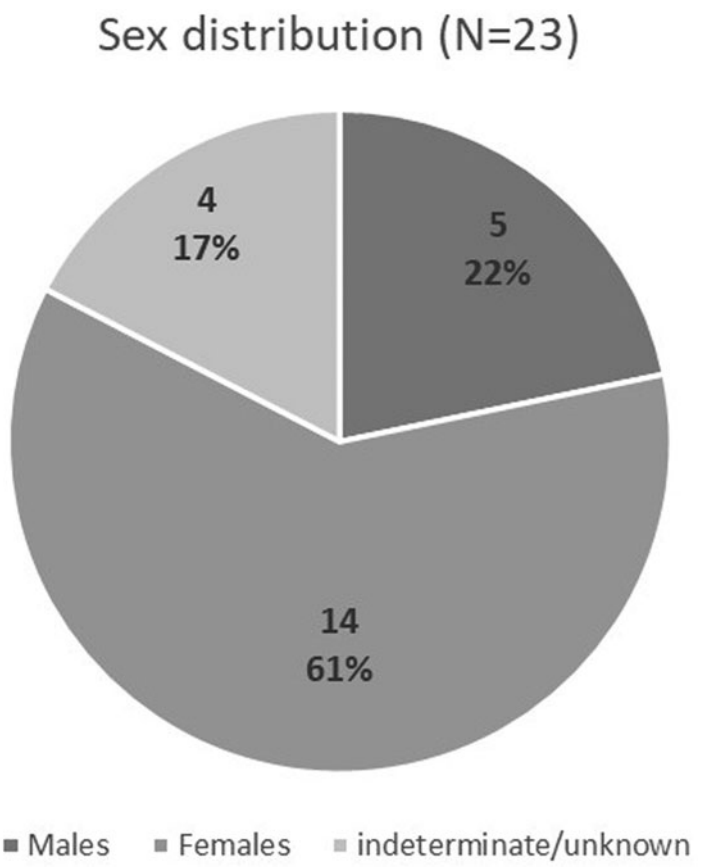


Fig. 3.4. Sex distribution (adults only, N = 23; counts and percentages shown).

Evidence for infectious diseases (in the form of non-severe periosteal lesions associated with non-specific bone infections) is very limited.

Reconstructing the burial activities

Clarification of the character of the funerary structure and reconstruction of the burial activities performed are the second major goal of this study. Methods pertaining to funerary taphonomy (analysis of preservation characteristics, dispersal patterns, MNI and bone frequencies) are applied in conjunction with stratigraphic evidence to assess the use of the structure and reconstruct as accurately as possible the nature, frequency and sequence of funerary episodes.

The first question is whether this was a tomb of collective, successive primary burials which subsequently received secondary treatment within the structure, or an ossuary that mostly received disarticulated remains from other graves. The presence of at least one primary burial *in situ*, partially intact, and a few other instances of semi-articulation noted within the mass of disarticulated bones is positive evidence that the structure was used at least on occasion for this purpose. Bone preservation also indicates that most fragmentation and dispersal took place *inside* the structure. Despite the high degree of fragmentation, it was possible to find many conjoining fragments especially within the same contexts. Some recent fractures had occurred during excavation, but there were also several old ones indicating fragmentation during the use of the grave. Many bones were reconstructed from several small fragments (up to 10 in some cases). Refitting analysis and re-individuation of the remains suggested the relative independence of the main contexts, but also some meaningful associations between them. No conjoining parts of long bones were found between different contexts, but some bone pairs have been identified, with matches found between C004 and C032, as well as C050 and C032. The relationship

between C050 and C032 was also firmly established by the reconstruction of an infant skull dispersed in both contexts. However, no associated material was found between the two contexts of the main chamber (C004 and C050). Finally, bone frequencies also point to the presence of primary interments that subsequently received secondary treatment within the structure.

Bone representation analysis shows a generally consistent minimum number of around 20–25 adult individuals by all main bones, with no pronounced discrepancies. In addition, several small bones are present (such as hand and foot phalanges) which would not be expected in an ossuary of exclusively secondary burials. Such bone frequencies suggest the original presence of several primary burials which were eventually commingled and disturbed due to the continuous and successive use of the structure (Bello and Andrews 2006; Duday 2006; for further details of criteria, see Moutafi and Voutsaki 2016; Moutafi 2021, 58–61). A more nuanced picture is given when we compare bone frequencies between the different contexts. Long bones are almost equally represented in all three main contexts, though appear slightly fewer in the side compartment (C032). However, skull elements demonstrate significant discrepancies: C004 and C050 share an almost equal number of adult skulls (between 10 and 15 individuals each), while C032 contains only a few cranial fragments coming from one adult and two juveniles. Interestingly, the exact opposite is observed in the representation of mandibles: C004 includes fragments of only three mandibles and C050 of another six, while the side compartment, C032, holds the vast majority (16 in total, most fairly complete).

These patterns suggest that the structure served mostly as a collective tomb rather than an ossuary. The tomb received successive primary burials which then became disarticulated, displaced, and eventually commingled due to continuous, intensive, and prolonged use of the same space. It is possible that some charnel use took place as well, with the tomb receiving at some point secondary remains of burials originally placed elsewhere. This is suggested by subtle differentiation in patterns of bone representation (fully explored and discussed in Moutafi et al. in preparation). Finally, it is evident that the eventual placement of the bones is the result both of accidental disturbance during continuous accumulation of burials, but also of conscious re-arrangements and secondary placements designed to free space for new interments while keeping most bones from previous burials inside the structure. Specific selective practices are evident in this process: for example, crania were kept together in C004 and C050 (Fig. 3.5), but their associated mandibles were moved to the side compartment, C032.

The next step is to use taphonomic analysis to make a more nuanced reconstruction of the major use phases of the tomb (as set out in §2). It should, however, be borne in mind that the events described below do not represent the full range of funerary episodes or single occurrences but are rather schematic outlines of the major phases of use, each representing the end result of several minor episodes that cannot fully be discerned.

Phase 0

The first major phase includes the building of the structure followed by a series of primary burials on the initial (lower) floor. No *in situ* remnants from that phase survived. After disarticulation of those first skeletons, and possibly some first internal re-arrangements, the need for space for more burials became acute. This led to the second major event (Phase 1) in which the disarticulated bones of the first burials were redeposited in C050 and C032.

Phase 1

Wall C038 was built to create a side-space to receive bone material, operating as a small interior charnel. Many of the bones from the original burials were moved there (C032, especially its lower layers), although some long bones and a few smaller elements, as well as the majority of the crania, were kept in the main tomb space (C050). The crania were placed collectively towards the back of the structure (Figs 2.22*ab*, 3.5), although their associated mandibles were moved with the rest of the bones to the side compartment (C032). Interestingly, the selective practice of keeping the crania together in the main chamber was only applied to adults, as any non-adult skulls from that phase were moved to the side compartment.

Fig. 3.5. Assemblage of crania at the back of the tomb in C050.

Phase 2

After this major re-arrangement, another series of primary burials followed above the level of C050, on a new floor *c.* 0.10 m higher. This is confirmed by the presence of the disturbed (truncated) primary burial found partially *in situ* (C048) and suggested by the bone representation patterns in C004 which preserved disarticulated remains from other burials of that phase. The stratigraphic separation (at least 0.10 m of soil) between C050 and the level of C048 and C004, plus the lack of joins between bones from the respective assemblages, confirms the later date of bones from the latter contexts. It is not possible to determine exactly how many primary burials occurred in this phase, but the fact that the skeleton of C048 was not placed centrally but in contact with the south-west side suggests the original presence of at least a few more primary burials next to it.

Phase 3

These other primary burials (and the left side of the skeleton in C048) eventually became disarticulated and mixed up in C004. The bone representation patterns in C004 indicate both primary and secondary deposition: there remains the possibility that some bones were brought in already disarticulated. As in Phase 1, the bones were subject to various internal re-arrangements: some were moved within the main chamber in C004 while others were placed in the side compartment in the upper layers of C032. This is suggested by some matches between bones in the different contexts, and by discrepancies in bone ratios between C004 and C032 similar to those seen between C050 and C032. Exactly as in C050, crania were retained in the main space (C004), placed in a group towards the back of the structure. The persistence of a practice showing special reverence towards the cranium is not surprising. Earlier remains are often retained when Middle Byzantine burials are made in the same tomb, and in such cases the skull is most often the preferred element (similar examples are seen in the Middle Byzantine cemetery of Alikianos on Crete: Bourbou 2010b).

Phase 4

Analysis of bone frequencies in C004 suggests that it consists of a mixture of disturbed primary and entirely secondary burials. The fact that no fully articulated last interment(s) was found *in situ*

indicates that the final opening(s) of the structure must have been for the addition of disarticulated bone material removed from other tombs in the vicinity. Unfortunately, there is no other stratigraphic evidence of any distinction between the two sets of interments in C004, as they were all eventually mixed up.

Epilogue

The analytical field recording of the osteological material in C003 offered an unprecedented opportunity to work with principles of funerary taphonomy and archaeothanatology on a Byzantine burial context. The preliminary results presented here have already shed light on the demographic profile of these people, the character of the structure, and the specific acts performed in it. It was shown that the tomb was collective, used as a primary burial locus for successive burials of both sexes and all ages (note however the minimal presence of infants), with continuous internal re-arrangements in order to keep older remains while adding new ones. At some point(s) during its history, the structure probably also received some already disarticulated material from other graves. The forthcoming publication of the complete bioarchaeological study will fully present the osteological data, including biological and taphonomic details, to allow for a deeper contextual discussion of this interesting context in its temporal framework. In the future, we hope to enhance the current results with selective biomolecular analyses (C14 dating, a-DNA and stable isotopes) and cross-examination with other anthropological material from the Sparta acropolis discovered in old excavations (see §4).

4. THE POST-ANTIQUE PHASES OF THE SPARTA THEATRE by Rossana Valente

Introduction

The Roman theatre was a monument continuously utilised from antiquity to Medieval times. Byzantine builders adapted and modified its form to meet the daily needs of an urban neighbourhood. The acropolis as a whole was enclosed by fortification walls perhaps during the fourth century, transforming the hilltop into the *kastron* of *Lakedaimon*. The theatre thus formed part of the intramural settlement of the Byzantine city. The Roman stoa, west of the theatre, was also repurposed with the construction in the Middle Byzantine period of the church and monastic complex once linked to Osios Nikon (Waywell and Wilkes 1994, 424–9; Kourinou-Pikoula 1998; Armstrong 2008). These monuments document the continuum between the physical fabric of the Roman city of Sparta and the emerging Byzantine style of vernacular and religious urban architecture.

The 2008 excavation sought to investigate how urban needs were accommodated, allowing for the conformation of the theatre area, and to understand the development of the urban fabric here and in relation to the acropolis. In this context, it is worth recalling Robert Ousterhout's (2019, 333) observation that

> the setting of everyday life is perhaps the most elusive aspect of Byzantine society after the ninth century. Although many examples of church architecture survive throughout the Byzantine empire, there is frustratingly little physical evidence of houses, palaces, towns, and urban architecture – that is, beyond the rudimentary archaeological data, although this may be combined with literary descriptions, wills, and other legal documents to provide a picture of Byzantine secular architecture.

By focusing on the archaeological evidence brought to light in 2008, my aim in this section is to address exactly these concerns and to contribute to the investigation of daily lifeways in a Byzantine city. I begin by placing the 2008 excavations in the context of British School research on the theatre of Sparta.

Excavations in the Sparta theatre: a multi-period conception of archaeological stratification
Detailed documentation of Byzantine archaeological stratigraphy often seems to be an afterthought in Mediterranean archaeology. It was common practice in the last century to remove post-antique remains with almost no record of stratigraphy or architecture. The goal of bringing to light Classical monuments encouraged the removal of inscriptions, *spolia*, and architectural features incorporated into Byzantine buildings, with a general disregard for post-antique phases of occupation. The strategies adopted by successive campaigns of the British School at Athens (BSA) in the theatre varied according to the research methodologies of their time, yet from the beginning they stand out for the attention paid to post-antique evidence.


Ἀριθ. πρωτ. 18149 Ἐν Ἀθήναις, τῇ 10 Φεβρουαρίου 1906

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

ΤΟ ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΕΩΣ
ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΕΦΟΡΕΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΩΝ

Πρὸς τὸν Διευθυντὴν τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀγγλικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Σχολῆς κ. R. Bosanquet

Ὁ Γενικὸς Ἔφορος
Καββαδίας

Fig. 4.1. Excavation Permit for Sparta, 10 February 1906 (BSA Archive, BSA Corporate Records-Athens: BSA Excavation Permits).

The British School began to excavate at Sparta on 10 February 1906 (Fig. 4.1). Reports published in the School's *Annual*, unpublished excavation notebooks kept in the School's archive, and the archive of the Byzantine Research Fund (BRF) officially established in 1908 (a unique collection of architectural drawings and photographs of monuments across the Byzantine world) together enable us to trace how, in the context of the Sparta excavations and the wider exploration of Laconia, archaeologists and architects mutually influenced each other's methodology in studying Byzantine heritage. From the late 1880s to the mid-1930s, the intellectual circles around the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain included archaeologists, art historians and architects with a flowering interest in Byzantine art and architecture. This movement inspired the exploration and recording of Byzantine heritage, enhancing and heavily influencing the direction of Byzantine studies (Kakissis 2023). Byzantine material culture in Sparta was not simply neglected and discarded. Rather, the British excavations can be seen as pivotal – a laboratory for the study of the diachronic phasing of architectural structures and the appreciation of archaeological stratigraphy as a sequence of phases of accumulation and spoliation.

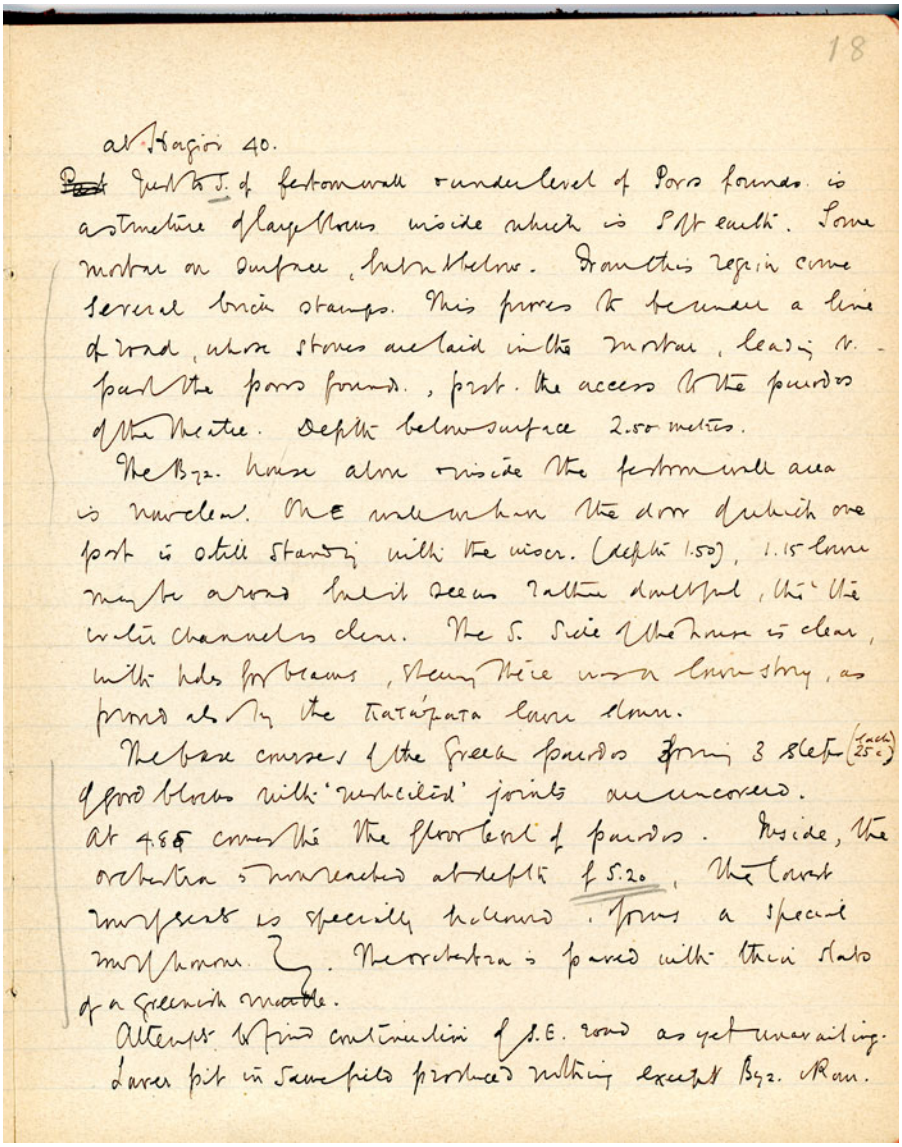


Fig. 4.2. BSA Sparta Excavation Notebook 1 (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 1), p. 18.

