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THE SO-CALLED "LOUTRO" AT THELPOUSA, ARCADIA: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2024 FIELD SEASON

Abstract: This paper presents the preliminary results of the first field season of a joint Polish-Greek-German excavation project in the western Arcadian polis of Thelpousa. The focus is a rectangular Roman-period building at the centre of the city's agora, which

has remained unpublished despite its well-preserved masonry. The project aims to clarify the architecture, chronology and function of the building in order to shed new light on urban development within the small towns of the hinterland of Roman Greece.

Keywords: Arcadia, Roman Greece, Roman urbanism and architecture, Thelpousa

Introduction

Studies of urbanism in Roman Greece have long focused on major centres – especially Athens and Corinth, whose urban phenomena have been central to discussions on cultural change under Roman rule (Hoff and Rotroff 1997; Βλίζος 2008; Fouquet 2019; Auffarth 2024; cf. Rizakis 2014, esp. 246-249). While initial steps have been taken into the hinterlands, as exemplified in the 2015 conference proceedings *What's New in Roman Greece?*, the allure of the *megalopoleis* continues to loom large (Di Napoli *et al.* 2018). But how did everyday life unfold in the small coastal cities of Laconia or the Arcadian mountain towns during the Roman period? Apart from sparse written sources, the archaeological evidence often remains silent, as these cities and their urban fabric have been studied too sporadically through field archaeology, despite the fact that standing structures from the Roman period may still be visible in them.

One such case is the so-called Roman "loutro" (bath building) in Arcadian Thelpousa, a *polis* (city) located approximately 25 km east of Olympia in the lower Ladon valley and north of the modern village of Toumbitsi (Pl. 1: 1). The origins of Thelpousa, situated on the left bank of the river, date back to the Archaic period (Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 533 f. no. 300 s. v. Thelphousa [T. H. Nielsen]). In the mid-2nd century AD, Pausanias described the "city built on a large hill" as largely "deserted", noting that its agora, formerly located at the centre of the urban area, now lay on its periphery (Paus. 8, 25, 3).[1] Nevertheless, it seems that Thelpousa remained an important micro-regional centre in western Arcadia, as attested by a copy of Diocletian's market decree from the early 4th century AD (SEG 37, 335; cf. Πετρονώτης 1973). The date of the city's final abandonment remains an open question; however, Thelpousa con-

[1] A decline in population may not have been the only factor in the altered urban context of the agora. It also seems possible that, as a result of the *pax Romana*, the inhabited area gradually shifted from the higher slopes to the lower-lying, more accessible areas near the Ladon, where the ruins of the church of Ag. Ioannis (Μουτσόπουλος 1956, 6-13, 15-19 with a Middle Byzantine dating; Ξυγγόπουλος 1957, 446 f.) are located. For similar urban developments in other smaller cities of the Roman Peloponnese, see Fouquet 2019, 292.

tinued to function as a bishopric during the late 5th and early 6th centuries AD (Hier. Synec. 647, 6; cf. Darrouzès 1981, 245 no. 3 line 761; Αβραμέα 2012, 368 nos. 88-90).

The Roman building conventionally called *loutro*, a common term for brick structures in the 19th century, is located in the middle of Thelpousa's agora (Pl. 1: 2, 2: 1).[2] It was here that the first excavations in Thelpousa were carried out by the *École française d'Athènes* (E*f*A) in the summer of 1939, under the direction of Jacques Roger and Henri Metzger. For two weeks, trial trenches were dug across the entire area to clarify its spatial layout and uncover related architectural structures. As a building of apparent Roman date, the *loutro* was only of secondary interest to the French *équipe*, fully in line with the scholarly interests of the time. Only in the final days were excavations conducted to expose the rear wall of the structure and to find the entrance to the building.[3] Unfortunately, the results of these excavations remain unpublished; however, a summary of the work, based on personal conversations with Roger and his excavation diary kept in the archives of the E*f*A, was presented by Madeleine Jost in 1986 (Jost 1986, 636-642; cf. Fouquet and Δουλφής 2024, 308 f.).

