

IKLAINA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

2016 FIELD REPORT

Michael B. Cosmopoulos

Introduction

The overarching objective of the Iklaina project is to test existing hierarchical models of state formation in Greece by examining the role that regional centers of power played in the establishment of complex states. The data for this investigation are provided by the systematic excavation of Iklaina, a regional center of power in the Mycenaean state of Pylos.

The project is conducted under the auspices of the Archaeological Society at Athens and the direction of the present writer. The 2016 excavation season, which lasted from June 6 to July 10, 2016, was funded by: a subsidy by the University of Missouri-St. Louis; grants by the National Endowment for the Humanities (Collaborative Grant RZ-51493-12), the National Geographic Society (grant no. 9853-16), the Institute for Aegean Prehistory; and a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCabe and Family. In the project participated about 30 archaeologists and specialists and 24 students and volunteers from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and other American, Canadian, and European universities.

The objective of the field season was to produce new datasets that would allow us to study: the distribution and differentiation of storage, processing and consumption patterns in domestic and administrative contexts; to reconstruct the historical trajectory of the settlement (esp. in terms of its physical and functional transformation after its integration by the Palace of Nestor); and to determine the precise role that monumental and formal architecture played in solidifying the authority of the Iklaina rulers before and after integration. Those objectives were met through excavation in the Cyclopean Terrace Complex and the massive wall CT-036, the paved road in front of Building X, the Industrial area, and the new plot that was purchased recently, referred to in this report as the "New plot" (Figure 1).

The Cyclopean Terrace Complex

NORTHEAST FOUNDATION OF THE CYCLOPEAN TERRACE

In square N13a10β8 excavation continued in the trench in front of the northeast corner of the CT (Figure 2, marked with the arrow in Figure 3). The north part of the excavated area consisted of sterile soil all the way to the bottom of the square, except for a narrow (0.30-0.40 m wide) deposit along the face of the CT. This narrow deposit contained stone rubble, few LH IIIA2-III B sherds, and fragments of plaster, some of which were painted and reached all the way to the



Figure 1. Aerial photo of the site at the end of the 2016 season



Figure 3: General view of the north face of the CT. The arrow marks the trench in the nw. corner



Figure 4: View of the n. wall of the CT from the north



Figure 5: View from the east of the narrow deposit in front of the north face of the CT and of the protruding stones under the lowest course of Cyclopean blocks

WALL CT-036

Excavation also resumed in square N13a0γ5, in order to follow the massive wall CT-036 (Figure 6). We were able to follow the wall to a length of approximately 15 m, at which point it seems to turn towards the east, although the excavation did not progress to the next square and

the continuation of the wall remains unclear. Pieces of mudbrick and fragments of white plaster found on and around the stones of the wall suggest that it may have supported a mudbrick upper-structure, possibly coated with plaster. Further excavation is needed in this area to identify the north end of the wall.



Figure 6: Aerial view of the CT. The arrow marks wall CT-036.

BUILDING X

The east face of Building X, which was partly cleared in 2010 and 2011, was totally cleaned from the adjoining soil and allowed us to reconstruct its construction. The wall is 6.54 m long and is preserved to a maximum height of 0.48 m. It is constructed of 4 to 5 courses of regularly cut limestone blocks of different sizes: the larger ones are 0.48-0.69 m long, the medium-sized ones 0.25-0.30 m long, and the small ones 0.10-0.15 m long.

PAVED ROAD

Excavation to uncover more of the paved road that lies south of Building X continued this season in trenches N13a10i08/09 and κ08/09 (Figure 7). The road now extends a total of 14.4 m and seems to turn to the north in squares N13a10i09/κ09, where a series of large flat stones lined up with the floor of the paved surface of the road were discovered. This paved area that runs towards the north was cleared to a width of 0.40-0.50 m and to a length of 2.5 m to the north until it reaches an area of either plaster floor or fallen wall plaster in N13a10κ08. The area of plaster is 1.15 m long (east-west), but further excavation is needed to establish its width. The area of plaster may also be associated with two ashlar blocks framing it to the east and west. The western block (1 in Figure 7 and Figure 8) was excavated in 2015 and is almost square (0.65 x 0.55 m). The eastern (2 in Figure 7 and Figure 8) is rectangular, measuring 0.40 m e-w and 1.0 m n-s.