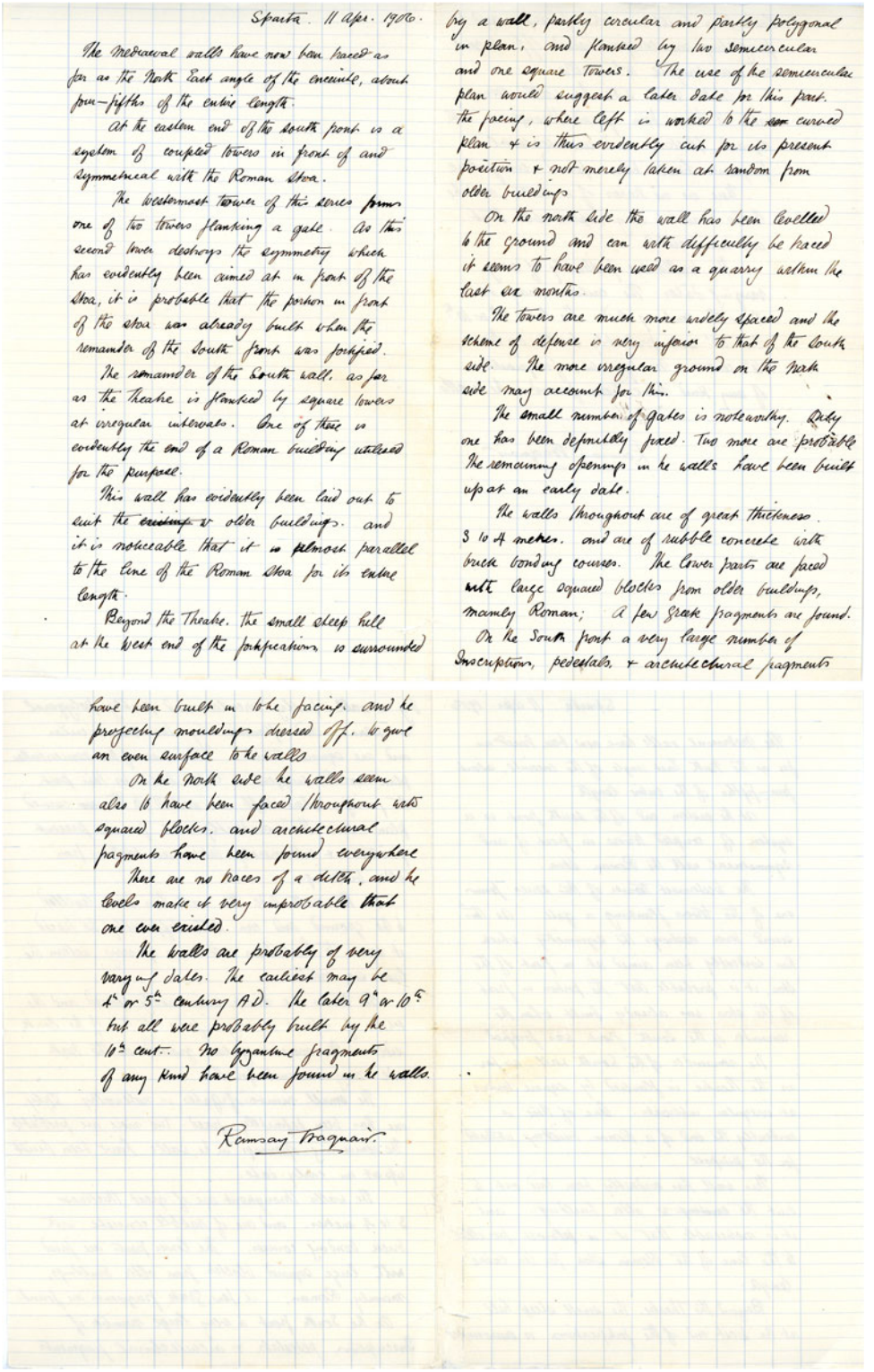
The archive of the British School at Athens is a rich source of data with which to address transformations in the methodology informing the excavation of the multiperiod urban site of Sparta over the past century. Excavation diaries, handwritten notes, photographs, negatives and drawings produced since the beginning of the British School excavations constitute published and unpublished legacy data which may deepen reconstruction of the topography of *Lakedaimon*.

Early excavators tended to prioritise the periods which were their major object of interest: nonetheless, and perhaps surprisingly, the 'less crucial' periods were also recorded. Reporting on the 1906 season, Guy Dickins, a student of the BSA briefly in charge of the Sparta excavations, describes the opening of trial pits along the Byzantine fortification (then standing and visible) in order to 'discover its relation with the theatre-buildings, and to extract any inscriptions or marble fragments that might be built into it. In this last respect we were fortunate as we began to discover a great quantity of architectural, sculptured, and inscribed marbles' (Dickins 1905–6, 396). Even though the main research questions guiding the investigation focused on Classical Sparta, the 1905–6 excavation notebook reveals the excavators' appreciation of the diachronic composition of the archaeological stratification. Notebook 1 in the BSA Sparta archive shows how they distinguished strata by level, with attention to soil composition, brief characterisation of the matrix, and even identification of cuts and pits. Although the excavation methodology was not yet rigorous and scientific, the most significant architectural phases of post-Classical features were noted and illustrated. Moreover, the team clearly understood the complexity of Byzantine occupation of the Roman theatre and were aware that they were excavating examples of vernacular architecture.

Fig. 4.2 shows a notebook entry with the kind of observations which led Dickins to propose a periodisation of the difference phases of post-antique construction and occupation in the theatre area (Dickins 1905–6, 400). Here is a transcription of part of the entry:

> Just to S. of festoon wall & under level of poros founds. is
> a structure of large blocks inside which is soft earth. Some
> mortar on surface, but not below. From this region come
> several brick stamps. This proves to be under a line
> of road, whose stones are laid in the mortar, leading N.
> past the poros founds. past the access to the parodos
> of the theatre. Depth below surface 2.50 metres.
> The Byz. house above and inside the festoon wall area
> is now clear. On E. wall we have the door of which one
> part is still standing with the inscr. (depth 1.50), 1.15 lower
> may be a road but it seems rather doubtful, tho' the
> water channel is clear. The S. side of the house is clear,
> with holes for beams, showing there was a lower storey, as
> proved also by the κατώματα lower down. (BSA Sparta Excavation Notebook 1 [BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 1], p. 18)

The work of Ramsay Traquair, architectural student of the BSA, is equally remarkable. In 1906 he investigated Byzantine and Frankish architectural 'remains' in Laconia, recording churches and fortifications. He then continued to explore Greece until 1909 as a member of the BRF team of architects (Traquair 1905–6a; Kakissis 2009, 134; Kourelis 2023). Traquair spent one month in Sparta investigating the Byzantine defensive walls, leading to a report in the School's *Annual* (Traquair 1905–6b) and an unpublished text (Fig. 4.3). Traquair investigated the topography and construction of the walls. He also examined the use of *spolia*, highlighting not just their original character as was usual, but stressing the utilitarian scope of reuse and even its aesthetic and decorative value, and paying attention to the location of *spolia* within the monument (Fig. 4.4). Moreover, he analysed the stratigraphy of the defensive walls, identifying at least three phases of construction and development. He then tried to develop a historical discourse linking this relative sequence to the major events in post-classical Spartan history, in order to provide absolute dates for the various construction phases. He locates the first phase of the fortification in front of the Stoa and relates it to the aftermath of the Herulian invasion in 267 AD.



Sparta. 11 Apr. 1906.

The Mediaeval walls have now been traced as far as the North East angle of the enceinte, about four-fifths of the entire length.

At the eastern end of the south front is a system of coupled towers in front of and symmetrical with the Roman Stoa.

The westernmost tower of this series forms one of two towers flanking a gate. As this second tower destroys the symmetry which has evidently been aimed at in front of the Stoa, it is probable that the portion in front of the stoa was already built when the remainder of the South front was fortified.

The remainder of the South wall, as far as the Theatre is flanked by square towers at irregular intervals. One of these is evidently the end of a Roman building utilised for the purpose.

This wall has evidently been laid out to suit the existing older buildings, and it is noticeable that it is almost parallel to the line of the Roman Stoa for its entire length.

Beyond the Theatre, the small steep hill at the West end of the fortifications is surrounded by a wall, partly circular and partly polygonal in plan, and flanked by two semicircular and one square towers. The use of the semicircular plan would suggest a later date for this part. the facing, where left is worked to the same curved plan, & is thus evidently cut for its present position & not merely taken at random from older buildings.

On the north side the wall has been levelled to the ground and can with difficulty be traced it seems to have been used as a quarry within the last few months.

The towers are much more widely spaced and the scheme of defence is very inferior to that of the South side. The more irregular ground on the North side may account for this.

The small number of gates is noteworthy. Only one has been definitely fixed. Two more are probable. The remaining openings in the walls have been built up at an early date.

The walls throughout are of great thickness. 3 to 4 metres. and are of rubble concrete with brick bonding courses. The lower parts are faced with large squared blocks from older buildings, mainly Roman; a few Greek fragments are found.

On the South front a very large number of Inscriptions, pedestals, & architectural fragments have been built in to the facing, and the projecting mouldings dressed off, to give an even surface to the walls.

On the North side the walls seem also to have been faced throughout with squared blocks, and architectural fragments have been found everywhere.

There are no traces of a ditch, and the levels make it very improbable that one ever existed.

The walls are probably of very varying dates. The earliest may be 4th or 5th century A.D. The later 9th or 10th but all were probably built by the 10th cent. No byzantine fragments of any kind have been found in the walls.

Ramsay Traquair.

Fig. 4.3. Traquair's report on the Sparta defensive walls, 11 April 1906 (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 32, side a and b).

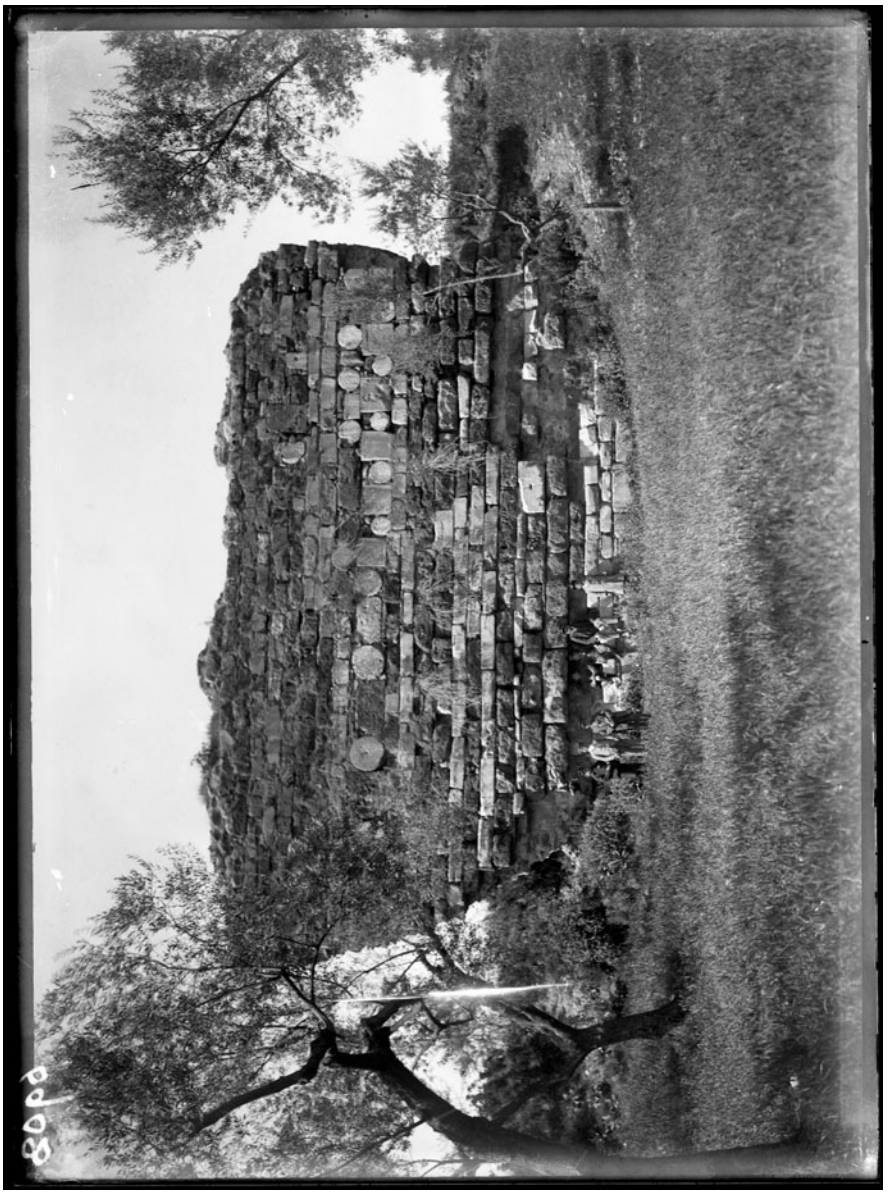


Fig. 4.4. East end of Late Roman fortifications (BSA Archive, BSA SPHS Image Collection, Reference no. BSA SPHS 01/2626.6908; Traquair 1905–6b, 427, fig. 10).

According to Traquair's interpretation, the majority of the walls were built during his second phase, which he dated between the fourth and fifth centuries AD, identifying a *terminus post quem* in the sack of Sparta by Alaric in 396 AD. Finally, works including the addition of towers are dated between the ninth and tenth centuries, during the revival of the Middle Byzantine empire.

Architecture was not the only object of investigation. In Sparta Excavation Notebook 1, the presence of Byzantine pottery is often recorded when describing the levels excavated, sometimes with its stratigraphic position and a very brief note of quantity. A portion of the Byzantine ceramics recovered in these excavations was kept and, together with material from trenches outside the fortification, informed the pioneering 1910–11 article on Byzantine glazed and matt painted pottery by the School's Director R.M. Dawkins and School student J.P. Droop (an expert on Geometric–Classical pottery). As Joanita Vroom (2003, 35–6) has noted, this study has the great merit of focusing not only on decorative motifs, which were divided into seven groups (five lumping together diverse sgraffito motifs and the final two categorising painted motifs on glazed and unglazed vessels), but also on the morphological characteristics of the pottery. Dawkins and Droop published profile drawings and paid attention to the technology of pottery production, describing the fabrics and firing conditions and presenting a brief characterisation of the clay. While admitting their limited knowledge of Byzantine matters and observing that 'date and general relations are still matters of some doubt', they suggested chronologies on the basis of the archaeological evidence from Sparta and comparative material from Cairo, Pergamon and Constantinople on display in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin (Dawkins and Droop 1910–11, quotation at 23; Kourelis 2023, 167).

The first excavation campaign concluded in 1910. When investigations resumed in 1924, continuing until 1928 under the direction of A.M. Woodward, attention focused on the orchestra area (Figs 4.5, 4.6). Consistent with the methodologies of the time, Woodward sought

Fig. 4.5. General view during excavation east of *cavea*, 1925 (BSA Archive, BSA SPHS Image Collection, Reference no. BSA SPHS 01/7469.C2591).

Fig. 4.6. General view of the stage area of the theatre, looking south-east, 1925 (BSA Archive, BSA SPHS Image Collection, Reference no. BSA SPHS 01/7430.C2552; Woodward 1923–5, 140, fig. 9).

to recover the monumental structures of the Roman theatre. He did, however, plan post-antique structures before removing them, as shown in Fig. 4.7. Excavation records show an appreciation of the accumulation of strata and the nature of the post-antique evidence. So, for example, the notebook record of excavation east of the stage in 1925 reports: 'Byzantine walls forming rooms north of that with a cistern, of characteristic "jumble-style", including several marbles and a poor granite column standing on a plain rectangular marble base. Floor level here showed nearly a foot-thick layer of broken tiles in very dusty earth, with rather hard clay above' (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 95). The soil compositions of the various levels and their main contents were recorded, and the nature of domestic space was occasionally discussed. Excavations east of the parodos brought to light a 'small square structure of rubble, containing an archaic Doric capital built upside down in the centre, associated with many traces of burning: this may actually have been hearth of a Byz. dwelling erected against the wall' (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 113). This excavation notebook makes clear that most of the orchestra and lower *cavea* lay under three and in some areas four metres of Medieval occupation. Working in such cramped conditions proved very difficult, as Woodward reported to the press in 1924 (Fig. 4.8).

The record shows that the excavators recognised two phases of post-antique occupation in the theatre area, describing closely packed structures and possible domestic and artisanal complexes including a Byzantine house with an olive press east of the central line of the *cavea* (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 11). The overall picture is of a settlement on terraces separated by narrow alleyways which in places followed the curvature of the theatre. Yet even though the excavators recorded substantial Byzantine remains, their published reports give little sense of the complexity of the urban topography they had revealed. This is also true of the portable finds. Woodward kept what he regarded as the most significant finds, including an

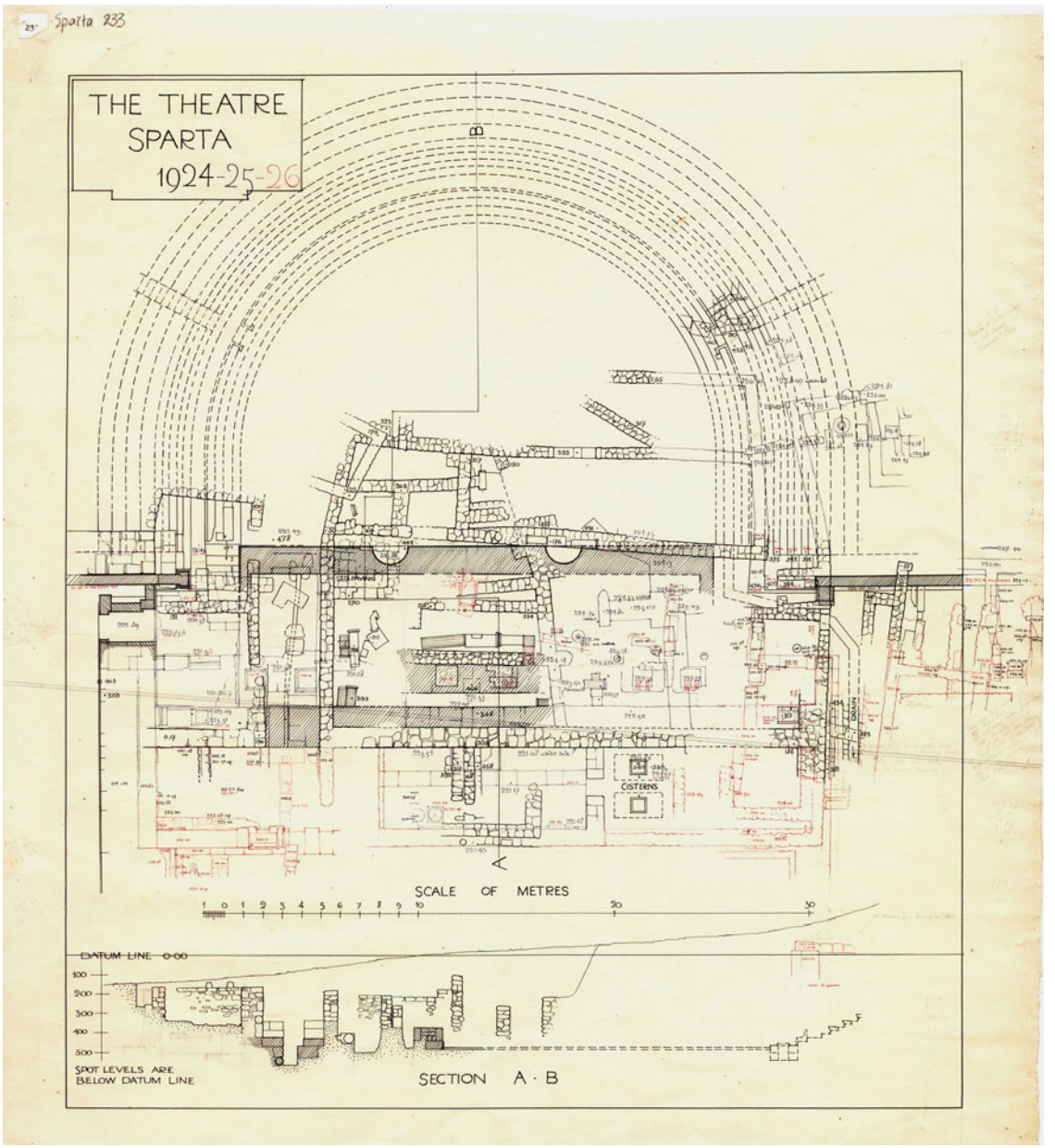
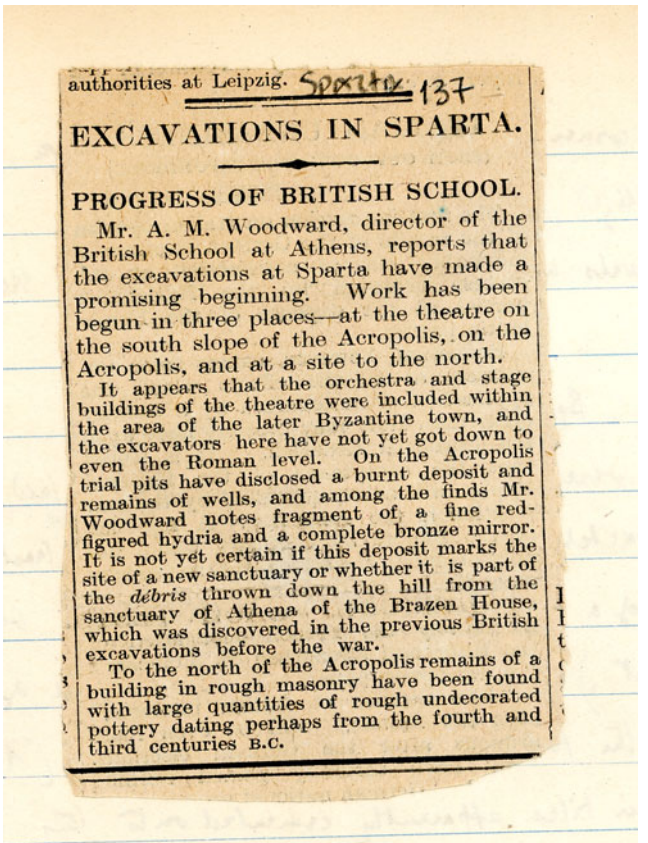


Fig. 4.7. Unpublished plan of the theatre showing the Byzantine buildings after the excavation seasons 1924–6 (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 233).

enormous quantity of Byzantine pottery and coins (see e.g. Woodward 1923–5, 157–8), but did not publish them.

