Pseira III

The Plateia Building



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Aerial photograph of the Plateia Building (Building BS/BV), after excavation, photographed by J. Wilson and Eleanor E. Myers.

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM MONOGRAPH 102

Pseira III

The Plateia Building

by Cheryl R. Floyd

Contributions by

Philip P. Betancourt, Eleni S. Banou, Polyxeni Bougia, Costis Davaras, Heidi M. C. Dierckx, Ioannis Frangakis, Paul Goldberg, Robert B. Koehl, John C. McEnroe, George Mitrakis, George H. Myer, Marianna Nikolaidou, David S. Reese, Mark J. Rose, Georgia Salapata, Werner H. Schoch, Maria C. Shaw, Charles J. Vitaliano, Dorothy B. Vitaliano, and Fotini Zervaki

Edited by

Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras

Published by

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

University of Pennsylvania

1998

Design and Production
University Museum Publications

Printing
Science Press
Ephrata PA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Floyd, Cheryl R.
The Plateia Building / by Cheryl R. Floyd ; contributions by Philip P. Betancourt ... [et al.] ; edited by Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras.
p. cm. -- (Pseira ; 3) (University Museum monograph ; 102)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
1. Pseira (Extinct city)--Buildings, structures, etc. 2. Pseira Island (Greece)--Antiquities. 3. Excavations (Archaeology)--Greece--Pseira (Extinct city) 4. Pottery, Minoan. 5. Architecture, Minoan--Greece--Pseira (Extinct city) I. Betancourt, Philip P., 1936- II. Davaras, Kostes. III. Title. IV. Series. V. Series: University Museum monograph ; 102 VI. Series: Pseira (Series) ; 3.
DF221.C8 F57 1998
939'.18--ddc21

98-25417
CIP

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Philadelphia
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Preface

Most of the reexamination of the Minoan remains on Pseira by Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras involved structures excavated approximately eighty years ago with far less rigorous methodologies than are acceptable today. In only a few instances was it possible to uncover stratified levels of accumulation, and thus to speak with much confidence about depositional processes, room or building usage, or a refined relative chronology.

Five structures were excavated completely during the 1985–1995 campaigns. Of these structures, only three belong to the main period of occupation on the island (Building AF North, Building BS/BV, and Building BY). Building BS/BV, or the Plateia Building, is the largest. It occupies a prominent position on the settlement peninsula, and yields convincing evidence that it was the residence of important persons during the LM IB period.

The fortuitous circumstance that explains the failure of Richard B. Seager to excavate the Plateia Building in 1906–1907 was that he apparently pitched his tents over this part of the site. The building occupies a relatively level area of ground, a feature not common on the settlement peninsula on Pseira. It was undoubtedly attractive as a campsite. The walls that were visible on the surface in 1985 were all low and highly destroyed. If they were visible in Seager's day, they probably were not considered tremendously promising. The building was passed over by the project at the turn of the century and, happily, remained to be explored by the Pseira project.

Although the Pseira project has now come to a close, and all that remains is the publication of the work, there is still much archaeological work left to be done on the island. This does not constitute an oversight on the part of the Pseira project co-directors; it reflects their philosophy that future generations of archaeologists, brandishing new methods, advanced technologies, and innovative analysis procedures, be afforded the opportunity to reevaluate these recent endeavers and to provide additional insights about this Bronze Age site.

In the pages below, the data and interpretation of the first of the structures to be completely and solely excavated by the modern project are presented. Methodologies and procedures are explained, an overview of the sequence of excavations is given, the chronology of the building is established, the data is presented, and interpretations are made. The structure is regarded as the residence of persons with elevated status in the LM IB community, and most probably the domicile of the "rulers" on the island. A wide range of activities was conducted within the building, indicating that it functioned not only as a residence, but also as a location for cult activity and industrial manufacture. It offers a fleeting glimpse of daily life in the Neopalatial period, and the workings of the provincial system of organization in this Minoan town.

Cheryl R. Floyd
June 1996

Acknowledgments

The Pseira project began in 1985. Excavations were conducted from 1986 to 1991 as an American-Greek collaboration (*synergasia*) directed by Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras. The project was sponsored by Temple University, the Archaeological Institute of Crete, and the Archaeological Society of Crete, under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Additional financial assistance for the work published in this volume was given by the following agencies and individuals: the Institute for Aegean Prehistory; the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency; the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada; The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage; the Arcadia Foundation; the Mellon Corporation; Hamilton College; Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario; the Long Island Society of the Archaeological Institute of America; Leon Pomerance; and other donors.

The authors and editors extend thanks to all those who assisted with the project, including the Directors for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Ministry of Culture of Greece, Yannis Tzedakis (1985–1990, 1993–present), Ios Zervoudaki (1990–1992), and Katerina Romiopoulou (1992–1993), and to Nikos P. Papadakis, Epimelete and Supervisor for the Ephorate of Eastern Crete (1985–1989, 1995–present). They are also grateful to the Directors of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Stephen G. Miller (1985–1987) and William D. Coulson (1987–1997).

The excavation of Building BS/BV was undertaken over several years. It was directed by the editors of this volume under the supervision of a succession of trench supervisors: Eleni S. Banou, Polyxeni Bougia, Robert B. Koehl, George Mitrakis, Marianna Nikolaidou, Georgia Salapata, and Fotini Zervaki. Technicians Nikos Daskalakis and Andreas Klines provided special expertise in excavation.

The architectural study was conducted by John C. McEnroe with the help of numerous assistants: Anne Barnosky (1990–1992), Joan Beaudoin (1992), Senta C. German (1989–1992), Naomi Horowitz (1991), Vicki L. Mims (1986–1988), Marianna Nikolaidou (1988), Sharon Rathke (1989–1990), Paul Scotton (1991), Chrysostomos Theodorou (1989), and Philip Van Dusen (1986). Architectural measurements were made with the assistance of David D. Day (1987–1988) using a Topcon DM-A2 EDM (Electronic Distance Meter). The final plan was completed in 1995 by John C. McEnroe using data prepared by the entire team of architects.

The water-sieving operation was supervised by students trained by Glynis Jones: Russel Evison (1986), Anne Snowden (1987), Sarah Ryder (1988), Ian Smith (1989, 1991), and Jonathan Chapman (1990).

Mary A. Betancourt supervised work in the apotheke. Profile drawings were made by Barbara Botting (1993–1994), Senta C. German (1989), Stephanie Gleit (1995), Krista Gustafson (1990–1992), Jenny Hope Simpson (1989, 1991), Ursula Hawlitschka (1992), Naomi Horowitz (1991), Teresa Howard (1986–1992), Robert B. Koehl (1986), Sheila Lin (1994), Katherine E. May (1993–1995), Marie T. Naples (1990–1991), Merav Nesvisky (1993), Jacke Phillips (1986), Jeanne Pond (1990), Sharon Rathke (1989), Chrysostomos Theodorou (1989), Eleni Velona (1990), and the authors of the individual sections. Catalog entries for the material presented here were made under the supervision of Mary A. Betancourt (1985–1995). Individual entries were written by her and by Catherine McEnroe (1985–1986), Heidi M. C. Dierckx (1988–1989), Laurie Schmitt (1991–1992), and the authors of individual chapters. Layout and other prepublication work was done by Katherine E. May. Conservators included Barbara Hamann (1988–1989), Asaf Oron (1992), and Vanessa Edwards (1992).

Field photographs were by Deidre Pribram (1985–1986), Michael W. Betancourt (1986–1990),

George Mitrakis (1992), and Philip P. Betancourt (1984–1993). Object photography was by Deidre Pribram (1985–1986), George Mitrakis (1992–1993), and Philip P. Betancourt (1987–1993). The seal was photographed by Ingo Pini. Aerial photographs were made in 1992 by J. Wilson and Eleanor E. Myers, working in consultation with the author.

Other studies were made by several specialists. Pottery was studied by the principal author with assistance and advice from Eleni S. Banou and Philip P. Betancourt. A study of Byzantine pottery in the upper levels of Building BS/BV is being published by Natalia Poulou-Papadimitriou. Definition of Minoan pottery fabrics was made with the assistance of ceramic petrographers Peter Day, Sarah Vaughan, and George H. Myer. Samples for analysis were collected by the trench supervisors under the supervision of Philip P. Betancourt, exported under permits from the Greek Ministry of Culture, and studied in the laboratories listed in the following chapters. Other finds from the excavation were studied by the scholars whose reports are presented in this volume.

The Topcon DM-A2 EDM (Electronic Distance Meter) used for survey in 1987–1988 was kindly lent by Don Anderson of the Anderson Instrument and Supply Co., Canton, Ohio.

