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The Role of Midea in the Network of Mycenaean Citadels in the Argolid*

The Acropolis of Midea and the other two great citadels of the Mycenaean Argolid, Mycenae and Tiryns, dominate the Argive plain in the northeast Peloponnese. The first investigation of Midea was made by Axel Persson in 1939,[1] followed by a small trial excavation by Verdelis and Åström in 1963.[2] Yet systematic excavations at this site started only in 1983, quite recently in comparison to the work at the other two citadels. The excavations continue to the present day as a joint Greek-Swedish undertaking and have shed much light on the history of Midea, the importance of which is gradually becoming manifest.[3] The Acropolis itself with its imposing Cyclopean fortification and its many significant finds, comparable to those from Mycenae and Tiryns, indicate that Midea was a centre of wealth and power. As one of the three great citadels of the Argolid, it would have had a main position among the other important Argive centres.

Midea is situated at the eastern end of the Argive plain, half way between Mycenae and Tiryns.[4] It was connected with both sites by roads and it must have had control of the road which would have led to the east coast of the Argolid via the foothills of Arachnaion and Kazarma.[5] The Acropolis was erected atop a lofty conical hill which reaches 270 metres above sea-level at its highest point. From all parts of the Acropolis there is a fine view of the whole Argive plain and of the Argive Gulf. The strategic location of the Acropolis with an uninterrupted view in all directions, offering the possibility of controlling the plain and the Gulf, may have been a great factor in the growing importance of Midea during Mycenaean times.

The Cyclopean fortification wall surrounds the northeast and the southwest upper slopes of the hill protecting the summit and a large sloping terraced area northwest of it *(Fig. 1)*. The southeast slope is so precipitous that no fortification was necessary. The fortification wall has been preserved in fairly good condition for its full length, five to seven metres wide and three to seven metres high. It is approximately 450 metres long and encloses an area of some 24.000 square metres, that is about two and a half hectares.[6] Unlike the two other Argive citadels, at Midea there are no successive extensions of the fortification. The mode of construction, which is uniform throughout the extent of the wall, suggests a single phase of building; this, according to the pottery found in the wall's foundation trenches, can be dated around the middle of the 13th century BC, at a time when important additions were made to the fortifications at Mycenae and Tiryns.[7]

The Upper Acropolis is separated from the lower terraces by a steep cliff. Along the foot of this cliff ran a road connecting the two gates of the citadel, located opposite each other on the east and the west side of the fortification wall *(Fig. 1)*. A stepped path across the cliff led from the West Gate to the Upper Acropolis, which could also be approached from another path starting at the East Gate.

The East Gate of the fortification was the main entrance to the Acropolis *(Fig. 1)*.[8] It is a simple opening in the fortification wall, unprotected by any bastion. The great width, however, of the sections of the wall

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[1] Persson 1942, 3–16, figs. 1, 4–5.

[2] Åström 1983, 22–41.

[3] Annual preliminary reports on the Greek-Swedish excavations at Midea have been published in *OpAth* since 1986. See also Demakopoulou 1995; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999; Walberg 1998.

[4] See the map with site distribution in Dickinson 1994, 77, fig. 4.24.

[5] See the map with the suggested Mycenaean road system in the north-east Peloponnese in Dickinson 1994, 163, fig. 5.34.

[6] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 206–7.

[7] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 207, 210; cf. also Wright 2005, 194–6.

[8] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 207–8, with references.

either side of the gateway is sufficient to have provided security. The Gate has a high steplike threshold formed by a huge dressed stone block and was accessible by a ramp structure that has been excavated during the last years.[9] The foundation of the ramp for its most part is preserved, consisting of a stone packing filling out the spaces between the many bedrock outcroppings and thus creating a level ground. As is obvious from some preserved parts, this level was covered by a packing of smaller stones forming, probably with a layer of pebbles and soil between and above the stones, a pavement which could have reached a proper height to make the threshold of the Gate accessible *(Fig. 2)*. This upper stone packing may have covered a large area in front of the Gate but much of it has been eroded. The line of the ramp is clear as it extends from the boulders joining the face of the fortification wall to the right of the entrance, gently curving in a northeastern direction. Its huge face, consisting of boulders, large stones and bedrock outcroppings, is preserved at a height of two to three metres and its length is about 12 metres *(Fig. 3)*. At a lower level along the line of the ramp is a stone pavement, forming its substructure. Pottery recovered from the fill among the boulders and the stones of the ramp shows that its construction could be dated to the LH IIIB period, as the fortification wall.[10]

The West Gate of Midea gave access to the southwest area of the Acropolis *(Fig. 1)*.[11] It was formed between the termination of the southwest section of the fortification wall and the rock face of the summit of the hill, dressed at this point with a retaining wall. It has a spacious gateway with a guard-room and it is protected by a massive bastion *(Fig. 4)*. The guard-room served also for storage, as is suggested by the pithoi and other storage vessels found within it.[12] In front of the Gate an open-air courtyard was formed between the bastion and the precipitous rock. The ascent to the courtyard was facilitated by a small ramp, supported by a low retaining wall with an opening forming a drain.[13] The wall was founded directly on bedrock and reached the corner of the bastion *(Fig. 5)*. The bastion was also founded on bedrock and followed the steep incline of the rocky area.