Some 60 years later, School excavations resumed under the direction of John Wilkes and Geoffrey Waywell. They explored the area of the Roman Stoa (1988–91) and the theatre (1992–8), where reconstruction of the stratigraphy of two deep sections at the edges of the 1920s excavation further documented post-antique phases of activity. These excavations confirmed a prolonged period of Medieval occupation in several areas of the theatre, mainly in the form of small-roomed buildings in stone and mud-brick with tiled roofs, similar to the secular architecture documented in other Byzantine cities and villages in Greece (Waywell and Wilkes 1994; 1999; Waywell et al. 1995; 1997).



authorities at Leipzig. Sparta 137

EXCAVATIONS IN SPARTA.

PROGRESS OF BRITISH SCHOOL.

Mr. A. M. Woodward, director of the British School at Athens, reports that the excavations at Sparta have made a promising beginning. Work has been begun in three places—at the theatre on the south slope of the Acropolis, on the Acropolis, and at a site to the north.

It appears that the orchestra and stage buildings of the theatre were included within the area of the later Byzantine town, and the excavators here have not yet got down to even the Roman level. On the Acropolis trial pits have disclosed a burnt deposit and remains of wells, and among the finds Mr. Woodward notes fragment of a fine red-figured hydria and a complete bronze mirror. It is not yet certain if this deposit marks the site of a new sanctuary or whether it is part of the *débris* thrown down the hill from the sanctuary of Athena of the Brazen House, which was discovered in the previous British excavations before the war.

To the north of the Acropolis remains of a building in rough masonry have been found with large quantities of rough undecorated pottery dating perhaps from the fourth and third centuries B.C.

Fig. 4.8. Extract from an unknown newspaper (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, detail p. 28).

This phase of research specifically investigated post-antique material culture, producing publications which have stimulated methodological debate about how reliance on textual, numismatic, or archaeological sources may lead, to paraphrase a famous publication, to 'different sources, different histories' (Brandes 1999). Sparta was long seen as deserted from the late sixth to the eighth century, devastated by earthquake, epidemics, and invasions (Armstrong 2002, 350–2). Since there is a well-known gap in written sources for the Peloponnese between the sixth and tenth centuries, this view relies solely on the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, which narrates the invasion of Sparta by Slavic tribes. According to this reconstruction, the city's inhabitants emigrated to the east coast of Laconia (where they founded Monemvasia in an inaccessible coastal location, settling there with their own bishop), as well as to Mount Parnon and to Sicily (Bon 1951, 31–64). Sparta then remained more or less unoccupied until the ninth century and the Byzantine military recovery under Nikephoros I. The *Chronicle* also states that the population of Patras fled to Reggio Calabria, the inhabitants of Argos to the island of Orobe, and the Corinthians to Aigina.

More recent philological analysis of the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* by Ilias Anagnostakis and Anthony Kaldellis has emphasised structural, verbal and factual parallels with the work of Pausanias. Its tenth-century author, now generally identified as Arethas, based his narrative on Pausanias with the aim of bolstering the authority of the See of Patras to govern that of *Lakedaimon*. The *Chronicle*, it is suggested, could also have been used to address competing claims by the Corinthian bishopric. The See of Corinth governed regions with indigenous populations, including the Lakedaimonians who founded Monemvasia, while the See of Patras governed regions that included defeated populations as well as the mixed settlers who migrated to the Peloponnese in the first decade of the ninth century, during the reign of Nikephoros

(Anagnostakis and Kaldellis 2014). This analysis has fostered debate about the validity of the *Chronicle* as a document of historical events (for a synthesis, see Valente 2021).

Archaeological data to challenge the narrative of abandonment were revealed for the first time in Wilkes and Waywell's excavation in the orchestra, in the form of a stratified sequence of domestic occupation dated, thanks to Guy Sanders' (1995a) study of the Byzantine material, from the eighth to tenth century. Based on discoveries of so-called globular amphorae (Saraçhane types 5 and 31) in association with handmade cooking ware inconsistent with Roman manufacturing tradition, Sanders suggested that Sparta was not completely abandoned but that local communities coexisted with settlers documented in the archaeological record by so-called 'Slavic' pottery. The fact that a non-Byzantine cultural group was for the first time recorded archaeologically in an urban domestic context makes the Byzantine neighbourhood in the theatre of particular interest. However, setting aside assessments of the *Chronicle* and of the archaeological record, one cannot dismiss the view expressed by Pamela Armstrong (2002, 351) that 'there was not enough population to support a basic level of civic structures', although it is worth recalling that Sparta retained the title of bishopric of *Lakedaimon* during the ecumenical council of 680/1 (Sanders 1995a, 455–7).

As the latest chapter in this long history of research, the 2008 excavation provides further data to enrich the debate. I preface discussion of the ceramic evidence by noting that all material was kept and fully recorded, and that a relative chronology for the ceramic assemblages was defined on the basis of stratigraphy. In two instances, coins provide *termini post quem* for the pottery with which they are associated (see §2). Absolute chronologies for the pottery presented below have been established by comparison with well-dated contexts in other excavations.

A connected city during the so-called 'Dark Ages': the new evidence in context

The oldest Byzantine occupation strata documented in 2008 are found in Trench 1. Immediately to the north and west of the Middle Byzantine tomb, the pit dug to contain the structure was partially preserved (Figs 2.26, 2.27; see §2). This *bothros* had been backfilled in a series of deposits containing very large sherds, often with sufficient joins to reconstruct entire vessel profiles. In C018 in particular, the matrix consisted largely of ash, large chunks of oxidised clay, and much animal bone. We may therefore speculate that the pit was backfilled using domestic refuse which originated in the vicinity and was at least in secondary if not primary deposition. Fig. 4.9 presents a full quantification of the pottery from all stratigraphic units in the pit: 99 per cent of it consists of utilitarian vessels such as cooking, storage, and tablewares, completely unglazed and very often undecorated. The following catalogue illustrates the main types identified.

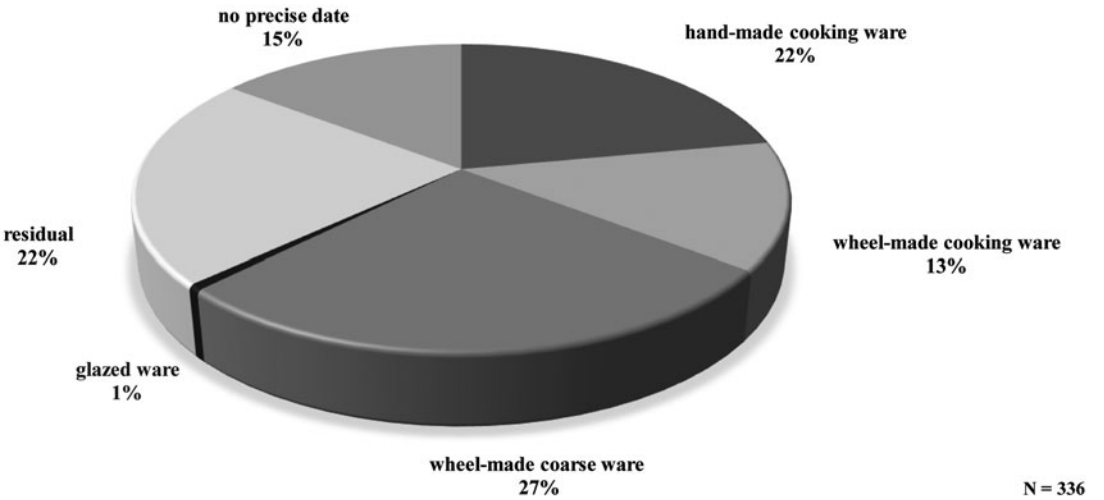


Fig. 4.9. Quantification of ceramics from the *bothros* in Trench 1 (N = 336).

4.1 (P141). Fig. 4.10. Plate: sherd preserving one-sixth of the rounded rim and one-tenth of the slightly rounded, widely flaring body. A single groove at the base. Greenish yellow glaze inside and out.

Fine, hard fabric: 2.5Y 8/2 (white). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.06 m, rim diameter 0.16 m.

Trench 1: C018.

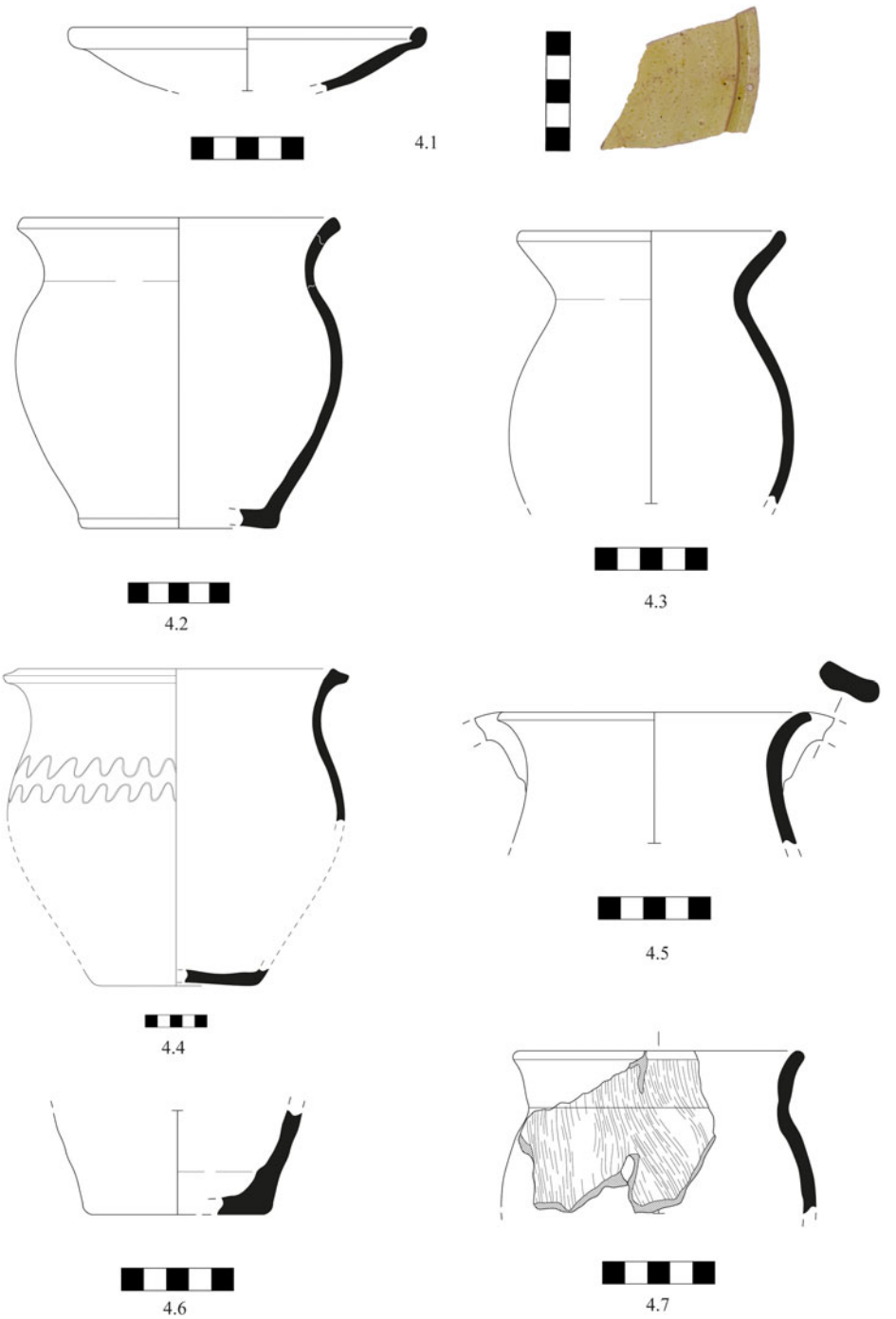


Fig. 4.10. Ceramics from the *bothros* in Trench 1 (with catalogue numbers).

4.2 (P164). Fig. 4.10. Beaker: two joining and two non-joining sherds preserving one-third of the flat base and ovoid body; concave neck and everted rim with squared lip (one-sixth preserved). Uneven inner and outer surface, undecorated.

Fabric medium-hard with a few angular, tabular white and crystalline inclusions: 10R 6/8 (light red). Handmade.

Base diameter 0.10 m, rim diameter 0.16 m, h. 0.16 m.

Trench 1: C020.

4.3 (P159). Fig. 4.10. Beaker: three joining sherds preserve one-fifth of the rim and body; base lost. Ovoid body, convex shoulder, flaring rim slightly concave inside, and rounded lip. Undecorated.

Fabric medium-hard with frequent voids and a hackly/irregular break; inclusions abundant, large to very large, angular, spherical, crystalline limestone or quartz, plus a few fine, angular, platy silver schist. 10R 5/8 (red). Handmade.

Preserved height 0.12 m, rim diameter 0.06 m.

Trench 1: C020/F010.

4.4 (P125). Fig. 4.10. Beaker with almost flat base and straight/slightly flaring lower body, curved profile at maximum diameter (just above median), concave shoulder and flaring rim (thickened on exterior with squared lip). Two non-joining sherds preserve one-fifth of the base and one-sixth of the body and rim. Two incised wavy lines on the shoulder.

Fabric medium-hard with a few angular, tabular white and crystalline inclusions: 10R 5/6 (red). Handmade.

Base diameter 0.12 m, rim diameter 0.28 m, h. 0.28 m.

Trench 1: C006.

4.5 (P249). Fig. 4.10. Jar with insloping upper body, thickening towards flaring lip with squared edge. Vertical strap handle attached over lip. Single sherd preserving one-fifth of the rim, one-tenth of the body, and one-sixth of the handle. Undecorated.

Fabric medium-hard with frequent voids and a hackly/irregular break; inclusions abundant, large to very large, angular, spherical, crystalline limestone or quartz, plus a few fine, angular, platy silver schist. Core 5YR 7/1 (light grey), margins 5YR 6/6 (reddish yellow). Handmade.

Preserved height 0.064 m, rim diameter 0.14 m.

Trench 1: C027.

4.6 (P139). Fig. 4.10. Beaker: a single sherd preserves one-quarter of the flat base and slightly flaring lower body; upper body and rim lost. Undecorated.

Fabric medium-hard with frequent, elongate voids and a hackly/irregular break; inclusions abundant, large to very large, angular, spherical, crystalline limestone or quartz, plus a few fine, angular, platy silver schist. 2.5YR 5/3 (reddish brown). Handmade.

Preserved height 0.049 m, base diameter 0.085 m.

Trench 1: C006.

4.7 (P165). Fig. 4.10. Beaker with sloping shoulder, slightly flaring rim and rounded lip. Five joining sherds preserve one-sixth of the body and one-eighth of the rim. Surface decorated with an irregularly combed motif.

Fabric medium-hard as **4.6**: 2.5YR 5/1 (grey). Handmade.

Preserved height 0.078 m, rim diameter 0.13 m.

Trench 1: C006.

4.8 (P312). Fig. 4.11. Beaker with flat base, globular body with maximum diameter below neck, flaring rim with concave inner profile, tapered lip. Two non-joining sherds preserve one-sixth of the lower body, and one-fifth of the rim. Undecorated.

Fabric medium-hard with a few angular, tabular white and crystalline inclusions: 5YR 2.5/1 (black). Wheelmade.

Restored height 0.043 m, base diameter 0.09 m, rim diameter 0.10 m.

Trench 1: C027.

4.9 (P145). Fig. 4.11. Cooking pot with sloping shoulder and convex flaring rim with squared lip. Single sherd preserves one-tenth of the body and rim and one handle (oval in section, attached over lip). Base and second handle lost. Undecorated. Cf. Sanders 1995a, 453, cat. no. 5.

Fabric hard with a few angular, tabular white and crystalline inclusions. 10R 5/6 (red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.054 m, diameter 0.115 m.

Trench 1: C018.

4.10 (P90). Fig. 4.11. Stewpot with sloping shoulder; flaring rim with concave inner profile and squared lip. Single sherd preserves one-seventh of the body and one-eighth of the rim. Grooved shoulder; single groove below rim on exterior.

Fabric medium-hard with granular, even break; few medium to large, reddish-black to black, subrounded, spherical inclusions; rare large, subrounded, spherical red inclusions; few fine, angular, platy silver schist (?) inclusions; few small to medium irregular pores. 10R 4/4 (weak red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.038 m, rim diameter 0.13 m.

Trench 1: C001.

4.11 (P171). Fig. 4.11. Small cooking pot with flat base and globular body, concave neck, and squared lip outwardly sloping. Thirteen joining sherds preserve one-eighth of the base and one-third of the rim. Grooved upper body and shoulder.

Fabric medium-hard, similar to **4.10**: 10R 5/8 (red). Wheelmade.

Height 0.65 m, base diameter 0.11 m, rim diameter 0.115 m.

Trench 1: C027.

