

IKLAINA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT 2011 FIELD REPORT

Michael B. Cosmopoulos

The fifth season of excavation at Iklaina was conducted in June and July 2011. The project is conducted under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society and funded by the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the National Science Foundation, and the National Geographic Society. The research team is composed of Demetris Brellas, Jennifer Elam, Rebecca Worsham, Amanda Slavin, Μίνα Νικολοβιένη, Ηρώ Βαλσαμάκη, Νικολέτα Δημητροπούλου, and Georgina Henderson (trench supervisors); Michael Nelson (architect); Deborah Ruscillo (faunal/marine remain analyst); China Shelton (palaeobotanist); Cynthia Shelmerdine, Joann Gulizio, and Patrick Thomas (ceramics analysts); Vassilis Petrakis (archaeological consultant); and Stefania Veldemiri (conservator). In the excavation participated 37 students of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and other US, Canadian, and Australian institutions.

This year's excavation focused on the Cyclopean Terrace and Building X (Figure 1, Figure 2).

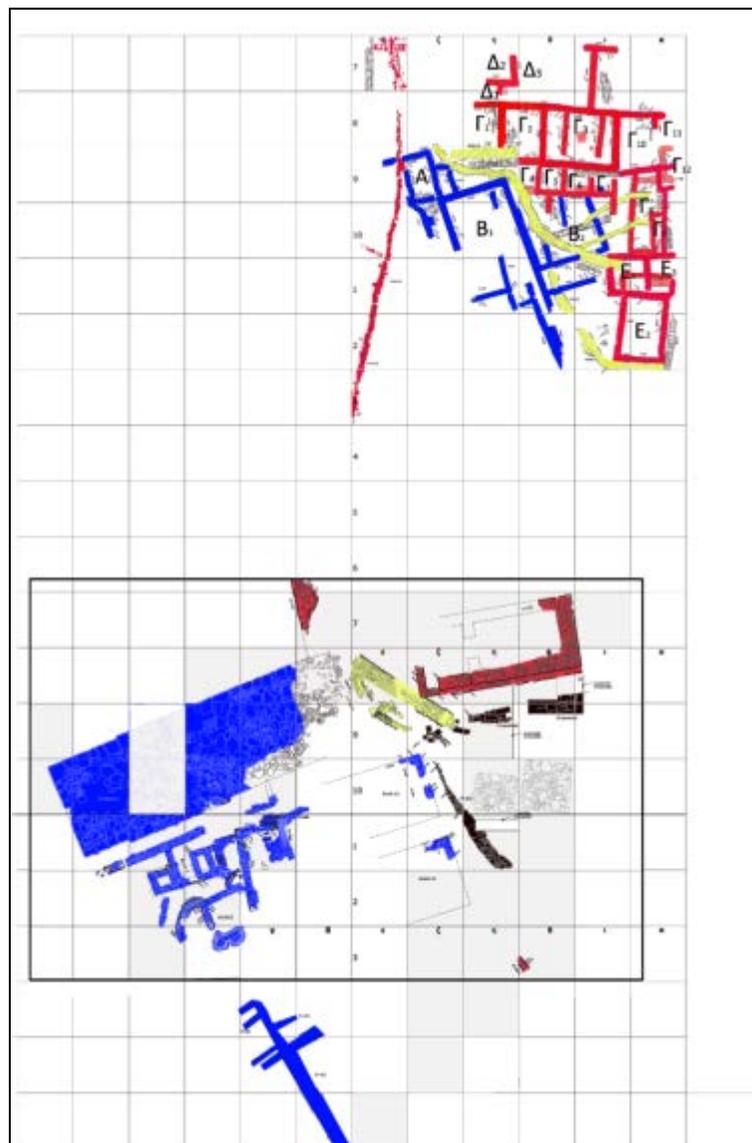


Figure 1: State plan of the excavation (Michael Nelson). The thick frame indicates the area shown in detail in figure 2. The squares excavated in 2011 are greyed.

