

The Lower Acropolis of Kalydon in Aitolia

*Preliminary report on the excavations carried out
in 2013-15**

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Since 2001 Danish and Greek archaeologists have collaborated in carrying out archaeological investigations at the ancient Greek city of Kalydon, close to the modern village of Evinochori in Aitolia. Work has included large-scale excavation projects as well as the study and publication of the finds. As part of the ongoing collaboration, a programme of new excavations on the Lower Acropolis was initiated in the summer of 2013. It is a joint project of the Danish Institute at Athens and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada, directed by the ephor Dr Olympia Vikatou and Dr Søren Handberg.

The Lower Acropolis area refers to a sloping plateau that surrounds an upper flat plateau known as the Central Acropolis, which at 167 m above sea level constitutes the highest point in the city (Fig. 1). The Lower Acropolis plateau is encircled by a substantial wall that connects with the city's outer defensive wall. Geophysical investigations carried out in the area in 2001-5 suggested that the plateau was laid out in an orthogonal grid, and several architectural features were identified, but no excavations were undertaken at the time.¹

Several research questions prompted the initiation of the new excavation on the plateau. First of all, since the reconstruction of the city's topographical layout has previously primarily been based on the interpretations of

the geomagnetic surveys, we wanted to test the validity of the obtained results. Secondly, we were interested in finding traces of the city that predate the Hellenistic period, which we believed could possibly be found on the acropolis. Finally, we wanted to find solid evidence for the construction date of the fortification wall that encircles the Lower Acropolis plateau. It had previously been suggested that this fortification wall might be earlier than the outer fortification circuit, and if an early construction date could be substantiated through excavations, we would also expect to find remnants of the early period of the city's history in the area behind the fortification.

During three excavation seasons (2013-5), 17 excavation trenches were opened in two different locations on the Lower Acropolis (Figs 2-3). In Area I, located approximately in the middle of the plateau, just south of the southeastern tower of the fortification of the Central Acropolis, 15 trenches were opened up, and another two trenches were opened in Area II by the wall that surrounds the Lower Acropolis plateau. The excavations in Area I have so far revealed substantial remains of a Hellenistic building that contains some undisturbed and relatively well-preserved contexts. The excavations at the Lower Acropolis wall has produced a good quantity of early material in the form of late Geometric and Archaic pottery.

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¹ For the results of the geophysical work, see Smekalova 2011.



Fig. 1. Aerial view of the acropolis of Kalydon from the southwest with the Lower Town in the foreground (C. Giatrakos).



Fig. 2. Topographic site plan of ancient Kalydon showing major monuments and the excavation trenches on the Lower Acropolis.

The Hellenistic House on the Lower Acropolis

During the three excavation campaigns, 15 trenches covering an area of 375 m² were opened in Area I in the middle of the plateau. In this area of the plateau the terrain slopes gently downwards towards the south at an approximately 15° angle. The excavations in the area have revealed a building complex dating to the Hellenistic period (Fig. 3). When excavations began in 2013, a substantial layer of stone debris covered almost the entire area. The stone debris layer, which at the time was referred to as a “stone blanket”, consisted of a very compact layer of medium-sized stones which in some places was up to 0.70 m deep. Early in the first year’s excavation, it became clear that the formation of the stone debris layer had been caused by the collapse of walls belonging to a Hellenistic building with at least two construction phases.

The complete extent and the exact layout of the structure remains uncertain at this point, but it is clear that the building was bordered by streets on the western and eastern sides, and another street probably ran along the northern side of the building, which was possibly its back. Even though the layout remains somewhat uncertain, we can clearly identify two rooms, and possibly a third

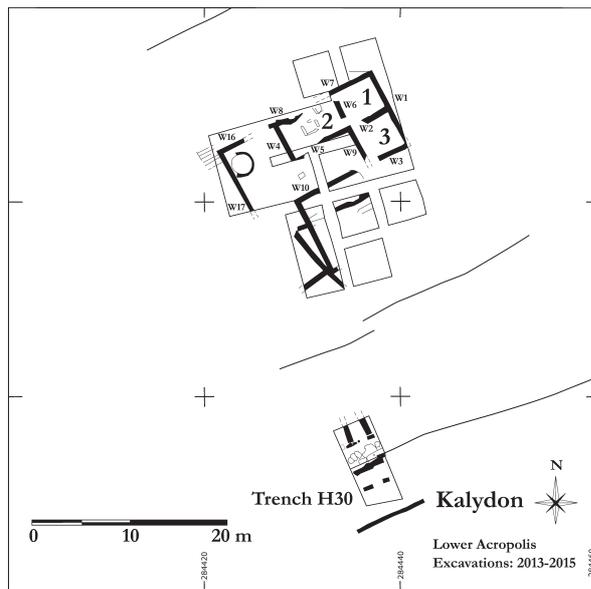


Fig. 3. Topographic plan of the excavations in Areas I–II on the Lower Acropolis.