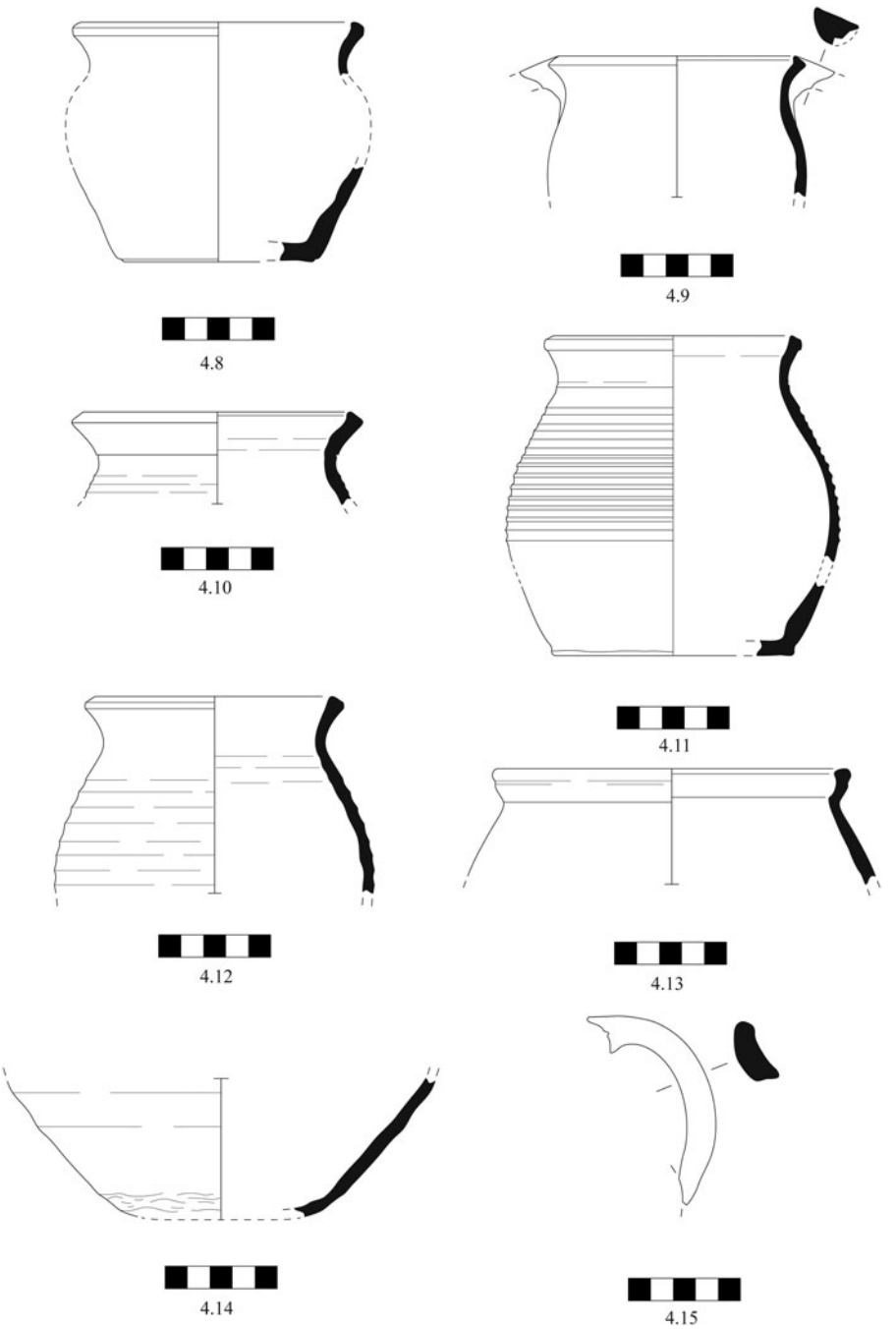


Fig. 4.11. Ceramics from the *bothros* in Trench 1 (with catalogue numbers).

4.12 (P129). Fig. 4.11. Cooking pot with globular body, concave neck, and flaring rim with squared lip. Single sherd preserves one-quarter of the body and rim; base lost. Wheel-ridged body.

Fabric medium-hard, similar to **4.10**: 2.5YR 5/6 to 6/6 (red to light red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.091 m, rim diameter 0.115 m.

Trench 1: C017.

4.13 (P126). Fig. 4.11. Stewpot with insloping shoulder, rim with concave profile, and round lip. Single shallow groove around mid-rim. Single sherd preserves one-quarter of the rim and one-sixth of the body; base and handles lost. Smoothed body surface.

Fabric hard, with smooth break. Few, medium to large, sub-rounded, spherical, cream-coloured lime inclusions; rare small to medium, angular, spherical, white quartz; rare small, angular, platy, abundant silvery sparkling, white mica. Few regularly shaped voids. 10R 3/1(dark reddish grey). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.056 m, rim diameter 0.16 m.

Trench 1: C006.

4.14 (P185). Fig. 4.11. Six non-joining sherds preserve one-third of a slightly rounded base of a stewpot. One-sixth of a tall, slightly flaring lower body. Wheel-made.

Fabric hard, similar to **4.13**: 10R 5/6 (red).

Preserved height 0.079 m, maximum diameter 0.17 m.

Trench 1: C027.

4.15 (P158). Fig. 4.11. Complete vertical strap handle.

Fabric hard, similar to **4.13**: 5YR 5/4 (light reddish brown).

Length 0.09 m, thickness 0.009 m.

Trench 1: C006 F15.

4.16 (P137). Fig. 4.12. Globular amphora: single sherd preserves one-third of the neck and rim. Cylindrical neck and thickened rim with concave interior and pointed lip. Oval handles attached from lower rim to lower neck. Wheel-ridged interior; exterior smoothed. Undecorated. Cf. Sanders 1995a, 452, cat. no. 2.

Fabric very hard, 2.5YR 5/6 (red).

Preserved height 0.078 m, rim diameter 0.04 m.

Trench 1: C006.

4.17 (P184). Fig. 4.12. Amphora: two non-joining sherds preserve one-quarter of the ovoid body (maximum diameter below median) and half of the carinated shoulder and conical neck.

Fabric very hard: 2.5YR 6/6 (light red).

Maximum neck diameter 0.065 m, maximum body diameter 0.23 m, height preserved 0.295 m.

Trench 1: C027.

The finds from the *bothros* show close similarities with the stratified sequence revealed in the orchestra (Sanders 1995a). There the oldest, eighth-century contexts were characterised by handmade pottery and globular amphorae. Data from Trench 1 confirm this picture. The

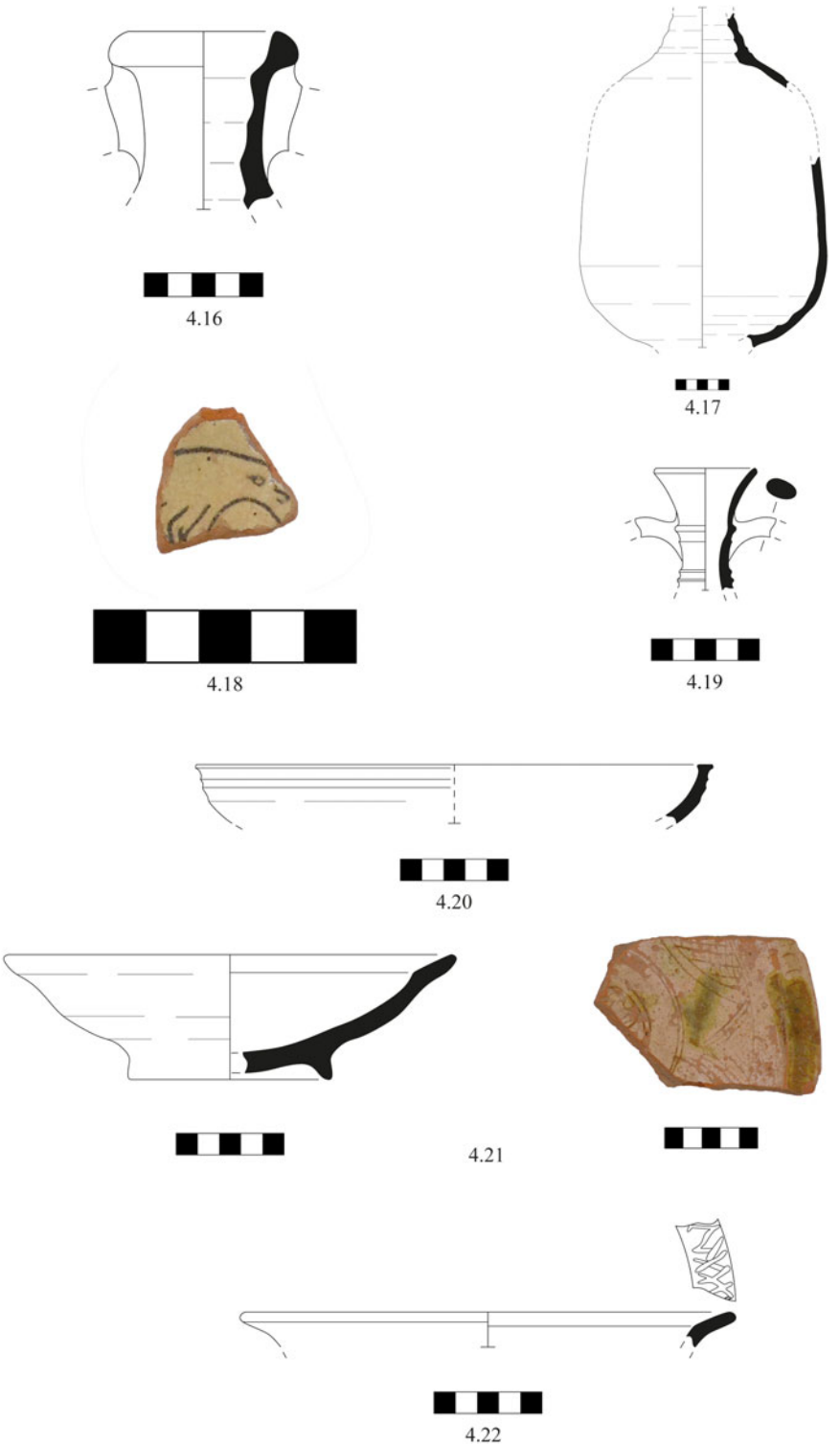


Fig. 4.12. Ceramics from the *bothros* in Trench I (**4.16** and **4.17**); Middle Byzantine pottery (**4.18–4.22**).

contents of the *bothros* include handmade beakers in a fabric containing organic inclusions (indicated by elongated voids), fired at a low temperature possibly for a short time, so hypothetically in a bonfire. Similarities in the clay paste used to produce handmade cooking ware suggest consistency in the manufacturing process and in clay preparation, despite variation in vessel shape. Wheelmade globular cooking vessels associated with this handmade ware may also have been locally produced, as indicated by fabric analysis in progress at the Fitch Laboratory of the BSA (Valente and Kiriatzi in preparation). However, we do not yet know where in Sparta pottery workshops of this period were located. As observed at Corinth, Byzantine globular shaped cooking vessels appear to be produced in a clay paste already in use for the Late Roman type (Joyner 2007; Graybehl 2010). Similarly, the shape continued from the Late Roman period until the late thirteenth century AD, with variations which mainly pertain to the rim profile (Valente 2018).

Local wheelmade pots in the *bothros* are found in association with imported globular stewpots with concave rim in a fabric rich in white mica (**4.13**, **4.14** and **4.15**, Fig. 4.13:1,2). This ware has also been identified in Corinth, where seriation suggests a date from the second half of the eighth to the early tenth century (Valente 2018, 81–3). Stewpots in what macroscopically appears to be the same fabric as **4.13**, **4.14** and **4.15** were found in the orchestra (Sanders 1995a, 453; material re-appraised by the author). Similar cooking ware was also found in the British survey on Melos (Guy Sanders pers. comm.) and in excavations at Otranto, where stratigraphic evidence suggests an eighth- to ninth-century date, narrowed by rehydroxylation analysis to the first half of the ninth century (Arthur, Buccolieri and Leo Imperiale 2017, 181–6, cat. no. 4). In 1995, Sanders proposed a similar date for the Spartan contexts in which this ware was found. Petrographic analysis conducted at the University of Salento suggests an Aegean–Asia Minor provenance,[8] while ongoing petrographic investigation of the Sparta theatre material confirms that the fabric recipe is not consistent with Peloponnesian geology, and that the area of origin should be sought within the so-called metamorphic Cycladic unit which spans Southern Euboea through the Cyclades to Samos and western Anatolia. Planned chemical analysis will provide further evidence for provenance, but in the current state of research, a western Anatolian origin is likely, possibly in the Ephesus area. If so, finds from Melos, Corinth, Sparta, and Otranto combine to suggest one of the sea routes that connected the eastern Aegean to the Italian peninsula in the eighth and ninth centuries.

In Sparta, as in Corinth, this cooking ware is found in association with a very few examples of imported, glazed, so-called White Ware. The specific type found in the *bothros* is generally dated to the ninth century according to evidence from Saraçhane (Hayes 1992, context 34, no. 29 and context 36, no. 1) and Corinth (Sanders 1995b, cat. no. 69). Petrographic analysis places the Sparta examples in Harriet White's 'Altered Feldspar' fabric class (White 2009, 94–8), which comes from the region of Constantinople (Fig. 4.13:3). Four White Ware fragments were found in 2008, and previous publications have also documented the presence of Constantinopolitan glazed table ware in Sparta (Armstrong 2001; Katsara 2018; 2021). No unglazed Constantinopolitan White Ware was found in 2008, though this may reflect the paucity of the material rather than any failure to import this utilitarian ware to Sparta. Imported globular amphoras as **4.16** and **4.17**, also found as residual in other contexts excavated in 2008, together with those documented by Sanders (1995a, 452, cat. nos 2 and 4), further suggest that this inland region of Laconia was connected to maritime trade networks.

A fundamental step if we are to evaluate the diffusion of ceramics and the networks of distribution involved would be to quantify these data. This could also help to challenge the socio-economic picture which has so far dominated historical discourse on these centuries. The coexistence of Byzantine and non-Byzantine material, both locally produced and imported, in this sector of the city allows us to hypothesise that despite the economic and political crisis

[8] Marco Leo Imperiale pers. comm. Investigation is ongoing as part of a major research programme, *Byzantine Heritage of Southern Italy* (https://byzantineitaly.it), coordinated by the University of Salento under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research.

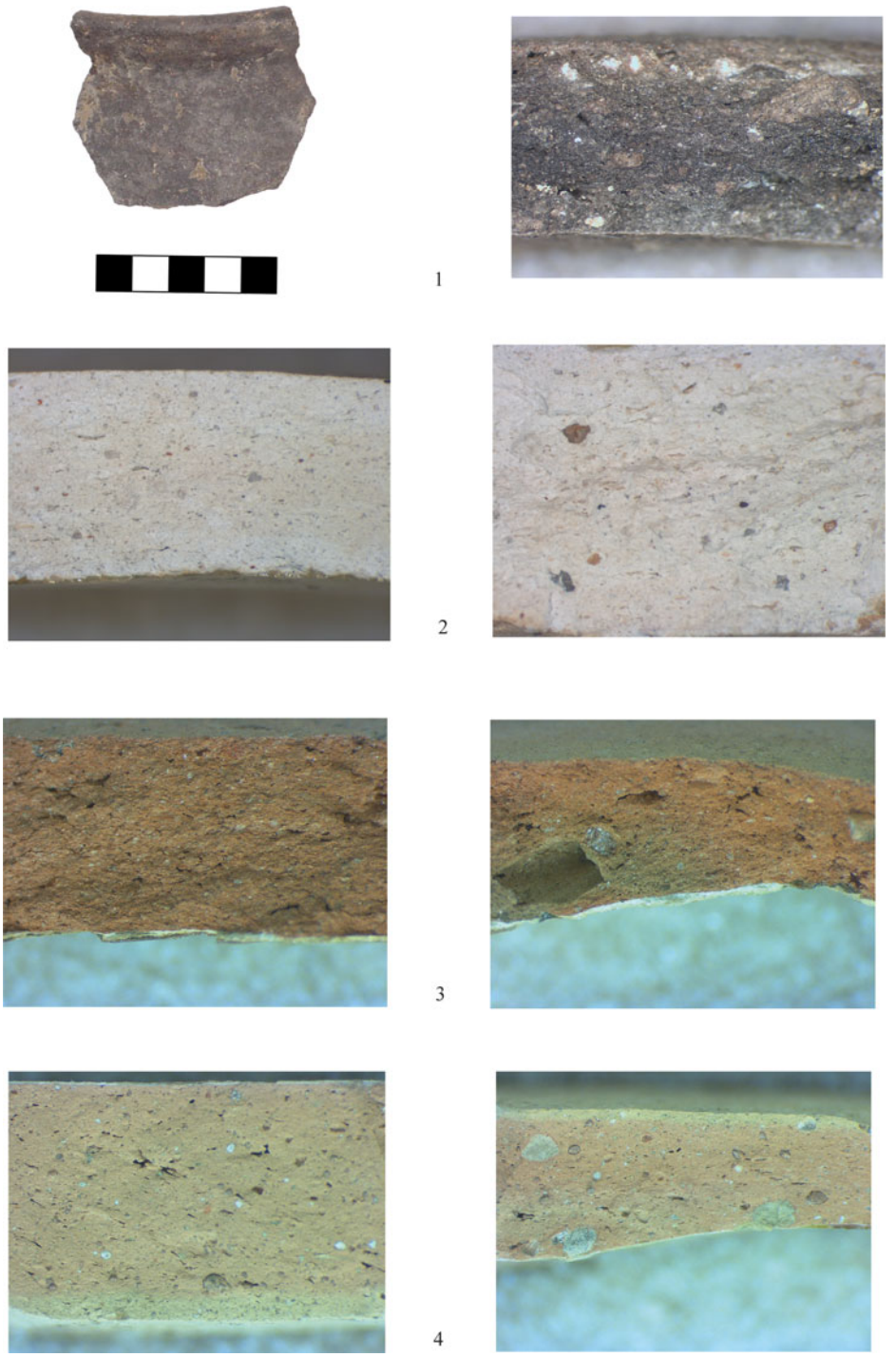


Fig. 4.13. Byzantine pottery fabrics: 1 and 2: imported cooking ware; 3: White Ware fabric; 4: Laconian Measles Ware; 5: Corinthian Measles Ware (photographs: Rossana Valente).

experienced by the empire and this region, there was a measurable sophistication of supply in urban locations like Sparta. The archaeological record of these centuries is only now starting to become visible in Aegean excavations (Poulou 2018; 2019; 2023; Poulou-Papadimitriou 2018; Poulou and Leontsini 2022; Valente et al. 2023), but future research should aim to create quantified datasets to enable systematic estimates of the nature and extent of network distributions in the Aegean, from

Asia Minor to the Italian peninsula, in which Sparta too participated. This could also be a fruitful approach to evaluating combinations of, and intersections between, the multiple social variables behind production, consumption, and trade.

Middle Byzantine funerary practices: the 2008 evidence in context

On the basis of the stratigraphic evidence and associated pottery (§2), the Middle Byzantine tomb was built between the last quarter of the eighth century and the first quarter of the ninth and remained in use at least until the late thirteenth century. Within this period, there were four phases of deposition of human remains followed by one layer of anthropogenic material (§3). Consistent with widely documented practice in Byzantine and Medieval funerary contexts, the tomb contained no grave goods (Poulou-Papadimitriou, Tzavella and Ott 2012).