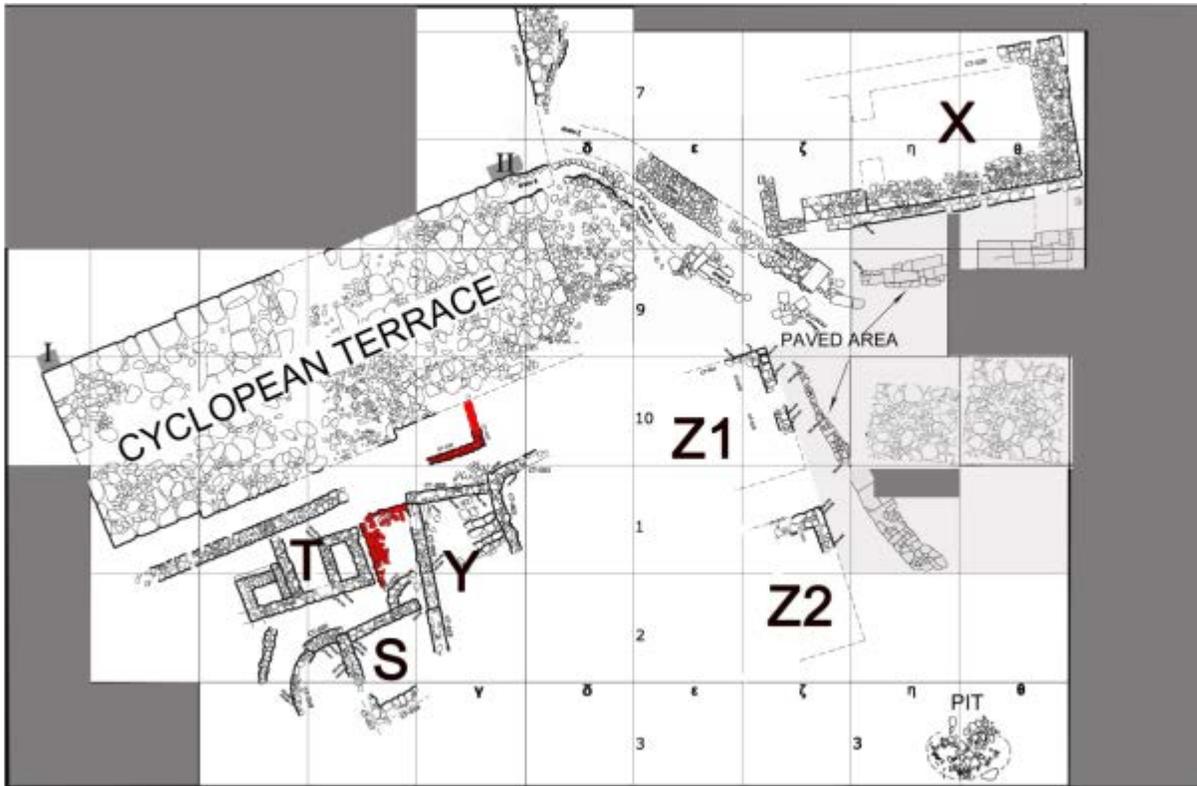


Figure 2: Plan of the area excavated in 2011(Michael Nelson)