Heidi M. C. Dierckx, author of the sections on stone implements, would like to thank Harriet Blitzer for her advice on the study of stone tools and for her help in their cataloging. She would also like to thank Jeffrey Soles and Costis Davaras for allowing her to study and refer to the stone material from the excavations at Mochlos, and David T. Romano for allowing her to examine stone implements in The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Marianna Nikolaidou is grateful to Eftychia Yannouli for her help with faunal terminology, and to Cheryl R. Floyd who kindly provided her unpublished 1995 manuscript on the Plateia Building.

The interpretation of this building and its contents was a PhD dissertation by the author for the Department of Art History at Temple University. She is grateful to Philip P. Betancourt, Jane D. Evans, Ellen N. Davis, and Martin S. Werner who served on her dissertation committee. She would also like to thank all the staff members at Pseira who gave her assistance, especially Costis Davaras, who made many helpful comments, and John C. McEnroe, who read an early draft of the chapters in her dissertation concerning architecture and made valuable suggestions.

Thanks are also extended to Kellee Barnard, Thomas Brogan, Briget Crowell, Leslie Preston Day, Geraldine Gesell, Donald Haggis, Barbara Hayden, J. A. MacGillivray, Jennifer Moody, Margaret Mook, David T. Romano, Jeffrey S. Soles, Thomas Strasser, Metaxia Tsipopoulou, L. Vance Watrous, and Malcolm Wiener.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used:

B	base sherd
BA	Bronze Age
Bod	body sherd
BYZ	Byzantine Fabrics
ca.	circa
cat.	cataloged
CF	Coarse Fabrics
cm	centimeter
d	diameter
dim	dimension
EM	Early Minoan
FF	Fine Fabrics
FN	Final Neolithic
FOR	Foreign Fabrics
frag	fragment
g	gram
h	height
H	handle sherd
kg	kilogram
L	leg sherd
LM	Late Minoan
m	meter
max	maximum
MF	Mirabello Fabrics
MFCC	Mirabello Fabric, Cooking Class
mm	millimeter
MM	Middle Minoan
MOD	Modern Fabrics
PF	Phyllite Fabrics
PS	Pseira excavation number
R	rim sherd
rest	restored
S	spout sherd
SM	Siteia Museum
th	thickness
TOT	total
w	width
ws	water sieved
wt	weight

Part I

Introduction

1

Introduction

Cheryl R. Floyd

The study of Bronze Age houses, while not novel (see, for example, Hawes et al. 1908; Pelon 1966; 1970; Rider 1965; and Shaw 1973) has enjoyed a renewed popularity in the last fifteen years (Nicholas 1980; Waterhouse 1981; McEnroe 1982; Cummer and Schofield 1984; Scharr 1985; 1990; Darque and Treuil 1990; and Daviau 1993). This circumstance is perhaps due to the rise in interest in gender topics, especially women's studies. In part, the desire may be to understand one of the principal domains generally associated with women. Sessions dealing with gender issues and domestic architecture have dramatically increased in the past ten years (1985–1995) at annual conferences of the Archaeological Institute of America, including sessions with papers devoted to "Archaeology of the House and Household" (1986), "Domestic Architecture in Ancient Tunisia" (1987), "Gardens, Villas, and Houses" (1988), "Women in Greek and Etruscan Art" (1990), "Age, Gender, and Sexuality" (1991), "Roman Domestic and Public Architecture" (1992), "Women and Family Life in Greece, Etruria, and Rome" (1992), "Cross-Cultural Studies in Domestic Architecture and Activities" (1993), "Body Image and Gender Symbolism: Women, Dress, and Undress" (1994), "Household Archaeology" (1995), "Gender and Periphery" (1995), and "Embodying Gender" (1995). Prior to 1985 (the first year in which the sessions were given titles), few papers at the annual AIA Conference were devoted to gender issues or domestic architecture.

Intrasite analyses, including the study of the domicile, have resulted from the tendency to view settlement archaeology in terms of hierarchy levels: activity areas within structures as well as structures, communities, and the distribution of communities across the landscape (Trigger 1989:284–285). In other words, the archaeology of houses may arise partly out of the functionalist's concern for settlement archaeology.

In spite of the current interest in domestic life and structures, Aegean Bronze Age scholars have remained curiously silent on the topic of Minoan households, including the activities that were performed within them, and how households might relate to others in the same settlement. House typologies have appeared (notably McEnroe 1982), as have considerations of the Minoan conditioned response to space and its organization (Preziosi 1983; Sanders 1990; Scharr 1990), but activity area analyses have lagged behind, especially when compared to the work done in ancient Eastern Mediterranean, Mesoamerican, and North American studies (Flannery and Winter 1976; Nicholas 1980; Ciolek-Torrello 1984; Scharr 1985; Cliff 1988; Tringham 1991; Daviau 1993).

Perhaps the major obstacle perceived when attempting to assess the activities performed in ancient households and their positions within their communities (rank or status) is the frustrating fact that so few buildings have been excavated with a total commitment to retrieving and recording all available data. The Plateia Building on Pseira is especially attractive for this type of study because stringent attempts were made to recover all material from the structure.

The Plateia Building (Building BS/BV) is located at the north of the Town Square or Plateia (Ill. 1, Fig. 1). It occupies the entire northern side of the square, with one room built on the eastern side as well. The structure is the largest building excavated at Pseira. For convenience in description, it has been divided into two wings, with Wing BS on the east and Wing BV on the west.

The site of Building BS/BV was not excavated during Richard Seager's campaigns of 1906 and 1907,

probably because his tents were placed over this part of the site (Pl. 1A–B). The building was discovered by small tests made in 1986, and it was excavated in subsequent seasons (Pl. 2).

From the beginning, the building was recognized as an important structure in the town. Its excavation was conducted slowly and meticulously, with careful attention to the proper recovery and recording of its data.

Several preliminary reports have been published on various aspects of Building BS/BV (Betancourt and Davaras 1986:197; 1988a:213; 1989–1990:297; 1990:21–23; 1995:81–86; Betancourt 1990b:20–21; Dierckx 1995; Floyd et al. 1995; Floyd 1996).

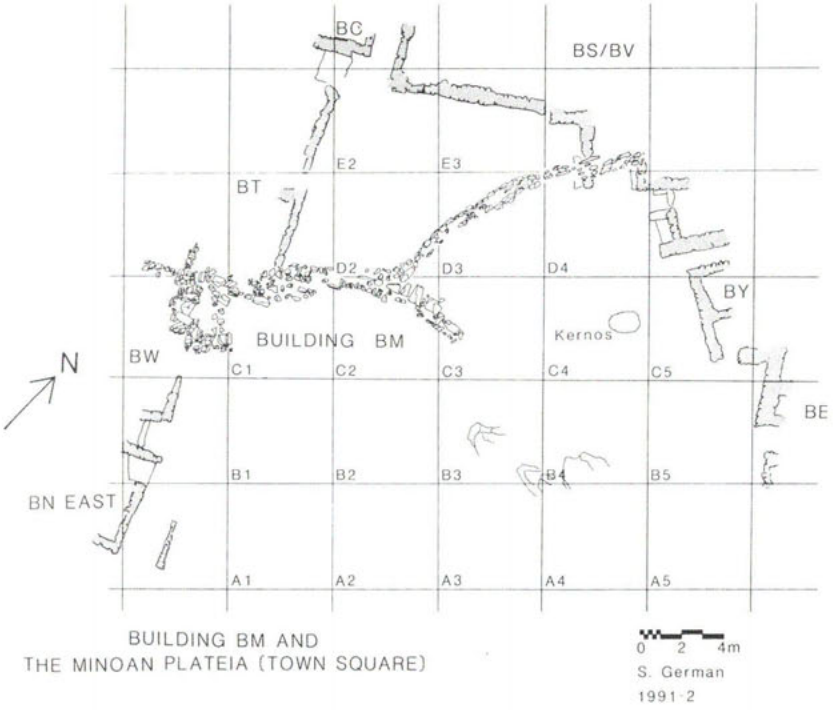


Illustration 1. Building BM and the Minoan Plateia (Town Square) at Pseira.

2

Methodology

Cheryl R. Floyd

After several years of planning, the Pseira project began in 1985. The first season of work consisted of cleaning the settlement peninsula and mapping the architecture exposed by Seager's excavations of 1906–1907. Architectural studies of the previously excavated buildings helped to suggest problems and approaches for the modern investigations on the island.

The Plateia Building was discovered in 1986. The goal of the excavation and study of this structure was to elucidate the workings of a Minoan household, to understand the building's relationship to surrounding structures and to the Plateia, and to establish its role in the Pseiran town (for information on the integration of cultural variables in establishing the nature of a society's culture, see the comments by Watrous 1996:27–28). The building also provided stratigraphy to compare with the work conducted by Seager.

Specific objectives included the excavation of as much of the building as the topography would permit, the recovery and publication of the architecture and its artifacts within their archaeological contexts, and the study and publication of sediments, microscopic remains, charcoal, and other materials to aid in the interpretation of the building.