This is not the only case of post-antique inhumation in the acropolis area. In 1906, excavators noted 'late tile-built graves in the stoa area' (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 1, 4) and a Byzantine grave in an imprecisely defined location within the theatre (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 1, 16), and they excavated a burial 'in a pit S.W. of theatre', reporting as 'found with skeleton an iron buckle: Byz. work, diam. 0.5' (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 1, 45). More graves were excavated in the 1920s, including various tile burials in the theatre area (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 27, 37), one west of the parodos (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 95), and one on the acropolis ('close to the Byz. wall a byz. burial, feet to N, N-E was above the roman wall') (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 209). One structure in particular recalls our tomb (imprecisely located, it is likely somewhere north-west of the *skene*). This is described as having a mortared wall just below the surface along two sides, and a small unfluted column lying across the third side 0.60 m below the surface. An 'ossuary' was found against the wall at a depth of 1.25 m, and another mortared wall (at 0.95 m) ran along the south side of the pit. A *terminus post quem* for the structure is provided by a road beneath it, at a depth of 1.40 m, with a coin of Constantine in its surface and one of Hadrian lower in its fabric. The comparison is tentative because it is unclear whether by 'ossuary' the excavator intended a bone receptacle or a bone deposit, although it is not a term generally used in connection with single burials. No illustration is provided (BSA Archive, Sparta Excavation Records, Sparta 137, 139–40).

It is difficult to date these burials precisely from the information recorded in the excavation notebooks. The single graves can be hypothetically assigned at least to the Early Byzantine period, according to the stratigraphy distinguished by the excavators. They appear to be so-called tile-built burials, 'alla cappuccina', a type also documented in the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia (Dawkins 1929, 48, fig. 27). The presence of single and multiple burials within the city walls would not be a unique occurrence in Byzantine urban settlements. Although intra-mural burial was repeatedly forbidden from the time of Justinian on (Theodosian Code IX 17.6), burials within the *kastron* populated by vernacular architecture were de facto already common in Byzantine cities. The practice was legalised only in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, during the reign of Leo VI (Novella LIII: Poulou-Papadimitriou, Tzavella and Ott 2012, 388). At Sparta, however, the relationship between the graves and the urban settlement remains unclear. If the single graves were Early Byzantine, the construction of overlying dwellings in the Middle Byzantine period would not be unexpected. In the forum area of Corinth, for example, the Middle Byzantine city developed over graves (containing single and multiple burials) which had occupied the area since the sixth century (Ivison 1996; Sanders 2004). In addition to clarifying the date of the Sparta burials, future research might also consider whether the reburial of bones identified in phase 4 of the tomb excavated in 2008 (see §3) might have been occasioned by urban development in this area in the Middle Byzantine period.

Two further multiple burials excavated between 1989 and 1991 are clearly associated with the Middle Byzantine monastic complex in the area of the Roman Stoa. One was found in the northern area of trench RSC1 and the other in trench RSXII. Each contained one articulated skeleton and further disarticulated bones belonging to several individuals (males and females of all ages), carefully placed, with few grave goods (Waywell and Wilkes 1994, 386, fig. 3 [RSXII plan], 388–9 [RSXII], pl. 60).

Finally, excavations in the western part of the theatre *cavea* conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia in 2014 (*ArchDelt* 69 [B′ 1], 453) revealed three Byzantine tile graves a few centimetres below topsoil, oriented east–west, and apparently without grave goods. Two contained single inhumations (of an adult and a sub-adult). In tomb 3, which is the only one to preserve a section of the tile covering, two primary burials were revealed (of an adult and a child) plus one instance of a secondary burial. The excavators propose an Early Byzantine date, although a later date remains possible.

Middle Byzantine Sparta

The 2008 excavation did not provide clear evidence of Middle Byzantine vernacular or religious building. Yet the material evidence, despite being found in secondary deposition, still contributes to discussion of the economic growth experienced by Sparta at this time.

As noted in §2, the discovery of numerous iron slags provides further evidence of artisanal activity in the settlement occupying the theatre area, with 16 of the *c.* 30 slags discovered coming from Trench 2 (C501, 502 and 503). Slags of kiln-type (C503) and iron forging type (C302, Trench 5) were found, the latter with the typical flat base and concave upper surface, voids oriented towards the surface, and metal inclusions of different sizes. Chemical analysis will be required to determine whether this slag type relates to iron forging or refining.[9] These iron slags provide clear evidence of a nearby metal workshop, since the iron forging type in particular was too large and heavy to be transported far. A metal workshop (as well as a kiln) documented during excavation of buildings in the west orchestra and lower *cavea* in 1992 and 1993 (trench ST 92/93 I) relates to the ninth- and tenth-century first phase of occupation in this area (Waywell et al. 1995, 439, 446–7).

Ceramic evidence too supports the picture of an economically prosperous Sparta rich in public and private buildings and with a strong artisanal tradition especially during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. So-called Measles Ware, a distinctive painted sgraffito ware dated to the second half of the twelfth century, provides a starting point. Local productions have been identified in Corinth on the basis of petrographic analysis (White 2009), in Argos on the basis of macroscopic fabric analysis and kiln wasters (Vassiliou 2018; 2022), and in Sparta, supported by our ongoing petrographic study (Sanders 1993, 255, 267; Bakourou, Katsara and Kalamara 2003, 234; Valente and Kiriatzi in preparation). Measles Ware of Corinthian production has also been petrographically documented among the 2008 finds in the form of plates manufactured in the so-called 'clay-temper' fabric recipe also used at Corinth for the production of Slip Plain Glazed, Green and Brown Painted I and II, Dark on Light Slip Painted Ware, and Fine Sgraffito Ware (Valente and Kiriatzi in preparation) (Spartan fabric: Fig. 4.13:4; Corinthian fabric: Fig. 4.13:5). Whether these ceramics attest to a regular trading network between cities or more sporadic connections is a matter for future research, as it is not yet possible to quantify their distribution. However, debate about this ware is definitely reopened. At this stage in research, it is preferable not to assign Measles Ware found outside these cities to Corinth by default, since fabric analysis is required to shed light on the complex trading network linking the Peloponnese with the coasts of the Adriatic (so far this ware is identified mainly in Italy and Albania: see Vassiliou 2022 for an updated overview). Pamela Armstrong (2009, 318 n. 50) has, for example, suggested a Spartan origin for the Measles Ware found in Otranto on the basis of its macroscopic description.

In addition, various examples of so-called 'Middle Byzantine Production' from Chalkis have been documented petrographically in Sparta (Waksman et al. 2014) and identified among finds from Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5. These include examples of Green and Brown III and Incised Sgraffito tableware (Fig. 4.15:1). Günsenin type III amphorae are shown petrographically to have been imported from Chalkis (Waksman et al. 2018) and are also found in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century contexts from the 2008 excavations (Fig. 4.14:2).

[9] Mannoni and Giannichedda 2003. This identification is based on the typology of Medieval metal slags published at http://archeologiamedievale.unisi.it/SitoCNR/Metalli/ferro/o4n.html, which derives from a research project conducted by the University of Siena on the archaeometallurgy of Medieval ironworking.

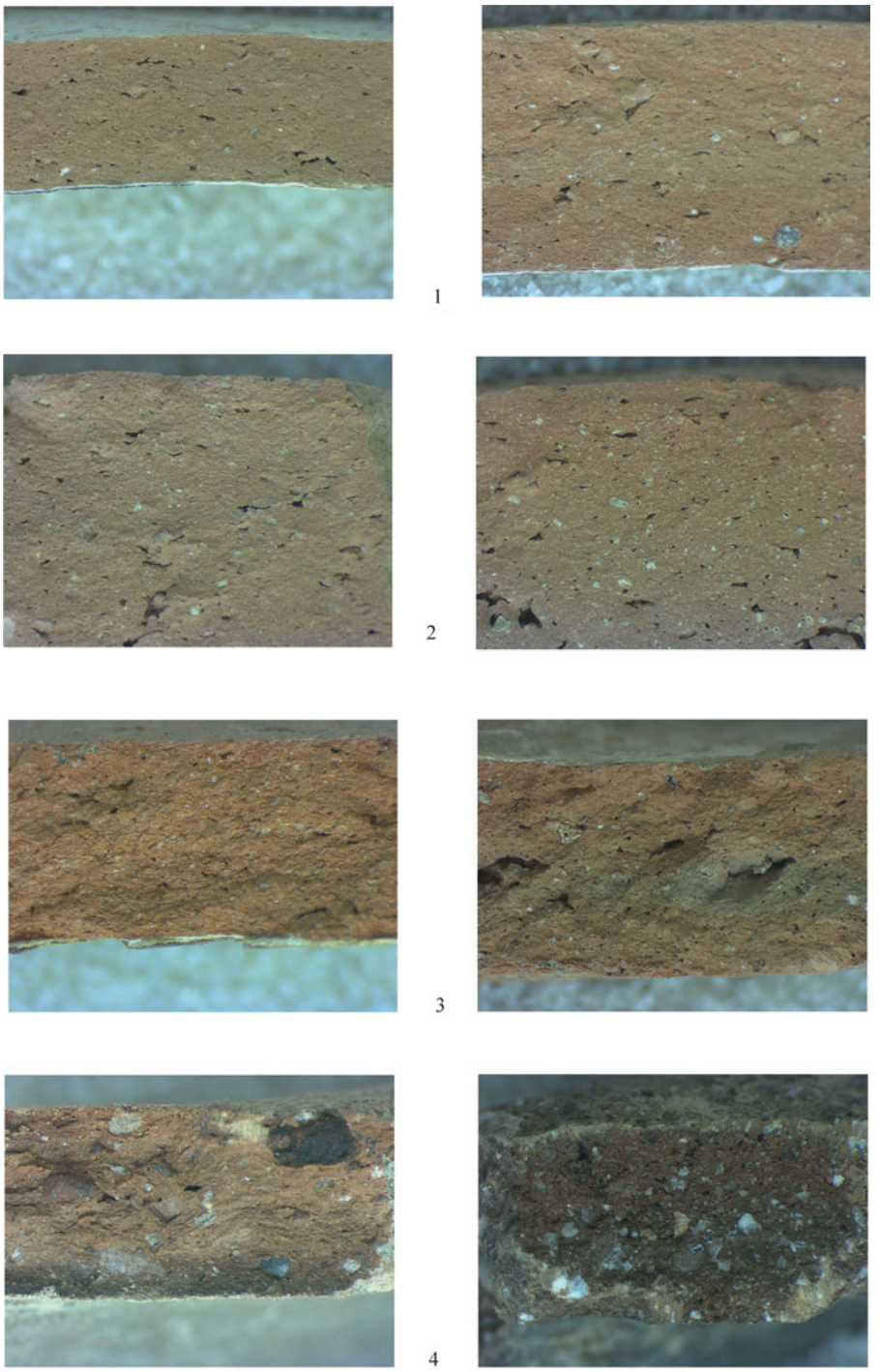


Fig. 4.14. Byzantine pottery fabrics: 1: 'Middle Byzantine Production' from Chalkis; 2: Günsenin type III amphorae; 3: local Middle Byzantine glazed wares; 4: cooking wares (photographs: Rossana Valente).

Glazed tableware hypothetically of local production appears to span the second half of the twelfth to the thirteenth century. In addition to Measles Ware, there may have been a local production of Slip Plain Glazed Ware, Sgraffito, and Incised Sgraffito Wares, although no archaeological evidence of workshops has yet been found in Sparta (Fig. 4.14:3). Coarse and

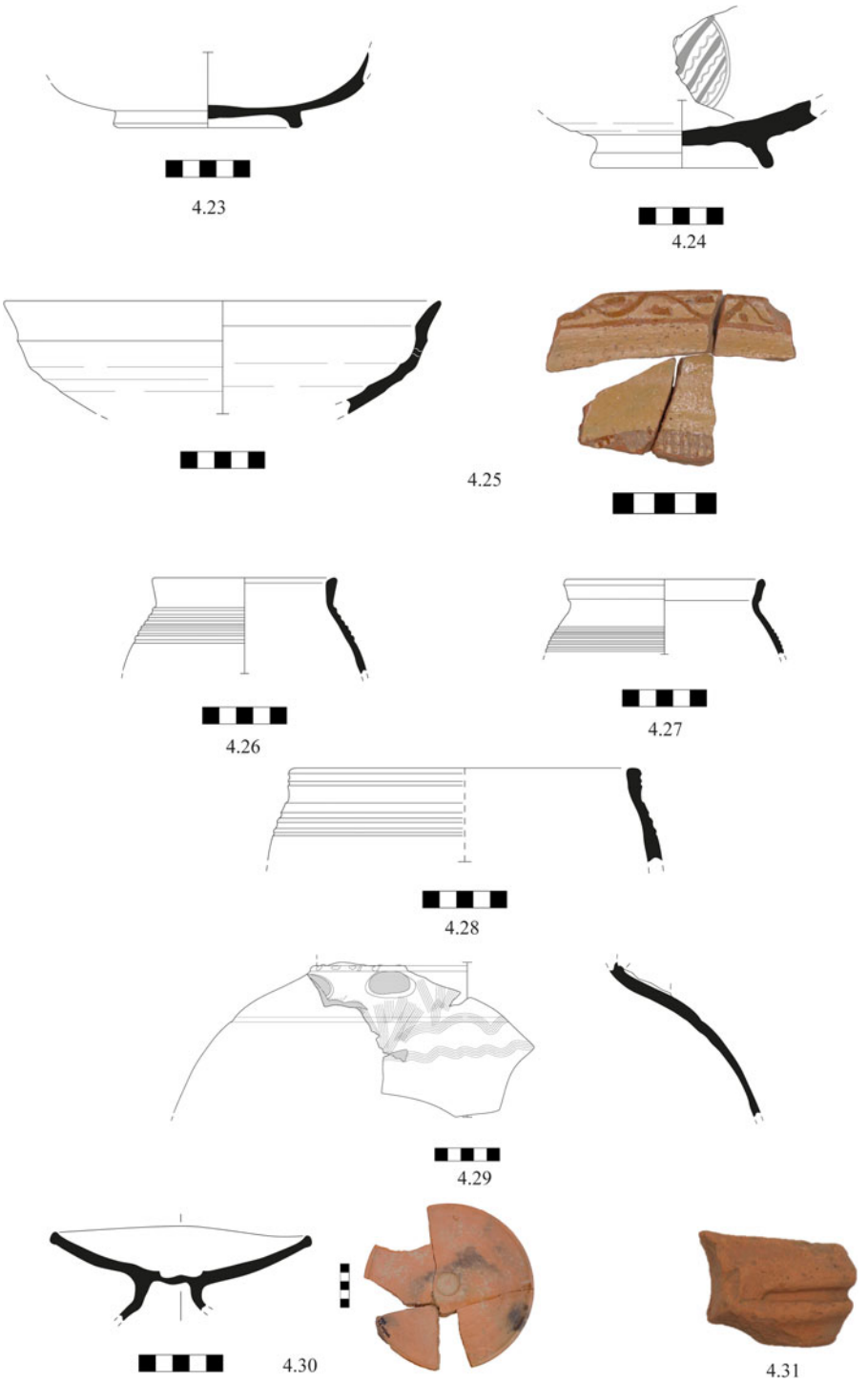


Fig. 4.15. Middle Byzantine pottery (with catalogue numbers).

cooking wares further enriched the repertoire of utilitarian vessels, sharing traits with the Byzantine cooking wares documented elsewhere on the Greek mainland. Byzantine ceramic cooking pots were closed vessels: open shapes disappear from the repertoire and were perhaps produced in other materials (as suggested by other visual evidence: Bakirtzis 2003). Ongoing petrographic research suggests that the Middle Byzantine stewpots presented here are made in fabric recipes

which, while diverse, are consistent with local geology. We may therefore speculate about local production, even though to the author's knowledge cookware wasters have yet to be recorded in Sparta (Fig. 4.13:4).

Utilitarian vessels for storage purposes, as those with incised handles (Sanders 1993, cat. nos 35, 36, 38 and 46), were widely recorded in the 2008 excavations but in very fragmentary condition. The catalogue below includes two examples of coarsewares not previously documented in Sparta (**4.29** and **4.30**).

4.18 (P85). Fig. 4.12. Dish with straight flaring body. Single sherd preserves one-twentieth of the body; base and rim lost. White slip inside; a sgraffito eagle head; greenish yellow glaze.

Fabric soft to medium-hard with granular, even break; frequent to common fine, sparkling, angular, platy inclusions (silver schist?); rare medium to large, angular, platy silver schist; rare voids. 2.5YR 6/6 (light-red)

Length 0.026 m, width 0.03 m.

Trench 1: C013.

4.19 (P212). Fig. 4.12. Jug with cylindrical neck, flaring rim, and rounded lip. Vertical strap handle over mid neck, oval in section. Three joining sherds preserve complete neck, one-third of the rim, and one-fifth of the handle. Missing body and base. Double ridges on the lower and mid neck. White slip, colourless overglaze, and sprinkles of brown glaze on the exterior extending inside over the rim.

Medium-hard fabric, similar to **4.18**: 2.5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow).

Preserved height 0.055 m, rim diameter 0.05 m.

Trench 5: C304.

4.20 (P127). Fig. 4.12. Bowl with concave, flaring body and T-shaped rim. Single sherd preserves one-tenth of the body and rim; base lost. Double groove on the exterior. White slip inside and out, green glaze over the entire vessel.

Medium-hard fabric, similar to **4.18**: 2.5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow).

Preserved height 0.029 m, rim diameter 0.27 m.

Trench 2: C503.

4.21 (P213). Fig. 4.12. Plate with slightly flaring ring foot, almost flat undersurface, and widely flaring, convex body and rim with rounded lip. Single sherd preserves a quarter of the base and one-fifth of the body and rim. Painted fine sgraffito ware. White slip inside extends over lip, dripping onto the exterior. Concentric circles in the centre define a medallion, double circles on lower body enriched with triangular and semi-circles decorated with cross-hatched decoration, vertical hatches on rim. Painted strokes of green glaze inside.

Medium-hard fabric, similar to **4.18**: 2.5YR 6/8 (light red).

Preserved height 0.055 m, foot diameter 0.095 m, rim diameter 0.21 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.22 (P198). Fig. 4.12. Straight flaring rim with rounded lip. Single sherd preserves one-eighth of the rim; base and body lost. White slip inside extends over lip. Incised crossed-hatched decoration on rim, yellow glaze.

Fabric medium-hard, similar to **4.18**: 2.5YR 6/8 (light red).

Preserved height 0.01 m, rim diameter 0.23 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.23 (P199). Fig. 4.15. Dish with shallow ring foot with rounded edges, flat underbase, shallow convex, widely flaring lower body. Single sherd preserves complete foot and one quarter of the body; rim lost. White slip inside, sgraffito rabbit in sitting position, band decorated with incised vertical lines on lower body. Greenish yellow glaze inside.