room, as well as an area that seems to have served as a courtyard. The building should probably be interpreted as a Hellenistic private house. Its walls are constructed of a combination of larger roughly dressed blocks of local sandstone and smaller undressed stones. The walls are better preserved in the northern part of the building, where up to six courses of stones are preserved in some places. So far, no traces of mudbrick have been observed in connection with the walls – which were presumably completely constructed of stone, extending all the way to the roof.

In the northeastern part of the excavated area, three rooms can be identified (Rooms 1–3). The rooms are situated in the corner of the building and form an L-shape, with Rooms 1 and 3 on the eastern side and Room 2 protruding towards the southwest. A courtyard seems to have been connected with the building in the area to the south and southwest of Room 2. Wall Sections 3 and 10 form a continuous wall, although a small section of it is missing in the eastern part, and presumably constitute the southern border of the building. In the southwestern part the wall turns towards the south at a 90° angle (Wall Section 15), which might represent an extension of the

courtyard towards the south. Since this area has not been excavated yet, the full extent of the courtyard remains unclear. Excavations in this area are planned for 2016.

The northern wall of the building has been traced across four trenches (Wall Sections 7, 8 and 16) and measure 17.7 m in length. The bedrock, which lies at a higher point in the northern part of the excavated area, has in some places been used as a foundation for the wall. Most of the stones in the middle section of the wall have slid from their original position and were found within Room 2 and in the courtyard area.

Room 1

The first part of the building to be revealed when excavations started in 2013 was Room 1, situated in the north-eastern corner of the building (Fig. 4). In 2015 the western half of the room was excavated down to the level above the bedrock. A clearly defined layer containing hundreds of fragments of terracotta roof tiles of Laconian type was found in this room. The layer covered the entire extent of the room and it clearly represents the debris from a collapsed roof.

No clearly identifiable floor level has so far been found, but the approximate level can be established on the basis of the stratigraphy. Almost all of the fragments of roof tiles were situated in Layer 3, whereas Layer 4 below was almost completely devoid of tile fragments and the composition of the soil was softer and of a slightly darker colour. The floor level of the room should therefore be located around the transition between Layers 3 and 4. Although apparently not completely horizontal across the whole area, this division is situated at around 137.56 m AMSL.² All the soil from the tile layer and Layer 4 below was sieved during excavation and substantial soil samples were collected. Several charred olive pits were found around the level of the floor during excavation (Fig. 5).

In the northern part of the room the bedrock protrudes above the floor level in two places. The bedrock protrusions are not horizontal, but slope dramatically downwards towards the east. The bedrock was here used as a foundation for the northern wall of the building, but soil has been used to fill the gaps in the foundations where the bedrock slopes.

² Level numbers 76 and 78 (July 15, 2015).



Fig. 4. View over Rooms 1 and 3 from the south (Søren Handberg).

The bedrock hence creates sloping “platforms” that must have protruded into the room in antiquity (Fig. 4). The highest point of this bedrock outcrop in the northwestern corner of the room is at 138.56 m AMSL, which lies 1 m above the supposed level of the floor. Consequently, the bedrock must have remained exposed above the floor level in the northern part of the room in antiquity.³

Several intact vessels had been preserved underneath the collapsed roof. In the southeastern corner of the room a deposit with larger vessels was excavated (Figs 6-7). It included a plain ware jug, an oil lamp and a plain ware krater.⁴ Fallen tiles and stones probably broke the vessels that seem to have originally been stored in the corner of the room. Comparison with contextually dated kraters from the Athenian Agora suggests that the krater should be dated to the late 3rd or first half of the 2nd century BC.⁵ In close proximity to the same corner fragments of a terracotta grill were also found. A deep Hellenistic lekane was found facing upside down right on top of the bedrock “platform” at the back wall.⁶ This vessel was covered by fragments of roof tiles and it seems likely that it was stored on a wooden shelf along the northern wall, from where it fell when the roof collapsed in antiquity. A broken but