In order to achieve these goals and objectives, a research design and excavation strategy were devised to retrieve as complete a range of finds as possible, both microscopic and macroscopic, given time and financial restraints. Attempts were made to collect all relevant material from the building. All excavated units were dry-sieved, and multiple samples from each floor level in every room were water-sieved to obtain residue and flot which was sorted for microscopic remains, such as faunal and floral material (for sampling strategy see Snowden and Jones 1995:132). All pottery was kept. It was washed, counted, weighed, and assessed according to sherd and vessel type. This information was recorded in statistical tables (App. A) which detail all pottery found in the structure. Loose stones were examined by lithic specialist Heidi M. C. Dierckx, who determined whether or not they were ground stone tools. All pieces of obsidian were kept and cataloged. Specialists in many fields were consulted to identify and analyze other materials found in the building.

Because many of the exterior and interior walls of the building were visible immediately after the removal of the surface stratum, it was possible to confidently excavate by room, with an emphasis upon associating artifacts and data. Where the walls of individual rooms were not visible before excavation began, the surface stratum was removed in grid squares (Ill. 2). This strategy resulted in an association of artifacts with specific rooms during excavation. An additional advantage to this approach was that it has aided in the rapid publication of the material from the Pseira Project.

The excavation of the building was organized by teams of three or four workmen, headed by a trench supervisor. The basis of the recording system used by the supervisors was a series of excavation units (or "pails"). These excavation units were removed in a series of levels corresponding to ancient strata, when detectable, or to ca. 10 cm deep arbitrary passes in the case of deep strata or when strata were not readily discernable.

Information on the methodologies employed by the various authors is given in *Pseira* I (see especially pages xvii–xviii, 47, 98, 131–133, and 143).

Statistical tables for the pottery were prepared using an adaptation of a system designed and utilized by Philip P. Betancourt (1990a) and L. Vance Watrous (1992) at Kommos.

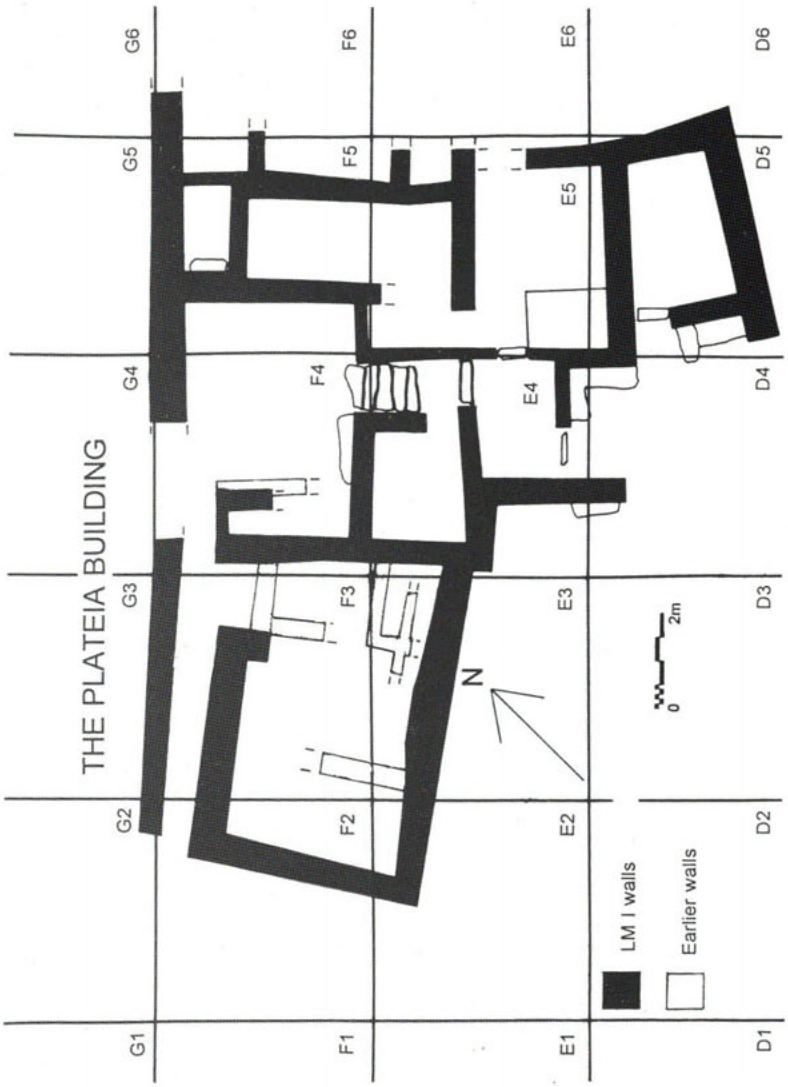


Illustration 2. Plan of the Plateia Building with the excavation grid overlaid.

3

Excavation of the Building

Cheryl R. Floyd, Philip P. Betancourt, Eleni S. Banou, Polyxeni Bougia, Robert B. Koehl, George Mitrakis, Marianna Nikolaidou, Georgia Salapata, and Fotini Zervaki

Stone blocks were visible above ground before excavation began in the area of the Plateia Building. The first trial trench was excavated in 1986, revealing Room BS 1; the remainder of the building was uncovered over the next five seasons (Pl. 2, Ill. 3). Rooms and walls were numbered sequentially as they were exposed (Ill. 4). Most of the architecture revealed was in use in LM IB, the building's final period of use. A Byzantine wall, perhaps from an animal pen, was found over the southern part of the structure (over parts of BS 1 and BS 11), but most of the building had not been built over in later times. This Byzantine wall was part of Building BM (Ill. 1).

During the first season of excavation, E. Banou and R. Koehl cleared Room BS 1, its bench (Bench B, Pls. 3A–B), and the small lane or alley to the south (Alley BS 2). The southern wall of the room was visible before excavation. The upper strata in Room BS 1 were composed of soil mixed with potsherds and many tumbled stones and slabs. An upper story was suggested by large slabs found fallen into the room from above. The lower strata had few stones. The floor of the room was formed of a thin layer of reddish soil. A second bench (Bench A) was discovered in Room BS 11 (Pl. 3C).

In the second season (1987), the entire length of the southern facade of Wing BV (Wall BV 1 in Wing BV, Pl. 4A) was exposed along both surfaces by P. Bougia. During this same season, Room BS 7 (the staircase, Pl. 4B), Room BS 8, and most of Room BS 6, in grid square E4, were excavated by G. Salapata. She was obliged to begin by removing a Byzantine wall (Wall no. 8), which was visible prior to excavation, and which ran across the trench. A layer of slabs found just above bedrock in Room BS 8 may have been the remains of a paved floor, but this interpretation is uncertain. Room BS 6 (the vestibule) offered positive evidence for a collapsed upper story in the form of numerous fallen slabs with a layer of hard-packed soil immediately beneath. A largely restorable cooking pot (no. **91**) and a mottled serpentinite lamp (no. **469**) were also present in this stratum representing the collapsed upper story (Pl. 5A). Below the slabs and hard-packed soil was the finely paved ground floor of the room (Pl. 5B).

In 1987, F. Zervaki excavated Locations BS 3, BS 4 (Pl. 6A–B), BS 5, Room BS 9 (the *sottoscala*), and Location BS 10 (the southern part of Room BS 10/15). A trench was opened in order to investigate the area north of Wall no. 3 of Wing BS, which was excavated the year before. No other walls were visible in the trench before excavation began. Parts of two possible superimposed paved floors were encountered in the eastern part of Room BS 3/4/5, which appeared to be of the same relative date (LM IB). The lowest stratum found in Location BS 3 was a packing below the LM IB floor. Its *terminus post quem* was LM IA, based on the pottery recovered, but it could not be associated with any architectural features.

