

Agia Paraskevi of Arachamitai

Report on the 2011 Season

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This year another ca. 80 m² of the Late Hellenistic rectangular building (RB I) at Agia Paraskevi¹ was excavated. Even though we still have not succeeded in finding the eastern short end of RB I, we now know that it is ca. 45x11 m in size. Most of the rooms are arranged in two rows divided by a longitudinal wall running in east to west direction (Fig. 1). However, at the western short end there is a rectangular room (Room 3), which stretches across the building from the southern long wall until the northern long wall.

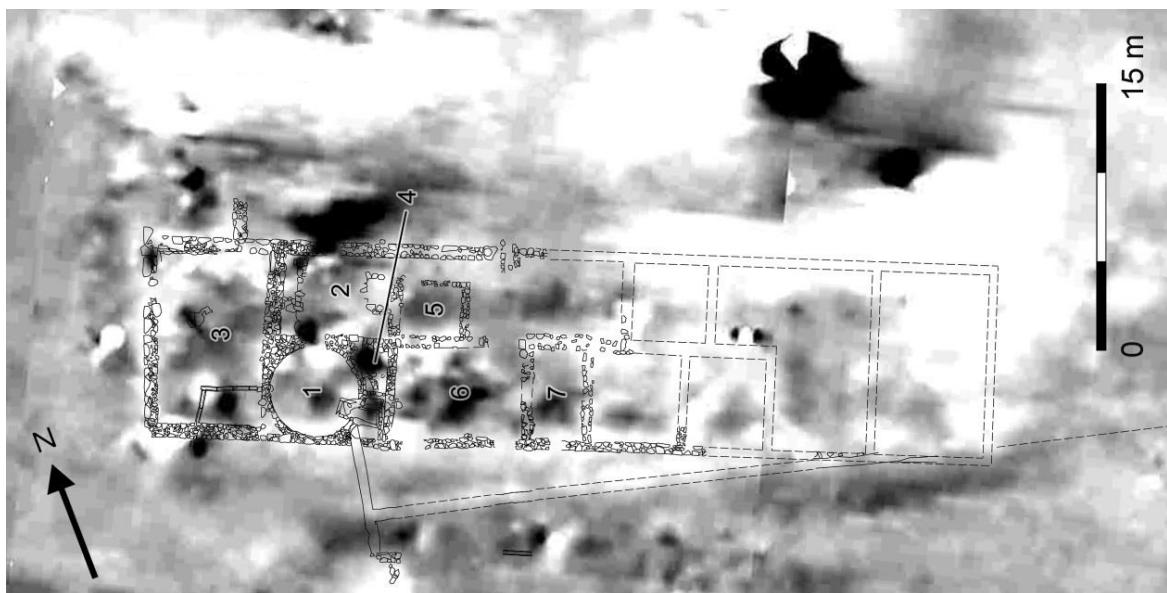


Fig. 1. Ground plan of RB I.

Work in Rooms 1-3 was continued, in addition to which Room 4 and Room 7 were excavated in their entirety. Room 1 and Room 4 are connected with bathing activities. Room 1 is circular in shape and has a tile mosaic floor (Fig. 2). Water has been drained out by a water pipe line towards the west, through Room 3. In the eastern part of the circular room

¹ For our work in the years 2006-2008 and 2010, see the reports in previous volumes of *Archaiologikon Deltion* and B. Forsén, J. Forsén, T. Smekalova και E. Tikkala, ‘Το αίνιγμα της Αγίας Παρασκευής Αραχαμιτών’, in G. A. Pikoulas, *Iστορίες για την αρχαία Αρκαδία. Proceedings of the International Symposium in Honour of James Roy*, Stemnitsa 2008, 223-230.

there is a niche, which also has a tile mosaic floor. The niche protrudes slightly into the circular room but is clearly separated from it by a terracotta curb. In Room 4 a furnace was uncovered with the shape of a tunnel abruptly ending not far from the niche in what must have been the foundation of the chimney-shaft.



Fig. 2. Room 1 with its tile mosaic floor and the niche to the right.