Like the western block, it has been exposed to a depth of approximately 0.30 m and rests at a similar elevation. The care taken to work the two blocks into rectangular shapes and the presence of both the paved road and plaster point to the possibility that this area was an entrance, but further excavation is required.



Figure 7. Aerial view of Building X, the road, and the north extension, showing the west (1) and east (2) blocks



Figure 8: View from the south of the extension of the paved road and the two blocks (1, 2)

The Industrial Area

Excavation continued south of rooms H.1, H.2, and K.2, excavated during the 2015 field season. The southern boundary of room H.2 was discovered this year. Room H.2 is a rectangular room to the west of K.2 that has the newly excavated wall N-095 as the southern boundary. Wall N-095 has a maximum excavated length of 3.4 m and a width of 0.45 m. Two courses of N-095 have been exposed to a height of 0.25 m, but the bottom of the wall has not yet been found. Each course of the wall is constructed in two to three rows of unworked and roughly shaped stones. The larger stones have a maximum length of 0.20 m while the smaller stones range in size from 0.10 – 0.12 m.

To the south of room H.2 is an enclosed open area, probably a courtyard open to the sky, with a plaster floor (K3, Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11). The northern and western sides of the courtyard are defined by walls N-096 and N-097, respectively. Wall N-097 is oriented north-south with a preserved length of 2.15 m and a width of 0.50 m. The currently excavated depth of wall N-097 is 0.25 m in two courses of stones. Each course is constructed of two to three rows of medium sized roughly shaped or unshaped stones, ranging in size from 0.15 to 0.25 m. Wall N-096 is oriented east-west with a preserved length of 4 m. Two courses of the wall have been excavated, but the wall continues deeper. Each course is constructed of medium sized stones, ranging in size from 0.20 to 0.25 m and larger blocks ranging from 0.40 to 0.50 m with a row of smaller stones between the outer two rows. Most of the stones are limestone with a few larger conglomerate stones.

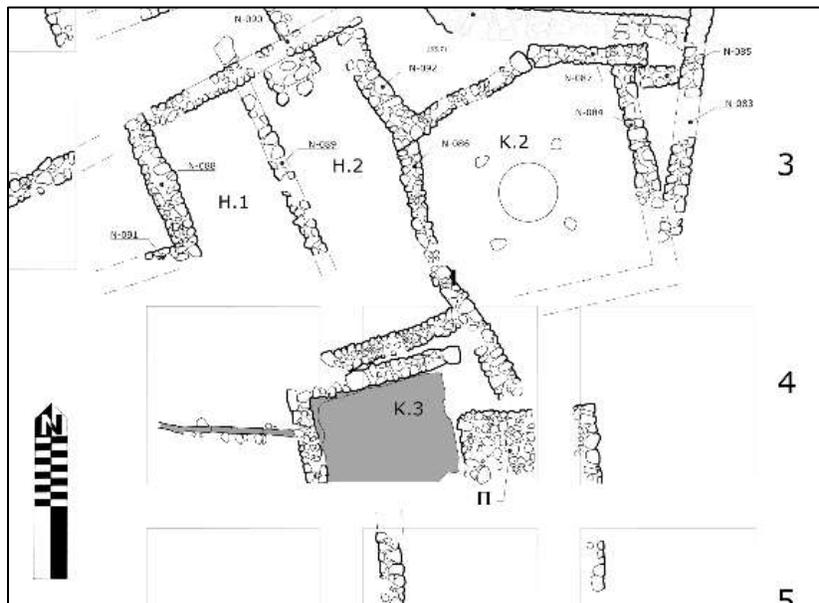


Figure 9: Plan of the industrial area showing the courtyard with the plaster floor (K3) and the platform (II)

The floor is made of plaster mixed with pebbles (Figure 11). Ceramic sherds and fragmented vessels found in situ on the floor date to LH IIIA-III B. From the west wall of the room starts a drain (K), which is preserved to a length of 6.55 m. The drain is 0.15 m wide and has a square section; it is constructed of flat terracotta tiles, 2 cm thick, lined up in a row. Cover

slabs were found inside part of the drain along with pottery dating to the LH IIIA2- IIIB period. The bottom of Drain K rests on the plaster floor, which makes its function unclear since it would not have easily drained water from the plaster floor.