Inside the fortification, on the Upper Acropolis and on the Lower Acropolis with the large terraced area, recent excavations and other cleaning and arrangement work have made the settlement pattern of the site much clearer. Investigation has for the most part concentrated on the Lower Acropolis, as most of the area of the Upper Acropolis is very eroded. The finds show that Midea was inhabited since Late Neolithic and became a substantial settlement in the following Final Neolithic and Early and Middle Helladic periods.[14] An almost intact burial, as well as unstratified ceramic finds from all over the Acropolis and some sporadic architectural remains, show that Midea was already important in Late Middle Helladic to LH I and during the Early Mycenaean phases. Midea saw its most flourishing period, however, in the 13th century BC and especially in the LH IIIB2 period, when the fortification of the Acropolis was completed. Most of the buildings and room complexes discovered on the lower terraces and in the area of the East and the West Gate belong to this time *(Fig. 1)*. There are some structures including a megaron-type building near the northeast corner of the Acropolis, a complex of rooms east of the East Gate, a building complex near the West Gate, and another complex of buildings on a plateau 40 metres north of the West Gate. Over the entire site evidence for a great destruction by earthquake and an accompanying fire at the end of the 13th century BC has been found.[15] After the destruction the West Gate ceased to be used and most areas of the Acropolis were no longer inhabited. The occupation of Midea during the post-palatial LH IIIC period appears to have been confined to the area of the lower northeastern and western terraces, where pottery of that time has been found in connection with floors and the repair of earlier buildings, as well as in accumulated deposits. In this

[9] Demakopoulou, Schallin and Weiberg 2004; Demakopoulou and Schallin 2005 (forthcoming).

[10] Demakopoulou and Schallin 2005 (forthcoming).

[11] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1990, 9–16, figs. 4–9; 1999, 208–9, pl. XLIV, with references.

[12] Demakopoulou 1995, 155–7; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 209.

[13] Demakopoulou et al. 2005 (forthcoming).

[14] Demakopoulou et al. 2005 (forthcoming).

[15] The collapse of the two gates and large parts of the fortification of Midea, as well as the many distorted, curved and tilting walls and the ash layers found in most areas inside the Acropolis, are the result of a devastating earthquake. The skeleton of a young girl with smashed skull and backbone found under fallen stones in one of the rooms in the East Gate area supplies more evidence for an earthquake destruction at the end of LH IIIB2, see Åström 1996; Åström and Demakopoulou 1996; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 208–11.

area most important is the building of megaron-type measuring 14 × 7.50 m.[16] It was built in LH IIIB and had a large main room with a central hearth, surrounded by four roof support bases, and a small back room. After the earthquake destruction it was replaced by a megaron of LH IIIC date with a central row of columns. This has been paralleled with the narrow megaron built in the ruins of the great megaron on the Upper Citadel of Tiryns after its destruction, in LH IIIC.[17]

Axel Persson during his excavations on the summit of the Upper Acropolis brought to light a few architectural remains which he attributed to a palace.[18] Recent cleaning of this area – the palace area as Persson named it – uncovered the levelled rock over a large space *(Fig. 6)*, which proves that a large building may have stood there. From Persson's architectural remains only a few piles of stones are left. Yet, if a palace existed on the Acropolis, it could well have been in this area.

Inside and east of the East Gate there was another smaller, inner gate which led to the Upper Acropolis *(Fig. 1)*.[19] Immediately after this gate there is a series of rooms attached to the fortification wall. They were storerooms; many stone tools and abundant pottery of LH IIIB2 were found in them, including many fragments of fine decorated and coarse storage and cooking vessels.[20]

Inside the West Gate, in the area along the fortification wall, a large building complex was excavated *(Fig. 1)*.[21] It is constructed against the fortification wall on successive terraces and has twelve rooms, arranged in two wings separated by a long corridor with a drain running through it *(Figs. 7–8)*. The entire complex was destroyed by the earthquake and an extensive fire. The destruction material in the floor deposit of the rooms contained, like the gateway and the guard-room of the West Gate, as well as the rooms of the buildings north of the Gate, abundant LH IIIB2 fine and coarse ware pottery,[22] a clay figure and figurines, some stone mortars and many bronze, stone and bone tools. Most of the rooms were storerooms and workshops.

On a plateau north of the West Gate excavations brought to light extensive structural remains *(Figs. 9–10)*. They belong to at least three buildings, two large adjacent structures and a third opposite them, all having access to a road running parallel to them.[23] All buildings have been destroyed by the earthquake and the fire. The tilting and ruined walls of the buildings are the result of the earthquake *(Fig. 9)*. Abundant LH IIIB2 pottery, tools, clay figurines and other objects were found in the rooms, which would have been living and working areas. The larger room has a bench along one of its walls, a central hearth and two stone column bases.[24] In one of the buildings part of a drainage system was found.[25] Abundant fresco fragments found in the three excavated buildings and in the building complex near the West Gate show that the walls of most of the rooms must have been covered with painted plaster.[26]

The finds from the southwestern part of the Acropolis, the Greek sector of the excavations, were plentiful and illustrate the importance of Midea. Of the earliest Mycenaean finds most significant are those from a small cist grave containing a child's burial, dating to the Shaft Grave period.[27] It was found on the plateau with the complex of buildings, under piles of stones from damaged structures. The grave goods include a Yellow Minyan rim-handled jar or amphoriskos of very good quality, which has close parallels in Grave Circle B at Mycenae.[28] Other finds are a small bead of cornelian and two mushroom-shaped ivory knobs with long shafts,[29] probably coming from a wooden box, now lost. The grave also contained an unwrought piece