Fabric medium-hard with smooth even break; few medium to large, sub-rounded, spherical, cream-coloured lime (?) inclusions; rare small to medium, angular, spherical, white quartz; rare small, angular, platy, silvery sparkling schist. 5YR 6/4 (light reddish brown).

Preserved height 0.09 m, foot diameter 0.112 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.24 (P20). Fig. 4.15. Bowl with straight, flaring foot, almost flat underside, flaring lower body. Single sherd preserves one-quarter of the foot and one-tenth of the body; rim lost. White slip inside, incised medallion at centre decorated with wavy lines alternated with glaze painted strokes. Yellow glaze inside.

Fabric medium-hard, as **4.23**: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow).

Preserved height 0.04 m, foot diameter 0.10 m.

Trench 2: surface clearance.

4.25 (P192+195). Fig. 4.15. Bowl with flaring lower body curving up to vertical upper body, flaring rim with tapered lip. Two joining sherds preserve one-tenth of the body and one-sixth of the rim: foot and lower body lost. White slip on interior, thinner on exterior. Incised band around body decorated with hatched motif; incised wavy line on lip with dotted motif. Yellow glaze inside.

Fabric medium-hard, as **4.23**: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow).

Preserved height 0.068 m, rim diameter 0.26 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.26 (P308). Fig. 4.15. Small cooking pot with almost globular body, sloping shoulder curving sharply up to vertical rim, outwardly thickened and triangular in section, inwardly sloping lip. Two joining sherds preserving one-tenth of the body and rim; base lost. Grooved shoulder.

Fabric medium-hard, granular/even break; inclusions few medium, sub-rounded, tabular white quartz; few, medium to large, rounded, tabular to spherical mudstone; rare fine, angular, platy schist; few, irregularly shaped voids. 5YR 5/6 (yellowish red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.07 m, rim diameter 0.11 m.

Second half 12th century AD.

Trench 4: C705.

4.27 (P260). Fig. 4.15. Round, grooved shoulder curving up to straight, slightly flaring rim with pointed lip. Single sherd preserves one-eighth of body and rim: base lost.

Fabric medium-hard, as **4.26**: 5YR 5/6 (yellowish red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.04 m, rim diameter 0.11 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.28 (P259). Fig. 4.15. Stewpot with sloping shoulder curving up to vertical, thickened rim with squared lip. Single sherd preserving one-tenth of the body and rim; base lost. Single groove around mid-rim, grooved shoulder.

Fabric medium-hard, as **4.26**: 5YR 5/6 (yellowish red). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.051 m, rim diameter 0.21 m.

Trench 4: C705.

4.29 (P166). Fig. 4.15. Cooking ware stamnos with combed decoration. Numerous fragments from body and shoulder, missing base, rim, and handle. Convex body, sloping shoulder. Parallel stumps of horizontal handle, round in section, on shoulder. Rib with incised hatches on upper shoulder at neck attachment. Combed wavy line on maximum diameter and upper body, intersecting multiple bands of combed lines.

Fabric very hard with frequent angular, tabular white and crystalline inclusions, rare subrounded-spherical black inclusions. Core 2.5YR 2.5/2 (very dusky red), edges 2.5YR 3/0 (very dark grey). Wheel-made.

Height 0.134 m, width 0.114 m, thickness 0.04 m.

From a context dated stratigraphically to the first half of 13th century. No comparative material is known to the author, although the condition of the vessel suggests that it is not residual. A Middle Byzantine date is therefore proposed, possibly second half 12th–13th century AD.

Trench 1: C004.

4.30 (P186). Fig. 4.15. Three joining fragments preserve the almost complete profile of a pedestal plate, with flaring, high foot, widely flaring almost straight body, and rounded lip. Medallion impression with concave profile at centre.

Fabric medium-hard, similar to **4.18**: 2.5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow). Wheelmade.

Preserved height 0.055 m, rim diameter 0.15 m.

Pedestal plates are a typical shape in the Byzantine dining set. They are generally glazed, but unglazed examples are also documented which replicate the shape and fabric of the contemporary glazed examples.

An 11th-century date is indicated by comparanda from Corinth (Valente 2018, nos 321, 322), although **4.30** comes from a context dated to the first half of the 13th century.

Trench 1: C004.

4.31 (P15). Fig. 4.15. Günsenin type I amphora. A single fragment preserves one-sixth of a vertical handle, triangular in section with a deep central groove, each side pressed down into a concavity. Neck hollowing preserved at the top. Surface compacted and smoothed, no additional treatment.

Fabric medium-hard, fine with rare subangular-oval black and angular-rounded white and crystalline inclusions: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow).

Preserved length 0.064 m, width 0.040 m, thickness 0.014 m.

From a context dated to the modern period. Günsenin type I amphorae date from the 10th–12th century AD: Günsenin 1990, fig. 40; Valente 2023, 795 for a synthesis.

Trench 2: C001

The neighbourhood which developed over the orchestra and lower *cavea* of the theatre in the Middle Byzantine period featured buildings separated by alleys which generally followed a radial plan dictated by the profile of the *cavea*. Despite some indications that buildings encroached into these alleys, the overall impression is of a planned settlement. By contrast, the upper *cavea* appears to have been left unoccupied. Research at the so-called church of Osios Nikon (a three-aisled basilica with a triconch sanctuary on the eastern hill of the acropolis) by the BSA and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Sparta identified an eleventh-century phase developed on a mid-sixth- to early seventh-century basilica (Sweetman and Katsara 2002; Katsara 2009; Sweetman 2009). On the south slopes of the acropolis, a market area was defined by a two-storey colonnade.

Both combining evidence from the 2008 excavation with the results of over a century of research into post-antique activity in the theatre area and setting this into the larger context of research within and beyond the city walls reveal the complex urban topography of Byzantine Sparta. Recent work by Evi Katsara (2021) has shed new light on topography outside the walls and the wealth of material culture associated with it, drawing on evidence from excavations conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia. The urban development of Sparta emphatically disproves the idea that Byzantine 'building occurs without any obvious planning and, lacking any deliberate architectural scheme, materializes dynamically to meet needs as they arise' (Bouras 1983, 22). Instead, it appears to indicate that a new fortified city developed as a centre of power overlying the ancient acropolis. The new urban topography saw the location of manufacturing activities (notably metalworking) within the settlement and the concomitant development of a vernacular architecture that could accommodate private daily life as well as craft activities. Burial *intra muros* appears as a regular phenomenon. Monumental construction centred on churches. This urban fabric was not a continuum but rather a series of nuclei within and outside the city walls.

This state of affairs did not end suddenly with the Frankish conquest of the Peloponnese, when control of Sparta passed to the Principality of Achaia. However, when Laconia was reconquered in 1262 and the Byzantine Despotate of the Morea created, the castle of Mystras (founded in 1249) became the new seat of administration for the entire Byzantine-controlled Peloponnese. By the last quarter of the thirteenth century, Mystras had become the political and economic heart of Laconia, the movement of the bishopric leaving the previously prosperous city socially and economically marginal. On present evidence, artisanal activities, including pottery production, continued up to the early fourteenth century (Sanders 1993; Dimopoulos 2007). But this is beyond the scope of the 2008 excavation results.

5. ARTEFACTS FROM THE ACROPOLIS SANCTUARY by Catherine Morgan

A significant number of artefacts displaced from the cult area on the acropolis were found in the packing of the theatre substructure and in deposits washed downslope after the abandonment of the building. Most (notably pins, fibulae, bronze sheets, or terracotta figurines) are too fragmentary and worn to be informative, and it is largely impossible to make a secure connection with any particular part of the cult area because of the scale of redistribution. In this section I present previously undocumented types, well-preserved votives, and pottery which predates the theatre construction. The pottery catalogue includes the best-preserved examples of all periods and wares and, aside from a few unusual pieces (as **5.10** and **5.23**), is broadly representative of the redeposited material. All are Laconian products.

Little attention has been given to the ceramic record of the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos since the pioneering stylistic studies published at the time of excavation (Droop 1926–7; Hobling 1923–5; comparison with Artemis Orthia: Droop 1929). Although excavation reports refer to pottery (Woodward and Hobling 1923–5, 245, 248, 251; Woodward 1926–7b), no systematic publication was made. I therefore take the opportunity to supplement the record especially of Laconian Classical and Hellenistic domestic wares, which remain poorly documented, while emphasising the need to revisit the assemblage as a whole, in so far as it can be reconstructed, in order to explore the nature of (and provision for) activity in the cult area.

Architecture

5.1 (OF46). Fig. 5.1. Two non-joining pieces of a raking sima. Vertical plaque with cut-out border of triangular teeth above a torus. Exterior monochrome with no evidence of polychromy or incision. Mantle attached just below the level of the torus; patches of paint preserved. The function of the hole pierced through one 'tooth' is obscure.

Fabric fine, with many large black, red, and white stony inclusions, micaceous: 2.5YR 7/6 (light red). Paint dark purple-brown.

A: height 0.107 m, width 0.162 m, thickness 0.027–0.05 m. B: height 0.088 m, width 0.07 m, thickness 0.026–0.033 m.

Late 7th century: *c.* 630–620 BC.

5.1 recalls the Laconian Type I sima of the original roof of the early temple of Artemis Orthia (Winter 1993, 98–100, 104–5, fig. 11; Skoog 1998, 46–7), but lacks the cavetto moulding between the teeth and the torus on the outer side or below the torus. It belongs on the transition between monochrome roof elements without a tooth border (among the earliest at Sparta) and polychrome with teeth, torus, and cavetto: it is dated accordingly (Nancy Winter pers. comm.). Similarly transitional traits are evident on the disc acroterion of Winter's Type I variant 2 (*c.* 620) from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia (Winter 1993, 102; George and Woodward 1929, 120, 137, cat. no. 16, fig. 90), which resembles **5.1** in its paint and forming.

5.1 must come from an Archaic public building on the acropolis. Its proposed date is consistent with roof elements previously recovered (notably the acroterion of Winter's Type II 2a, *c.* 625/620–580 BC: Woodward 1926–7b, 40–2, fig. 1; Skoog 1998, 51–2, 157, cat. no. 11), which may be associated with the temple of Athena Chalkioikos or more probably (on grounds of size) with the further temple of Athena excavated by Woodward (1926–7b, 39–43) south of the Chalkioikos sanctuary (Spallino 2016, 703–6).

Trench 2: C508.

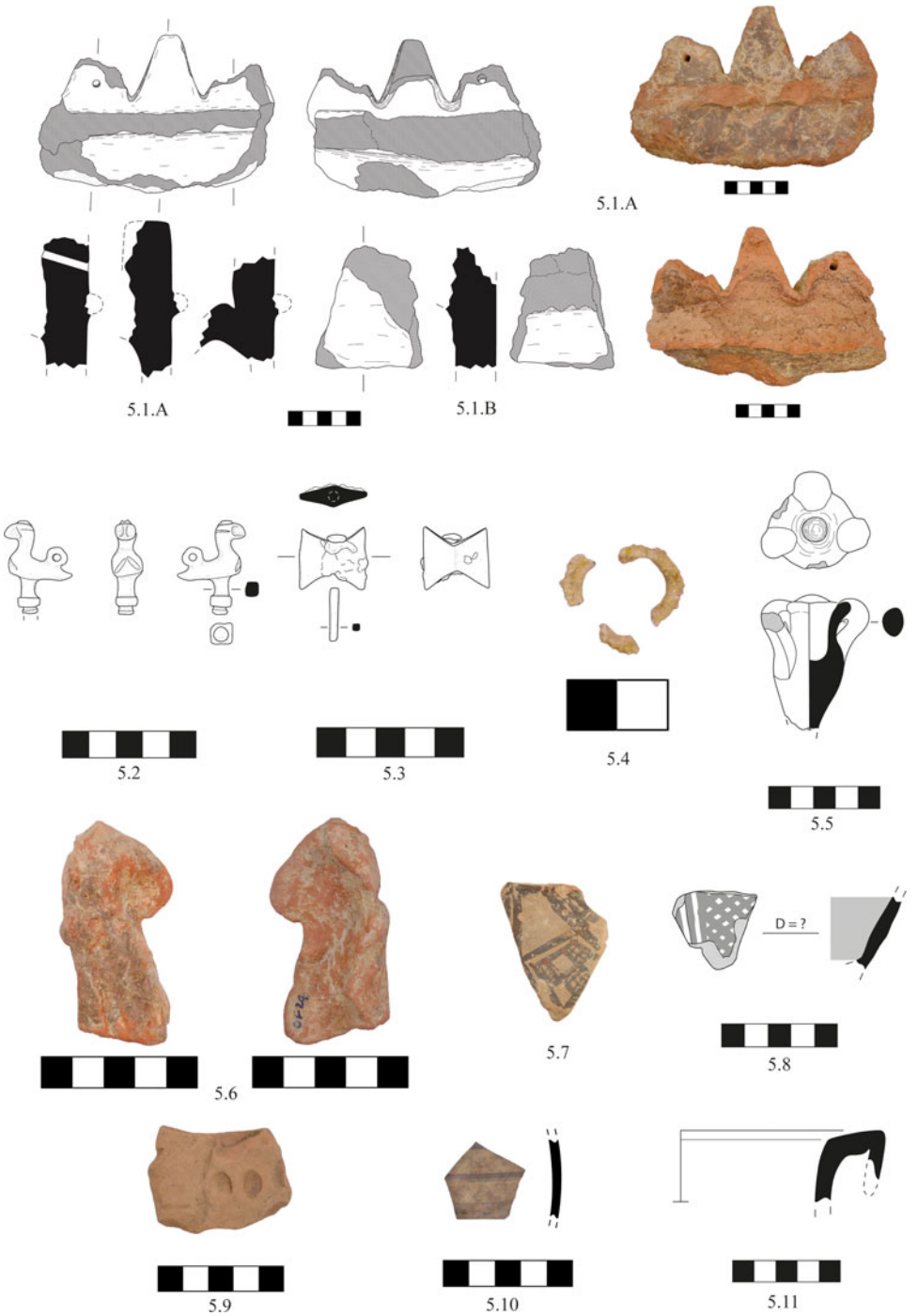


Fig. 5.1. Artefacts from the acropolis sanctuary (with catalogue numbers).

Votives

5.2 (OF35). Fig. 5.1. Bronze bird pendant with suspension loop on the back; square section shaft with ring above the lower break. The bird has a small, rounded body, near horizontal, with two diagonal grooves on the front marking wings; the neck and head are upstanding; the beak is sharply pinched; there is a groove around the back of the head and a small, raised disc on top.

Height 0.035 m, depth 0.027 m.

Early Iron Age.

5.2 recalls both the category of bird pendants with back loop described by Kilian-Dirlmeier (1979, 128–49, 261) and hammer pendants (as her 49–50, no. 307, pl. 20 [from Tegea]); see also Woodward and Hobling (1923–5, 270, 274, fig. 5, no. 11 from the Sparta acropolis). However, the combination of back loop, shaft, body form, and modelling is unparalleled.

Trench 4: C701.

5.3 (OF11). Fig. 5.1. Bronze votive double axe with part of the haft.

Width 0.022 m, height 0.021 m, maximum thickness 0.008 m, haft length 0.017 m, haft thickness 0.003 m.

Protogeometric–6th century BC (not closely datable).

As Kilian-Dirlmeier 1979, 248–9, 252–4, pl. 94:type B, cat. nos 1609, 1613 (from Geometric deposits at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia).

Trench 3: C908.

5.4 (OF6). Fig. 5.1. Lead wreath; reed/spike leaf type. Three fragments comprising near complete circle, outer edge lost.

Diameter *c.* 0.018 m.

c. 620–250 BC.

As Boss 2000, 112–13, motif 34, 1, fig. 82, type 1222 (but without ball attachments); Braun and Engstrom 2022, 208–9, fig. 2 (as they note, spike wreaths without context should be dated broadly to Lead II–VI; cf. Boss 2000, 148–75).

Trench 3: C909.

5.5 (P86). Fig. 5.1. Miniature terracotta pedestalled amphoriskos with three handles. Top hollowed out; body solid; base lost. Surface compacted with no added colour.

Fabric fine, with small–medium mainly white inclusions: 5YR 6/6 (reddish yellow).

Height 0.055 m, maximum diameter 0.047 m, thickness rim 0.006 m.

Archaic/Early Classical: 7th–5th century.

As e.g. Droop 1929, 106–7, fig. 82*k* (Artemis Orthia); Buschor and von Massow 1927, pl. XV, nos 31, 32 (Amyklaion); cf. Catling 1992, 70, 72, fig. 20 (Menelaion).

Trench 2: C502.

5.6 (OF24). Fig. 5.1. Terracotta figurine. Aphrodite type, half-draped: lower body draped (garment bunched at waist), upper body nude. Figure stands with weight on right (front) foot, left leg slightly bent to rear, left hand on hip, right in front of belly grasping drapery. Head and lower body lost. Hollow, with deep relief (unfinished interior roughly pushed into mould). Surface largely eroded: traces of white slip preserved, but no other colour.

Fabric dense and gritty, a little silver mica and a few grey inclusions: 2.5YR 6/6 (light red).

Height 0.069 m, maximum width 0.034 m, maximum depth 0.02 m.

Hellenistic.

Iconography as Bonias 1998, 188–9, cat. nos 400–2, pl. 49.

Trench 1: C006.

Pottery

Early Iron Age

5.7 (P117). Fig. 5.1. Closed vessel shoulder, steeply sloping. Decorated with framed diamonds containing smaller hatched diamonds; two vertical bands at left.

Fabric fine, with a few small–medium white inclusions: 5YR 7/3 (pink), grey in places. Exterior surface smoothed and slipped. Glaze greyish brown with red firing spots.

Height 0.038 m, width 0.024 m, thickness 0.005 m.

Protogeometric: *c.* 950–800.

As Voyatzis 2014, 230, CLacPG 139–42, figs 25–6, pl. 12, from Tegea (in stratified context, see 359–60).

Trench 1: C001.

5.8 (P132). Fig. 5.1. Shallow bowl or flaring skyphos, wall sherd. Zone of cross-hatching defined at left by three vertical bands. Interior glazed.

Fabric fine, a very few small white inclusions: 5YR 7/4 (pink). Uneven brown/black glaze with a metallic sheen.

Height 0.036 m, width 0.032 m, thickness 0.006 m.

Protogeometric: *c.* 850–750.

As Coulson 1985, 53–4, 78, cat. no. 284, fig. 8 (Sparta acropolis); Margreiter 1988, fig. 3.10, pl. 4.42 (Sparta acropolis, Sparta Museum 2946); cf. Voyatzis 2014, 226–7, 235, C-LacPG 53, 57, fig. 18, pl. 8.

Trench 1: C020.

5.9 (P75). Fig. 5.1. Plainware closed vessel shoulder with vertical strap handle. Three oval (finger?) impressions at the base of the handle: groove around shoulder at the same level. Thickening of the wall at the left break may indicate further decoration.

Fabric fine, a few small black and white inclusions: 7.5YR 6/6 (reddish yellow) on the exterior, grey core, darker orange interior.

Height 0.053 m, width 0.037 m, thickness 0.006 m.