Work on the Plateia Building during the third season (1988) included the exploration of the western part of Room BS 6 by P. Bougia, who also began work on Location BV 1. In addition, she revealed the bench on the western wall of Space BS 11 (Bench C, Pl. 7A), and completed the excavation of Space BS 11. G. Salapata worked in the Plateia in the angle between the two wings south of Room BS 8. The primary aim of the season was to establish the extent of

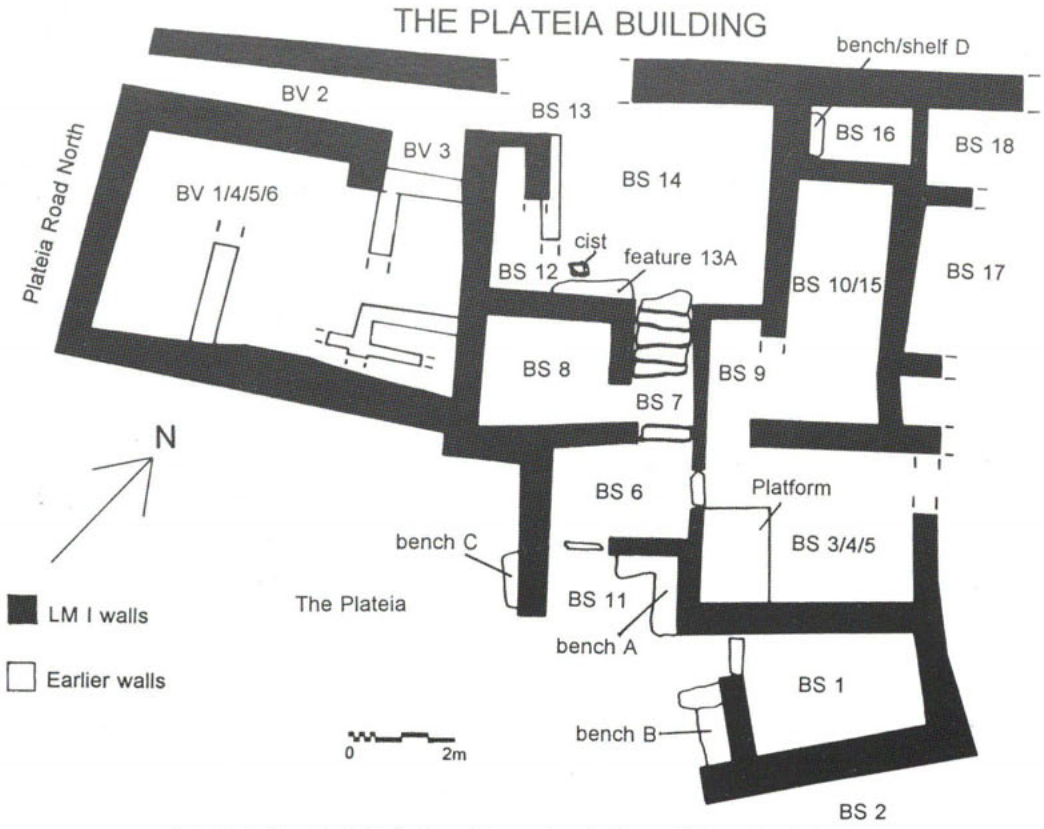


Illustration 3. Plan of the Plateia Building with rooms, spaces, locations, and features designated.

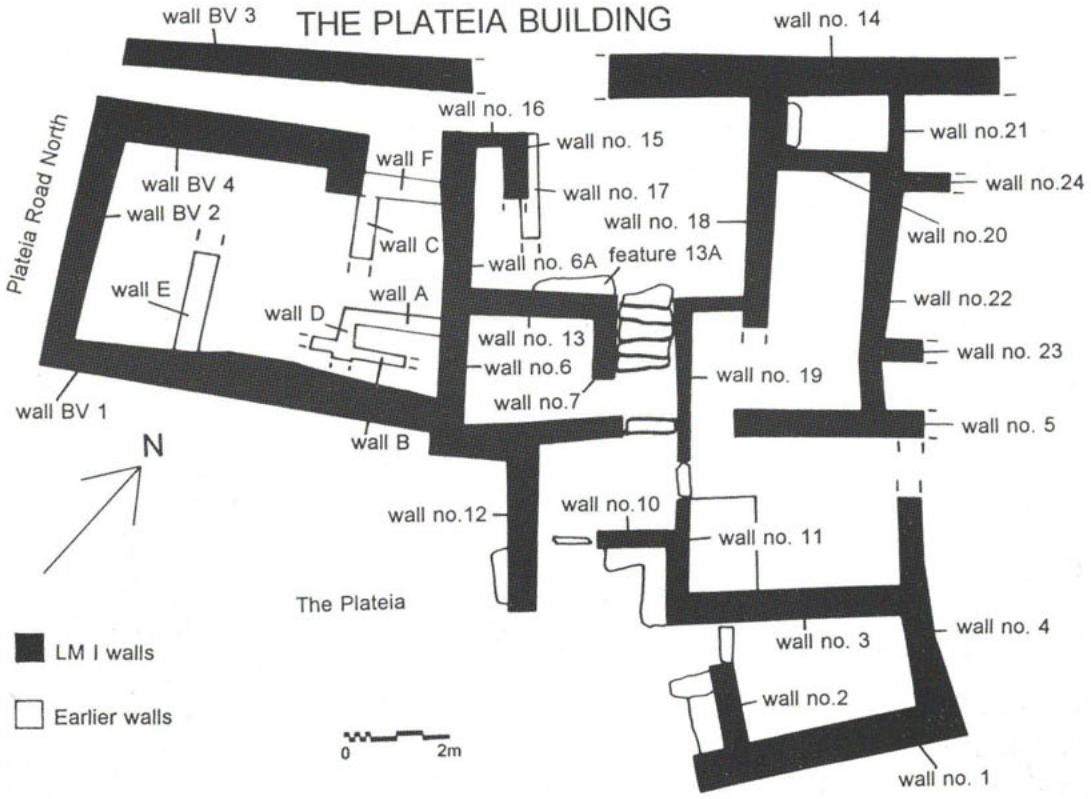


Illustration 4. Plan of the Plateia Building with wall designations.

Wing BS and to determine its relationship to the largely unexplored Wing BV.

Substantial time was devoted to the excavation of this building during the fourth season of work (1989). The aim of the season was to fully investigate the northern part of Wing BS, the remainder of Wing BV (Pl. 7B), and to assess their relationship. P. Bougia and M. Nikolaidou excavated Location BV 3. M. Nikolaidou also finished the excavation of Locations BV 1, BV 4, BV 5, and BV 6. In Wing BS, Rooms BS 12, BS 13, BS 14, and the baulks around Room BS 7 were excavated. In addition, Location BS 15 and Room BS 16 were begun.

Only after the second level was removed from grid square F4 did new walls appear that differentiated Rooms BS 12, BS 13, and BS 14. Room BS 12 yielded fallen slabs and stones which may have come from a collapsed upper story or from the destruction of the walls of the room. The evidence was not conclusive. A large amount of pottery was found in this small room. The eastern wall of Room BS 12 (Wall no. 15) lay partially on top of an earlier wall (Wall no. 17) which had the same orientation (Pl. 8A).

Room BS 14 occupied most of the trench in grid square F4, and even continued into the adjacent grid square, F5. After removing the first level of fallen debris, the boundaries of Room BS 14 were apparent. A portion of the collapsed mudbrick wall that defined Room BS 9 was found to have fallen into the southern part of Room BS 14. The small cist in the southwest corner (Pl. 8B) was found full of soil mixed with a few sherds in Coarse Fabrics. The numerous slabs found fallen into the room, one of which was quite large (0.8 X 0.35 m) offered proof of the existence of an upper story. They were found above a layer of hard-packed soil above the floor where they had fallen when the building was destroyed. The ground floor in Room BS 14 had two superimposed pavements preserved in its northeast corner (Pls. 9A–B).

With the excavation of trenches in grid squares F2 and F3, Wing BV was determined to be an extension of Wing BS. All of Wing BV was investigated down to bedrock, and early strata (MM II and LM IA) were found in Locations BV 6A and BV 6B. As with the LM IA stratum in Location BS 3, the LM IA stratum in Location BV 6B existed merely beneath the LM IB floor and could not be associated with any walls.

In 1990 excavation on the Plateia Building was completed by trench supervisors G. Mitrakis and M. Nikolaidou, who finished the work on Location BS 15 and Room BS 16 in grid square F5. A very large number of slingstones was found in Location BS 15 which, apparently, had fallen in from the roof. Limited excavations were also conducted in Location BS 17, but the floor level was not reached. No work was undertaken in Space BS 18. It was not possible to ascertain the eastern limits of the building, because it had eroded over the steep cliff that lies immediately to the east.

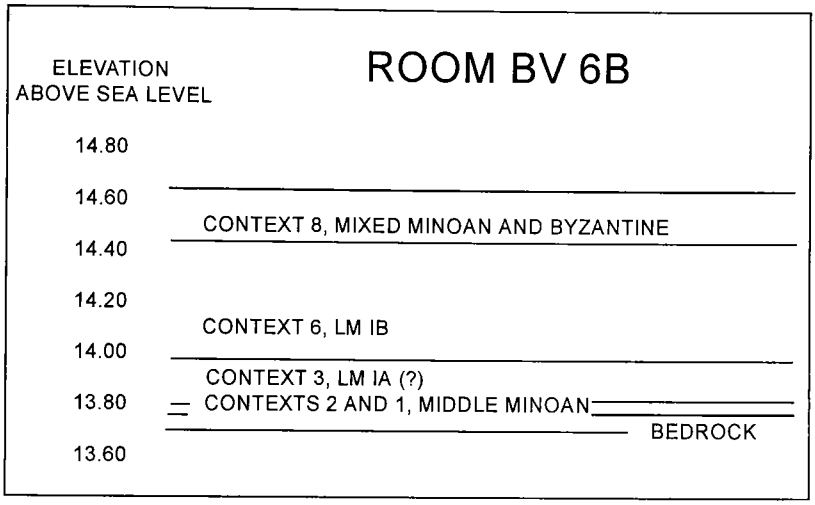
Archaeological Contexts

Eighteen architectural spaces were numbered in the building (Ill. 3), some of which were joined later when it became apparent that they constituted the same room.