The first comprehensive documentation of the Roman building in its preserved architectural state and topographic setting was conducted by a Greek-German research team, which included some of the authors, in 2021, with permission from the Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia and funding from the Gerda Henkel Foundation.[4] This initial study highlighted the need for excavation to clarify aspects of the building's architecture, dating and function – certainly not, however, as a *loutro* (Fouquet and Δουλφής 2024, 310 f.).[5]

As part of a three-year research programme (2024-2026), generously funded once again by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, the first field season of the *Thelpousa Agora Project* (TAP) took place from July 22 to August 10, 2024, under the aus-

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[2] For the interpretation as a bath building see Bursian (1872, 259), whereas Curtius (1851, 370) suggested a religious function. For an overview of the initial exploration of the site see Fouquet and Δουλφής 2024.

[3] Excavation diary of J. Roger (PEL 2 C, ARC 1), EfA archives. Entries regarding the Roman building are dated to the 28th, 29th and 31st of July [p. 29a-30a].

[4] The team, led by Johannes Fouquet and Georgios Doulfis, consisted of: Christian Seitz (State Office for Cultural Heritage of Hesse), archaeologist and specialist in drone-based 3D documentation and analysis; Barbara Valakou, assisted by Spyridon Tzeffronis, architects-engineers; as well as two archaeology students Georgia Bouzea (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and Lukas Grüning (Heidelberg University).

[5] Shorter references to the building can be found in Sielhorst 2015, 341 f. no. 45; Fouquet 2019, 321; Vitti 2023, 57 f.; Fouquet forthcoming a, forthcoming b.

pices of the Polish Archaeological Institute at Athens.[6] Financial support was also provided by the *Mare Nostrum LAB* research programme at Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

The following section provides a brief description of the building within its topographic setting and architectural features before presenting an overview of the preliminary results of this first field season. A comprehensive publication will be released upon completion of the research programme.

The topographical context of the Roman building and its architecture

The agora of Thelpousa is situated on an artificial terrace approximately 370m below the acropolis plateau. Its west and south sides are reinforced by massive retaining walls built from roughly hewn limestone ashlar blocks. As revealed by the French excavations, the open space was enclosed on at least three sides by *stoai*, with the western *stoa* featuring a double colonnade, back rooms and a *thesauros* (Jost 1986, 638-642) (Pl. 1: 2).[7] Only a few remains of the foundations made of shell limestone and the lower part of the *thesauros* are still visible today. While the area enclosed by the three *stoai* is relatively level, the terrain begins to rise approximately 90m east of the western retaining wall, ascending steeply by more than 13m to form a narrow ridge. The French excavators uncovered additional architectural remains here, which they interpreted as the eastern *stoa* of the agora. Although the identical orientation does suggest a certain connection with the structures of the lower area, it remains unclear at this stage how the considerable difference in height might have been bridged. The repeatedly cited dimensions of the open space (e.g. Jost 1986, 638; Sielhorst 2015, 341 f. no. 45), measuring 130m x 120m, are – therefore – not accurate, as they do not take the

[6] The project is directed by Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), Johannes Fouquet (Leipzig University) and Georgios Doulfis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens). The research team included archaeologist Łukasz Miszk (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), ceramologist Małgorzata Kajzer (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences), digital documentation expert Wojciech Ostrowski (Jagiellonian University in Kraków and Warsaw University of Technology), archaeologist-surveyor Anna Karolina Wencel, conservator Amalia Siatou and several archaeology students and graduates from Poland (Natalia Chochorowska and Małgorzata Nowak), Germany (Mia Knoch, Lea Thun and Thorsten Hunds) and Greece (Georgia Bouzea, Vasilis Vlachos, Natalia Anyfanti and Elena Roussa).

[7] For *thesauroi* on Greek *agorai*, see Kaminski 1991.

rise in terrain into account. The entire building complex has been tentatively dated to the 4th century BC (Lemerle 1939, 301, without any reasoning; followed by Jost 1986, 638; Sielhorst 2015, 341 f. no. 45), and the use of Π-clamps for the construction of the *stoai* and *thesauros*, evidenced by photographs and sketches of the French excavation in the archive of the E*f*A, certainly suggests such a *terminus post quem*. However, it does not exclude the possibility of a later construction of the *stoai*.