Fig. 5. Examples of the charred olive pits found in the floor layer in Room 1.

complete Italian Terra Sigillata plate with “Hängelippe” and the fabricant stamp [VETTI / OPTATI], from the workshop of A. Vettius Optatus, was found at the southern end of Wall Section 6 that separates Rooms 1 and 2 (Figs 8-9).⁷ The plate was found at a somewhat lower level than the presumed level of the floor in Room 1. It remains unclear whether this plate was part of the original assemblage in Room 1 at the time of the collapse of the roof. The plate can be dated to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, and it should perhaps rather be associated with the context of Room 2 to the west – so belonging to a later phase of reorganization of the building.⁸

The excavations in Room 1 also produced a large amount of small fragments of white and painted stucco (Fig. 10). Hundreds of fragments were retrieved, but few were larger than c. 5x5 cm and no stucco was found preserved intact on the walls. Besides white, the predominant colours on the stucco fragments were red, ochre and blue. Some of the fragments have slightly raised moldings and thin incised lines, and the whole decorative scheme is reminiscent of the style identified in Room III in the Peristyle House in the Lower Town. There the decoration consisted of an approximately 0.7 m lower white band incised

3 In Rooms 1 and 3 in the so-called Dema House in Attica, the natural bedrock approached the level of the floor of the rooms, but in this case it was apparently cut so as not to protrude above the floor. See Jones et al. 1962, 77-8.

4 Find nos: 20548.1 (jug); 20798.1 (lamp); 20545.1 (krater).

5 Agora 33, 105-7. Typologically the krater from Room 1 is especially close to cat. nos 208 and 214.

6 Find no. 15-1183.

7 Find no. 15-1499.

8 For the type, see *Conspectus*, Form 12.3; for the stamp, see *CVA*, 2267-81.



Fig. 6. Deposit in the southeastern corner of Room 1; the deposit was found during excavations in 2013 among the numerous terracotta tile fragments (Søren Handberg).

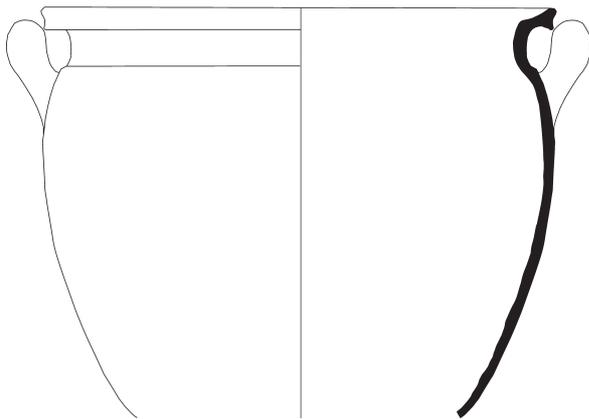


Fig. 7. Drawing of the krater found in the deposit in Room 1 (Diameter: 22 cm).



Fig. 8. The Terra Sigillata plate with fabricant stamp found at the southeastern end of Wall Section 6.



Fig. 9. Drawing of the reconstructed plate.



Fig. 10. Examples of the fragments of stucco from the floor level in Room 1.



Fig. 11. Fragment of a Corinthian kotyle of the Middle Corinthian period found below the floor level in Room 1.

with thin horizontal lines and an upper red zone.⁹ Apart from the fact that more colours seem to have been used in the wall decoration in the building on the Lower Acropolis than in the Peristyle House, the decoration appears so similar in style and execution that the same craftsmen may have been employed in the decoration of both houses.

The date of the collapse of the roof must remain tentative since the majority of the finds need detailed study, but on the basis of the chronology of the objects found in situ in the room, a date somewhere in the second half of the 2nd century BC can be proposed. The overall scheme of the wall decoration can perhaps be compared to the First Pompeian Style, which would support the proposed date. The tile layer (Layer 3) also included a bronze coin.¹⁰ It was found at the level 137.51 m above sea level,¹¹ which roughly corresponds to the supposed level of the floor.



Fig. 12. The cooking installation (structure 1) and the hearth (structure 2) in Room 2; remains of the thick ash-layer is visible in the soil column in the foreground (Søren Handberg).

⁹ Dietz 2011a, 114–20. We are grateful to Søren Dietz for sharing information about the stucco decoration from the Peristyle House with us.

¹⁰ Find no. 15-1373. The coin has not yet been properly cleaned, so it remains difficult to form an opinion about the date.