Due to the nature of the architecture of the Plateia Building, the various archaeological strata within the building are best considered and discussed as "contexts." The term "context" is preferable to "stratum" for several reasons. All eight superimposed layers of horizontal accumulation are never found within a single room. How these layers are related from room to room in terms of stratigraphy can be confusing because the ground floors are on different levels or terraces. Thus, "pail" or excavated unit BS 6-6 from Room BS 6, which represents the LM IB ground floor level, is at an elevation of ca. 12.59–12.72 m above sea level, yet it is analogous in nature to excavated unit BS 14-5, which is the ground floor level in Room BS 14, at an elevation of 13.80–13.47 m above sea level. Although their positions vary vertically, they are of the same date. They are related in nature, in that they both represent contemporary ground floor levels in a single structure. They represent the same context but not the same stratum.

Eight separate contexts have been identified in the Plateia Building as a whole. Their relative dates, which, in each case, represent the *terminus post quem* of the context, vary from MM II to Byzantine. It is possible for more than one context to have a given date if they are different in character. For example, both Contexts 4 and 5 are dated to LM IB, but Context 4 represents the ground floor, while Context 5 represents the collapsed upper story.

The earliest deposit was from MM IIB, and the latest was Byzantine. The most complete stratigraphy was in Space BV 6B (Ill. 5A), but no single space contained all the levels. Context 7, the collapsed roof, could only be identified in two locations, BS 15 and 17 (Ill. 5B). In many rooms, the stratigraphy was approximately as is shown in Illustration 6. A mixed Minoan and Byzantine stratum (Context 8) was at the modern surface and covered the upper parts of sur-



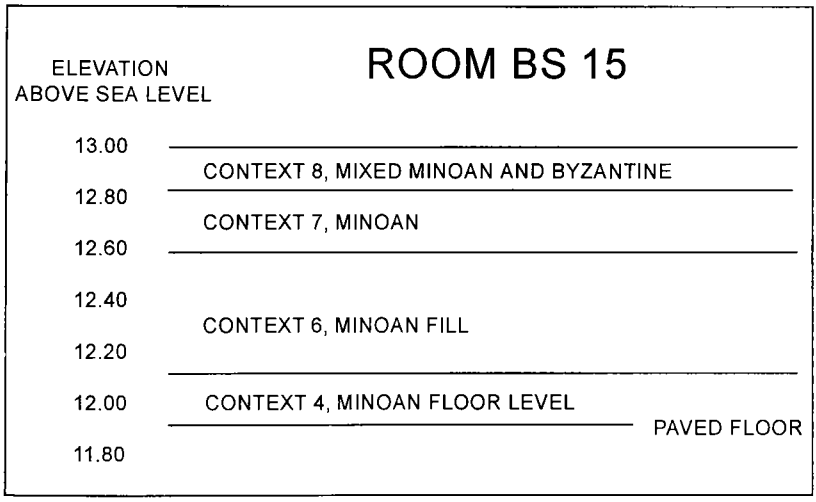


Illustration 5A. Schematic representation of the stratigraphy in BV 6B. Not drawn to scale.
Illustration 5B. Schematic representation of the stratigraphy in BS 15. Not drawn to scale.

viving walls. Below this context, excavations uncovered levels whose latest pottery was LM IB. Sometimes, as in Room BS 6, it was possible to distinguish material from the second story (Context 5) from the floor level associated with the ground story (Context 4). At other times, it was only possible to identify these levels as collapsed fill (Context 6). Late Minoan IB contexts represented the last period when Building BS/BV was used.

The eight contexts in the building are used in the organizational system to describe the find spots of objects in the structure. The eight contexts, beginning with the earliest one, include the following:

Context 1. A Middle Minoan IIB floor level associated with early walls (Walls A, B, and D) in Room BV 6B.

Context 2. A Middle Minoan IIB level under the LM IA level, yet above Context 1.

Context 3. A Late Minoan IA level beneath the LM IB floors, and associated with no walls.

Context 4. LM IB floor levels, with objects left on the floors when the building went out of use.

Context 5. LM IB remains from the upper story which fell onto the ground floor rooms when the building collapsed.

Context 6. LM IB and earlier remains that constitute debris within the room resulting from the collapse of the walls and roof.

Context 7. LM IB stratum associated with the roof of the building, found collapsed into two rooms.

Context 8. Minoan and Byzantine mixed stratum over the remains of the building.

CONTEXT 1

Nature: MM IIB floor.
Date: MM IIB with some earlier material.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Room BV 6B (Ill. 5A):
BV 6B-4
Soil colors: dry: yellowish red (5YR 5/6); wet: yellowish red (5YR 4/6)
Comments: Room BV 6B used hard-packed soil on bedrock for its floor during MM IIB.

CONTEXT 2

Nature: A MM IIB stratum under the LM IA level, associated with walls, but above the MM IIB floor.
Date: MM IIB, with earlier material.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Room BV 6A:
BV 6A-2
Room BV 6B (Ill. 5A):
BV 6B-3
Soil colors: dry: yellowish red (5YR 5/6); wet: yellowish red (5YR 4/6)
Comments: Excavations under the LM IA level were only possible in a small area at the east of Wing BV.

CONTEXT 3

Nature: Floor packing under the LM IB floors, and beneath the LM IB level in spaces where no floor could be isolated.
Date: LM IA and earlier.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Space BS 3:
BS 3-7
Space BV 6B (Ill. 5A):
BV 6B-2
Soil colors: dry: strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) to yellowish red (5YR 5/6); wet: brown/dark brown (7.5YR 3-4/4) to yellowish red (5YR 4/6)
Comments: Excavations under LM IB floors were made in two rooms (BS 3 and BV 6).

CONTEXT 4

Nature: LM IB floor levels with deposits of whole vases and sherds.
Date: LM IB.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Room BS 1:
BS (D5) 1-4
Space BS 3:
BS 3-5
BS 3-6
Space BS 5:
BS 5-5
Room BS 6 (Ill. 6):
BS 6-6
Room BS 8:
BS 8-4
BS 8-5
Room BS 9:
BS 9-6
Space BS 10:
BS 10-5
BS 10-6
Room BS 11:
BS 6-7
Room BS 12:
BS 12-3
Room BS 13:
BS 13-2
Room BS 14:
BS (F4) 14-4 = BS 14-4

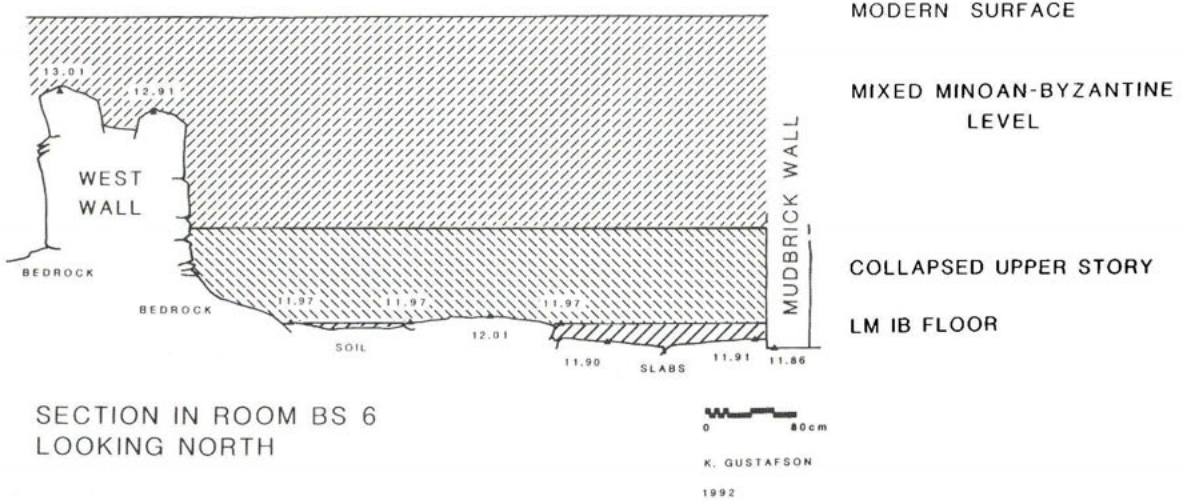


Illustration 6. Schematic drawing showing a vertical section and the stratigraphy in Room BS 6.