The Roman building is situated between the north and south *stoa* at the centre of the open space, positioned as far east as the rise of the terrain would probably allow. Its dominant presence over the open space is, therefore, hard to deny. According to the results of the architectural documentation from 2021, the building is a rectangular structure with an unmistakably temple-like plan, measuring approximately 10.2m x 7.3m (35 x 25 Roman feet) (Pl. 2: 2). The interior is divided into two sections by a transverse wall with a partially preserved threshold made of limestone. In the north and south walls of the eastern main room (6.07m x 5.26m), two niches face each other, each 1.29m wide with a relatively small height of less than 1.7m. Both the main room and the presumed western entrance (3.02m x 5.7m) were originally covered by solid-brick vaults (Pl. 3: 1).[8]

The walls of the building were constructed in *opus reticulatum mixtum*, with larger stone blocks, usually spolia such as the limestone base block of a statue monument with a decorative boss, reinforcing the masonry at the corners (Pl. 3: 2). The brick bands, constructed with square *pedales*, span the entire width of the walls, resembling the bonding courses of *bipedales* that emerged in Rome in the later 1st century AD. Apart from these Italian influences, the masonry also displays clear local characteristics: tile fragments were used, with varying levels of quality, to frame the *cubilia* in the reticulate masonry – a technique that appears to have originated in Augustan Patras (Vitti 2016, 262-268). Considering the rare use of *opus reticulatum* in southern Greece, it seems plausible that the building workshop was hired from the *colonia* as well (cf. Fouquet forthcoming a, forthcoming b).[9]

[8] For solid-brick vaulting as a building technique widely employed in Roman Greece, in contrast to concrete vaulting, see Vitti 2016.

[9] For the use of *opus reticulatum* in Roman Greece, see Medri 2001 and Malacrino 2007.

Preliminaries: Excavating the Roman building

For the purpose of the excavation, the interior of the Roman structure was divided into four quadrants, using the transverse wall as a boundary. These quadrants form the basis for setting out the excavation trenches, with numbering proceeding in a clockwise direction, starting from the north-west quadrant. A similar system was used in planning trial trenches along the exterior walls of the Roman structure, with two potential trenches placed on the northern and southern sides, respectively. All measurements presented here refer to a local coordinate system based on seven grid points. The main grid point R.1 (coordinates: 37° 43' 29.073" N; 21° 52' 45.256" E; height: 216.12m above sea level) is located in the olive field west of the Roman building.

Trench II (T.II)

The primary objective of T.II (8m x 2.5m), situated in the northern half of the main room of the Roman building between the transverse wall with the threshold and the eastern rear wall, was to investigate the function of the structure and, if possible, establish its chronology (Pl. 4: 1). Excavation commenced at an elevation of +3.2m and concluded at a depth of +1.8m at the trench's lowest point. Given the substantial quantities of stone, brick and tile observed on the surface, as well as several large fallen masonry fragments from the barrel vault, a significant destruction layer was anticipated. A loosely constructed 'L'-shaped feature composed of stones of various sizes was identified east of the threshold, associated with the topsoil. This feature may be linked to an ash layer in front of a niche in the north wall. Additionally, a significant concentration of animal bones was found accumulated against the wall east of the niche. These findings suggest a later, not precisely datable reuse of the space following the building's collapse – possibly as a shelter for shepherds and their livestock.

As expected, the layer beneath the topsoil consisted of debris from the building's progressive collapse, mixed with fragments of mortar, bricks and tiles. A substantial portion of these tiles likely did not originate from the building itself but were repurposed as aggregate in the *opus caementicium* from older structures (see below). Additionally, smaller pockets of pebbles were occasionally encountered, probably representing another type of aggregate material. The gradual nature of this collapse is demonstrated by the debris from three larger *opus caementicium* segments of the rear wall, which toppled towards the west

into the eastern half of the building and onto another rubble layer (Pl. 4: 2). A larger section of wall plaster, including both base and finish coats, has been preserved on the inner face of the segment that fell closest to the still *in situ* rear wall. No traces of colour were visible to the naked eye. In the upper sections of the north wall, however, small patches of fine ochre-coloured plaster have been preserved on the base coat. In the upper sections of the north wall, small patches of fine ochre-coloured plaster have been preserved on the base coat. Further analysis is required to determine whether these traces form part of the original decorative scheme.