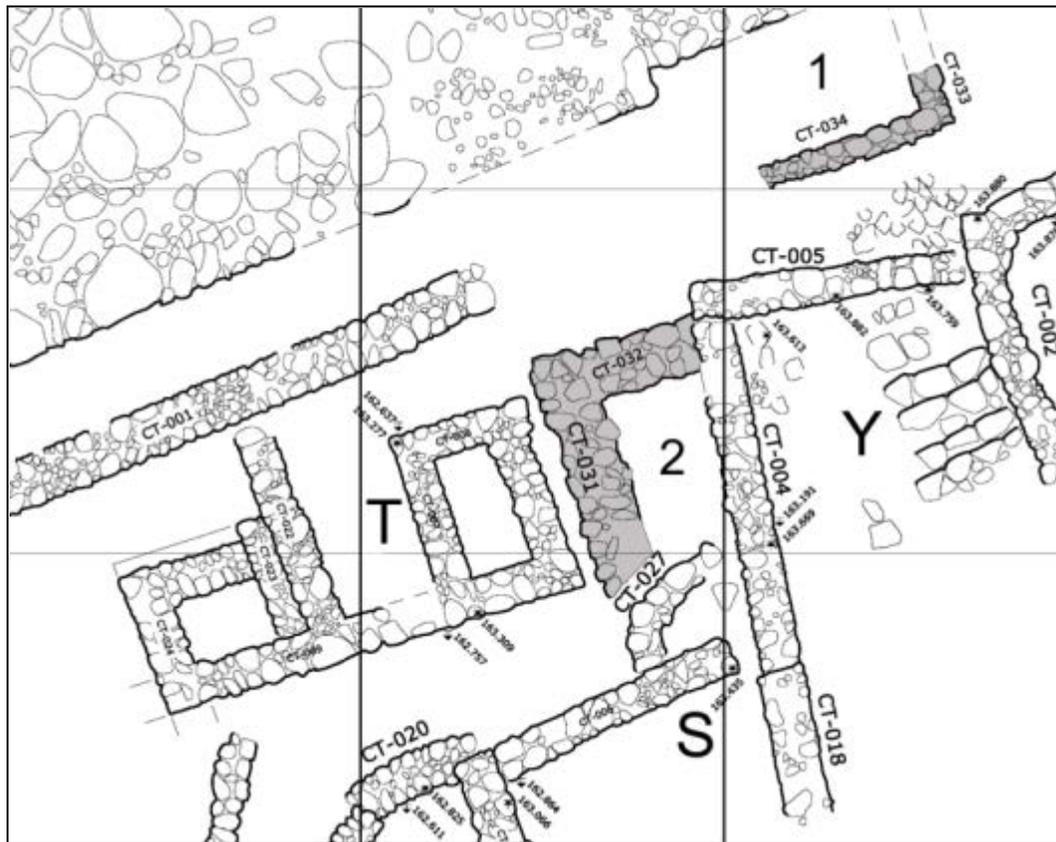


Figure 3: Plan of the buildings to the s. of the CT, showing rooms 1 and 2 (Michael Nelson)

In the plateau to the south of the CT, where since 2009 we have been excavating a suite of LH IIB/IIIA1 rooms, we uncovered two additional rooms (Figure 3: 1, 2). Room 1 is defined by walls CT-033 and CT-034 and its long axis runs parallel to the south side of the CT. The preserved internal dimensions are 2.5 x 2 m., but the southwest part of wall CT-034 has been destroyed and the original length of the room would have been greater. Inside this room, the upper layer (down to a depth of 0.40 m. from the surface of the ground) contained mixed LH IIB/IIIA1 sherds; under this layer there was a second one (from 0.40 to 0.70 m. from the surface), which contained painted sherds of the LH IIB period (Figure 4), along with a large number of animal bones, mostly young pigs and sheep/goats. The floor of the room has not been preserved. Room 2 is defined by walls CT-031 and CT-032 and measures 2.5 x 1.30 m. In its interior we found LH IIB/IIIA1 pottery and a large number of fragments from painted plaster, two fragments of a clay offering table, and two scraps of bronze. This room is older than Houses Y and S, as walls CT-004 and CT-005 of Y are built on top of the eastern part of CT-032 and also wall CT-027 of S is built on top of wall CT-031.

To the south of buildings Y, S, and T there is an open area, possibly a garden or courtyard, that seems to extend towards the south/southeast. To define the borders of this open area we opened a series of trenches to the east and southeast of rooms Z1 and Z2 (squares N14a1ζ2/θ2/η2/ζ3/η4/ε6, grayed in Figure 1). These trenches did not yield any finds, except for sporadic sherds of various LH periods found in the topsoil. In the eastern part of the excavated area (squares N13a10η10/θ10 and N14a1η1) we came across a layer of tumbled stones mixed with bricks, tiles, and sherds of the Byzantine period, only 0.10 m. under the surface of the ground.