Early Iron Age (/Archaic?).

Akin to the plainware with impressed decoration reported on the acropolis by Droop (1926–7, 78–9, fig. 19): related plainware is associated with Geometric pottery at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, but the longevity of the impressed style is unknown.

Trench 2: C502.

Archaic–Early Classical

5.10 (P162). Fig. 5.1. Small, closed vessel: mid-upper body sherd. Decorated with horizontal bands enclosing in two cases a wavy line and in the third (at the bottom), a row of dots.

Fabric very hard (misfired), burnt, a few small black inclusions: now 10R 2.5/1 (reddish black) to 10YR 7/3 in less burnt patches, cream slip, thin grey paint.

Height 0.029 m, width 0.031 m, thickness 0.002 m.

Archaic/Early Classical.

The tiers of ornament and use of dots and wavy lines generally recall schemes current in Elis and the central Peloponnese during the Archaic period. An unpublished kantharos from Megalopolis on display in Tripolis Museum has the same crudely executed motifs.

Trench 1: C004 spit 1 F17.

5.11 (P12). Fig. 5.1. Pithos: overhanging rim and neck. Black-glazed except for the underside of the rim.

Fabric hard, slightly coarse with small black and white inclusions: 10R 5/8 (red) with a grey core. Glaze grey/black, matt on the exterior, glossier on the interior and rim top.

Height 0.029 m, estimated rim diameter 0.022 m, thickness 0.009 m.

Archaic: 6th century.

As Stibbe 2000, 81–2, figs 185–90 (as 185).

Trench 3: C902.

5.12 (P135). Fig. 5.2. Hydria or neck amphora; outturned rim with ridged outer lip and low ring on neck below. Black-glazed.

Fabric fine, lacks visible inclusions: 5YR 6/6 (reddish yellow). Burnt; glaze now flaking.

Height 0.055 m, estimated rim diameter 0.23 m, thickness 0.006 m.

Archaic/Classical: 6th–5th century.

The large rim diameter suggests a hydria rather than an amphora: Catling 1996, 60–1, type 2, as 30f, fig. 14:8, nos 19, 22; Pelagatti 1991, especially figs 4 and 5; Stibbe 2000, 75–6.

Trench 1: C012.

5.13 (P131). Fig. 5.2. Hydria, oinochoe, or amphora; broad neck and rounded shoulder, with a ridge at the junction of shoulder and neck, and in the neck above. Black-glazed.

Fabric fine, very hard, a few small black and white inclusions: 7.5YR 7/4 (pink) to grey. Glaze matt, grey/black.

Height 0.077 m, maximum preserved diameter 0.28 m, thickness 0.01 m.

Archaic: (late 7th–)6th century.

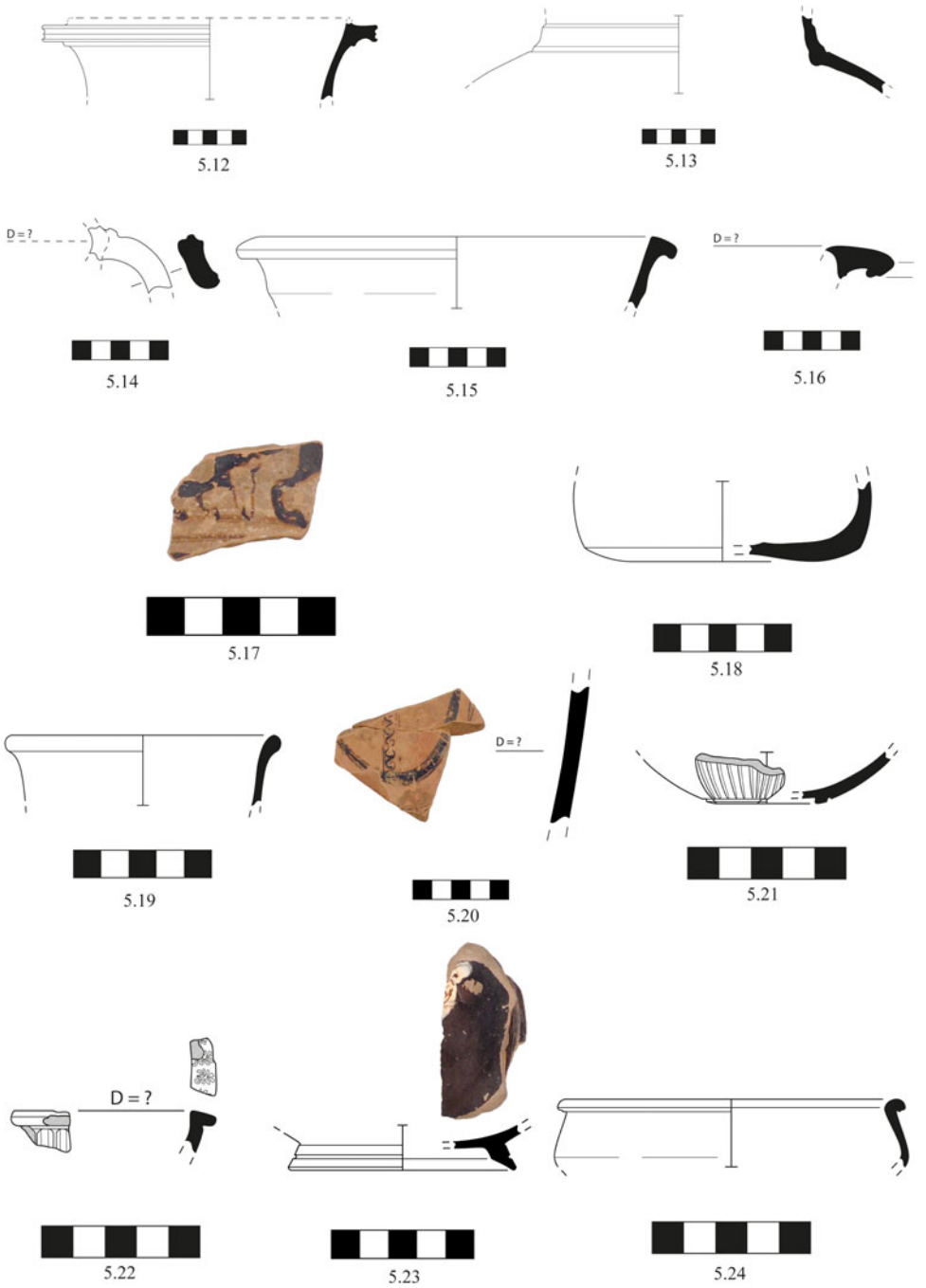


Fig. 5.2. Artefacts from the acropolis sanctuary (with catalogue numbers).

Hydria: Catling 1996, 61, type 30g, fig. 14.8:23 (chronology based on neck proportions which cannot be restored here). Oinochoe: Stibbe 2000, 149, C3, fig. 123.

Trench 3: C909.

5.14 (P113). Fig. 5.2. Amphora, hydria, or oinochoe, with neck-ring. Top of a vertical strap handle with a deep central groove and rolled edges, attached to the neck at the ring (profile preserved in the section). Black-glazed.

Fabric fine, lacks visible inclusions: 5YR 6/6 (reddish yellow), lightly burnt. Glaze unevenly fired (mottled red).

Height 0.051 m, width 0.045 m, thickness 0.012 m.

Archaic: 6th century.

As Catling 1996, 68–9, type 37e, fig. 14.10:15; Pelagatti 1991, figs 2, 4, and especially 8.

Trench 2: C502.

5.15 (P169). Fig. 5.2. Bell krater. Pointed rim with concavity in wall beneath; insloping profile. Monochrome in and out.

Fabric very hard fired, a few small white inclusions: 2.5YR 2.5/1 (reddish black) with redder areas. Glaze grey/black out, redder in. Misfired.

Height 0.036 m, estimated rim diameter 0.20 m, thickness 0.006 m.

Archaic: 6th (second quarter)–early 5th century?

Stibbe 1994, 53, Group C, cat. no. C3, fig. 158; Catling 1996, 40–1, type 5c, fig. 14.2:25 (plainware, *c.* 550–450?).

Trench 1: C012.

5.16 (P245). Fig. 5.2. Large bowl with overhanging rim. Black-glazed.

Fabric fine; 2.5YR 4/4 (reddish brown). Glaze black with a metallic sheen, thick on the upper face, washy on the underside.

Height 0.018 m, width 0.049 m, thickness 0.018 m.

Archaic: 6th century.

Stibbe 1994, 91, Group C, as C3, fig. 349.

Trench 4: C701.

5.17 (P173). Fig. 5.2. Silhouette style skyphos, upper body. At left, grazing goat (?) to right; at right rear of another animal; ground line and one further band beneath; top of thick band or glazed zone at lower break.

Fabric fine, lacks macroscopically visible inclusions: 5YR 7/6 (reddish yellow). Glaze black.

Height 0.037 m, width 0.025 m, thickness 0.003 m.

Archaic: probably Laconian II (*c.* 620–580).

Silhouette animals occur earlier in the 7th century (Margreiter 1988, 111–18, e.g. pl. 65:727,728; Droop 1929, 66–9) but continue into the early 6th: Droop 1929, 73, figs 46*o*, 58*cd*.

Trench 4: C701.

5.18 (P136). Fig. 5.2. Kothon or mug; two joining sherds from the base and lower body. Rounded bottom, hollowed towards the centre, resting surface poorly defined. Black-glazed in and out, resting surface reserved.

Fabric very hard (lightly burnt in firing), a few small white inclusions: 5YR 6/4 (light reddish brown).

Height 0.067 m, width 0.055 m, thickness 0.007 m.

Archaic: 6th century.

Stibbe 1994, 43–7, see Groups C and D, figs 97–109.

Trench 1: C002.

5.19 (P97). Fig. 5.2. Cup: concave rim to junction with body. The rim diameter suggests a stemless cup, although **5.19** cannot be attributed to type. Black-glazed in and out.

Fabric fine, a few macroscopically visible white inclusions: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow), lightly burnt in firing.

Height 0.026 m, estimated rim diameter 0.12 m, thickness 0.003 m.

Late Archaic/Early Classical: *c.* 550–450?

As Catling 1996, 47, type 15d, fig. 14.5:15.

Trench 3: C906.

Classical

5.20 (P133). Fig. 5.2. Large kothon: two joining sherds from mid body. Red-figure decoration: part of the drapery of a female figure (perhaps to right). Interior glazed.

Fabric fine, with a few small white inclusions: 2.5YR 6/8 (light red), core redder, exterior slipped.

Height 0.076 m, width 0.069 m, thickness 0.008 m.

Classical: last quarter 5th or early 4th century.

While **5.20** could be a bell krater, the interior treatment favours the slightly closed kothon (the most common Laconian red-figure shape at Sparta: McPhee 1986, 155–6). For the shape, see Stroszeck 2014, 142–3, 150, cat. nos 1–2, figs 1–2.

Trench 1: C013.

5.21 (P68). Fig. 5.2. Oinochoe shape 8 (Pheidian mug): foot ring and ribbed lower wall. Narrow base; small foot ring marked off from the wall with a groove; rounded body profile above.

Fabric fine, lacks visible inclusions, lightly burnt in firing: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow). Glossy glaze.

Height 0.03 m, estimated base diameter 0.037 m, thickness 0.003 m.

Classical: *c.* 450–early 4th century.

Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 73, cat. nos 216–18; for the small base, see *CVA*: Leiden 3 (5), pl. 57:4. The longevity of the shape in Laconia is unknown, but it continues into the early 4th century in Athens (Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 73 n. 28) and Apulia (*CVA*: Toledo 2 [20], pl. 94:2).

Trench 3: C908.

5.22 (P124). Fig. 5.2. Small bowl with projecting rim. On rim top, a series of closely spaced (sometimes overlapping) stamped palmettes. Wide vertical ribs run from a groove just below the rim. Black-glazed in and out.

Fabric fine with a few small white inclusions, burnt in firing: 5YR 7/4 (pink).

Height 0.019 m, estimated rim diameter 0.07 m, thickness 0.002 m.

Classical: late 5th(–4th) century.

The date derives from the plain-walled shape in Attic black glaze (Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 135, cat. nos 879–81; Rotroff 1977, 165, cat. nos 1045–9). The decoration of **5.22** is not attested in Attic and may be a Laconian innovation.

Trench 2: C503.

5.23 (P130). Fig. 5.2. Stemless cup: profile of foot and edge of wall/tondo. In tondo, part of a motif in added white (perhaps animal fur). Stilt-like foot sliced diagonally to give a narrow resting surface; an angular groove scraped around the exterior junction with the body. Underside of foot and base half covered with a pool of glaze; the unaffected area suggests that the inner face of the foot may have been reserved and the base glazed, with a reserved band round the outer edge.

Fabric hard, fine, lacks visible inclusions: 7.5YR 7/6 (reddish yellow).

Height 0.013 m, width 0.046 m, thickness 0.002 m.

Classical: late 5th–4th century.

On the chronology of high ring feet on Laconian cups, see Catling 1996, 55–6, especially type 27k.

Trench 1: C004.

5.24 (P74). Fig. 5.2. Small one-handler; rim rolled out and hollowed underneath; rounded body turning in at lower break. Black-glazed in and out.

Fabric fine, very hard (burnt in firing), a few small black inclusions: 5YR 6/2 (pinkish grey). Glaze matt black.

Height 0.02 m, estimated rim diameter 0.08 m, thickness 0.002 m.

Classical: second half 5th–4th century.

Profile as Catling 1996, 51, type 18, fig. 14.5:45; Lang 1992, 54–6, fig. 8:1.

Trench 3: C903.

5.25 (P116). Fig. 5.3. Bowl with incurving rim; four joining sherds preserve the profile from rim to centre base. Low disc foot. Glazed in and out.

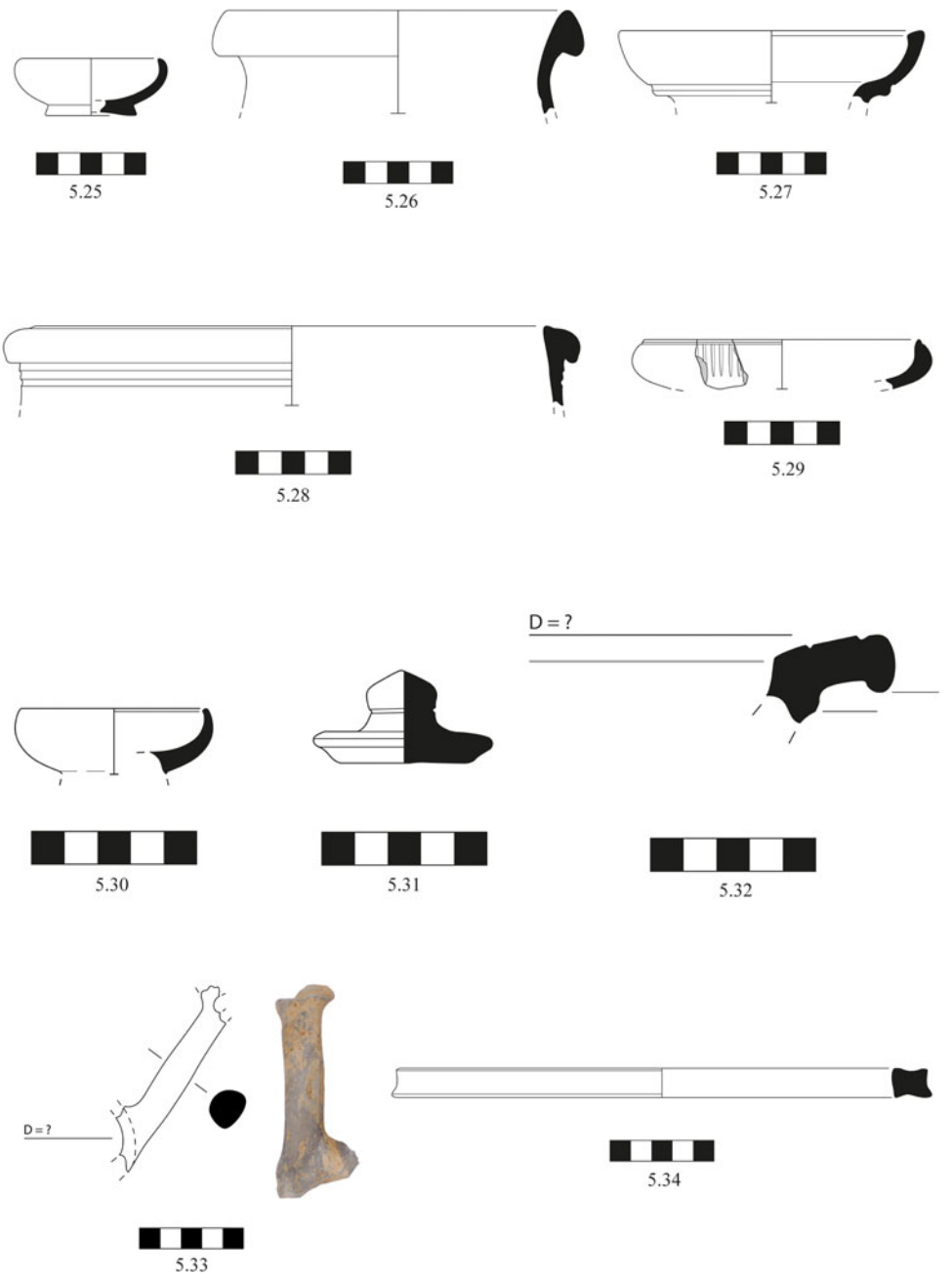


Fig. 5.3. Artefacts from the acropolis sanctuary (with catalogue numbers).

Fabric 5YR 7/8 (reddish yellow) with a few small white and black inclusions. Glaze matt grey/brown.

Height 0.027 m, estimated rim diameter 0.66 m, estimated base diameter 0.043 m, thickness 0.005 m.

Classical: late 5th–4th century.

As Coldstream 1972, 160, cat. no. 19, fig. 48.

Trench 1: C016.

Late Classical–Hellenistic
5.26 (P50). Fig. 5.3. Table amphora. D-rim, folded down and rounded to the exterior, scraped on the underside. Neck concave, flaring at lower break. Glazed in and out.

Fabric fine, a scatter of small white inclusions: 2.5YR 5/4 (reddish brown), pink in section, traces of burning on the surface. Glaze matt grey/black.

Height 0.048 m, estimated rim diameter 0.17 m, thickness 0.004 m.

Hellenistic.

As Visscher 1996, 99, type 18c, fig. 15.4:16.

Trench 1: C001.

5.27 (P247). Fig. 5.3. Lekythos. Wide cup rim with insloping edge; ring and groove around the junction between the rim and neck. Black-glazed.

Fabric fine, lacks macroscopically visible inclusions: 5Y 6/1 (pink) to grey.

Height 0.028 m, estimated rim diameter 0.14 m, thickness 0.011 m.

Late Classical/early Hellenistic: 4th century.