¹¹ Level number 59 (July 17, 2015).

In Layer 4 (the layer beneath the tile debris), a single sherd of a Middle Corinthian kotyle was found (Fig. 11).¹² On stylistic grounds the kotyle belongs in the Middle Corinthian or early Late Corinthian period, and should thus be dated to the first half of the 6th century BC.¹³ This date supports the assumption that this layer is below the original floor level of the room and should also give us a terminus post quem for the first construction phase of the building. Furthermore, the sherd also provides tentative evidence for earlier occupation in the area, although the fragment might also be part of the debris that had eroded down from the area further north.

Room 2

Room 2, to the southwest of Room 1, has been entirely excavated down to the yellowish sediment that lies on top of the bedrock. Six courses of stones are preserved in the western wall of Room 2, which reaches a height of c. 0.85 m. A door opening onto the courtyard was found in Wall Section 5, near the southwestern corner of the room. The door opening, which measures approximately 0.8 m. in width, was at some point in antiquity blocked by smaller stones. A rectangular pillar capital was found as a spolia used to block the opening. A baulk still covers part of the opening and the wall, which will be removed in 2016.

Two significant structures were identified in Room 2 (Fig. 12). The first structure (Structure 1) is a substantial base constructed in dry stone masonry consisting of four courses of undressed stones. The base is built up against the bedrock, which here functioned both as the lower part of the back wall of the building and as the foundation for the built-up upper part of the wall. A large Corinthian pan-tile was found on top of the base, probably placed there to facilitate a flat surface. The stone base is set on top of a low platform which extends beyond the base.¹⁴ The platform is constructed with a frame of rectangular slabs, two of which are mortar slabs which probably originate from another building and were reused in the construction of the platform. The top of the platform



Fig. 13. Fragments of cooking ware found in situ next to the cooking installation (Søren Handberg).

was paved with flat stone slabs of irregular size which have only been preserved underneath a tile layer in the northwestern corner of the platform. In the corner of the mortar slab and the bedrock west of the stone structure, several sherds of Hellenistic cooking-ware vessels were found lying right on top of the pavement of the platform (Fig. 13). This area was covered with many fragments of roof tiles, which must have preserved the vessels in their original place.

Structure 2 was found to the southwest of the stone base at a slightly lower level and can be identified as a hearth. It measures 1.32 x 0.95 m and is framed on three sides by larger rectangular blocks placed vertically with

¹² Find no. 15-1469.

¹³ For a parallel, see e.g. Corinth 15.3 cat. nos 590 and 608, pls 28-9.

¹⁴ A "platform" somewhat similar to the one from Room 2 was found in a late Hellenistic or early Roman house further up on the Central Acropolis; see Dietz 2001b, 231-6, and specifically fig. 168.

an opening in the southeastern corner. The northwestern side of the hearth facing the back wall of the room was presumably constructed of several smaller stones, some of which seem to have been preserved close to their original position. Inside the hearth, the bedrock was reached between 0.15 and 0.2 m below the top of the framing stones. The surface of the bedrock inside the hearth is irregular and has not been dressed. Some of the higher areas of the bedrock show signs of exposure to high temperatures and display a greyish colour: the bedrock surface was certainly used as a firing surface.

The area in front of the plateau and east of the hearth was covered with a layer of fine greyish ash that extended all the way to the wall which separates Room 1 and 2. The ash layer could most clearly be identified in an area extending around 1 m from the border of the plateau of Structure 1. The ash layer had the shape of a low mound with the highest point in front of the plateau, from where the layer sloped gradually towards the south and southeast. Closer to Wall Section 5 and the possible opening into Room 1, the ash layer was patchier and it was difficult to identify its precise contours. Soil samples were taken from both the ash layer and the soil inside the hearth for future analyses.

Only a preliminary framework of the chronological sequence of the various features in Room 2 can be presented. It seems, however, that both structures in Room 2 were in use at the same time, even though they are situated rather uncomfortably close to each other, and the hearth is at a somewhat lower level. The best indication of the synchronicity of the two structures stems from the fact that the ash layer did not overlay the hearth.