Figure 4: LH IIB pottery from rooms CT-031/CT-032

Further to the south, in squares N14a1η3 and θ3 we found an elliptical pit, 4.5 m. x 3 m. Inside the pit there is a curved wall running from the north to the southeast (Figure 5). The interior of the pit contained burned soil and ashes, burned and unburned bones of sheep/goat and pigs, animal figurines, a folded sheet of lead, fragments of painted plaster, fragments of a painted offering table, numerous sherds, and twelve complete or nearly-complete conical cups and kylikes dating to LH IIIA1/III2 (Figure 6). The existence of these finds in the pit suggests that this may have been an open-air shrine.



Figure 5: The pit from the north



Figure 6: Finds from the pit

North side of the CT

In order to investigate the masonry of the CT, we opened two small trenches along its north side (marked as I and II in Figure 2). Trench I was opened in front of the northwest side of the CT (square M13a10t10) and reached a depth of 7.30 m. from the surface of the ground (Figure 7), exposing the full height of the terrace. It revealed that the foundation of the northwest corner of the CT is built with two horizontal courses of worked blocks, approximately 1.20 m. wide. The deepest course is made with blocks 0.90 m. thick, the blocks of the second course are 0.50 m. thick and support three rows of smaller stones (combined thickness 0.57 m.), which form a flat surface. On top of this flat surface were placed

three additional courses, made with large rectangular blocks (each 0.40-0.65 m. thick and 1.40 m. long). The pottery from the deposit associated with the lowest two courses of the CT is LH IIB/LH IIIA1.

Trench II was opened in square N13α10β8, at a distance of 15 m. to the southeast of Trench I and reached a depth of 2.20 m. from the surface of the ground. Under the top soil we found two deposits: the upper deposit contained LH IIIA2/IIIB pottery; under this deposit lay a destruction layer containing burned soil and burned ashlar blocks (Figure 8), mixed with LH IIB/III A1 pottery. The ashlar blocks presumably fell from higher up the CT when it was destroyed. Excavation of this destruction layer will continue in the future.



Left: Figure 7: The foundation of the northwest Corner of the Cyclopean Terrace

Right: Figure 8: Destruction layer with fallen ashlar block in front of the Cyclopean Terrace

The upper (LH IIIA2/IIIB) deposit of Trench II continues further to the north and northeast of the CT, in squares N13α10γ6/δ6, γ7/δ7, and γ8. In these squares large quantities of LH IIIA2/IIIB pottery were found along with pieces of slag, fragments of bronze, and the head of a male bronze figurine (Figure 9). The east end of this deposit is defined by a massive wall (CT-036), about 2.5 m. thick (its east side is buried under the layer of stones of square N13α10δ06, which has not been excavated yet). This wall starts from the CT and continues towards the northwest (Figure 10, Figure 11). A sounding opened in front of the west facade of this wall revealed nine horizontal courses of stones without reaching its bottom. The top two courses are made of massive blocks of stone, ranging in size from 0.40 × 0.24 × 0.56 m. to 0.90 × 0.70 × 0.30 m. The lower courses are built with smaller stones, avg. dim. 0.20 × 0.40 × 0.30-0.50 m. Although only a small section of this wall was cleared, its size and orientation suggest that it was a support or terrace wall. The pottery from the sounding along the west facade of the wall is LH IIIA2/IIIB.