BS (F5) 14-5 = BS 14-5
Space BS 15 (Ill. 5B):
BS 15-7b
BS 15-7c
BS 15-8
Room BS 16:
BS 16-5
Space BS 17:
BS 17-9
Space BV 1:
BV 1A-4 (north part of room)
BV 1B-2 (south part of room)
Space BV 2:
BV 2-2
Space BV 3:
BV 3-2
Space BV 4:
BV 4-2
Space BV 5:
BV 5-3

Soil colors: dry: yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) to strong brown (7/5YR 4-5/6); wet: brown/dark brown (7.5YR 3-4/4-5 to 10YR 4/3)

Comments: Floors dating to LM IB were recognizable in many of the rooms. One of the clearest stratigraphic sequences was in Room BS 6; the levels are shown in Illustration 6. The floor deposits included only a few whole vases along with sherds, stone tools, and other objects.

CONTEXT 5

Nature: Fallen remains from the LM IB upper story.
Date: LM IB.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Room BS 6 (Ill. 6):
BS 6-3
BS 6-4
Room BS 8:
BS 8E-2
BS 8W-2
BS 8-2
BS 8-3
Room BS 14:
BS 14-3
BS 14 (cist)-3

Soil colors: dry: dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4); wet: dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6); or dry: strong brown (7.5YR 4-5/6); wet: dark reddish brown (5YR 3/4) to brown/dark brown (7.5YR 3-4/4)

Comments: A stratum of floor slabs and objects which had fallen from the upper story was recognizable in Room BS 6, the adjoining Room BS 8, and in Room BS 14. The sequence of levels in Room BS 6 is shown in Illustration 6.

CONTEXT 6

Nature: Fill within the rooms from collapsed walls and roof sometimes mixed with material from the second story.
Date: LM IB mixed with a small amount of earlier material.
Spaces and Excavated Units:
Room BS 1:
BS (D5) 1-3 = BS (D5) 3
Spaces BS 3/4:
BS 3-3
Spaces BS 3/5:
BS 3-4
Space BS 4:
BS 4-3
Room BS 7:
BS 7E-2
BS 7-3
BS 7-4
Room BS 9:
BS (E5) NW-3
BS 9-4
BS 9-5
Space BS 10:
BS 10-4
Room BS 11:
BS 6-5
Above Rooms BS 12, BS 13, and BS 14:
BS (F4)-Surface
BS (F4)-1
BS 12-2
Room BS 14:
BS 14-2
Room BS 14 and Space BS 15:
BS Wall 18-cleaning
BS Wall 17-cleaning
Spaces BS 15 and BS 17 (Ill. 5B):
BS 15-4
BS 15-5
BS 15-6
Room BS 16:
BS 16 (F6)-3
BS 16-2
BS 16-3
BS 16-4
Space BV 1:
BV 1-2
BV 1-3
BV 1-4
Space BV 1 (north part):
BV 1-5
BV 1A-2
BV 1A-3
Space BV 1 (south part):
BV 1-6

Space BV 2:
BV 2-1
Space BV 3:
BV 3-1
Space BV 4:
BV 4-1
Space BV 5:
BV 0-2C
BV 0-4
BV 5-2
Spaces BV 6A and 6B (Ill. 5A):
BV 6-1
Plateia Road North:
BC 14-1
BC 14-1/2
BC 14-2
BC 14 South-1
BC 14 S-1

Soil colors: dry: yellowish brown (10YR 5/4); wet: dark brown (10YR 4/3); or dry: reddish brown (5YR 4/4) to strong brown (7.5YR 4-5/6); wet: brown/dark brown (7.5YR 3-5/4)

Comments: Most of the rooms contained a fill of soil and stones from the collapse of the building's walls and roof.

CONTEXT 7

Nature: Fallen remains from the LM IB roof.

Date: LM IB.

Spaces and Excavated Units:

Spaces BS 15 and BS 17 (Ill. 5B):
BS 15-3

Soil colors: dry: dark yellowish brown, 10YR 4/4; wet: light yellowish brown, 10YR 6/4

Comments: In BS 15 and 17, a level which had fallen in from the roof could be isolated.

CONTEXT 8

Nature: Mixed Minoan and Byzantine stratum over the remains of the building. In most cases, the level lay over the preserved upper parts of the building's walls.

Date: Mixed Minoan and Byzantine.

Spaces and Excavated Units:

Room BS 1:
BS (D5)-Surface
BS (D5)1-1
BS (D5)1-2 = BS (D5)-2
Space BS 2:
BS (D5)2-1
BY 4 (C5)-1
Above Room BS 3/4/5:
BS 3-1
Above Rooms BS 3/4/5, BS 9, and Space BS 10:
BS (E5)-1
BS (E5)-2
Room BS 6 (Ill. 6):
BS (E4)Wb-Room 6
BS (E4)Wb-3
BS (E4)Wb-Wall no. 8
BS 6-1
BS 6-2
BS 6E-1
BS 6E-2
Above Rooms BS 6, BS 7, BS 8, BS 11:
BS (E4)E-1
BS (E4)E-2
Above Room BS 6 and Plateia west of the room:
BS (E4)Wb-1
BS (E4)Wb-2
Rooms BS 7 and BS 9:
BS 7-surface
Baulk BS 7/BS 9-1
Baulk BS 7/BS 9-2
Above Room BS 8 and Plateia west of the room:
BS (E4)Wa-1
Rooms BS 9 and BS 14:
Baulk BS 9/BS 14-1
Baulk BS 9/BS 14-2
Room BS 11:
BS 2-1 = BS (D4)2-1
Above Rooms BS 14 and BS 16, and Spaces BS 15 and BS 17 (Ill. 5B):
BS (F5)-Surface
BS (F5)-1a
Room BS 16, and Sapces BS 15 andBS 17 (Ill. 5B):
BS (F5)-1b
BS 15-2
Rooms BS 16 and Space BS 18:
BS (F6)North-1
BS 16 (F6)-2
Above Space BV 1:
BV 1-1
Above Spaces BV 1 and BV 5:
BV 0-Surface
BV 0-1
BV 0-2A
Plateia Road North:
BC 14 South-Surface

Soil colors: dry: yellowish red (10YR 5/4); wet: dark yellowish red (10YR 3-4/4)

Comments: The Minoan levels were disturbed in two principal ways during the Byzantine occupation of Pseira. A wall of Building BM was built over part of the Plateia Building, and its construction and subsequent use deposited Byzantine material within the

upper few centimeters of the building's remains. In addition, the Plateia Building was used as a source of building blocks for the construction of a monastery built over the Bronze Age ruins in Area A, to the south. As a result of the building's destruction and the subsequent search for building stones, only the lower part of the large wall which formed the facade facing the Plateia was found in place.

Part II

The Evidence

4

The Architecture

John C. McEnroe

Building BS/BV defines the northern edge of the Plateia (Pl. 2, Fig. 1, Ill. 1, frontispiece). The building consists of two parts; the large Wing BS, on the east, was the earlier of the two. Wing BV is a large rectangular annex added to Wing BS on the west.

General Description

Both wings of the Plateia Building were built on bedrock that slopes down from northwest to southeast (Ills. 7–8). Because the slope is more gentle than in most other parts of the site, the builders were able to avoid elaborate terracing. Despite its size, Building BS/BV has only two main levels, a lower one in the southeast (BS 1–BS 6, BS 9–BS 11, BS 15, and BS 17) and an upper one in the northwest (BS 12–BS 14, and BV). The two levels are connected by the stairway in Room BS 7. Room BS 8, located halfway up the stairs, is at an intermediate level.

The main entrance to the building is through Room BS 11, an entrance room fitted with an L-shaped bench (Pls. 3A, 3C, 5B, lower right corner). From Room BS 11, one enters an inner, paved vestibule, Room BS 6, which provides access to the rest of the house (Pl. 5B). One could move to the eastern rooms through Room BS 3/4/5 or to the upper rooms by way of the stairs, Room BS 7 (Pl. 4B). The stone stairs in Room BS 7 climbed from south to north. A return, over Room BS 9, held a return flight of wooden stairs that ascended from north to south. The two flights were separated by a mudbrick partition wall of which clear traces were found (Pl. 10A). Room BS 14, at the top of the first flight, is the largest space of the lower story of the house.

While the basic arrangement of Building BS/BV is relatively clear, there are several places where crucial information is missing. The northeast corner of the building is not preserved, part of the north wall of Room BS 14 is missing, and it was not possible to trace the eastern wall of the building.

Materials and Techniques

Building BS/BV incorporated an unusually broad range of materials and techniques. The west and south facades of Wing BV and the wall of Room BS 6 and BS 11 were of impressive megalithic limestone blocks. The south facade of Room BS 1 was of coursed large slabs.

