

# Agia Paraskevi of Arachamitai

## Report on the 2013 Season

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The Hellenistic rectangular building (RB I) that we have been excavating 2010-2012 was used for preparing of food and communal meals/drinking in connection with the sanctuary of Artemis Lykoatis mentioned by Pausanias (8.36.7). In 2012 we verified the location of a second rectangular building (RB II) that is located ca. 10 m to the north of RB I. As a main result of our work in 2013 it is now obvious that RB I and RB II are part of one and the same building with a total size of ca. 45x30 m (FIG. 1).<sup>1</sup>

This Hellenistic courtyard building was accessed through a monumental gate from the west. The gate can on the basis of the bronze pivots found roughly in situ be reconstructed as having had two single-leaf doors on each side and a wider double-leaf door in the centre. Just before and to the right of the entrance there was a foundation block of an inscription or a relief which has not survived.

On the east side of the monumental gate follows a 13x9.5 m large space that has not been excavated. This space opens in the east towards a courtyard, which on its west side was flanked by four columns. The bases of these columns were found in situ together with the lowermost column drums (FIG 2). A single Doric capital found in secondary use could because of its dimensions perhaps have belonged to these columns. The size of the inner courtyard is unknown, neither do we know whether it also had columns along its other sides.

Parallel with and about half a meter east of the row of columns there is a ca. 50 cm wide water channel, the bottom of which is constructed of large terracotta slabs. The edges of the channel are built of irregular stones and some re-used terracotta water spouts, which indicates that it was not meant to hold water, only drain it to the ditch. The row of columns was most likely covered with a sloping roof, directing the rain water to the channel, which led

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<sup>1</sup> For the previous work at the site, see *ArchDelt* 2006-2008 and 2010-2012 as well as B. Forsén, 'Neue Funde aus dem Heiligtum der Artemis Lykoatis in Arkadien', in H. Frielinghaus and J. Stroszeck (eds.), *Kulte und Heiligtümer in Griechenland. Neue Funde und Forschungen* (Beiträge zur Archäologie Griechenlands 4), Mainz 2017, 133-154 (summarising the results of the excavations 2010-2013).

it away below the rooms to the south of the courtyard and into the shallow ditch running parallel from east to west along the southern outer side of the building.