A stone platform (Feature A), was uncovered east of the plaster floor with a width of 4.3 m north-south and 3.1 m east-west. Feature A was constructed of at least three courses of large and medium sized roughly shaped and unworked stones up to a size of 0.35 m. Feature was probably in place before the construction of the plaster floor because the floor has a finished edge on the western side of the stone platform.



Figure 10. Aerial view of the plaster floor, the platform (II), and the drain (K)



Figure 11: View of drain K and the plaster floor from the west

South of the room with the plaster floor is another building, which at this point is defined only by the N-S oriented wall N-099. A length of 7.6 m of wall N-099 has been excavated with a width of 0.55 m in two rows of medium-sized roughly shaped stones. The interior of the building is probably to the east of the wall since ceramic vessels were excavated in situ in that area. According to the pottery this room could be dated in LH IIIA1- LH IIIB1 period but further excavation is needed to confirm the date and interpretation of the building.

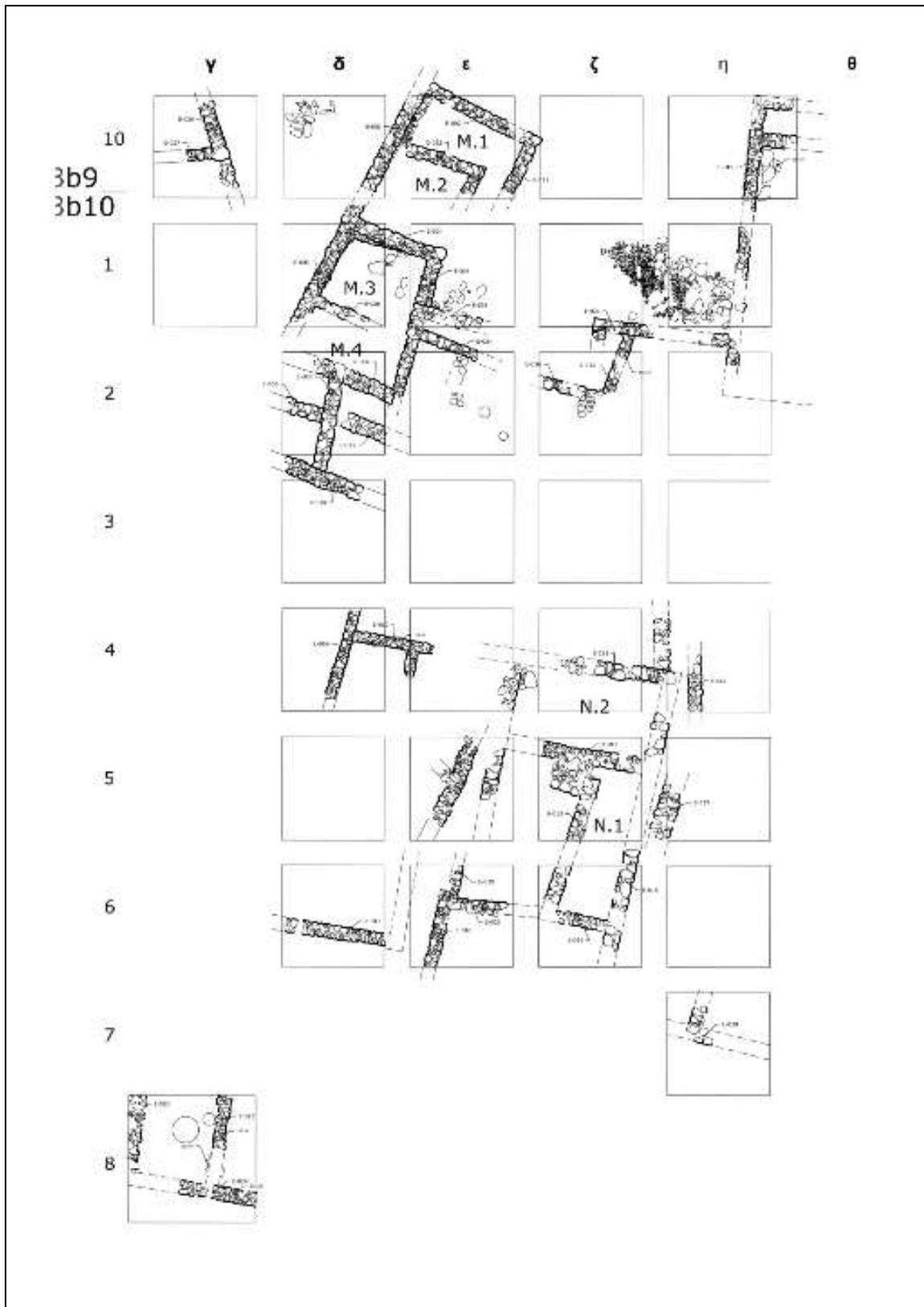


Figure 12. State plan of the new plot. M. Nelson



Figure 13: Aerial view of the new plot

The New Plot Sector

In this new plot we discovered parts of a room containing broken pithoi, and also two larger complexes, called M and N (Figure 12, Figure 13).

PITHOS ROOM

A room delineated by walls E-023, E-024, and E-026 and containing two pithoi and portions of plaster floors was discovered in situ (lower left corner, square N13b10γ8 in Figure 12). The floor of the room is covered with fragments of storage jars and two large pithoi that fell and remained in situ (marked as 1 and 2 in Figure 14; cf. Figure 15). Because this room was found late in the season, it was not excavated; the trench was backfilled to await excavation in a future season.