[16] Walberg 1995, 87–91, fig. 1; 1996, 24–31, figs. 57, 60, 65, 68; 1997–98, 74–90, fig. 86; 1999.
[17] Maran 2000, 1–4; 2001, 113–8, pls. XXXI, XXXIII.
[18] Persson 1942, 7–12, figs. 4–5.
[19] Åström et al. 1990, 9; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 208, pl. XLIIIb.
[20] Åström 1996; 1997–98; Nilsson and Schallin 2004, 26–7, figs. 53–4.
[21] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 210, pls. XLIIb, XLVb, with references; Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 57–73; 2000–01, 35–48.
[22] Demakopoulou 2003.
[23] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 33–4, 48–9, figs. 3, 13–5, 59–63; 2003, 11–5, figs. 12–4, 16, 27; 2004, 9–20, figs. 2–6, 22–3, 28, 35, 42.
[24] Demakopoulou et al. 2004, 9–13, figs. 4–6.
[25] Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 15–6, figs. 28–30; 2004, 20, figs. 44–5.
[26] Demakopoulou et al. 2000–01, 37, 39, fig. 7; 2002, 29, 31, fig. 9; 2003, 13–4, fig. 15.
[27] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 36–8, fig. 31.
[28] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 37, fig. 33, with references.
[29] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 37, fig. 35.

of yellow material,[30] which is orpiment, an arsenic mineral with bright yellow colour, used as raw material for pigment making. Orpiment was found in the Ulu Burun shipwreck.[31] The piece from Midea, at least two centuries older than the orpiment from the shipwreck, is the first to be found in the Bronze Age Aegean. This intramural grave is clearly an elite burial and can be compared to the richly furnished child's burial of the same period in the Lower Citadel of Tiryns.[32]

The earliest finds from the southwest area of Midea, recovered mostly from accumulated deposits, include two Minoan objects: a prismatic seal of fine whitish faience dated possibly to MM II to MM III,[33] and a large amethyst fragment coming from a triton shell-shaped rhyton.[34] In its original state, it must have been one of the finest lapidary products of the LM I period. No doubt it was imported to the Argolid from Crete, where it was created, possibly in a palatial workshop at Knossos. Another important find is a large mushroom-shaped sword pommel of white marble with pronounced traces of burning, recovered from a LH IIIB2 context *(Fig. 11)*[35]. Three more, very large, sword pommels of ivory, alabaster and Lapis Lacedaemonius were found hidden in a niche in the megaron-type building on the Lower Terraces.[36]

From accumulated deposits in the southwest area of Midea numerous seals were recovered.[37] Most of them are of steatite and abraded, and belong to the Mainland Popular Group. There are also some made of harder stone and dated to the 15th–14th centuries BC. Noteworthy are four seals, one cushion-shaped, one amygdaloid and two lentoids, of agate or other hard stone: the agate cushion bears the depiction of a minotaur,[38] of the other three, two have representations of two reclining bovids *(Fig. 12)* and the third of a running bovid.[39]

The largest quantity of pottery found in all areas of the southwestern part of the Acropolis is of LH IIIB date, especially of LH IIIB2, and has been recovered mostly from well-stratified deposits. There is, however, a substantial group of pre-LH IIIB material, including a fine range of decorated types from LH I and LH II to LH IIIA2.[40] Noteworthy is a fragment of a large stirrup jar with Marine Style decoration, which continues under the base *(Fig. 13)*.[41] This is a fine specimen of the Classic LM IB or LH IIA Marine Style. While an Argolid origin cannot be excluded, the original vase could well be an import from Crete.[42] An almost complete, squat stirrup jar mended from fragments is the best example of the LH IIIA2 pottery found *(Fig. 14)*.[43] It is decorated with voluted flowers on the shoulder and horizontal chevrons in the belly zone. The LH II to LH IIIA2 ceramic material and the seals of the 15th century BC verify the link between the citadel of Midea and the very rich cemetery of Dendra with the important tombs and elite burials of the same period.[44]

The plentiful LH IIIB2 pottery from Midea includes all the typical ceramic shapes of the time.[45] The commonest shape is the deep bowl of all types: Group A *(Fig. 15)*, Group B *(Fig. 16)*, stemmed bowls, and rosette deep bowls *(Fig. 17)*. Kraters, mostly of the ring-based type *(Fig. 18)*, are also plentiful, as well as mugs. Of

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[30] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 37–9, fig. 36.

[31] Bass 1991, 74.

[32] Kilian 1982, 419–20, figs. 36–8.

[33] *CMS* V Suppl. 3, no. 222; Demakopoulou 2004, 405–6, figs. 35.1–3.

[34] Demakopoulou 1998, 222, pl. XXIa–c; Demakopoulou 2004, 305–7, figs. 35.4–5, with references.

[35] Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 14, fig. 18.

[36] Walberg 1996, 30–1, fig. 66. It has been noted that the size of the pommels shows that they possibly belonged to ceremonial swords and that the area of the megaron-type building, where they were found, might have had a ritual function.

[37] *CMS* V Suppl. I B, 58–9, no. 71; *CMS* V Suppl. 3, 363–5, fig. 1, nos. 223–35; Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 50, fig. 80; 2003, 14–5, fig. 25; 2004, 13, fig. 18; Krzyszkowska 2005, 298–9.

[38] *CMS* V Suppl. 3, no. 223.

