Midea: The Megaron Complex and Shrine Area


TEXT

by

Gisela Walberg
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Gisela Walberg

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Published by
INSTAP Academic Press
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2007
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Walberg, Gisela.
p. cm. -- (Prehistory monographs ; 20)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Midea (Extinct city) 2. Excavations (Archaeology) --Greece --Argolis. 3. Argolis (Greece) --Antiquities. I. Title.
DF221.M54W37 2007
938'.8--dc22
2007004520

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INSTAP Academic Press
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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Printed in the United States of America
Dedicated to

Jeanne F. Stanton and Thomas M. Stanton
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When I was invited to excavate at Midea in 1985, the areas of investigation were divided between the excavators. While K. Demakopoulou excavated at the West Gate and P. Åström at the East Gate, it was agreed that I should investigate the Lower Terraces in the area below and north of the East Gate (Pl. 1). It was also decided that the excavators should publish their finds in separate volumes.

The excavations in the different areas were carried out independently. Thus, the responsibility for the results presented in this (and the previous) volume is entirely my own. In some cases, I arrived at conclusions (for example concerning the stratigraphy and aspects of the LH IIIB and LH IIIC periods), which may differ from those of the other two excavators.

The investigation on the Lower Terraces took place during two different periods: 1985–1991 and 1994–1997. The 1985 and 1987 seasons were preliminary in nature. From 1989, support from the University of Cincinnati made it possible for me to undertake large-scale excavations, which led to the discovery of the sanctuary area on Terrace 9 and the megaron on Terrace 10. During the excavations in 1989, a Byzantine terrace wall and remains of the Middle Helladic settlement were found. Trenches excavated in 1990 on Terrace 9 revealed rooms which later could be identified as part of a Mycenaean shrine area. The Bronze Age strata were undisturbed and included a LH IIIC stratum as well as a LH IIIB floor, sealed by a stratum of debris. A room and an outdoor area were found on Terrace 10 next to the fortification wall which protects the eastern side of the acropolis of Midea. In 1991 the first nodule with a Linear B inscription was discovered in a trench on Terrace 10, and the northern wall of a large building, later identified as the megaron, appeared. Finds from continued excavations by my team in the shrine area included a fragment of a wheelmade female terracotta figure and a bovine figure as well as a stirrup jar decorated with double axes, horns of consecration, birds, and flower motifs. The results of the 1985–1991 excavations were published in Walberg, Midea I.

After three study seasons, the excavations were resumed in 1994. My immediate aim was to obtain information about the sanctuary area and the megaron and their relation to adjacent buildings. The results of these excavations are presented in this volume.

Cincinnati, November 2002
Gisela Walberg
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to the Swedish Institute in Athens, under whose auspices the excavations were undertaken. The American School of Classical Studies in Athens housed several participants of the project on various occasions on their way to and from the Argolid and provided access to literature and references. The excavation on the Lower Terraces was entirely funded by the University of Cincinnati through the Louise Taft Semple Fund. I am grateful to the Classics Department and the Louise Taft Semple Fund for granting me the ability to excavate for five weeks and to study the finds for three subsequent weeks each summer for seven years (1994–2001). The Department also funded conservation of the architectural remains uncovered by the excavations on the Lower Terraces in 1992 and 1998–1999. The support was generous, and I was able to invite scientific specialists to work on the excavation team.

I am most grateful to the Ephors of the Argolid and the Corinthia, Dr. E. Spathari and her successor Dr. A. Mantis, members of the Ephoria, and the staff at the Nauplion Museum who gave us help over the years, including Dr. E. Palaiologou-Kourachanes and the museum conservator, Mrs. G. Kapsali. Thanks are also due to Mr. E. Drougas, the guard of the sites of Dendra and Midea, the conservators, Mr. G. Karambalis and Mrs. L. Karambalis, and Mr. P. Papageorgopoulos of the village of Midea, who assisted them.

We again owe a special debt to our foreman, D. Niteros, to his brother, J. Niteros of Nemea, and to our workmen from Midea, Dendra, and other villages in the Argolid for their skill and hard work. We also extend warm thanks to Mr. J. Demas, whose family once owned the land on which we excavated. Our sherdwashers worked patiently with thousands of bags filled with dirty ceramics covered with hard calcium incrustation. We depended on Mr. and Mrs. T. Sarris for all our transportation, and I am grateful to them for their efficiency and friendship. I would also like to thank the Vallianatos family who provided me and a number of members of the team with accommodations and excellent meals.