Figure 9: Bronze head and animal figurine

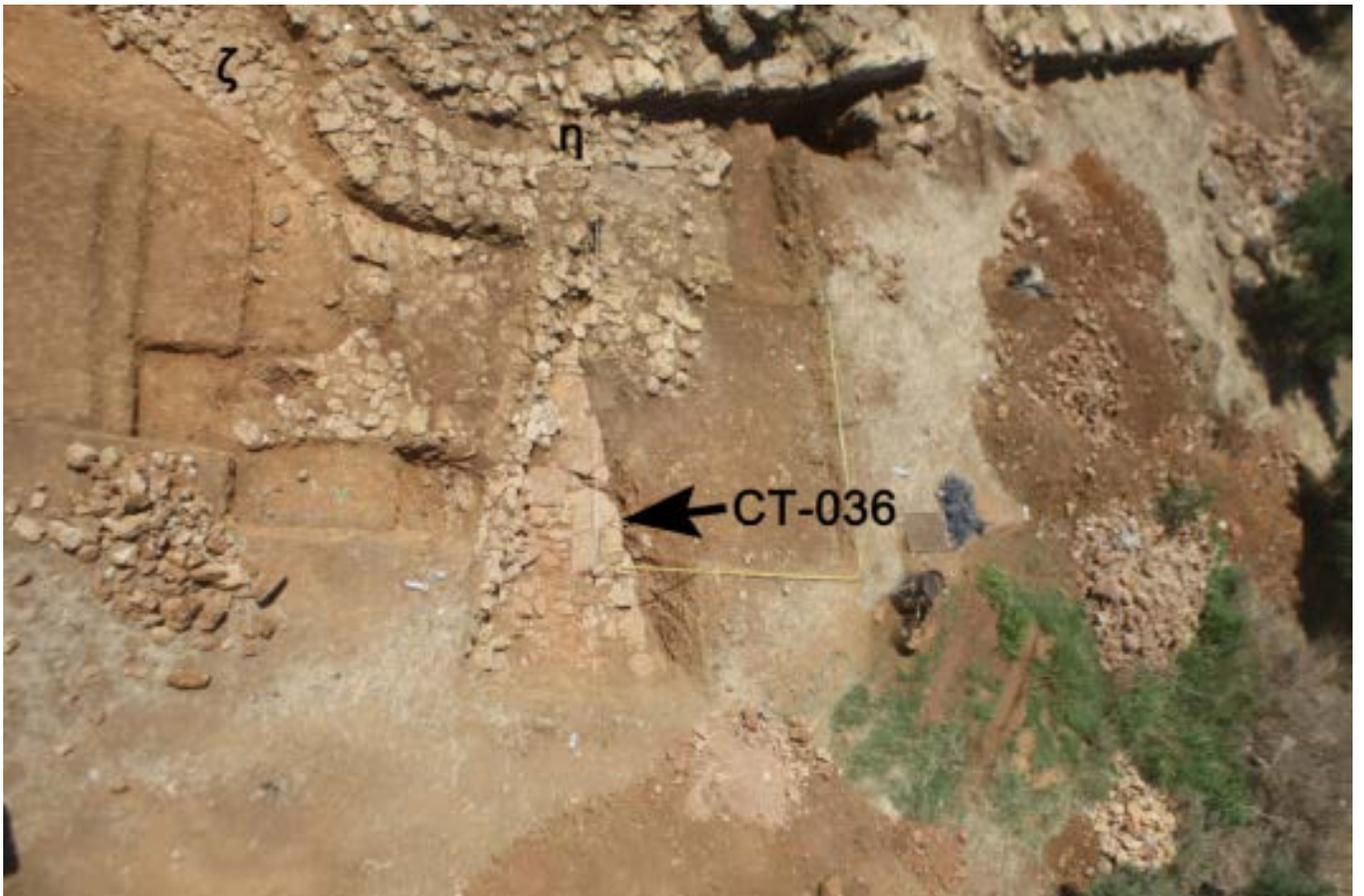


Figure 10: Aerial photo of wall ct-0036 and the west continuation of drains ζ and θ