Certain parallels can be found between Room 1 and Room G in Arcadian Gortys regarding the type of tile mosaic floor and drainage.² Room 1 does on the other hand differ from the bath of Gortys by not having any heating canals below the floor. The best parallel for the furnace in Room 4 can be found in Olympia in the bath to the south of the gymnasium, where the main purpose of the furnace was to heat water in a bronze boiler.³

Room 2, which is rectangular and measures ca. 4.8x6.2 m, was accessed from the east. From Room 2 one not only entered the circular room, but also stoked the furnace. Room 7, into whose southwest part a small test pit had been sunk already in 2007, was now excavated in its entirety. The inner dimensions of the room, which was entered through a

² For the floor, see R. Ginouvès, *L'établissement thermal de Gortys d'Arcadie* (Études Péloponnésiennes 2), Paris 1959, 42, figs. 46, 49 and 87; for the drainage, see Ginouvès 1959, 78-84, figs. 105, 115-116.

³ F. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass. And London 1992, 377, fig. 475.

door from the west, are ca. 3.2x5 m. Most of this room, as well as all the other rooms so far excavated were covered with a layer consisting of collapsed roof tiles.

RB I was constructed during the second century and destroyed during the late first century BC. On the basis of the pottery (cooking vessels, drinking cups, plates, amphorae, craters etc.) it was e.g. used for preparing of food and communal meals/drinking. Several lamps have also been recorded and occasionally loom-weights, especially in Room 7. No clear sign of cult activity has been noted inside the building, although stamps on the roof tiles and a large amount of broken figurines and miniature vessels indicate that it was connected to a sanctuary.

In some parts we managed to reach strata that pre-date RB I. In the south half of Room 7 we found below the earthen floor another cultural layer full of black-glazed pottery dating to between the mid-sixth and mid-fourth century BC as well as a Megalopolitan coin dating to the late 360s or the 350s BC. In Room 4 we managed in two restricted areas next to the niche of Room 1 to excavate deeper. Here we found a closed pottery deposit on top of another tile mosaic floor, which is located at a level below the tile floor of Room 1 and thus apparently connected with an earlier building phase of RB I. This deposit dates to the third century BC. Also in Room 2 we detected an older wall and a floor made of stamped soil below the Late Hellenistic building. Finds from this lower floor level date to the late fourth and early third century and include e.g. a silver coin of Alexander the Great minted posthumously between 319 and 305 BC.

On the basis of the finds from Room 2 and Room 4 we can conclude that RB I was built on top of an older building, partly making use of its walls. This building, which was constructed during the second half of the fourth century BC and remained in use well into the third century, seems to have been orientated in the same way as RB I and presumably had a similar function as it. The early finds below Room 7 cannot be connected to any walls and may be part of a dump.

A trench was finally opened outside RB I, to the south of Room 4, revealing the same dark deposit that had been found already in 2007-2008. This dark, find-rich deposit originally must have been a ditch running from east to west a couple of meters to the south of RB I, which later on purpose was filled with broken pottery, other finds and food remains.

Part of the roof tiles of RB I was stamped. Fragments of two different, fairly long stamps have been found. The first stamp is 31x3.8 cm large and consists of 19 letters. One intact stamp of this type is preserved together with more than ten fragments. The letters are only faintly legible and all of them are not visible even in the intact stamp, which reads:

APΤ[.]MI[.]ΣΛΥΚΟΑΤ[-]ΔΟΣ. However, a comparison with two fragmentarily preserved stamps of the same type (APTEM[.]TO[.]ΛΥΚΟΑ[....] and [.....]ΟΣΛΥ[.....]), ascertains the full reading: Ἀρτέμιτος Λυκοάτιδος, i.e., “belonging to Artemis Lykoatis”.

The second stamp is less common; so far only four fragments belonging to this type have been found. The beginning of the text can be reconstructed on the basis of two fragments (ΔΕΣΠΟΙΝ.... and ...ΝΑΣΑΚ...) as reading Δέσποινας ΑΚ..., i.e., belonging to Despoina ΑΚ.....

Artemis appears only once with the topographical epithet Lykoatis and that is in the small Mainalian *polis* Lykoia/Lykaia, which is known from Pausanias' description of the route from Megalopolis along the river Helisson to the plain and mountain of Mainalos (Paus. 8.36.5-8). The stamps prove without doubt that Lykoia/Lykaia was located at Agia Paraskevi of Arachamitai, a fact which implies that the Arachamitai valley is identical with the valley of Mainalos and the Agios Elias mountain is the Mainalos mountain.