The profile fits the Laconian version of the Deianeira lekythos (Stibbe 2000, 144, cat. no. A1, fig. 109, pl. 9:7); however the rim diameter recalls the larger storage vessel that in Athens developed from the Deianeira during the 4th century: Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 151–2, cat. no. 1108. The proposed date presupposes a similar development in Laconia.

Trench 4: C701.

5.28 (P27). Fig. 5.3. Relief krater. Rim rolled to the exterior with two moulded grooves on the wall beneath; wall vertical/slightly outturned, suggesting a bell-like profile. Glazed in and out.

Fabric fine, a few small black and white inclusions: GLEY2 5/5B (bluish grey). Glaze dull, dark grey/brown.

Height 0.029 m, estimated rim diameter 0.22 m, thickness 0.003 m.

Hellenistic.

See Hobling 1923–5, 297–309.

Trench 2: C501.

5.29 (P183). Fig. 5.3. Shallow bowl with incurving rim. Sherd preserving profile from rim to inturn to base; vertical incised ribs run from a groove around the rim, stopping just below the point of maximum diameter with no base line. Slight traces of glaze are preserved inside (red) and out (black).

Fabric reddish yellow, 5YR 7/6, very fine, a very few small black and white inclusions. Hard, now abraded.

Height 0.023 m, estimated rim diameter 0.118 m, thickness 0.005 m.

Early Hellenistic: late 4th or early 3rd century?

Without the base/foot, we cannot determine whether **5.29** is a phiale or a shallow bowl perhaps akin to Apulian black glaze bowls with convex, ribbed upper body and strongly concave lower body/foot: Morel 1981, 168, type 2421a, pl. 49.

Trench 1: C027.

5.30 (P243). Fig. 5.3. Footed saltcellar (shallow bowl with incurving rim); profile from the rim to the junction between wall and foot. Black-glazed in and out.

Fabric 10YR 5/1 (grey).

Height 0.017 m, estimated rim diameter 0.06 m, thickness 0.003–0.011 m.

Late Classical–early Hellenistic: 4th century(–mid 3rd).

Shape: Rotroff 1997, 167.

Trench 1: C022.

Kitchen ware

5.31 (P322). Fig. 5.3. Lid for a flagon or other round mouthed closed shape with a narrow neck. Complete profile preserved. Solid base; domed knob with groove around exterior.

Fabric 7.5YR 7/4 (pink).

Height 0.028 m, base diameter 0.043 m, maximum diameter 0.05 m, knob diameter 0.019 m.

Archaic–Hellenistic.

Trench 1: C020 F#010.

5.32 (P134). Fig. 5.3. Lekane. Flat rim with downturned outer edge hollowed beneath; slightly concave wall with carination at lower break. Two ridges on rim surface.

Fabric has small–large red, white, and black inclusions: 5YR 6/8 (reddish yellow) with greyer core. Surface smoothed and slipped.

Height 0.035 m, width 0.059 m, thickness 0.011 m.

Early Hellenistic: 3rd century?

As Visscher 1996, 96, type 11b, fig. 15.1:22.

Trench 3: C908.

5.33 (P155). Fig. 5.3. Chytra or cookware jug. Complete vertical handle (oval in section) with attachments to the edge of the rim and to a rounded shoulder.

Fabric very hard (section beginning to split), with a few small–large white inclusions: GLEY2 6/5PB (bluish black). **5.33** is misfired (not to deliberate effect, as e.g. blister ware).

Height 0.098 m, width at base of handle 0.037 m, thickness 0.014 m.

Archaic–Hellenistic.

Trench 1: C022.

5.34 (P94). Fig. 5.3. Pot stand. Low ring with concave upper, outer, and lower surfaces, all with ridges at the outer edges. Glaze preserved in small patches.

Fabric very hard, few inclusions visible: 2.5YR 2.5/1 (dark grey).

Height 0.046 m, estimated diameter 0.265 m, thickness 0.019 m.

Archaic–Hellenistic.

Trench 1: C001.

6. INSCRIPTIONS by Robert K. Pitt

Stone

6.1 (OF33). Fig. 6.1. Part of an inscribed halter (jumping weight) of green *lapis Lacedaemonius* preserving the pointed end of the weight and part of the grip-hole, inscribed around the outer edges. Length 0.126 m; width 0.06 m; letter height 0.012–0.018 m.

Trench 5: C301.

Eds. Briefly reported in *AR* 55 (2008–9) 31 (*SEG* LIX 388); ed. pr. Pitt 2014–19 (*Bull. ép.* 2020, 157). Late 6th–early 5th century BC

[- - -] . ΙΟΜΙΚΑΣΑΘΙΑ[.]Α[.]ΣΤΑΘΕ . [- - -]
[- - -]πιο Μικᾶς Ἀ*hί*α[ι] Α[. ?] [ἐ]στάθε . [- - -]

[- - - son of - -]pios, Mikas, dedicated to Asia [- - -]

This fragmentary inscription on a piece of athletic equipment provides evidence for a form of Athena at Sparta previously known only from the literary record and demonstrates that the acropolis was to some degree thought an acceptable site at which to present offerings to *epikleseis* of Athena other than Chalkioikos (on the practice, see Parker 2003, esp. 181). Athena Asia was worshipped in the Laconian city of Las, whose territory includes a mountain called Asia

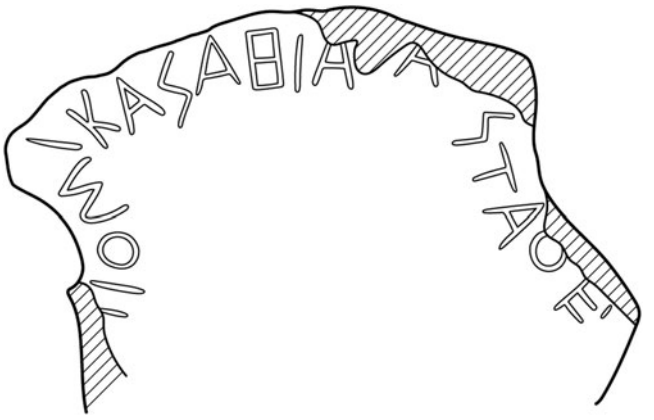


Fig. 6.1. Part of an inscribed halter (jumping weight) of green *lapis Lacedaemonius* preserving the pointed end of the weight and part of the grip-hole, inscribed around the outer edges. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

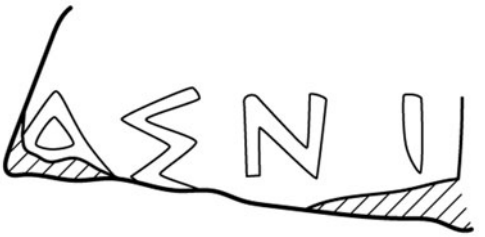


Fig. 6.2. Pan tile fragment with no preserved edges. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

(Pausanias 3.24.6–7). A second epigraphic attestation of the *epiklesis* was published in 2019: an honorific decree of the first century BC was set up εἰς τὸ τᾶς Ἀΐας ἱερόν (Zavvou 2019). The name of the dedicant, Μικᾶς, is not otherwise attested in Laconia. For further commentary, see Pitt 2014–19.

Brick and tile stamps

Ten stamped bricks and tiles add to the extensive collection discovered in earlier British excavations and surveys of the acropolis and wider region, and in numerous rescue excavations in recent decades. They date principally from the Late Hellenistic period (late second–first century BC), when a number of specific projects, notably the city walls and the theatre stage building, necessitated the creation of large amounts of such building materials. It seems that certain Spartan magistrates ordered the manufacture of tiles from workshops in this period for a variety of projects and may even have stored them up for future repairs. The stamps often preserve the names of the officials and contractors involved, but there are also several series of tiles marked simply 'Public, of Athena', which have been interpreted as originating from factories owned by the goddess for use in public constructions.[10]

6.2 (P150). Fig. 6.2. Pan tile fragment with no preserved edges. Height 0.10 m, width 0.135 m, thickness 0.016 m; letter height 0.016 m. Cf. Wace type 13; *IG* V 1, 857.

Trench 2: C503.

2nd century BC?

[δαμόσιος]	[Public (tile)],
[Ἀθάν]ας· Νι(κίων).	[Of Athen]a; Ni(kion) (contractor).

6.3 (P40). Fig. 6.3. Fragment of a large, stamped brick, preserving top, bottom and one side with a retrograde inscription. Length 0.14 m, width 0.12 m, thickness 0.05 m; stamp height 0.18 m, stamp length 0.14 m; letter height 0.016 m. Cf. *IG* V 1, 877–9; Shipley 1996, 224, no. 21, pl. 21*a*.

Trench 1: C001.

1st century BC

σκανοθή̣[κας].	(From) the stage building.

[10] The typology of the stamped tiles of Sparta was laid out in Wace 1905–6 and refined in Wace 1906–7; for the stamped bricks, see Tillyard 1906–7, 191–6; Kourinou 2000, 52–7 presents a revised chronology and typology.

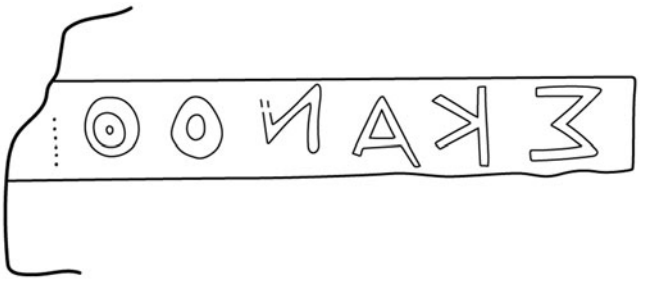


Fig. 6.3. Fragment of a large, stamped brick, preserving top, bottom and one side with a retrograde inscription. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

Other examples of bricks from the *skanotheke* of the same thickness were stamped on four sides with the name of the contractor and the eponymous magistrate Kallikrates (e.g. δαμόσ[ιαι] / σκαν[οθήκας]· / Καλλικράτης· / Ἑρμογένης; *IG* V 1, 877).

6.4 (P191). Fig. 6.4. Flat tile broken on all sides with mortar at the breaks from reuse. Length 0.135 m, width 0.19 m, thickness 0.024 m; stamp height 0.04 m; letter height 0.006–0.012 m. Cf. Wace type 40B; *IG* V 1, 870.

Trench 1: surface find.

1st century BC.

[ἐπ]ὶ Νικονόμου· δα-	Nikonomos (was patronomos). Pu-
[μόσιοι] παραθέσεος· ἐργ-	blic (tiles) for storage. Cont-
[ώ]γα Εὐφράνο[ρος].	ractor Euphranor.

6.5 (P188). Fig. 6.5. Cover tile broken on all sides, dark brown-red glaze on the convex. Length 0.095 m, width 0.125 m, thickness 0.018 m; stamp height 0.025 m; letter height 0.008–0.012 m. Cf. Wace 1906–7, 28, fig. 4*F*.
Trench 5: C301.

Late 2nd/1st century BC.

δαμόσιος	Public (tile)
[Ἀ]θάνας.	of Athena.

6.6 (P175). Fig. 6.6. Pan tile broken on all sides. Height 0.08 m, width 0.08 m, thickness 0.014 m; stamp height 0.033 m; letter height 0.007 m.

Fig. 6.4. Flat tile broken on all sides with mortar at the breaks from reuse. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

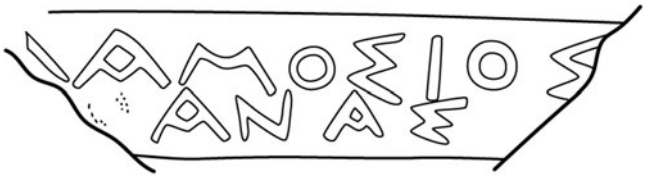


Fig. 6.5. Cover tile broken on all sides, dark brown-red glaze on the convex. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

Trench 4: C701.

Late 2nd/1st century BC.

δαμόσ[ι]-	Public (tile) ---
ος? [---]	

6.7 (P79). Fig. 6.7. Small tile fragment broken on all sides. Length 0.085 m, width 0.115 m, thickness 0.016 m; letter height 0.01 m.

Trench 2: C502.

Late 2nd/1st century BC.

δαμό[σιος]	Public (tile)
Ἀθ[άνας].	of Athena.

6.8 (P105). Fig. 6.8. Pan tile with no preserved edges. Length 0.07 m, width 0.065 m, thickness 0.02 m; stamp height 0.028 m; letter height 0.010 m.

Trench 2: C502.

Late 2nd/1st century BC.

[δαμόσιος Ἀθάν]ας.	Public (tile) of Athena.

6.9 (P103). Fig. 6.9. Cover tile broken on all sides. Length 0.095 m, width 0.08 m, thickness 0.017 m; stamp height *c.* 0.015 m; letter height 0.012 m.

Fig. 6.6. Pan tile broken on all sides. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

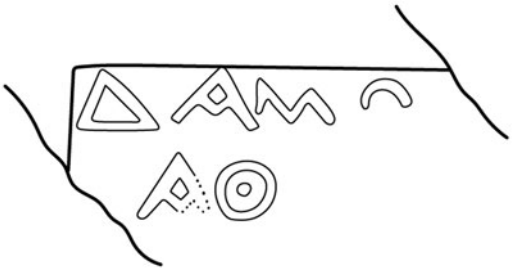


Fig. 6.7. Small tile fragment broken on all sides. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

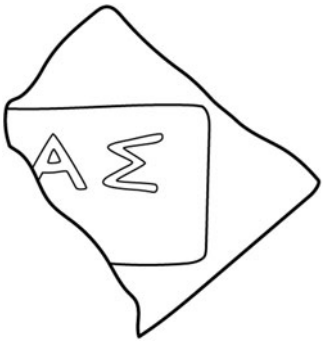


Fig. 6.8. Pan tile with no preserved edges. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

Trench 2: C502.

Late 2nd/1st century BC.

[- - δαμό]σιος. [- - Pub]lic (tile).

6.10 (P225). Fig. 6.10. Tile broken on all sides. Height 0.055 m, width 0.065 m, thickness 0.013 m; letter height not preserved, *c.* 0.02 m.

Trench 5: C305.

Late 2nd/1st century BC?

- - - Λ̣Λ̣ . - - - - - - -
δ̣α̣μ̣[όσιος]? Pub[lic] (tile).

6.11 (P98). Fig. 6.11. Two joining tile fragments with red slip, broken all sides. Height 0.075 m, width 0.11 m, thickness 0.016 m; letter height not preserved.

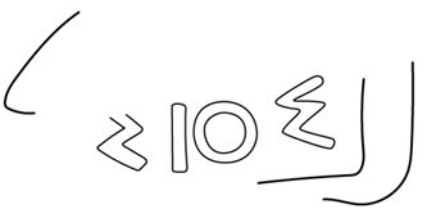


Fig. 6.9. Cover tile broken on all sides. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

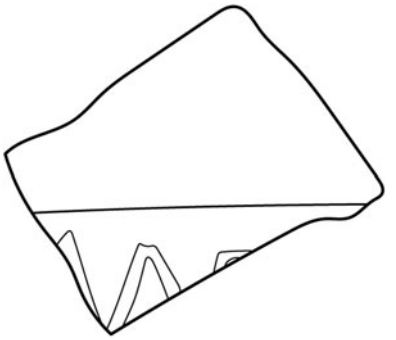


Fig. 6.10. Tile broken on all sides. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

Fig. 6.11. Two joining tile fragments with red slip, broken all sides. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

Trench 3: C909.

Late 2nd/1st century BC?

- - . . ΣẸA - -

Pottery

6.12 (P22). Fig 6.12. Graffito on a fragment of a large Classical Laconian closed vessel with black-glaze exterior. Height 0.065 m, width 0.055 m, thickness 0.009 m; letter height not preserved, scratched with a 0.002 m-thick instrument.

Trench 1: C001.

- - - AṂ - - -

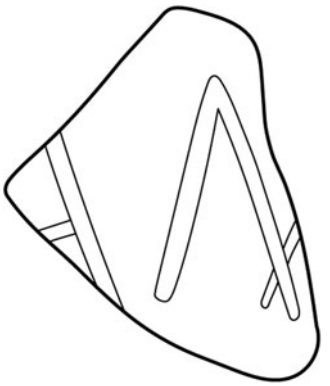


Fig. 6.12. Graffito on a fragment of a large Classical Laconian closed vessel with black-glaze exterior. Drawing: Robert Pitt.

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Ανασκαφές στο αρχαίο θέατρο της Σπάρτης, 2008

Στο άρθρο αυτό παρουσιάζονται τα αποτελέσματα της ανασκαφής του 2008 στο αρχαίο θέατρο της Σπάρτης που διεξήχθη από τη Βρετανική Σχολή Αθηνών και την Εφορεία Αρχαιοτήτων Λακωνίας. Με επίκεντρο τη δυτική πλευρά του κοίλου, οι εργασίες αποσκοπούσαν στον εντοπισμό του νότιου άκρου του οικισμού της Ύστερης Αρχαιότητας μεταξύ του θεάτρου και του ιερού της Αθηνάς Χαλκιοίκου, στον καθορισμό των βόρειων ορίων του οικισμού της Ύστερης Αρχαιότητας πάνω από την πρώην ορχήστρα, και στον ακριβέστερο κεραμικό προσδιορισμό και χρονολόγηση για την Πρώιμη-Μέση Βυζαντινή περίοδο στη Σπάρτη.

Η περιοχή μεταξύ των οικιστικών συστάδων στην ακρόπολη και πάνω από την πρώην ορχήστρα ήταν ουσιαστικά ανοικτή, με καταγεγραμμένο μόνο ένα βυζαντινό αναλημματικό τείχος και ένα μονοπάτι. Στο βορειοδυτικό τμήμα του πρώην κοίλου, ένας τάφος που χτίστηκε στα τέλη του 8ου ή στις αρχές του 9ου αιώνα μ.Χ. χρησιμοποιήθηκε τουλάχιστον μέχρι τα τέλη του 13ου αιώνα για την ταφή 29 περίπου ατόμων. Το άρθρο παρουσιάζει τα πρώτα αποτελέσματα μιας βιοαρχαιολογικής μελέτης των σκελετικών καταλοίπων, καθώς και μελέτες βυζαντινής κεραμικής από το εσωτερικό του τάφου και από την επίχωση του λάκκου στον οποίο ήταν χτισμένος ο τάφος (η τελευταία περιλαμβάνει μια αξιοσημείωτη ποσότητα πρωτοβυζαντινής οικιακής κεραμικής). Τα ευρήματα του 2008 εντάσσονται στο ευρύτερο πλαίσιο των ερευνών για τις φάσεις του θεάτρου μετά το τέλος της αρχαιότητας (με βάση το αρχείο της BSA) και για τον υλικό πολιτισμό και την αστική τοπογραφία της βυζαντινής Σπάρτης.

Σχεδόν όλα τα ανασκαφικά συμφραζόμενα περιείχαν υλικά κατάλοιπα όλων των περιόδων. Το άρθρο ολοκληρώνεται με σύντομους καταλόγους του υλικού που προϋπήρχε της κατασκευής του θεάτρου και των επιγραφών όλων των περιόδων.

Μετάφραση: Στ. Ιερεμίας