Figure 11: Wall ct-036 from the west

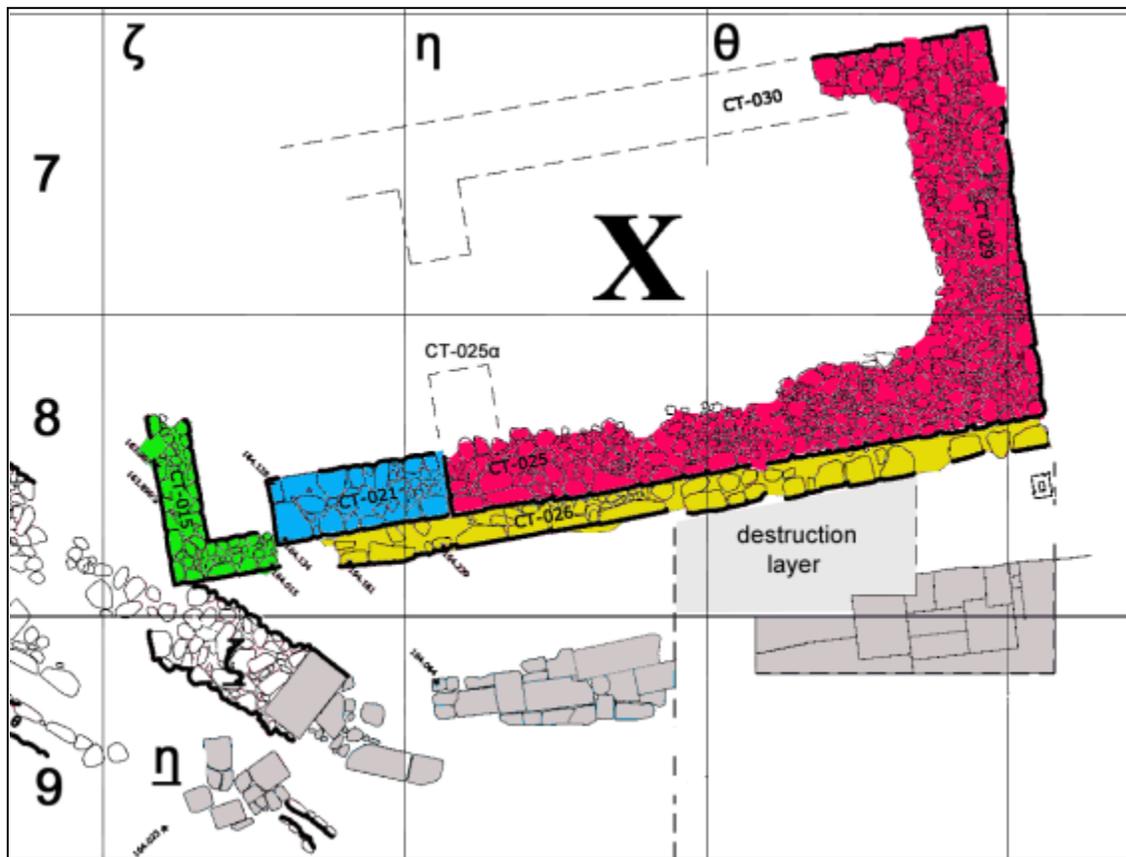


Figure 12: Plan of Building X (Michael Nelson)

Building X

In squares N13α10ζ8, η8, θ8, and θ7 we continued the excavation of Building X (Figure 12, Figure 13), the southwest corner of which had been excavated in 2010. This is a rectangular building 14.60 m. long and 7 m. wide. It consists of four compartments (Figure 12).

The first compartment (red in Figure 12) consists of walls CT-025 (l. 9.95-10.05 m., w. 1.00-1.70 m.), CT-029 (l. 6.65 m., w. 1.55-1.80 m.) and CT-030 (l. 3 m., w. 0.50-0.70 m.). These three walls are made with one (CT-029), two (CT-025) or five (CT-030) horizontal courses of flat stones connected with clay mortar and placed with their long axis parallel to the building so that they form a facade towards the exterior. Behind this facade the remainder of the width of these walls is formed by a horizontal layer of small irregular stones forming a flat surface aligned with the top surface of the facade; this surface may have been meant to support a mudbrick upperstructure. The west end of wall CT-025 seems to form a line continuing towards the north and it is possible that another wall may have started from that point (Figure 12).

The second compartment (blue in Figure 12) is wall CT-021 (l. 2.95 m., w. 1.10 m.). This short wall abuts the south side of CT-025 and is constructed of large flat stones (avg. dim. 0.20-0.45×0.25-0.50 m.). Its southwest corner is formed by a large (dim. 0.70×0.60×0.16 m.) rectangular block serving as the basis for an *anta* (Figure 15).

The third compartment (green in Figure 12) is a rectangular room formed by wall CT-015. This wall starts from the *anta* of wall CT-021 and extends towards the west to a length of 1.80 m.; then it turns to the north and continues for another 3.15 m. Its width is 0.50-0.70 m. It is constructed with one course of flat unworked stones (avg. dim. 0.20-0.30×0.25-0.50 m.), the largest ones placed with their flat surfaces towards the outside. The space between the large stones is filled with rubble.