Beneath the successive layers of collapse, remnants of a mortar floor were uncovered. It was constructed with a packing of river stones embedded in a strong mortar matrix, upon which a thin layer of mortar was applied (Pl. 5: 1). The underlying filling of this floor was investigated in two sondages (1m x 1m) located at the building's northwest corner and along the northern wall. It comprised a levelling layer of field and river stones mixed with gravel, overlying a compact clay deposit, with the lowest recorded elevation at +1.8m. In its consistency and colour, it resembles the clay-rich soil encountered in trenches T.IV and TT.IV. Finds from these contexts (62-63, 65, 67, 70-72) were scarce, with only 13 pottery fragments recovered, mostly body sherds. The presence of a lamp and a few other diagnostic sherds suggests an Early Roman chronology.

With the best-preserved section in the northeast corner of the building (ca. +2.35m-2.37m), the floor is primarily attested by its packing, which today noticeably slopes towards the centre of the structure. It was evidently affected by a disruptive event that also led to the disintegration of the mortar layer on top, which warrants further consideration. Remnants of the wall base, i.e. the connection between the floor and wall plaster, have been preserved in the northwest corner of the building, providing further evidence of the original walking level (ca. +2.39m) in the main room. The area immediately east of the threshold (with the top of the threshold at ca. +2.42m) has not yet been excavated, leaving its direct connection to the mortar floor unresolved for now.

A feature that remains difficult to interpret is located along the southern edge of T.II. Directly on top of the packing of the mortar floor, a compact yet irregular arrangement of brick and tile fragments was uncovered (Pl. 5: 1). With few exceptions, the individual fragments are set vertically and bonded by soil, collectively forming a level surface (ca. +2.25-2.27m). This observation may suggest that the feature is not associated with the collapsed solid-brick vaulting, but rather with another walking surface that replaced the original mortar floor.

If this assumption is correct, the tile floor would reflect an effort to re-establish a level walking surface after the original mortar floor had already been compromised during the building's use, possibly due to a catastrophic event such as an earthquake or inadequate compaction of the underlying ground. It is to be hoped that further excavation in the southern half of the main room will provide more conclusive evidence on this matter.

At the same time, the excavations in T.II provided further evidence for the construction technique of the masonry. The wall plaster exposed on the northern wall primarily consists of a coarse base coat with a smooth finish (Pl. 5: 3). In contrast, the surface beneath the niche in the north wall differs significantly in that the base coat has been grooved with a tool. The purpose of this change in technique is difficult to interpret; however, it might suggest that the socle of the niche was finished with a different material rather than a second finer plaster layer.

Below the niche, an inscribed stone was reused as *spolium* within the reticulated masonry. The grey limestone was cut into a diamond shape (14.5cm x 12cm) to match the other *cubilia*, leaving the inscription only fragmentarily preserved (Pl. 5: 2). Nonetheless, the remaining letters, with a height of 2.5cm, suggest its potential funerary character: [--- χα?]ῖρε. The apices and the letter forms suggest a general dating to the late Hellenistic or early Roman period.

No finds from T.II could be linked to a specific use of the building. This may, in part, be due to the structure having been affected by a looting trench, visible on the surface as a shallow depression. It extended along the east-west axis of the building, cutting through sections of the *in situ* rear wall, its collapsed segments and the mortar floor.[10] However, this lack of finds also applies to other areas of Trench T.II that were not affected. It remains to be seen whether the still-unexcavated southern half of the main room will provide further clues.