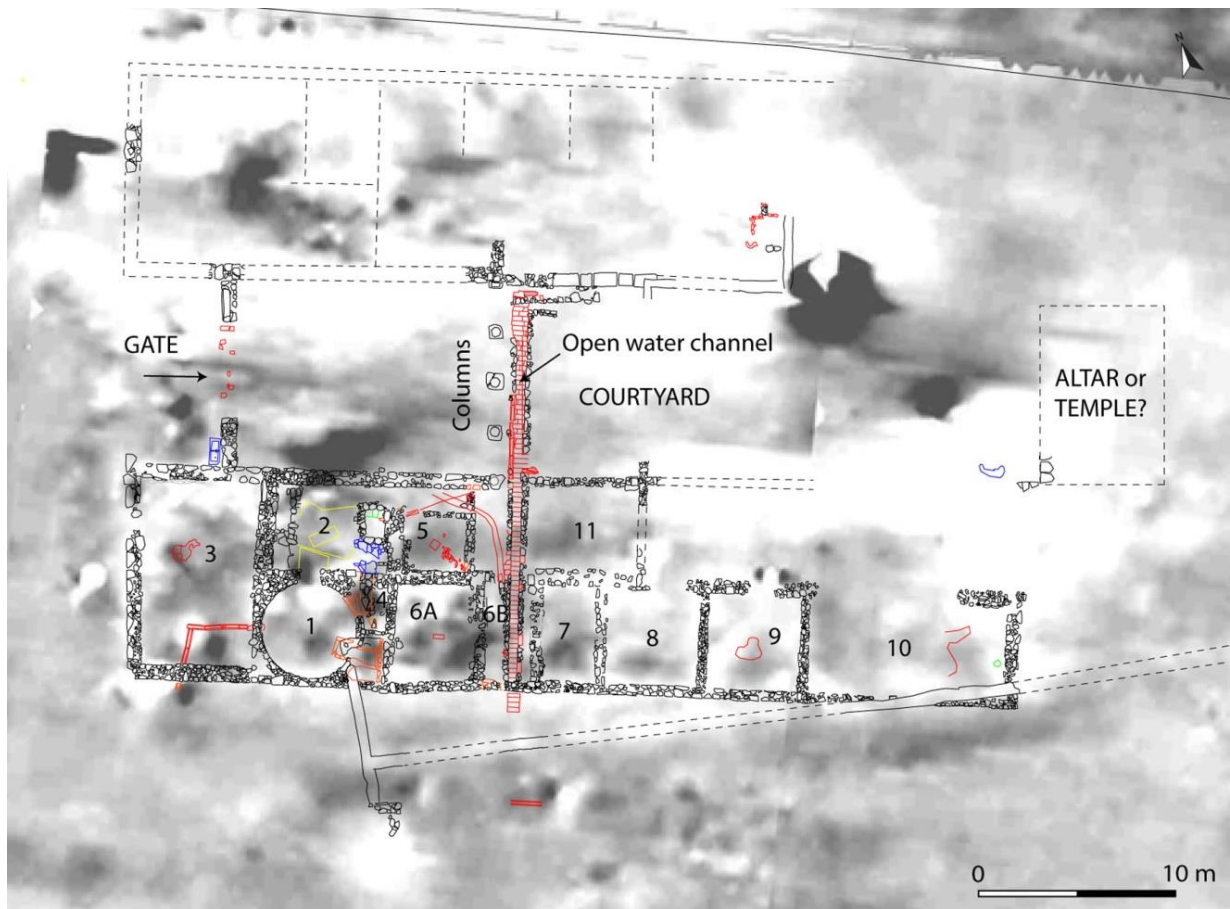


Fig. 1. Ground plan of the Hellenistic courtyard building, end of 2013 season.

The courtyard is flanked on its south and north side by two ca. 11 m wide wings, each one consisting of two rows of mostly square rooms. None of the rooms of the north wing has been excavated, but the outline of some of them can be followed on the magnetometer map. It remains unclear what the eastern part of the courtyard building looked like. In 2013 we tried in vain to find the northeastern corner of the south wing. Instead we found a short piece of a wall that constitutes the western end of a structure continuing towards the east and north. This could be the altar or temple, at least if one compares with similarly shaped courtyard structures, such as the sanctuary of Zeus Soter in Megalopolis (where the altar is located in the centre of the courtyard and a small temple on the east side of the courtyard).

In 2013 the excavation of the rooms of the south wing continued. The most interesting finds were made in Rooms 2 and 6, although some important early finds also were recovered elsewhere. Among these early finds were e.g. the first fragments of some Late Archaic

Argive terracotta figurines, including that of a horse with pellet eyes, several drinking cups dating to the sixth or fifth centuries BC, as well as the oldest coins so far found in the excavations, e.g., a silver triobol from Mantinea, dating to 460-450 BC.

Room 2 was re-opened in order to excavate deeper in some points. Thereby we found a square water basin that is 105 cm deep and can be accessed by a staircase consisting of three steps. Water has been led into the basin through a round water pipe, the mouth of which remained in situ. The fill of the basin contained only a handful of mostly black-glazed pottery sherds. On the bottom of the basin a complete drinking mug was found.



Fig. 2. The four columns that flank the western side of the open courtyard together with the open water channel and a Doric capital that may have belonged to the columns, view from the north.

This square water basin belongs to an early building phase, dating to the late fourth century BC. The basin was filled up at some stage, probably at some stage during the early second century in connection with the building of Room 1 connected with bathing. However,

the square basin shows that there were bathing facilities already during the first building phase at roughly the same spot as Room 1 later was located. There is thus a functional continuity of the bathing activity that probably had a ritual connection.

Room 6A had during the last phase of use a fireplace in the centre of the room and a floor made of stamped soil. The floor was covered by a cultural layer containing several well-preserved pots (e.g. a kantharos, an unguentarium, a bowl and a juglet), but also large amounts of cooking ware and 11 coins. The floor level itself contained another 9 coins as well as a small juglet filled with a total of 34 silver coins minted during the second century and the first half of the first century BC.

The origin of the early courtyard building goes back to the late fourth century BC and it was destroyed during the last decades of the first century BC. Due to the shape of this early courtyard building it now seems logical to regard the Roman, large courtyard building, which is located further towards the east, as having the same function and being a direct successor to the early courtyard building. Following the same line of argumentation, the later courtyard building was probably built only shortly after the destruction of the early building and remained in use until some stage in the third or fourth century AD when it was destroyed.