[39] *CMS* V Suppl. 3, nos. 224, 230; Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 14–5, fig. 25. The dimensions of the seal fig. 12 are 0,022 x 0,014 m.

[40] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 26–7, fig. 14; 2002, 35–6, 47, figs. 28–9, 37, 51; 2003, 9–10, fig. 5.

[41] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 36, fig. 30.

[42] Demakopoulou 2004, 407–8, figs. 35.6–7, with references.

[43] Demakopoulou et al. 2005 (forthcoming).

[44] Persson 1931; Persson 1942, 17–101.

[45] The pottery from the destruction layers and floor deposits in Midea can be dated to the LH IIIB2 Late period, see Demakopoulou 2003, 90–1. For typical groups of LH IIIB2 fine and coarse pottery from Midea, see also Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1990, 13–5, figs. 10–4, 16–7; Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 26–31, figs. 16–32; 1996, 18–23, figs. 12–37; 1997–98, 59–72, figs. 6, 14–9, 21–37, 40–5, 61–9; 2000–01, 38–49, figs. 12–32, 45–7, 52–4; 2002, 34–5, 47–51, figs. 16–23, 66–76; 2003, 9–20, figs. 6–8, 20–1, 32–40, 42–6; 2004, 12–20, figs. 7–9, 11, 16, 24–6, 29–33, 36–9; Demakopoulou et al. 2005 (forthcoming).

the closed shapes most common are the narrow-necked jugs *(Fig. 19)*, stirrup jars *(Fig. 20)* and collar-necked jars, pirifom jars and miniature handmade vases. The painted pottery includes many fragments with pictorial decoration, which have established Midea as an important find spot for this class of pottery, like the other major Mycenaean centres of the Argolid.[46] Most interesting are some fragments showing chariot scenes *(Fig. 21)* and a stag procession. The category of the plain vases includes many conical and carinated kylikes, dippers, some piriform jars, and mugs, while the coarse ware includes many storage and cooking vessels.

A large number of fragmentary transport stirrup jars was recovered, similar to those from Mycenae and Tiryns. They are decorated in both light-on-dark and dark-on-light with linear-curvilinear motifs or deep wavy bands (stylized octopods) on the belly *(Fig. 22)*.[47] One of them bears the Linear B inscription *wi-na-jo*.[48] This and most of the others may well be Minoan imports. The majority was found in LH IIIB2 contexts, and this shows that the trade in oil or wine between Crete and Midea continued until the end of the 13th century BC.[49] No stoppers have been found so far, probably because of the fragmentary condition of the jars. Some large lumps of clay, however, without preserved seal impressions, might have served as stoppers.[50]

Worthy of mention are some fragments of handmade burnished jars of the 'Barbarian' or 'North-West Greek' ware, which has also been found at Mycenae and Tiryns.[51] It is interesting that the fragments from Midea were recovered from LH IIIB2 contexts.

Apart from the pottery, other vessels of stone and lead come from LH IIIB2 contexts. A number of stone mortars[52] were found in the excavated rooms together with the clay vases, as well as many crushed lead vessels.[53]

Abundant fragmentary clay handmade human and animal figurines of all types were recovered from all excavated areas in the southwestern part of the Acropolis.[54] Most important is a complete terracotta wheelmade female figure[55] and a number of other fragmentary human and animal wheelmade figures,[56] including the impressive head of a large female figure *(Fig. 23)*.[57] The religious connotations of these figures provide strong evidence for the existence of a sanctuary at the site.[58]

Of the ivory objects found noteworthy are a small model of a figure-of-eight shield[59] and some inlays, one in the form of an ivy leaf.[60] A number of bronze tools and other objects were also recovered, such as tweezers,[61] pins and needles,[62] knives[63] and chisels,[64] as well as a complete mirror with two rivet holes for the miss-

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[46] Demakopoulou 2006 (forthcoming).

[47] For the most complete examples, see Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1990, 14–5, fig. 13; Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 59, 62–3, 71–2, figs. 16–8, 61–2; 2000–01, 40, fig. 20; see also Demakopoulou 2004, 409–10, fig. 35.11, with references. The dimensions of the stirrup jar fig. 22 are: height: 0,41 m, max. diam. of body 0,29 m, diam. of base 0,12 m.

[48] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 62–3, fig. 19; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1994–95, 326–7, pl. II.A–B; Demakopoulou 2004, 408–9, fig. 35.10.

[49] Demakopoulou 2004, 409–10, with references. A Minoan transport stirrup jar, recently found in a LH IIIC Early context in Tiryns, shows that intercommunication between the Argolid and Crete continued also in the 12th century BC, see Maran 2002–03, 223; also Maran 2005.

[50] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 62; Krzyszkowska 2005, 299.

[51] Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 10–1, 14–5, figs. 9, 22, with references.

[52] Demakopoulou 1998, 223–5, pls. XXII–XXIV; Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 34–5, fig. 24.

[53] Demakopoulou 1995, 156, pl. 10a; Demakopoulou et al. 1996, 23–4, fig. 40; 1997–98, 66–7, fig. 46; 2002, 35, fig. 25; 2004, 13, 16, fig. 19.

[54] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001; Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 48, 50, 52, figs. 57, 78; 2003, 14–5, 20, fig. 23; 2004, 15, fig. 27.

[55] Demakopoulou 1999; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001, 183–4, pls. XLIXf, La–b.

[56] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001, 184–5, pl. Lc; Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 50, fig. 79; 2003, 11, 15, figs. 10, 24.