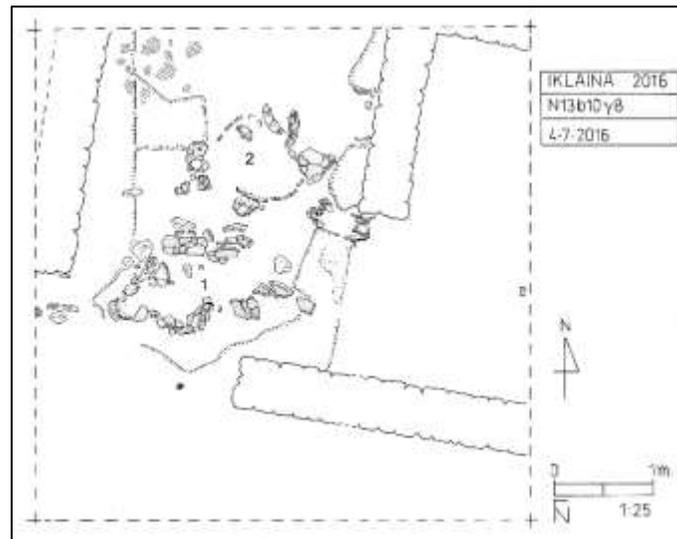


Figure 14: Plan of the pithos fragments



Figure 15: View of the Pithos room from the east

BUILDING N

Room N.1 is a rectangular room defined by walls E-015, E-013, E-016, and E-014. Its dimensions are 1.96 m east-west and 5.8 m north-south. Wall E-015 has a preserved length of 6.42 m and is 0.55 m wide. The wall was constructed of only one course to a depth of 0.15 m, with two rows of roughly shaped or unworked stones, primarily limestone blocks with a few conglomerates. The larger stones are 0.60 m in size, while smaller stones are 0.20 m in size. Wall E-013 is 5.10 m long, 0.55 m wide, and preserved to a height of 0.28 m. It is built in one course with two to three rows of worked and roughly shaped limestone blocks. Large stones in the wall are approximately 0.30 m in size while small stones are closer to 0.15 m. Wall E-016 forms the southern boundary of Room N.1. It is about 2.55 m long, 0.45 m wide and 0.20 m high. It is built with two courses and in two to three rows with smaller stones in the central row. The stones are roughly shaped limestone blocks. The large stones are approximately 0.25 m in size and the small-medium stones are 0.20 m. Wall E-014 is 6.42 m long and 0.5 m wide with a maximum preserved height of 0.24 m in two courses. The wall is constructed of worked, roughly shaped limestone blocks and just a few conglomerate stones. The bigger and medium in the two outside rows (30 m.) and the smaller (0.2 m.) at the center. Ceramic sherds dating to LH IIIA- IIIB1 were found inside Room N.1, as well as other objects, such as a spindle whorl and stone tools. West of Room N.1, but attached to the south of Wall E-014 was a stone platform constructed of large stones with a flat surface on the top.

Room N.2 is north of room N.1 and shares wall E-014. The main orientation of the room is east-west, although the full length in that direction is unknown since the east and west walls of the room have not yet been identified. The north side of Room N.2 is defined by Wall E-011. Wall E-011 has a preserved length of 4.22 m and is 0.55 m wide. The wall is constructed in one to two courses with a maximum height of 0.30 m. Each course has two-three rows of roughly shaped limestone blocks. The two outside rows are constructed of larger stones (0.27-0.43 m) while the central row stones are smaller (0.10-0.15 m). Among the limestone is one conglomerate stone. The ceramic sherds found in this room date it to LH IIIA2.