Trench IV (T.IV)

Trench IV was located in the western part of the Roman building, in the southern half of the space between the transverse wall to the east and slightly beyond the presumptive west end of the building (Pl. 4: 1). The trench, measuring 4m x 2.5m, aimed to provide information on the function of the building and

[10] In Roger's diary, the trench dug at the rear wall of the Roman building is explicitly described as "la tranchée à l'arrière du loutro" (PEL 2 C, ARC 1: 29th of July [p. 29b]), which contrasts with the location and orientation of the looting trench.

its architecture, particularly with regard to its western façade. The excavation started at +2.65m and ended for this year at +0.42m. It revealed the southern half of a previously unknown wall, originally connecting the western ends of the building's long walls, now inclined westward due to post-depositional processes (Pl. 6: 1). Its cleaning revealed additional damage in the form of three cracks in its exposed southern section. Particularly significant is the crack in the centre, as it has caused an almost complete disruption of the masonry.

The upper part of the wall is heavily damaged, making it difficult to determine its original height. Only a levelling layer of flat-laid bricks has been preserved, followed by sparse remnants of *opus incertum*. During further exploration, the foundation level – also constructed in *opus incertum* – was reached at +1.1m. This context corresponds to layers excavated in trench TT.IV (see below) at the same level, particularly contexts 266 and 267. Notably, context 266 has been interpreted as a foundation trench, which was not identified in T.IV. Therefore, the question remains whether the exposed masonry was founded on naturally compacted ground or an artificially created embankment (Figs. 12 and 15).

Excavation down to the Roman building's usage level yielded little pottery, whereas the lower layers – possibly unrelated to the building – contained a greater number of finds, primarily pottery sherds. In this area, excavation was concluded upon reaching barren soil at +0.29m in the foundation trench of the southern wall pit and at +0.4m in the rest of the trench. From the degree of damage to the construction line of the western and southern walls in the eastern part, it can be inferred that they were originally connected.

The excavation also continued in a small section of the eastern part of the trench, but no remains were discovered that could provide insight into the building's function. Unfortunately, the ceramic material obtained has a very broad dating range, indicating its disturbed character.

Trial Trench III (TT.III)

Trial Trench III, measuring 1.5m x 3m, was located immediately south of and in contact with the southern long wall of the Roman building, near its eastern end (Pl. 4: 1). The excavation aimed to investigate the presence or absence of a foundation trench, determine the depth of the foundation and date the construction of the Roman building. As these objectives were achieved through the excavation of Trial Trench IV and TT.III exhibited similar conditions – with almost no pottery finds – excavation was halted at a depth of +2.1m (Pl. 6: 2).

Below the surface layer, a destruction layer consisting of bricks, stones, tiles and mortar – likely from the Roman building – was uncovered. A notable find was a limestone with visible tool marks forming a rhomboid pattern identical in size to the *cubilia* used in the Roman building's *opus quasi reticulatum* masonry, as well as a smaller one which is the product of this procedure (Pl. 6: 3).

Trial Trench IV (TT.IV)

Trial Trench IV, measuring 1.5m x 3.0m, was located immediately south of and in contact with the southern long wall of the Roman building, near its western end (Pl. 4: 1). The excavation started at +1.844m and was completed at +0.3m in the western part of the trench and at +1m in the eastern part (Pl. 7: 1). Similar to the stratigraphy in TT.III, below the surface, a destruction layer composed of bricks, tiles, stones, mortar, a small amount of pottery sherds and traces of charcoal was uncovered. Underneath, a layer containing pebbles, tile fragments, some pottery sherds and bone fragments came to light. This appears to be another destruction layer, or rather a layer resulting from the levelling of the area. Adjacent to the outer face of the Roman building's southern wall, a foundation trench (context 266) was identified, distinguishable by its soil composition. The foundation trench yielded almost no pottery; however, in the northwest corner of TT.IV, where the foundation trench meets the west end of the Roman building's southern wall, a concentration of stones, tiles and some pottery sherds were discovered. Among these were a diagnostic fine ware vessel rim and a plain ware lamp fragment, which date to the late 1st to early 2nd century AD.