Several different formation processes may explain the presence of the ash layer. The layer is not likely to represent the debris of a collapsed roof. No pieces of charcoal were found in it, nor did it include any nails from the timber construction of the roof. In addition, no similar ash layers were found in other areas of the excavated building. The most obvious explanation therefore seems to be that the ash layer represents the residue from the hearth that was continuously deposited in the area next to

it. However, the ash might also stem from burnt offerings. Structure 1's construction is similar to altars built up of several courses of rough field stones known from depictions on Attic red-figure vases.¹⁵ However, since traces of burning were not visible on the Corinthian pan-tile that rested on top of the stone base, it is difficult to identify it as an altar for burnt offerings. It might of course have functioned as an altar for other perishable offerings, such as fruits and vegetables or smaller terracotta figurines, but preliminary studies of the finds, as well as some of the soil samples, have yielded no evidence for this practice. Furthermore, no thymiatria have been identified among the objects from the room.¹⁶

The more plausible interpretation is that the base is some kind of cooking installation associated with the hearth. A similar structure, which has tentatively been interpreted as an altar by the excavators, was identified in the early Hellenistic Building D in the Poseidon Sanctuary at Kalaureia on Poros.¹⁷ An extensive ash layer was found around the structure in Building D, and similar large ash layers are known from rooms that have been interpreted as kitchens, for instance the 0.3 m-deep ash layer in Room 2 in Building M:21-22 in the Demeter and Kore Sanctuary at Corinth, which resembles the deposit in Room 2 in Kalydon.¹⁸

Room 3

The room to the southeast of Room 1, which has provisionally been called "Room 3", is not well understood, and further excavations are needed in order to form a clear interpretation of the contextual situation. What is clear, however, is that a large deposit of dumped material was situated in the northeastern corner of the area (Fig. 4). The deposit included hundreds of larger fragments of Hellenistic pottery, metal objects, animal bones and ash. The highest point of the deposit abutted the eastern wall (Wall Section 1), from where it sloped downwards towards the southwest. This fact, combined with the relatively low breakage rate of the pottery found in this deposit, suggests a distinct depositional pattern where material was

¹⁵ Ekroth 2001, fig. 7.

¹⁶ We are grateful to Gunnel Ekroth for discussing this structure with us in September 2014.

¹⁷ Wells et al. 2003, 49-77 (for the altar see especially p. 60).

¹⁸ *Corinth* 18.3, 187.



Fig. 14. *The layer of terracotta tiles, which was found below the dump in Room 3 in 2015 (Søren Handberg).*

continuously and purposely dumped in the area. Underneath this dumped deposit a layer of fallen terracotta roof tiles was found (Fig. 14). This tile layer, which runs almost continuously across the room, stops abruptly at around 1.5 m from the northern wall (Wall Section 2). The southwestern wall of Room 3 (Wall Section 9) is not well-defined and only consists of a few preserved stones. A few stones are protruding from the northern section of the trench between Wall Section 9 and the tile layer. These might represent a small staircase connecting Rooms 1 and 3. The difference in height between the floor levels of the two rooms is around 0.5 m.

The Courtyard

The area to the southeast and west of Room 2, which stretches across five excavation trenches (Trenches H20, H21, H24, H37 and H38), appears to have been a courtyard associated with the building (Fig. 15). Wall Section 10, which forms the southern border of the building, turns towards the southeast at a 90° angle in the southern part

of Trench H21. It seems likely that this southern, and so far unexcavated area, should be included in the area of the courtyard. If this turns out to be the case, the layout of the building would be L-shaped.

A large isolated Corinthian pan-tile was found in Trench H21 in the courtyard area. The position of the tile is aligned with the southwestern wall of Room 2 (Wall Section 4) at a distance of 1.75 m from the wall. This distance is almost the same as the extent of the tile layer found in Room 3, and it is possible that the Corinthian tile was used as a base for a wooden pillar that would have carried a roofed portico, which would have run along the southeastern façade of Room 1 and 2. A pillar capital that was found among the material that blocked the doorway into Room 2 might have been used for this purpose. The level of the Corinthian tile, which must represent the original surface of the courtyard, and the sloping nature of the bedrock indicate that in antiquity the surface of the courtyard sloped slightly towards the south.

In the northwestern corner of the courtyard a larger circular structure was identified in 2015. The structure



Fig. 15. *The supposed courtyard area in the western part of the building; the Corinthian pan tile, which might have supported a wooden pillar, is visible on the right-hand side (Søren Handberg).*

measures 2.6 m in diameter and up to six courses of smaller stone slabs are preserved on the northern side. The top of the structure is covered by a number of large terracotta slabs, which form a roughly circular area. The structure incorporates the bedrock in its foundation in the western part, where the level of the bedrock is higher. Firm evidence for the date of the circular structure is so far lacking, but considering the upper level of the structure it was probably visible during the use period of the building. The structure may, however, have been constructed prior to the erection of the building. The function of the structure remains unknown, although it does not seem to have functioned as an altar, since no traces of burning was observed – neither on the terracotta slabs, nor in the area surrounding the structure. Further excavations around the structure might shed more light on its function.