We are indebted to the governor of the Argolid, the mayor of Midea, and the president and secretary of the Hagia Triada Union for their support of the excavations.


The photographers were T. King, S.L. Olfano, A. Glenn, and M. France. They elegantly solved the problems involved with archaeological photography, both in the field and in the storerooms, and entered photographic data into a database, which helped me find features and objects on the hundreds of rolls of film that were shot. I am particularly indebted to Mrs. A. Glenn and Prof. M. France for many beautiful museum photographs.

Dr. D.S. Reese worked on the zoological material, and his scientific expertise helped us in our interpretation and reconstruction of the Bronze Age environment. His results are presented in Appendix A. Valuable suggestions about the human bones found on the Lower Terraces were given by Dr. A. Ingvarsson-Sundström. Her results appear in Appendix B. Dr. S. Mossman analyzed lead objects, and Professor V. Scarborough investigated possible traces of ancient water management at Midea. Professor J. Hancock created a computer model of Midea, especially of the architectural remains found on the Lower Terraces, and tested architectural hypotheses about rooms, spaces, and construction practices. Mr. E. Markou, his son, Mr. A. Markou, an architect of Larissa, and Professor E. Nanas of the Technologikon Ekpaideutikon Idryma of Larissa undertook the digital survey for the contour map and other maps and plans published here and in the first Midea volume. R. Fitzsimons set up an inventory database, and organized the finds in a new storeroom in the Leonardo Building of the Nauplion Museum. I am indebted to them all.

I would like to thank the following colleagues and friends for valuable advice in connection with this publication, and in many cases, also Midea I: A. Barakari, P.P. Betancourt, B. Burns, P. Darque, J. Deddens, S. Deger-Jalkotzy, O. Dickinson, S. Dietz, H. and M. van Effenterre, D. Evely, E. French, J. Hancock, N. Hirschfeld, S. Hiller, S. Iakovidis, V. Karageorghis, N. Kardulias, the late K. Kilian, O. Krzyszowska, A. Leonard Jr., B. Lindros-Wohl, H. Martlew, M.C. Nelson, Th. Papadopoulos, C. Piteros, C. Runnels, B. Rutkowski, and R. Touchais. J. Maran generously shared his expertise and provided valuable suggestions about the MH material and
the architecture of the megaron complex. I am greatly indebted to the late C. Podzuweit for discussions of the LH IIIB and LH IIIC periods at Tiryns and Midea. I am grateful to I. Pini for permitting me to use the excellent photographs and drawings from CMS V.3.2.

I reserve special gratitude for the many friends in Cincinnati and elsewhere who expressed their interest in and support of the Midea Excavations. I would also like to thank Mrs. G. Salesiotou of Nauplion for her friendship, support, and advice.

My greatest debt in connection with the publication of this volume is owed to three persons: P. Boulter, K. Giering Tweddle, and E. Markou. Plans and drawings of architectural remains from all three excavation areas as well as maps of the entire site (Walberg 1998, pls. 3a–c), contour maps, and maps of the excavated areas were completed by E. Markou to ensure consistency. I have depended on his skill, support, and encouragement throughout the years at Midea. P. Boulter and K. Giering Tweddle have done the editorial work of this volume, including the coordination of different chapters by different authors. In addition, K. Giering Tweddle compiled the data for the catalog and organized the plates. They have also both provided critical reading. Their friendship and loyalty have been invaluable, and it is thanks to them that the finds from the 1994–1997 excavations on the Lower Terraces are now ready for publication.

L. Kvapil and D. Osland also helped with the checking of references and editing of the manuscript.

The Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP) provided generous funding for the completion of the catalog and database as well as for drawings of finds, the layout of the plates, and the completion of plans and sections. We also received a grant from INSTAP for a digital site model of Midea and the architectural remains, which was invaluable for the testing of hypotheses about rooms, space, and construction techniques.

I am deeply grateful to the trustees of the Louise Taft Semple Fund of the Department of Classics and to the faculty of the department for the funds to excavate and to prepare the manuscript. They also furnished the color plates.

I am also deeply grateful to INSTAP Academic Press for the publication of this volume, and to Professor P.P. Betancourt, Miss S. Ferrence, and the staff at INSTAP.