At a height of +0.3m, the natural ground of the area was reached, consisting of hard, light brown clay soil, without any finds. The bottom of the foundation of the southern wall of the Roman building is located at a height of about +0.35m. Two sections are distinguishable: the upper part contains abundant bonding mortar, while the lower part has much less. It is noteworthy that the destruction layer identified in the trench corresponds to the upper part of the foundation. In the lower part, two roughly shaped, rounded limestone architectural elements with tenon holes are visible (Pl. 7: 2), likely spolia in secondary use. The crack in the above-ground section of the southern wall extends almost to the lowest level of its foundation.

Finds

The pottery material found during the first season consisted of 619 pottery sherds in total. They were collected in T.II, T.IV and TT.IV. Only 117 are diagnostic and include rims, bases, handles and some additional fragments such as necks, shoulders or spouts. If applicable, fragments were classified into basic functional groups, i.e. tableware, plain ware, cooking ware, storage vessels, amphorae and lamps (Pl. 8: 1). The dominant group is plain ware, followed by tableware. Preliminary research conducted on the whole assemblage shows the general scarcity of pottery material. Overall, the chronology of the assemblage spans the Hellenistic and Late Roman periods. More numerous finds were only recorded in the area of T.IV (Pl. 8: 2), which included 61 diagnostic fragments of Hellenistic-early Roman date. A selection of pottery sherds from different trenches is provided in Pl. 9-11. For now, it seems that the material consists of fabrics of local/regional character, but some imported sherds were also documented, including Attic Black Gloss and Aegean wares. Further investigation will be undertaken to clarify the chronology of specific fragments and their potential provenance.

Apart from pottery fragments, it is worth emphasising the significant presence of ceramic building materials, mainly tiles and bricks. The selection of diagnostic fragments, including painted (black, brown and red) and incised forms, as well as animal (probably dog?) prints (Pl. 12: 1), will be further studied. The recorded archaeological material included bones (probably consumption remains), shells, plasters, stones and glass, along with a few fragments of diagnostic character belonging to vessels.

Preliminary conclusions

The first season of fieldwork at the Roman building on the agora of Thelpousa has provided more insights into its history and architecture. Particularly intriguing is the discovery of a previously unknown wall in T.IV, which invites speculation about the architectural design of the building's western façade. The hypothesis that it represents the foundation of a front stylobate *in antis* seems very likely and will be the subject of further investigation during the next field season. At the same time, two different floor constructions in the main room illustrate the 'long life' of the building, though clear evidence regarding its func-

tion still remains elusive. As already argued elsewhere, the plan of the building could certainly suggest its use as a temple or as an intra-mural funerary monument, which significantly altered the traditional spatial layout of the agora (Fouquet and Δουλφής 2024, 310 f.; Fouquet forthcoming a).

The dating also continues to pose challenges, given the low number of diagnostic pottery sherds. While the masonry of the building points to a construction date in the later 1st or 2nd century AD (Fouquet and Δουλφής 2024, 310 f.), the evidence from the contexts below the floor in T.II, as well as from the foundation trench in TT.IV, seems to support this general timeframe. We hope that ongoing work will help to further substantiate this. Nonetheless, it is all the more tempting, as loosely suggested by earlier research, to associate the construction of the Roman building with the epigraphically attested large-scale restoration programme of the agora, undertaken by the imperial freedman M. Ulpius Eutychos during the Trajanic period (*SEG* 11, 1124; cf. Kahrstedt 1954, 158; Rizakis and Zoumbaki 2001, 148 no. 163).

This could explain another aspect of the Roman building: the extensive use of spoliaas building material, including, among others, the previously mentioned base block of a statue monument and another limestone block with two stylised lion legs and an ivy leaf (Pl. 12: 2), re-used in the anta of the north wall. A *stele* base with the same motif, likely originating from a small rural sanctuary, was reused as *spolium* in the masonry of an early Roman *villa rustica* in the territory of Thelpousa, located west of modern Kalliani (Eckstein and Meyer 1960, 37-39 with Beilage 14, 2). At the Roman building on the agora, smaller architectural fragments were also found in the filling between the transverse wall and the newly discovered west wall in T.IV. Moreover, numerous monochrome painted roof tile fragments – evidently from different roofs, given their varying colours and profiles – were recovered from the collapse layers of the Roman building, where they had been repurposed as aggregate for the *opus caementicium*. Further investigation is necessary, but these fragments certainly originate from older buildings.[11] All in all, the picture emerges of a ready availability of spolia, which could well have been a byproduct of a major cleanup of the agora as part of its restoration by M. Ulpius Eutychos.