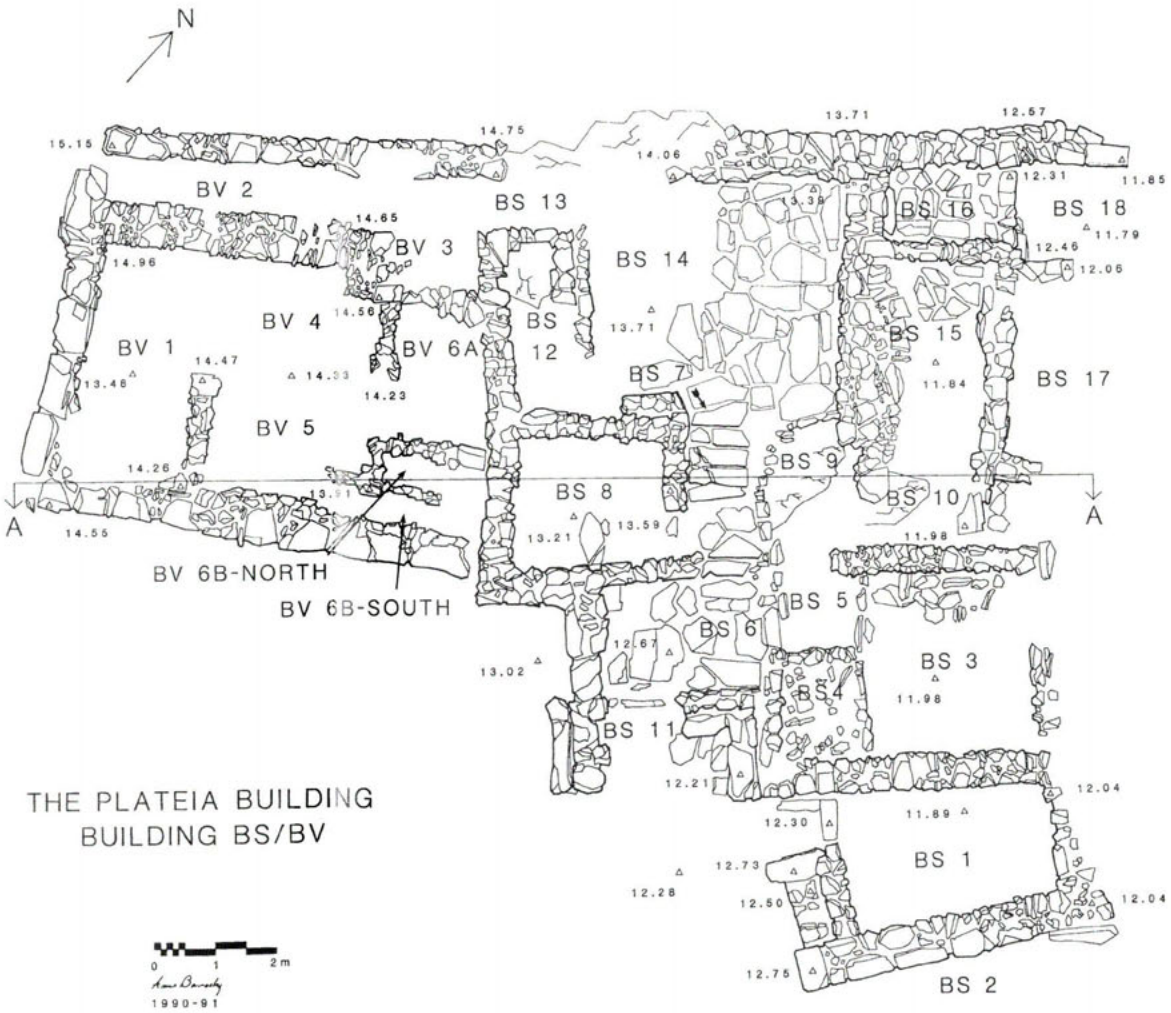


Illustration 7. State plan of the Plateia Building (Building BS/BV).

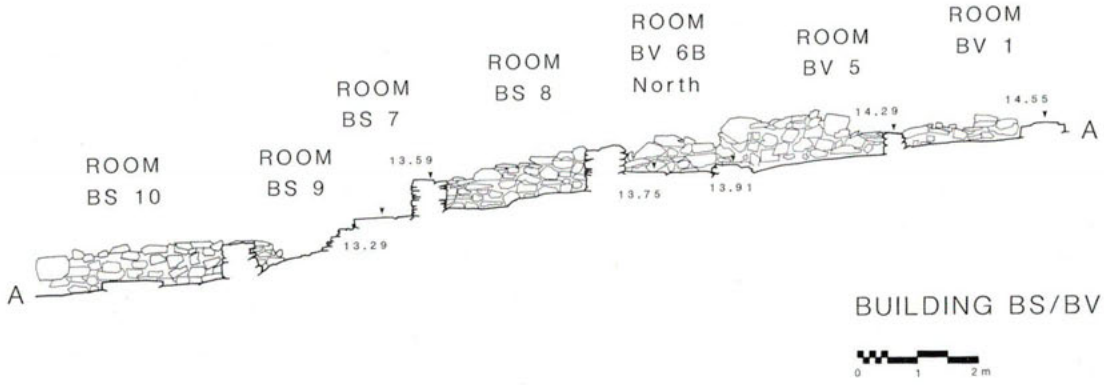


Illustration 8. Vertical section A through the Plateia Building (Building BS/BV).

Most of the interior walls were quite distinctive. They were unusually thin, mostly under 0.30 m thick. They were built of coursed limestone and phyllite slabs. The slabs were set on terra rossa mortar. The thin walls in the interior of Wing BV were of this construction. They were built on the bedrock and are preserved only up to the approximate level of the LM IB floor. It is not clear how they were carried up, but mudbrick is a possibility. Similar walls were used in Building AF South, in Room AF 3F.

Mudbrick walls must have been relatively common at the site, though they are rarely preserved. Remains of one mudbrick wall were found separating Rooms BS 9 and BS 7. As in Room AF 1 in the southern part of the settlement, this mudbrick partition, faced with phyllite slabs, was associated with a wooden return flight of stairs.

The stairway in Rooms BS 7 and BS 9 was one of the most interesting at the site. Two piers of coursed phyllite slabs at the north end of Room BS 9 formed the foundations for the first step for the wooden return flight (visible in Pl. 4B, upper right). At its lower level, Room BS 9 was a *sottoscala.*

The great number of slab pavements was also unusual. No fewer than five rooms were at least partly paved (BS 11, BS 6, BS 3/4/5, BS 14, and BS 16, Pls. 9A–B). Fallen slabs indicated that at least some of the upper story rooms were also paved with slabs. This extensive use of slab pavements was another distinctive feature that the Plateia Building shared with the southern rooms of Area AF.

Building Sequence

The relative chronology of Building BS/BV is fairly simple. Except for apparently earlier wall remains in the east of Wing BV and in BS 15–BS 17, the rest of the building belongs to two main phases. First Wing BS was built, then Wing BV was added to it. Superimposed pavements in Rooms BS 3/4/5 and BS 14 (Pls. 9A–B) represent repairs.

Because Building BS/BV is basically freestanding, its precise chronological relation to neighboring structures is not clear. It can be noted, however, that the northeast corner of Room BS 14 and the north wall of BS 16 were built over (i.e., are later than) the south wall of Room 1 in Building BJ.

Room Descriptions

ROOM BS 1

Room BS 1 appears to be a small annex added to Wing BS, but it was evidently built at the same time as the rest of the house (Pl. 10B). It has its own entrance from the Plateia, and next to it is a well-built bench framed by walls on two sides (Pl. 3B).

The north wall of the room is 5.10 m long (measurements are taken in the interior of the room). It is 0.48 m thick and 1.08 m high, rising 8 courses above the present level of the interior. The south wall is 3.29 m long, 0.66 m thick, and 0.72 m tall (5 courses). The east wall is 1.71 m long, 0.70 m thick, and 0.31 m high (2 courses). The west wall is 2.48 m long, 0.46 m thick, and 0.73 m high (5 courses). The doorway is 0.82 m wide.

SPACE BS 2

Space BS 2 is the narrow lane south of Room BS 1 between Wing BS and Building BY (Pl. 10B). It is about 0.75 m wide.

ROOM BS 3/4/5

Room BS 3/4/5 is essentially a single architectural space with a built platform (labeled Space BS 4) in the southwest corner (Pl. 6A–B). The stone platform is ca 1.44 m x 1.66 m. It is preserved to a maximum height of 0.48 m above the floor. A line of small stones continues the line of the east edge of the plat-

form to the north wall of the room. Parts of two superimposed slab pavements can be distinguished, indicating that the room was resurfaced at least once.

The north wall is preserved for a length of 3.20 m. It is 0.48 m thick and 0.48 m high (6 courses). The south wall is ca. 3.95 m long, 0.51 m thick, and 0.87 m high (4 courses). The east and west walls are not preserved.