The fourth compartment (yellow in Figure 12) consists of the long wall CT-026, to the south of walls CT-021 and CT-025. This wall is 11.95 m. long and 0.50-0.65 m. wide. Only the lower course is preserved, made of rectangular blocks placed on the flat surface created by a layer of small flat stones. The wall has two sections. The west section (to a length of 5.80 m. from its southwest corner) is constructed with carved blocks of similar dimensions (1.10 x 0.55 x 0.35 m.). The space between these blocks and walls CT-021/CT-025 is filled with small stones. The east section (last 5.15 m. to the east) is less carefully made, with large worked stones shorter and wider (0.55×0.20-0.35 m.) than those of the west section. The top surface of the stones of this wall is flat and meant to support another layer of worked stones or orthostates. The entire eastern section of the wall was initially covered by a destruction layer containing fallen blocks, numerous pieces of mudbricks, and small stones (part of this destruction layer has been left in situ: Figure 16, Figure 17). On the basis of the direction of the fallen material it would seem that it fell from above walls CT-025 and CT-026. In general, wall CT-026 "dresses" the south side of Building X (i.e. walls CT-021 and CT-025) and covers the point where those two walls connect, so that the building presents a finished view to the paved area to the south (see below).

The deposit to the south of the wall contained a large number of pieces of disintegrated mudbricks and pottery which, on preliminary analysis, appears to be LH IIIB and also includes some LH IIIC pieces. Also on the basis of preliminary inspection the pottery from the foundations of walls CT-015, CT-021 and CT-026 can be dated to LH IIIA2/IIIB, suggesting that Building X could be dated to that general time frame.

One of the puzzles about this building is that its interior was totally devoid of finds and was entirely undisturbed by human activity. There are two possible explanations. The first is that we are digging above the floor level of the building and that its interior has been destroyed. The second is that this area was never used, because Building X may have never been completed. This conclusion is supported also by the facts that only the external sides of walls CT-015, CT-021, CT-025, and CT-030 form facades, while the internal ones are unformed; and that the eastern section of wall CT-026 is not as carefully

made as the western section, giving the impression of a rushed construction. An additional argument may also be provided by an erect vertical slab standing at a distance of 0.50 m. from the southeast corner of wall CT-026. This slab, measuring 0.35 h. x 0.23 w. x 0.18 th. (Figure 17), is aligned with the east facade of wall CT-029 (Figure 18), which it seems to mark. In this respect, it is possible that this slab functioned as a sort of a *horos*, used by the builders as a point of reference for the construction of the east side of the building and remained in place because the building was never completed.

The reason for which the building was never completed may be related to the destruction layer that covered the slab and the surrounding area: it is reasonable to postulate that construction was interrupted by the destruction of the building and its surrounding area.