[57] Demakopoulou et al. 2004, 13, 16, fig. 20.

[58] Demakopoulou 1999, 202–4; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001, 189–90; Walberg 1999, 890.

[59] Demakopoulou et al. 2000–01, 41, figs. 35–6.

[60] Demakopoulou et al. 1996, 24, fig. 42.

[61] Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 14, fig. 19.

[62] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 32–3, fig. 38; 1996, 23, fig. 39; 2000–01, 41, fig. 34.

[63] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 32–3, fig. 40; 1996, 23–4, fig. 41.

[64] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 68–9, fig. 53.

ing handle.[65] Many stone tools were also found, such as millstones and pounders,[66] hammer-axes,[67] pestles[68] and whetstones.[69] Other important finds are small tools, ochre and raw materials which suggest the existence of specialized workshops operating on the Acropolis of Midea.[70] Notable is a fragmentary steatite mould for the making of glass relief beads.[71] A number of such beads have been recovered,[72] as well as many others of the globular type.[73] The raw materials include many pieces of semi-precious stones, some with traces of cutting, such as fluorite and rock-crystal *(Fig. 24)*,[74] agate,[75] cornelian and steatite,[76] as well as haematite.[77] Of special interest are many pieces and small fragments of mother-of-pearl. Some of them seem to be worked and may well have been used as decorative inlays.[78]

Historically, among the most important finds on the Acropolis of Midea are five clay prismatic nodules, four of which are inscribed in Linear B. Three of them were found in a room north of the megaron-type building.[79] The other two come from a room in the building complex by the West Gate and from a trench southeast of the buildings on the plateau respectively.[80] Both were recovered from a LH IIIB2 context. The first[81] bears the impression of an insect, possibly a spider, with the Linear B ideogram for wheat, GRANUM, incised on it. It is noteworthy that it was found in the same room with the transport stirrup jar with the *wi-na-jo* inscription. The second nodule[82] has the impression of a lion attacking a bovid with the word *o-pa* incised on it. The other sides bear the words *me-ka-ro-de* and a_3*-so-ni-jo*. The inscription can be translated as "contribution to the megaron from Aisonios". The term megaron – attested for the first time in Mycenaean script as far as I know – is clearly here a toponymic reference as the allative -de shows. Could it mean the manor or the palace of the ruler or of another elite at Midea? A place name or a palace distinct from Midea is also possible. The word *o-pa* is written also on the nodules found in Thebes[83] and the word *Aisonios*, a personal name, is known from the Pylos tablets.[84] This nodule could well have been attached to a commodity or rather to a finished artifact.

In conclusion, the evidence that has been brought to light by the recent Greek-Swedish excavations at Midea has shown that this Acropolis can be compared in many respects with the other two Argive citadels, Mycenae and Tiryns. The finds demonstrate that Midea, like these two great centres, had close and productive relations with Crete and the Levant. At present, the settlement inside the fortification appears to be a lesser one in comparison with Mycenae and Tiryns, although this picture may well change with the continuing excavations. Yet it was clearly an administrative and craft centre, probably the third most important Mycenaean site of the Argolid. Although no tablets have been found so far in Midea, the sealings with Linear B inscriptions and the transport stirrup jar with the *wi-na-jo* inscription show that the site was an administrative

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[65] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 68–9, fig. 54.
[66] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 58, 66–8, figs. 7, 48–9; 2000–01, 41, figs. 37–8; 2002, 52–3, fig. 83; 2003, 20, fig. 47.
[67] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 66, fig. 51.
[68] Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 66, fig. 50; 2002, 52–3, fig. 84.
[69] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 32–3, fig. 39; 1997–98, 68, fig. 52; 2004, 19–20, fig. 41.
[70] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 38; 2003, 20; 2004, 21.
[71] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 31–2, fig. 37.
[72] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 31–2, fig. 35; 2002, 51–2, fig. 58; 2003, 18–9, fig. 41.
[73] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 35–6, fig. 27.
[74] Demakopoulou et al. 1994, 31–2, fig. 36; 2002, 52.
[75] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 52–3, fig. 81 (first from left); 2003, 14–5, fig. 26.
[76] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 52–3, fig. 81.
[77] Demakopoulou et al. 2003, 11, fig. 11.
[78] Demakopoulou et al. 2004, 12, 20–1, figs. 15, 43.
[79] Walberg 1996–97, 133–4, pl. IA–D; 1998, 157, pls. 112 I1, 145 I1; *CMS* V Suppl. 3, 366, fig. 2, nos. 238–40; Krzyszkowska 2005, 299.
[80] *CMS* V Suppl. 3, 364–5, fig. 1; Krzyszkowska 2005, 299.
[81] Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1994–95, 324–5, fig. 1, pl. IB; Demakopoulou et al. 1997–98, 62–3, fig. 20; *CMS* V Suppl. 3, no. 236.
[82] Demakopoulou et al. 2002, 52–4, figs. 85–7; *CMS* V Suppl. 3, no. 237.
[83] Piteros, Olivier and Melena 1990. For the meaning of the term *o-pa* see Killen 1999, esp. 336.
[84] Hooker 1980, 107–21, esp. 120–1 (Tablet PY Jn 310).

centre of some kind. The craft production included stone mortars,[85] vessels and other objects of lead,[86] as well as jewellery and mother-of-pearl inlaying.[87] There was also a large-scale pottery manufacture, of which the pictorial vases form the most distinctive class.[88]