Multiple figurines were found in this area including two Phi-shaped figurines, two female figurines, and a zoomorphic figurine. Most figurines were not found in relationship to the defined rooms of Building N.

BUILDING M AND SURROUNDING AREA

On the north side of the new plot is Building M, which is connected to another building to the East by a courtyard area, and has an unknown relationship with another building to the west. Building M is orientated northeast-southwest (like Building N) and contains at least four rooms.

Rooms M.1 and M.2 were originally a single room formed by walls E-001, E-002, E-021, and E-004 and later subdivided by E-022, which abuts E-001 (FIGURE). M.1 is 4.0 m east-west and 1.73 m north-south, while M.2 is 2.80 m east-west and 3.10 m north-south. Wall E-001, which continues to the south as E-005, has a combined length of 11.20 m, while E-002 has a preserved length of 3.88 m, E-021 has been excavated to a length of 1.20 m, and E-004 is 4.18 m long. E-022,

which separates M.1 from M.2 is 3.36 m long. All five of the walls were constructed in courses of 2 to 3 rows of stones, but Wall E-004 is only 0.32 m wide, while the other four walls are all 0.48 to 0.50 m wide. All five of the walls were constructed of worked and roughly shaped limestone blocks ranging in size from 0.38 m to 0.10 m. The depth of the walls also varies: E-001 has a maximum depth of 0.50 m in 3 to 5 course, while E-002 has a maximum depth of 0.27 m in 2 courses. E-004 has been excavated to a depth of 0.52 m with 5 courses and E-022 has been excavated to a depth of 0.38 m in 2 to 3 courses, but the bottom of neither wall has not yet been found. Similarly, E-021 has been excavated to a depth of 0.25 m, where there is a pebble floor surface inside the room, but may extend below the floor. Both M.1 and M.2 date to at least LH IIIB, based on the pottery found in each room. They also both contained a number of lead strips, along with painted and undecorated pottery.

M.3 is 3.40 m east-west and 2.75 m north-south. Room M.3 shares wall E-004 with M.2 to the north and the continuation of wall E-001 as E-005 on the western side. The southern wall of M.3 is E-020, while E-003 is to the east. E-020 has an excavated length of 2.55 m, while E-003 is at least 6.68 m long, but may continue further to the south. Both walls are approximately 0.45 m wide, but E-003 is constructed of 4 courses of 2 to 3 rows of stones, while E-020 is only one course of 1 to 2 rows of stones. Both walls are primarily of limestone with one to two limestone blocks respectively. According to the diagnostic pottery, the latest date for Room M.3 is LH IIIA2.