A Preliminary Interpretation of the Building

On the basis of the preliminary study of the finds several observations support an interpretation that allows for

at least two distinct phases of use. First of all, the original doorway between the courtyard and Room 2 was at some point in time covered up. When the blocking of the doorway took place, a new exit from Room 2 into Room 1 might have been created by removing the southeastern part of Wall Section 6. Secondly, the deposit in “Room 3” was intentionally dumped on top of the roof tiles after the roof had already collapsed.

We may then tentatively suggest that in the first phase the building consisted of two rooms (Rooms 1 and 2). These would both have had doorways opening into a roofed portico that ran along the southeastern side of the two rooms. The pillars of the portico, which were presumably of wood, were placed on large Corinthian pan tiles, of which only the westernmost in the courtyard has been preserved. In this first phase, the courtyard might already have been L-shaped and thus extended beyond the two rooms. A possible construction date for this building could be the first half of the 2nd century BC, but the finds need to be studied in more detail to corroborate this date. The first phase of the building suffered a sudden destruc-



Fig. 16. *Fill layers identified in area behind (north of) Wall Section 16 (Søren Handberg).*

tion which meant the roof collapsed, thus preserving the objects in situ in Room 1. The walls of the building, or at least a substantial part of them, must have remained standing after this first destruction.

In the second phase of the building, it seems that Room 2 was reoccupied and the doorway into the courtyard was covered up. The dump in “Room 3” could represent the clearing of debris from Room 2. Room 1 was left basically untouched, but the area may have been used as an exit way into the courtyard. The removal of the southeastern part of the wall between Rooms 1 and 2 might have occurred at this time, and might also explain the presence of the Roman plate found there. The second phase should perhaps be dated to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD. This sequence of events could also explain the scanty nature of the western wall of “Room 3”. The reconstruction is an attempt to understand the archaeological contexts, but it must be regarded a very preliminary reconstruction that is open to future reinterpretations. A more thorough study of the stratigraphic circumstances and the associate finds will shed additional light on the contextual situation.

The Road System

The geomagnetic investigations that were previously carried out on the Lower Acropolis had already indicated that a quasi-orthogonal street grid transects most of the plateau. This hypothesis is corroborated by the results of the excavations in 2013-5.

The strongest evidence was found outside the courtyard area west of Wall Section 17. Here five steps of a staircase which lies partly outside Trench H37 were identified (Fig. 15). The staircase is part of a street that runs in a northwestern to southeastern direction towards the fortification wall to the south (see below). A similar street has been identified on the other (eastern) side of the building, although no clear traces of a staircase have been found.

Behind the northern wall of the building, a series of fill layers were identified. A tripartite stratigraphy was clearly observable in the area that borders the staircase to the west (Fig. 16). The lower layer, which rests on the bedrock, consists of a compact layer of smaller stones, possibly chips from blocks that have been worked. On top of this layer lies a soil layer of a lighter colour with fewer stones. The upper layer consists of erosion soil. It



Fig. 17. *The two trenches (H30 and H336) at the Lower Acropolis wall seen from the north; the T-junction of the street is visible in the foreground (Søren Handberg).*

seems possible that the entire area behind the northern wall of the building was levelled in antiquity in order to make a flat surface, thereby creating a passageway behind the northern wall of the building, or possibly a larger open

space, which would also have facilitated movement between the two streets that ran on either side of the building. Evidence of similar fill layers was found in Trenches H32 and H33 at the eastern end during excavations in 2014. The finds from the fill layers should provide evidence for the date of the construction of the street system and thereby perhaps also indirectly for the date of the construction of the building. Only a preliminary study of the finds from the fill layers have been undertaken in 2015 and they await further study.