The rise of Midea began probably at the end of the Middle Bronze Age and continued during the two following centuries, as is evident from the finds and from its association with the cemetery at Dendra, as early as the 16th century BC. The wealth and range of the grave-goods in the Dendra cemetery in the 15th century BC indicate a time of prosperity. By the palatial period, notably in the 13th century BC, the Acropolis of Midea had become more important, as is apparent from the impressive architecture and the rich array of finds, including elite goods. It must have had close connections with the other two citadels, with which it would have formed a network for the control and defense of the fertile Argive plain.[89] Mycenae was of course the greatest centre, as is evident from its wealth.[90] Tiryns was the balance of Mycenae because of its coastal location and consequently its direct control of the port. This is illustrated by its successive palaces and its ability to obtain imported goods and ideas from the external world in the 13th and even in the 12th centuries BC.[91] Midea, with its strategic location would have had an important role in the control of production from cultivation of a large area of the plain and also from stock farming. As a great centre with its own administration, it must have been controlled by a centralized power which could have been in the form of a ruler or an elite group. Be that as it may, it is evident from its Cyclopean fortification, that it was a powerful centre with close ties to the other two citadels. From its Acropolis, it commands a view of the entire plain to the sea, complementing the more restricted views from the other two sites. It shared with them authority over the plain and possibly over the entire Argolid at the height of Mycenaean civilization.

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[85] It has been argued that the mortars found in Midea were probably made locally, see Demakopoulou 1998, 225.

[86] The manufacture of vessels and other objects of lead in Midea is suggested by the discovery of two lead bun ingots in one of the buildings north of the West Gate, see Demakopoulou et al. 2004, 12, fig. 12.

[87] See Demakopoulou et al. 2004, 21.

[88] See Demakopoulou 2006 (forthcoming).

[89] For the relation between Mycenae and other sites of the Argolid see, most recently, French 2005, 127.

[90] For the importance of Mycenae as a 'potential capital', see French 2005. It has been suggested, Voutsaki 2001, that the wealth of Mycenae and its position as the main centre in the plain should be explained as a result of the diplomatic relations between Mycenae and the Minoan New Palaces, probably Knossos; this has been pointed out earlier by Dickinson 1994, 304.

[91] See Maran 2003, 223–4; also Maran 2004; Maran 2005.

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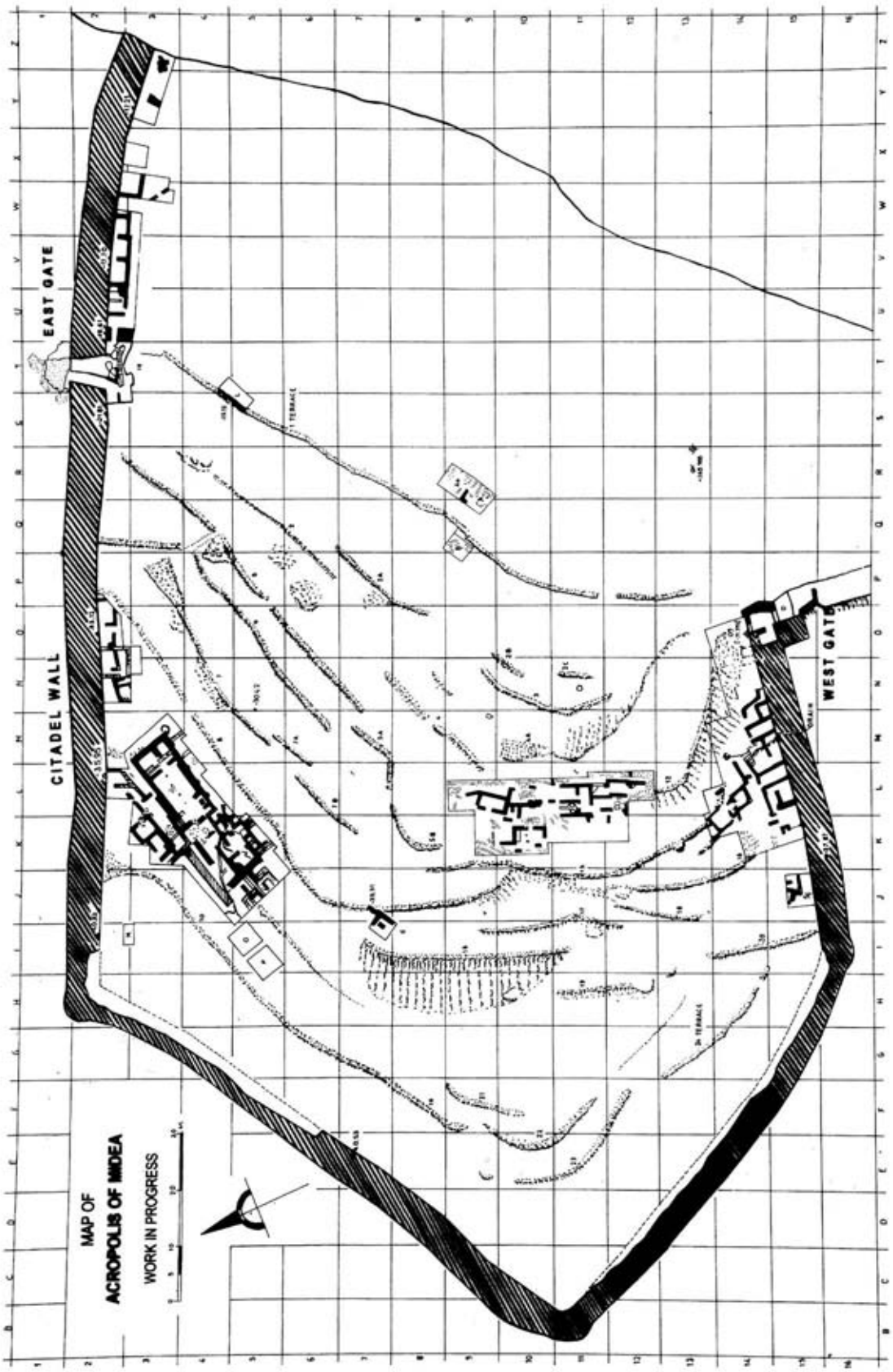