Room M.4 is south of M.3 and has a maximum extent 3.80 m east-west and 2.0 m north-south. On the east side is the continuation of E-003 from room M.3 and on the west the continuation of Wall E-005/001. E-020 is on the north side of Room M.4, while E-006 is on the southeastern side of the room. Wall E-006 has a length of 1.90 m and a width of 0.50 m in 2 to 3 rows of stones. The maximum excavated depth of the wall is 0.75 m in 5 courses, but the bottom of the wall has not yet been found. The room seems to have been used as a trash midden after abandonment due to the large amounts of pottery (including a number of old breaks that join) and bone. Among the other artifacts found in this room were two anthropomorphic figurines and a spindle whorl.

To the east of Building M is a courtyard area (Figure 16), that connects to another building defined to the east by the long wall E-019 (Figure 12). The courtyard had areas with multiple types of paving including plaster, pebbles, cobbles, and flagstones. On the eastern side of the courtyard, the floor appears to have had multiple phases with rounded, white pebbles covered by large flat slabs, while in other areas the paving slabs were not found. Further excavation in and around the courtyard area will be conducted in the future to clarify the function of this area.



Figure 16: View of the courtyard to the east of Building M

On the west side of Building M are remnants of earlier phases of the site. Wall E-001 rests on a layer of red clay soil that is rich in building material, plaster fragments (some painted) and pottery (also some painted). This layer extends to the west into the next trench where the sediment also includes wood charcoal and signs of burning, as well as part of a Phi figurine. Below this layer is a light brown sediment that contained small amounts of building material and clay, but was rich in pottery, including painted pottery). Also within this layer was a small amount of bronze and an anthropomorphic figurine. Underneath this layer was a medium to dark reddish brown clay layer, which also contained well-preserved painted pottery in large quantities. Adjacent to this layer and also underneath the light brown sediment was a feature constructed of stone that appears to be a storage bin. Below the dark brown sediment was a layer of stones that are probably rubble.

Further to the west is the eastern side of another building, which is on a different orientation than Building M (NW-SW instead of NE-SW), but which is oriented in a similar direction with the skewed phase noted in the older section of the excavation to the west. Further excavation is needed in this area to delineate the relationship between this building, Building M, and the previously excavated areas.

Conclusions

In the 2016 field season we were successful in reconstructing more closely the historical trajectory and socio-political and economic organization of the site. Specifically:

- 1) Historical trajectory of Iklaina. This year's excavations provided proof that the ambitious building program that was undertaken at Iklaina, involving the Cyclopean Terrace Complex, Building X with the road and the entrance gate, and the paved piazza can be dated to the LH III2/IIIB period (ca. 1350-1250 BC). The discovery of ashlar blocks from the superstructure of the Cyclopean Terrace building indicates formal construction similar to that of the main capital at the Palace of Nestor.
- 2) Functional organization of the site. The discovery of a) the entrance gate to the administrative center, and b) the residential quarter in the new plot indicates a clear separation of activity areas within the site.

These results open up a set of new questions, as they appear to be incompatible with the existing hypothesis for the emergence of states. On the one hand, the date of the construction of the monumental building program at Iklaina places it at a time when, based on what was known until now, Iklaina was a subject of the Palace of Nestor, the main/primary capital of the Pylian state. On the other hand, the clear separation of activity areas at Iklaina is more compatible with the intrasite organization of primary settlements, such as the Palace of Nestor, and less with that of other secondary settlements, such as Nichoria, where such a separation does not exist.

Based on the above, the existing hypothesis, grounded on hierarchy and clear vertical stratification of primary vs. secondary centers of power, needs to be adjusted. The revised hypothesis, according to which the formation of the state of Pylos was not the result of the forceful integration of lower-order centers by a higher-order one, but instead of the unification of centers of power more or less on the same level of hierarchy, will be explored in the next excavation season.