April 2003

Gisela Walberg
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA
Archäologischer Anzeiger

AEA
Aegean Archaeology

Agora
The Athenian Agora

AJA
American Journal of Archaeology

Åkerström, Berbati II
A. Åkerström, Berbati II: The Pictorial Pottery

Albers, Spätmykenische Stadtheiligtümer
G. Albers, Spätmykenische Stadtheiligtümer: Systematische Analyse und vergleichende Auswertung der archäologischen Befunde

Älin, Ende
P. Älin, Das Ende der mykenischen Fundstätten auf dem griechischen Festland

AR
Archaeological Reports

ArchDelt
Ἀρχαιολογικῶν Δελτίων

ArchEph
Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἑφημερίς

Åström, Cuirass
P. Åström, The Cuirass Tomb and Other Finds at Dendra

Banks, Lerna
E. Banks, The Early and Middle Helladic Small Objects from Lerna

BAR
British Archaeological Reports

Bergati-Limnes

Bernabò Brea, Poliochi
L. Bernabò Brea, Poliochi: Città preistorica nell’isola di Lemnos

BICS
Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies

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BSA
Annual of the British School at Athens

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SIMA Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
SIMA-PB SIMA Pocketbook
SMEA Studi micenici ed egeo-anatolici
Smith, Water Management T.K. Smith, Water Management in the Late Bronze Age Argolid, Greece, Ph.D. diss.

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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bronze Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>Coarse Ware</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Diameter</td>
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<td>DB</td>
<td>Dark Burnished</td>
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<td>Dim</td>
<td>Dimension</td>
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<td>DOL</td>
<td>Dark on Light</td>
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<td>Dietz Shape</td>
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<tr>
<td>EH</td>
<td>Early Helladic</td>
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<td>Early Mycenaean (LH IIIA2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fab</td>
<td>Fabric</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Furumark Motif</td>
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<td>Height</td>
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<td>Length</td>
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<td>LDW</td>
<td>Lustrous Decorated Ware</td>
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<td>LH</td>
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<td>LOD</td>
<td>Light-on-Dark</td>
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<td>Maximum</td>
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<td>MD</td>
<td>Mycenaean Decorated</td>
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<td>MH</td>
<td>Middle Helladic and Middle Helladic-type wares</td>
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<td>Min.</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
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<td>MM</td>
<td>Middle Minoan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>Nauplion Study Collection</td>
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<td>PBA</td>
<td>Post–Bronze Age</td>
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<td>Pnt.</td>
<td>Paint</td>
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<td>Th.</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>West Anatolian</td>
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<td>WD</td>
<td>White on Burnished Dark</td>
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Terms:

- **Tournavitou, Ivory Houses**: I. Tournavitou, *The “Ivory Houses” at Mycenae*
- **Tripathi, Bronzework**: D.N. Tripathi, *Bronzework of Mainland Greece from c. 2600 B.C. to c. 1450 B.C.*
- **Tzavela-Evjen, Lithares**: H. Tzavela-Evjen, *Arbëre*
- **Ubelaker, Remains**: D.H. Ubelaker, *Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation, Analysis, Interpretation*
- **Valmin, SME**: N. Valmin, *The Swedish Messenia Expedition*
- **Vitelli, Franchthi**: K.D. Vitelli, *Franchthi Neolithic Pottery 2: The Later Neolithic Ceramic Phases 3 to 5*
- **Wace and Blegen**: C. Zerner, P. Zerner, and J. Winder, eds., *Wace and Blegen: Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Aegean Bronze Age, 1939–1989*
- **Waldstein, Argive Heraeum**: C. Waldstein, *The Argive Heraeum*
- **WBM**: Well Built Mycenae
- **Weber-Hiden, Tiryns XI**: I. Weber-Hiden in *Tiryns XI*
- **Weisshaar, Tiryns XI**: H.-J. Weisshaar in *Tiryns XI*
- **Wienecke, Lerna IV**: M. Wiencke, *The Architecture, Stratification, and Pottery of Lerna III (Lerna IV)*
- **Wünsche, Studien zur äginetischen Keramik**: R. Wünsche, *Studien zur äginetischen Keramik der frühen und mittleren Bronzezeit*
Midea: The Megaron Complex and Shrine Area


FIGURES AND PLATES

by
Gisela Walberg
Midea: The Megaron Complex and Shrine Area


FIGURES AND PLATES

BY

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Published by
INSTAP Academic Press
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2007
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