Fig. 1 Ground plan of the fortified area of the Acropolis of Midea



Fig. 2 View of the ramp outside the East Gate with the northeast section of the fortification wall



Fig. 3 View of the northwestern face of the ramp outside the East Gate



Fig. 4 View of the West Gate with the guard-room and the bastion



Fig. 5 View of the ramp outside the West Gate with the bastion



Fig. 6 View of the terrace with levelled rock on the Upper Acropolis

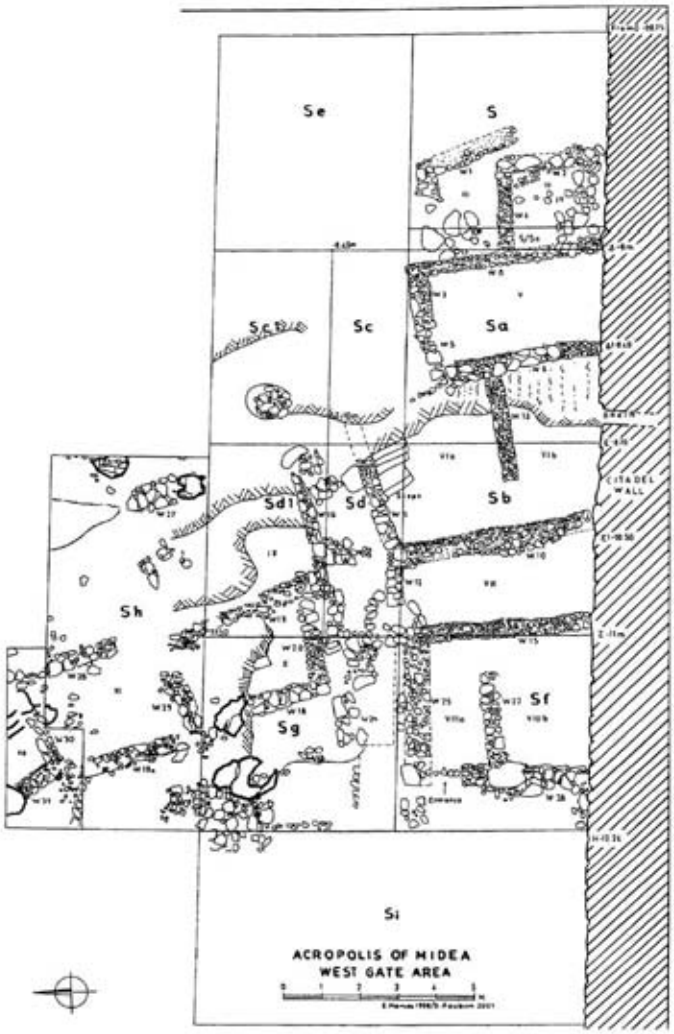


Fig. 7 Ground plan of the Building Complex in the West Gate area

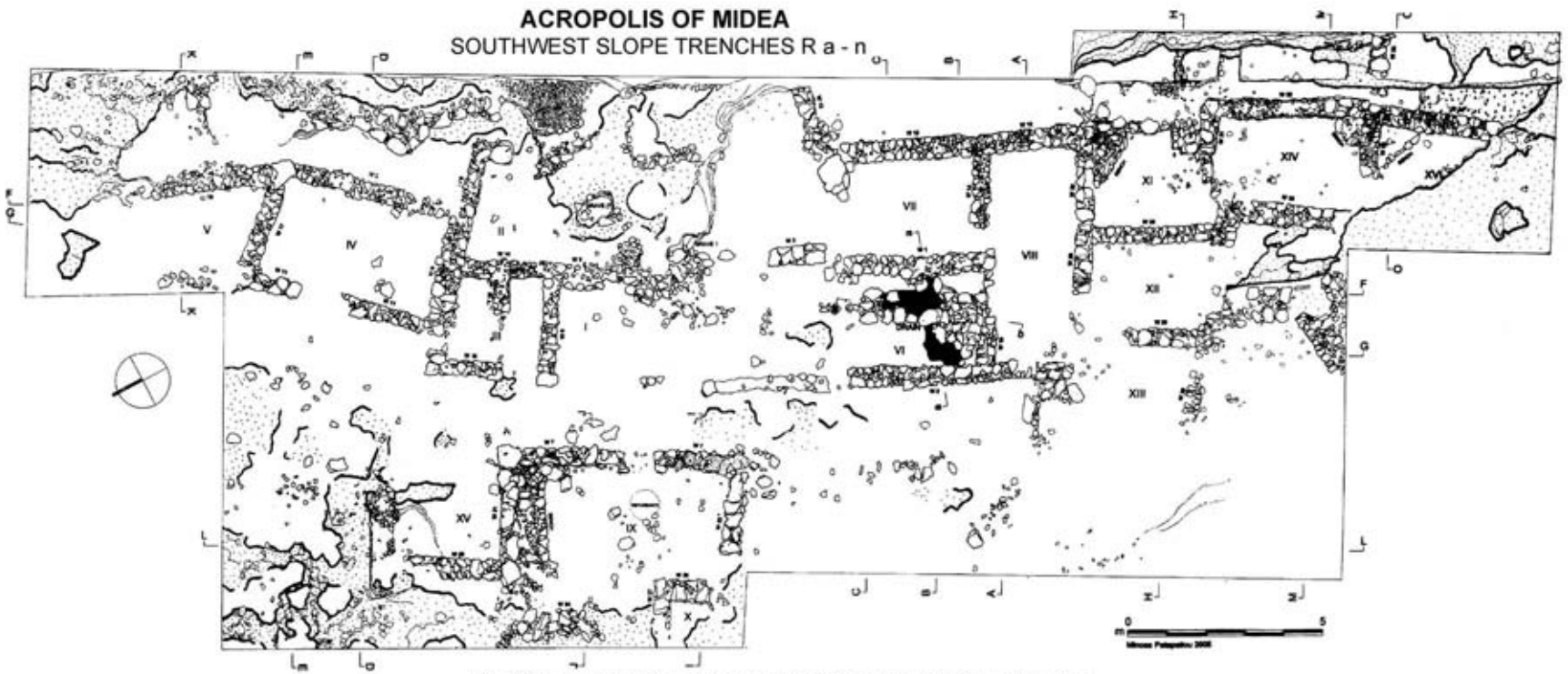


Fig. 9 Ground plan of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate



Fig. 8 View of the Building Complex in the West Gate area with the inner face of the southwest section of the fortification wall



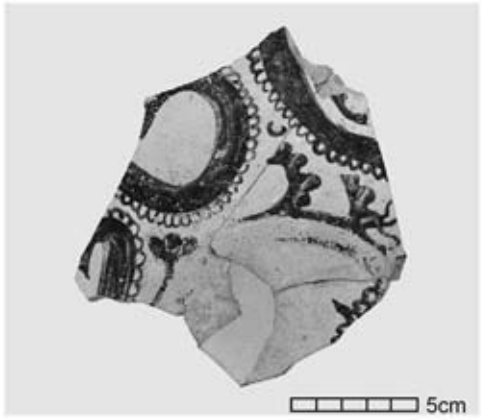
Fig. 10 View of the southwest part of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate



11


12

Area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate: Fig. 11 Sword pommel of marble from Room V; Fig. 12 Agate sealstone with a depiction of two reclining bovids



13



14

Fig. 13 Fragment of a LM IB/LH IIA stirrup jar with Marine Style decoration from the area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate; Fig. 14 LH IIIA2 stirrup jar from the upper terraces of the Lower Acropolis