In 2015 another trench (Trench H36) was opened in Area II to the south, as a northern extension of Trench H30 at the fortification wall (see below). Here the end of the street with the staircase was found (Fig. 17). The street runs into a T-junction that connects to another street which presumably ran along the interior side of the fortification wall that encircles the Lower Acropolis plateau. The street is lined on both sides by walls. The eastern wall is slightly broader than the western wall, a fact that could suggest that the eastern wall belongs to a house construction, whereas the western wall might be a lower wall that only served to delimit the street. The two border-walls of the street do not run exactly parallel to each other, and the street is wider at its southern part where it connects with the other street. In the street that runs southwest–northeast along the fortification wall the excavations reached the level of a pavement, which consists of numerous stone slabs of various sizes. Towards the south the street is delimited by another wall, which appears originally to have had an opening that was subsequently blocked by smaller stones.



Fig. 18. *The outer face of the Lower Acropolis wall seen from the south (Søren Handberg).*



Fig. 19. Trench H30 at the Lower Acropolis wall; the rubble fill between the outer and inner faces of the wall is clearly visible in the eastern section of the trench (Søren Handberg).

The Lower Acropolis Fortification Wall

A substantial wall constructed of rough, irregular-sized sandstone ashlar blocks in isodomic style surrounds the Lower Acropolis plateau and connects with the outer fortification circuit. In 2014 a single 5 x 5 m trench (Trench H30) was excavated on the northern interior side of the wall, in a place where at least five courses were preserved to a height of 2.2 m (Fig. 18).¹⁹ Before the excavations were carried out, the date of the construction of the wall was unknown, but in connection with the fieldwork carried out in Kalydon in the years 2001-5, the then director had suggested that the wall might date to the late Archaic or early Classical period.²⁰ The main aim of opening a trench at the wall was therefore to investigate the date of the construction of the wall.

The excavation of Trench H30 revealed that the acropolis wall is an approximately 3.6 m-thick double-faced wall

with an inner fill consisting of stone rubble and earth. Traces of the inner wall, in the form of a single row of smaller blocks running parallel to the outer wall, were found in Trench H30. The inner wall has been much disturbed, and at most two courses may be recognized. However, it is clear that this row represents the inner face of the acropolis fortification wall. This is seen in the profile of the eastern section of the trench, where the fill of the wall is clearly demarcated (Fig. 19). The fill is tightly packed with stones of various sizes and a dark soil. To the north in the profile, a completely different layer is clearly visible. This layer is of a pale brownish colour and completely devoid of stones. This layer (H30, Layer 3) is confined to the area north of the inner wall and did not continue into the rubble fill. The complete section of the acropolis wall is therefore clearly visible in the eastern baulk. Layer 3, which abuts the northern side of the inner

¹⁹ No excavations were carried out on the exterior side of the wall and the total number of preserved courses therefore remains unknown.

²⁰ Dietz 2011c, 78.



Fig. 20. Fragment of the rim of a cup-skyphos found in the fill of the Lower Acropolis wall.

wall, continues underneath the wall, and it seems that the wall was originally set into this layer, which contained predominantly pottery of the Archaic period.

The easternmost area of the fill, called Trench H30A and measuring approximately 2 x 2 m, was excavated down to a depth of c. 0.6 m. The uppermost part of the fill was excavated separately in order to avoid contamination that might have affected the upper part of the fill material. A substantial amount of pottery was recovered from the rubble fill excavated in Trench 30A. A preliminary study of the pottery suggests that all fragments should be dated within the period from the late 8th century to the early 5th century BC. The latest pottery fragment that can be securely dated is a rim fragment of an Attic black glossed cup-skyphos with concave rim dating to the early 5th century BC (Fig. 20).²¹ The evidence, in the form of the pottery fragments obtained from the fill of the wall, therefore strongly suggests a *terminus post quem* around 490-480 BC for the construction of the wall.

This date provides us with an unprecedented early fortification wall from Aitolia. In fact, this appears to be the earliest fortification so far attested in the whole region.²² The substantial amount of pottery sherds dating to the late Geometric and Archaic period that was found both

in the fill of the fortification wall and in the dumped fill behind the inner face of the wall most likely represents traces of earlier occupation on the Lower Acropolis in this period. So far, excavations further up on the plateau have only produced sporadic finds of Archaic material, and the accumulation of early finds in the contexts surrounding the fortification suggests a levelling of the area of the plateau in connection with the construction of the wall. It seems very likely that the area behind the fortification wall was originally similar to the situation observable at nearby Chalkis, where houses of the late Geometric and Archaic period have been unearthed on the border of the Hagia Triada acropolis.²³ The existence of an even earlier system of fortification somewhere on the acropolis of Kalydon should not be excluded – especially since Homer seems to refer to a defensive wall in his account of the story of the Kalydonian boar hunt (Homer *Il.* 9.549-51).