Figure 13: Aerial view of Building X

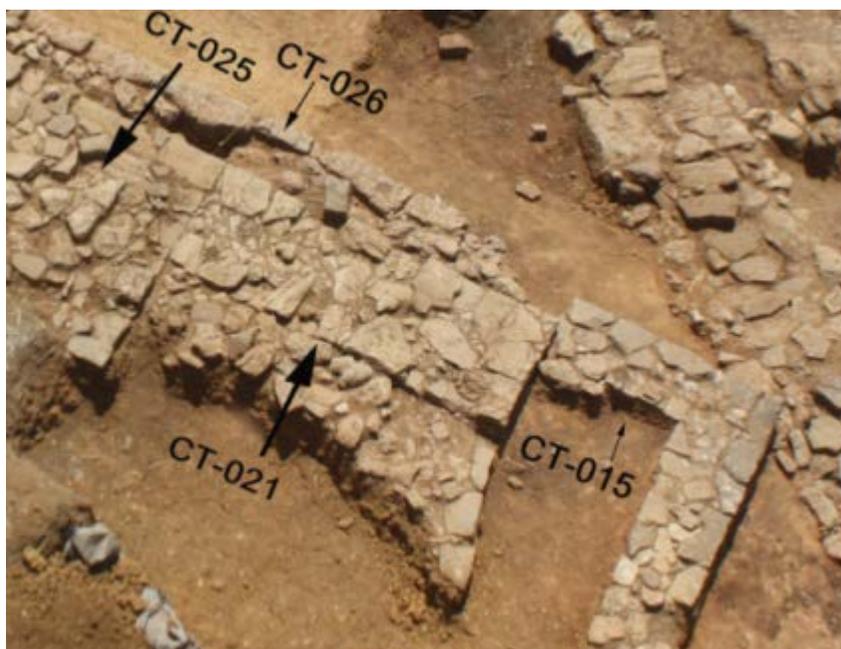


Figure 14: Aerial view of the west end of Building X.*Figure 15: The west anta of wall ct-021*

Paved courtyard and drains

To the south of Building X we uncovered parts of an extensive paved open area. Unfortunately, this paved area has been severely damaged and is only preserved in two parts. The first (Figure 12, Figure 16) starts from the east end of square N13a1009¹ and continues to the west in a parallel direction of wall CT-026 to a length of 16 m., at a distance of 1.85 m. from the south facade of the wall. In square N13a1009 it is preserved only around the large fallen orthostate that covers the entrance of drain ζ. The second part of the paved area had been excavated in 2010 and had then been considered part of a road, but the discovery of more parts of the same paved area has shown that it belongs to the same paved floor. The pavement is made of large worked limestone blocks with square or rectangular section, carefully placed on the ground so that their top surfaces form a uniform flat level.

In what the use of this paved area is concerned, it seems likely that it was used as a courtyard or square/piazza. Its original total surface cannot be determined at the moment, because parts of it continue in the unexcavated squares; in the excavated area, however, it seems to extend from the south side of Building X to the east side of rooms Z1 and Z2, a total area of about 250 sq. m. (16 m. sw.-ne. x 16 m. nw.-se.). Because the floor of the paved courtyard is at the same depth as the lower line of the ashlar blocks of wall CT-026 (Figure 19), it would appear that the intention of the Mycenaean builders was for the ashlar south facade of Building X to be visible by those who stood on the paved area. On the basis of this architectural connection of the paved area with Building X, it seems that the two structures were connected and form part of the same building project.

¹ It continues into the unexcavated square 19.



Figure 16: View from the southwest of the southeast corner of building X showing the destruction layer, the pavement, and the stele



Figure 17: View from the southeast of the southeast corner of Building X showing the destruction layer, the pavement, and the stele



Figure 18: The stele in relation to the east wall of Building X



Figure 19: The pavement and the south facade of Building X from the south



Figure 20: Aerial view of drains ζ and θ



Figure 21: Drain ζ from the southeast



Figure 22: The south external wall of drain ζ

To the same building project also belong the two drains (ζ and θ) that we had partially excavated in 2010 (Figure 20). The slabs covering the entrance of the drains are a continuation of the slabs of the pavement and in fact the floor of the pavement slopes gently from east to west, so that rain water could flow in the drain. Drain ζ starts from square N14α10ζ9 and runs towards the northwest. It was followed to a length of 12 m., but its continuation is lost under the rubble that covers the northeast corner of the CT, which remains to be cleared. Its construction is massive (Figure 21), reaching an external width of 1.60 m. Its external walls are constructed of seven courses of medium-sized flat stones, reaching a total height of 0.70-0.80 m. (Figure 22). The interior of the drain is 0.30-0.45 m. wide and 0.40-0.50 m. deep and is covered with large slabs, carefully placed to form a level surface.

Drain θ starts from square N13a10ε9, continues towards the north, and then turns to the west and runs parallel to the north facade of the CT. It was followed to a length of 1 m. from the southwest corner of square N13a10γ8. Its east end is covered by the slabs of the pavement, but after it turns towards the north it continues uncovered. It has an average width of 0.35 m. and is constructed with one or two horizontal courses of small and medium-sized stones. In square N13a10γ08 we found large fragments of clay pipes that seem to have channeled the waters from the drain to the slope below. The exit of the drains has not been located yet.

Prospects for the future

In 2012 and 2013 we plan on holding study seasons, to complete the analysis and study of the material recovered in the last five excavation seasons. Full-scale excavation will resume in 2014.