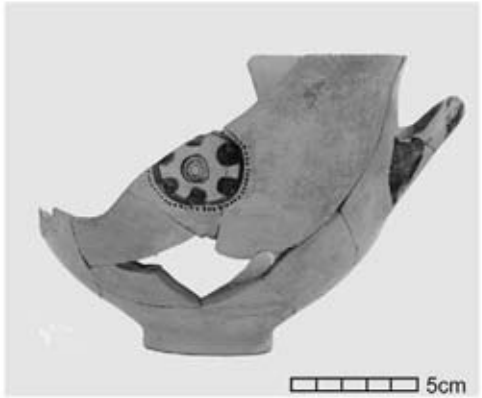


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Fig. 15 LH IIIB2 deep bowl of Group A from Room XI of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate; Fig. 16 LH IIIB2 deep bowl of Group B from Room VIIIb of the Building Complex in the West Gate area



17

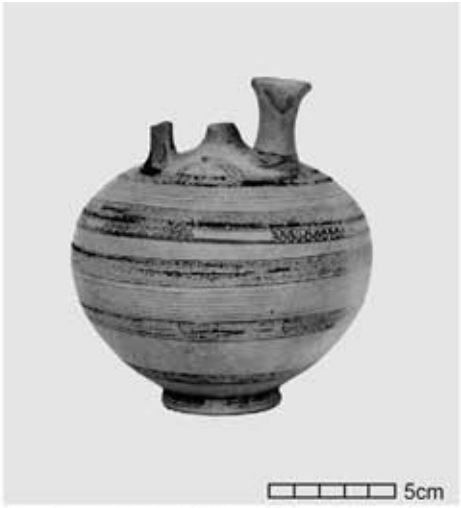


18

Area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate: Fig. 17 LH IIIB2 rosette deep bowl; Fig. 18 LH IIIB2 ring-based krater from Room XII



19



20

Fig. 19 LH IIIB2 narrow-necked jug from Room VIIIb of the Building Complex in the West Gate area;
Fig. 20 LH IIIB2 stirrup jar from the area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate



21



23

Fig. 21 LH IIIB krater fragments with a chariot scene from the area of the Building Complex in the West Gate area;
Fig. 23 Head of a wheelmade female figure from the area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate



22



24

Fig. 22 Transport stirrup jar from Room VII of the Building Complex in the West Gate area;
Fig. 24 Pieces of fluorite and rock-crystal from the area of the complex of buildings north of the West Gate