A Topographic Survey of the Ancient City

In 2015 a new project which aims at recording all visible ancient monuments within the archaeological area of Kalydon was initiated.²⁴ The overall purpose of this survey is to create a complete topographical map of the ancient city by updating the existing site plan. Such a comprehensive and systematic mapping of all ancient structures within the area has not previously been carried out. When completed, the final topographical map could be compared with the existing geomagnetic surveys as well as excavated structures in the area. The combination of the three types of evidence – the geophysical, the visible remains and the excavated features – will present us with a good overview of the topography of the entire ancient city.

The recording of the remains was carried out with the aid of a high-precision GPS system (Leica CS25 tablet with an accuracy of up to 0.01 m). The GPS coordinates of the structures were stored in a database and subsequently plotted, through GIS software, onto a topographic map of the area. In 2015 approximately 200 structures (mostly wall sections, of which most are presumed to be ancient) were

21 Find no. 23051-5. For a parallel, see *Agora 12*, cat. no. 578, fig. 6.

22 Funke, P. 1987. See also Frederiksen 2011, 106-7, 153-4 for the possibility that another early fortification wall encircled the Central Acropolis.

23 Houby-Nielsen & Moschos 2004.

24 The topographic survey was led by Anne Ditte Koustrup Høj.

recorded in the area of the acropolis of Kalydon. Further survey work is planned for the next couple of years.

Conclusion

The past three years of excavations on the Lower Acropolis of Kalydon have revealed the existence of a house complex of the Hellenistic period. The building seems to have sustained considerable damage not long after it was erected. The destruction, which caused the collapse of the roof, has preserved the content of Room 1 in situ. This situation is similar to the destruction, and in situ preservation of finds, observed in the so-called Peristyle House in the Lower Town, which suggest the damage to the two buildings may have been caused by the same event.

Room 2 can be identified as a cooking area, and appears to be one of the best instances of the occurrence of both a hearth and a cooking installation known from the ancient Greek world.²⁵ The room was probably re-used, contrary to Room 1, in a second phase. According to several ancient sources, the inhabitants of the Aitolian cities were supposedly relocated to the new city of Nikopolis, which Octavian founded following his victory at the battle of Actium in 31 BC.²⁶ The presence of the well-preserved Roman plate dating to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD is therefore interesting, since it suggests some reoccupation of the site perhaps a generation after the foundation of Nikopolis.

The excavation of the wall encircling the Lower Acropolis plateau has shown that the acropolis area was most likely already fortified by early Classical times. This is the first time that a fortification wall in the Aitolia has been dated on the basis of finds from archaeological excavations. The substantial amount of Archaic pottery that was found in the levelling fill in the area of the fortification wall, as well as in the fill of the wall, in combination with previous finds of Archaic pottery on the Central Acropolis, suggests that much of the acropolis area was perhaps already inhabited by the late Geometric, or early Archaic period. These results add significant new evidence to the discussion of the process of urbanization in the Aitolian tribal society.²⁷

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Abbreviations:

Agora 12: B. A. Sparkes & L. Talcott 1970, *The Athenian Agora 12, Black and plain pottery of the 6th, 5th, and 4th centuries B. C.*, Princeton, NJ.

Agora 33: S. I. Rotroff 2006, *The Athenian Agora 33, Hellenistic Pottery: The Plain Wares*, Princeton, NJ.

Conspectus: E. Ettliger et al. 2002, *Conspectus formarum terrae sigillatae Italico modo confectae (Materialien zur Romisch-Germanischen Keramik 10)*, Bonn.

Corinth 15,3: A. N. Stillwell, J. L. Benson & H. N. Fowler. 1984, *Corinth 15, 3 The Potters' Quarter. The Pottery*, Princeton, NJ.

Corinth 18,3: N. Bookidis & R. S. Stroud. 1997, *Corinth 18, 3 The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: topography and architecture*, Princeton, NJ.

CVA: Oxé, A. 1968, *Corpus Vasorum Arretinorum: a catalogue of the signatures, shapes and chronology of Italian sigillata*, Bonn.

²⁵ See Foxhall 2007 for a discussion of the ancient Greek 'kitchen'.

²⁶ For the foundation of Nikopolis and the depopulation of the Aitolian cities, see e.g. Dietz 2009; Isager 2009.

²⁷ See Funke 1997 for this discussion.

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