ROOM BS 6

Room BS 6 is the paved inner vestibule (Pl. 5B). It is entered from Room BS 11, and it provides access to the ground floor Rooms BS 3/4/5 and to the stairway, Room BS 7. A small platform/bench is in the northwest corner. Instead of the usual slab threshold, a long thin stone was placed on the floor. Behind it may have been a wooden threshold, and the door would have closed against it.

ROOMS BS 7 AND BS 9

These two spaces constitute one of the most interesting staircases at the site (Pls. 4B, 10A, left). The structure consists of a lower stone flight and evidence of a wooden return flight over Room BS 9. From the vestibule, one climbs two steps to a small landing which provides access to Room BS 8. From the landing, six more steps lead up to the large paved room, BS 14. The return flight is indicated by the remains of the mudbrick partition wall and the two piers that served as the foundations for the first step. The west wall of Room BS 7 is 2.06 m long, 0.40 m thick, and 0.72 m high (6 courses).

ROOM BS 8

Room BS 8 is a square room entered from the landing in Room BS 7 (Pl. 5B). Its north wall is 2.47 m long, 0.45 m thick, and 0.62 m high (4 courses). The south wall is 3.08 m long, 0.67 m thick, and 0.70 m high (7 courses). The east wall is 1.26 m long, 0.40 m thick, 0.50 m high (5 courses). The doorway is 0.75 m wide. The west wall is 2.12 m long, 0.43 m thick, and 0.80 m high (9 courses).

SPACES BS 10, BS 15, AND BS 17

During the final use of the house, the three spaces BS 10, BS 15, and BS 17 formed a single room entered from Room BS 9. Traces of what appears to be an earlier wall can be seen between BS 15 and BS 17. Because of the precipitous slope on the east and the threat of erosion, it was not possible to excavate the east wall of the room. The north wall is 2.80 m long, 0.40 m thick, and 1.06 m high (7 courses). The south wall is preserved for a length of 3.60 m. It is 0.47 m thick and 0.60 m high (7 courses). The west wall is 4.85 m long, and it stands to a height of about 1.40 m above the present level of the interior (Pl. 11A).

ROOM BS 11

Room BS 11 is an entrance room (Pl. 11B). Its south side is completely open to the Plateia. An L-shaped bench (Bench A) fills its northeast corner (Pls. 3A, 3C). Limestone flags cover the east side of the room, and bedrock is exposed on the west.

ROOM BS 12

Room BS 12 is a small space entered from Room BS 14 (Pls. 8B, 11A). Its eastern wall rests on top of a curious low wall of small courses of slabs that runs around the southwest corner of Room BS 14. The purpose of this low wall is unclear. The north wall of the room is 0.88 m long, 0.42 m thick, and only 0.26 m high. The south wall is 0.40 m thick and 0.40 m high in 3 courses. The east wall is preserved for a length of 0.93 m. It is 0.36 m thick and 0.39 m high. The west wall is 2.80 m long, 0.37 m thick, and 0.48 m high (4 courses).

ROOM BS 14

Room BS 14 is the largest room on the ground story (Pl. 11A). It is entered by the stairway, Room BS 7, and probably by another doorway in the northwest. It provided access to Room BS 12 and to the upper flight of stairs in Room BS 9. The room is paved with limestone and phyllite slabs. Parts of two superimposed pavements are visible (Pls. 9A–B). A low wall of coursed slabs was built around the southwest corner of the room. The northeast wall of Room BS 12 used this low construction (Feature 13A) as a footing. A small enclosure (cist) made of upright slabs is in the southwest corner (Pls. 8 and 12A).

Three walls can be measured. The north wall is preserved for 2.94 m. It is 0.56 m thick and stands 0.34 m above the level of the floor (2 courses). The east wall is 3.98 m long. The west wall is about 1.35 m long, 0.35 m thick, and 0.54 m high (5 courses).

ROOM BS 16

Room BS 16 is in the northeast corner of the house (Pl. 11A). It is a small paved room with a narrow bench or raised ledge against its west wall (Bench D, Pl. 12B). The north wall is preserved for a length of 3.10 m. It is 0.48 m thick and 0.56 m high. The south wall is 1.90 m long, 0.45 m thick, and 0.60 m high (4 courses). The west wall is 1.19 m long and 1.10 m high (8 courses).

ROOM BV 1

Wing BV was a single large annex added to Wing BS (Pl. 7B). Its interior is divided into several spaces by the footings of thin partition walls made of coursed slabs (Pls. 13A–B). The walls were founded on bedrock, and they stand only to the level of the floor. Plateia Road North, with this part of the street designated Space BC 14, begins at the wing's southwest corner (Pl. 14).

Room BV 1 is in the southwest corner of Wing BV. At the northeast, there is no clear separation between Rooms BV 1 and BV 4 (Ill. 7, Pl. 7B). The south wall is 2.07 m long and 0.78 m thick, and it stands 0.27 m above the level of the bedrock. The east wall is preserved for a length of 1.60 m. It is 0.43 m thick and 0.17 m high. The west wall is 3.78 m long, 0.53 m thick, and 0.46 m high (2 courses).

SPACE BV 2

Space BV 2 is the long narrow space between Wing BV and the building to the north, which is unexcavated (Pl. 7B). It may have been unroofed. It was open to the street on the west and paved with stone slabs. The east end is not clear. The north wall is 4.31 m long, 0.44 m thick, and 0.23 m high (2 courses). The south wall is 3.70 m long, 0.80 m thick, and 0.18 m high. The passage is about 0.80 m wide.

ROOM BV 4/5

Room BV 4/5 is a single space in the center of Wing BV (Pl. 7B). The south wall is 2.63 m long, 0.93 m thick, and 0.70 high. The east wall is 1.20 m long, 0.28 m thick, and only 0.10 m high (2 courses). The west wall is 1.63 m long, 0.42 m thick, and 0.26 m high (2 courses).

ROOM BV 6A

The north and south partition walls that define Room BV 6A are against the west wall of Wing BS (Pl. 7B). The north wall is 1.52 m long, 0.32 m thick, and 0.34 m high. The south wall is ca. 1.62 m long, 0.29 m thick, and just 0.10 m high (a single course). The east wall is ca. 2 m long, 0.48 m thick, and 0.34 m high (4 courses). The west wall is 1.24 m long, 0.30 m thick, and 0.16 m high.

ROOM BV 6B

Room BV 6B is the small space in the southeast corner of Wing BV (Pls. 7B and 13B, upper right). A low, presumably earlier wall runs east and west through the center of the room. The north wall is 1.66 m long, 0.28 m thick, and 0.30 m high. The south wall, which is the building's outside wall dividing this room from the Plateia, is 1.84 m long, 0.70 m thick, and 0.50 m high. The east wall is 1.10 m long, 0.55 m thick, and 0.66 m high. The west wall is 0.78 m long, 0.27 m thick, and 0.20 m high.

5

The Pottery

Cheryl R. Floyd

Because the Plateia Building was not excavated previously, it offers the opportunity to discuss stratigraphy. Eight archaeological contexts were discerned in the building. The pottery from these contexts is considered below, beginning with the earliest one (Context 1) and concluding with the latest stratum (Context 8). The potsherds are discussed context by context and room by room for the two wings of the building (Wings BS and BV) to allow the reader to compare the remains of ceramic vessels from a single period and context. Thus, the MM contexts are discussed, then the LM I contexts, and finally, the mixed Byzantine and Minoan surface stratum.

This chapter includes the finds from Space BS 2 (the alley south of the Plateia Building) and from Plateia Road North, although they do not constitute parts of the actual building. This material is considered here because it likely represents debris that collapsed into these exterior areas from the Plateia Building.

All of the sherds are considered in the pottery tables (Appendix A), Appendices B–E, and in the counts and weights by fabric groups within this chapter. Weights were measured on a precision electronic digital scale with an accuracy to 1 g. The tables give the full range of the ceramics in tabular form, and the catalog provides a more detailed description and illustration of specific examples in each fabric category. The catalog includes all whole or largely restorable vessels, all sherds recognized as foreign, and most sherds with unusual shape or decoration. Examples of the various ceramic forms and fabric groups are also included to illustrate the full range of material encountered in the building. Colors are taken from the Munsell Soil Color Charts (Kollmorgen Corporation 1992).

Pottery as Evidence for Activities Performed in the Building

The pottery from the Plateia Building is mostly highly fragmentary, consisting largely of nonjoining potsherds.

A major hurdle to the assessment of the Minoan household has been the belief that only whole, unbroken, *de facto* objects can be used as evidence for the presence and location of activities within buildings (for an example of this view, see: Ciolek-Torrello 1984:128). As recently pointed out by M. Schiffer (1996), such primary deposits are rare on house floors. Only large items are likely to be found in place, where they were actually used. Virtually no whole or usable items were found in the Plateia Building. The bulk of the remains are potsherds, plus stone tools, loom weights, miniscule bits of faunal remains, and a few small, miscellaneous objects of