

EXCAVATIONS IN THE CITADEL OF MIDEA

Excavations were carried out by N.M. Verdelis and Paul Åström in the Acropolis of Midea near Dendra from July 10th to 13th 1963. A trench about 4 x 5 m. square was dug inside the Cyclopean wall to the north of Persson's Shaft II dug in 1939 (A.W. Persson, *New Tombs at Dendra near Midea*, p. 13, fig. 1).

Part of the inside of the Cyclopean wall was laid bare and, parallel to it, another minor wall (P.L. 135a); there was a partly destroyed partition wall between them, separating two rooms. A catastrophe layer, about 40 cm. thick, containing ash and carbonized remains of figs, horsebeans and olive stones, was found in the area outside these rooms, below the surface. Among the potsherds from this layer were fragments of deep bowls in metope style (P.L. 135b) dating from the end of Mycenaean III B. Other finds in the ashy deposit include some terracotta figurines and a hematite pendant with incised decoration consisting of a schematized horse. A fragment of a big stirrup jar had an hour-glass mark on one handle, incised after firing (P.L. 135c). A kylix has two parallel horizontal lines on one handle incised before firing. The Citadel of Midea was not occupied after the catastrophe in the area of the excavations, where not a single Mycenaean III C sherd was found.

Dr Hans Helbaek has kindly submitted the following preliminary report on the carbonized remains¹:

1. Fig (*Ficus carica*)

Most conspicuous are the remains of this fruit. They occur in all specimens, mostly fragmented, but about a dozen of whole fruit, too. The latter look quite like the present-day dried product, flattened, shrivelled and shapeless; they are not perforated for stringing. It is obvious that they were dried before carbonization. They vary in size roughly from 25 to 30 mm and

1. There are few ticks in the figs and some of them look fresh, not more than two years old, according to Dr Helbaek. The carbonized figs will be dated by the Laboratory for Radioactive Dating at Frescati (Stockholm).

are thus smaller than most modern western figs, but larger than those bought to-day in mountainous western Iran. In the freshly dried state they probably equalled in size modern figs from the Mossul district in Upper Iraq.

Characteristic of the fracture surfaces are the glossy, broken shells of the seeds which are about 1.2 mm long and roundish.

The fig seems to be indigenous to Greece, and its fruits are encountered in very early cultural deposits.

2. Olive (*Olea europaea*)

Two of the specimens contained fragments of olive pits. The outer surface of this fruit stone is longitudinally grooved in an irregular pattern. One of the fragments is half of a blunt pit, 9.8 by 7.5 mm with a sharp point protruding from its upper end. It is reminiscent of the pit type of one of the cheap qualities of olive grown in the Gimlik area near Bursa in Anatolia.

Other fragments come from pits of a more general shape, slender, tapering towards both ends, and up to 12 mm long and 6 - 7 mm wide.

The two shapes are principally different and suggest that already at Dendra different races of olive were grown.

Mid-fourth millennium cultivation of olive is evinced for Lachish in Palestine, but as yet no evidence of this crop in Greece before the second millennium has come forth. Neuweiler (1935) reports, however, olive from Megaris I, II, III («Neol» and «Historical») from Sklavokambos (Late Minoan?).

3. Horsebean (*Vicia faba* var. *minor*)

Some fragments and one whole seed were found in two specimens. The whole seed is oblong-rounded 7.33 by 5.84 mm; the seed coat and the hilum have disappeared, and of the radicle only the imprint is left near one end.

Horsebean is commonly encountered in the east-Mediterranean coastlands and the islands from Early Helladic times onwards. Its occurrence in Malta and the Iberian peninsula early in the second millennium is certainly due to immigrants from the eastern area of distribution.

PAUL ÅSTRÖM

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Midea (Dendra): a. Minor wall parallel to the Cyclopean wall, b. Fragment of a bowl, c. Fragment of a big stirrup jar

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