[11] For painted tiles from the Archaic-Hellenistic period in the Asea survey, see Forsén and Forsén 2003, 227 f. A comparable use of painted tiles can be observed in Laconia until the Hellenistic period, see Visscher 1996, 107-109; for a predominance of unpainted material in the Roman period see Lawson 1996, 121 f.

A pragmatic building economy is revealed, however, not only by the exhaustive use of spolia; the entire decoration of the building, as far as attested, appears rather unpretentious. While it is conceivable that smaller statues were placed in the two niches of the main room, the simple mortar floor and painted wall plaster stand in stark contrast to the contemporary marble-clad architecture of major urban centres (Fouquet 2019). Whereas the building's prominent position on the agora suggests a structure of high status in terms of architecture and decoration, this expectation clashes sharply with the financial and urban realities of the hinterland of Roman Arcadia. Cities like Thelpousa thus offer important new insights into the urbanism of Roman Greece.

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PLATE 1

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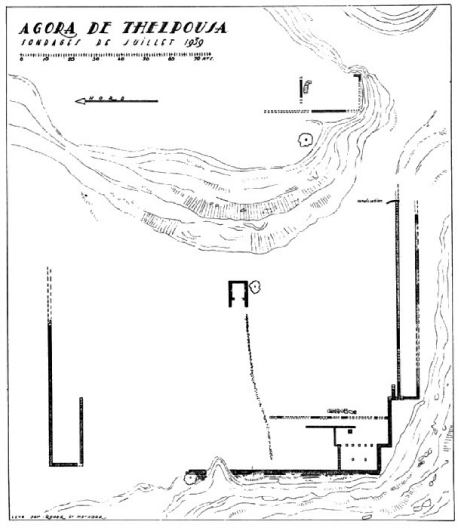


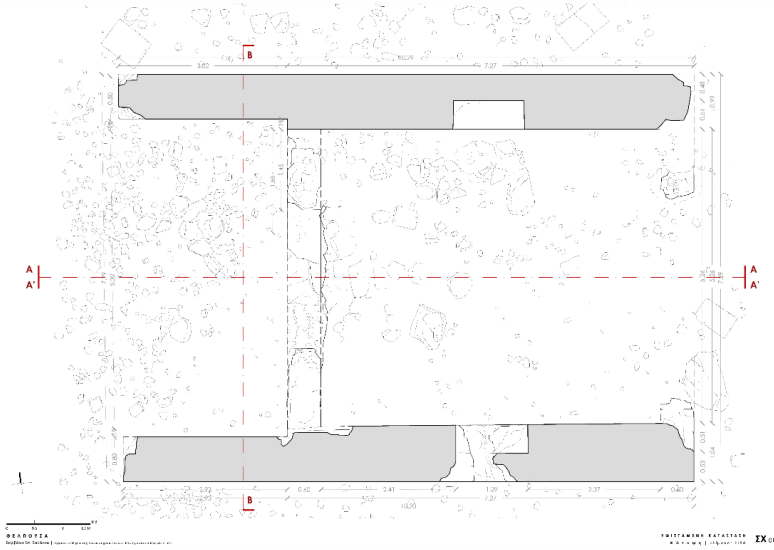
2

Pl. 1: 1 – General map of the central Mediterranean showing the location of the north-western Peloponnese, followed by a detailed map of the NW Peloponnese. Plan: Johannes Fouquet

Pl. 1: 2 – Plan of the agora by the French mission (1939). Plan: J. Roger and H. Metzger published as Jost 1986, fig. 5, courtesy of École française d'Athènes

PLATE 2

1

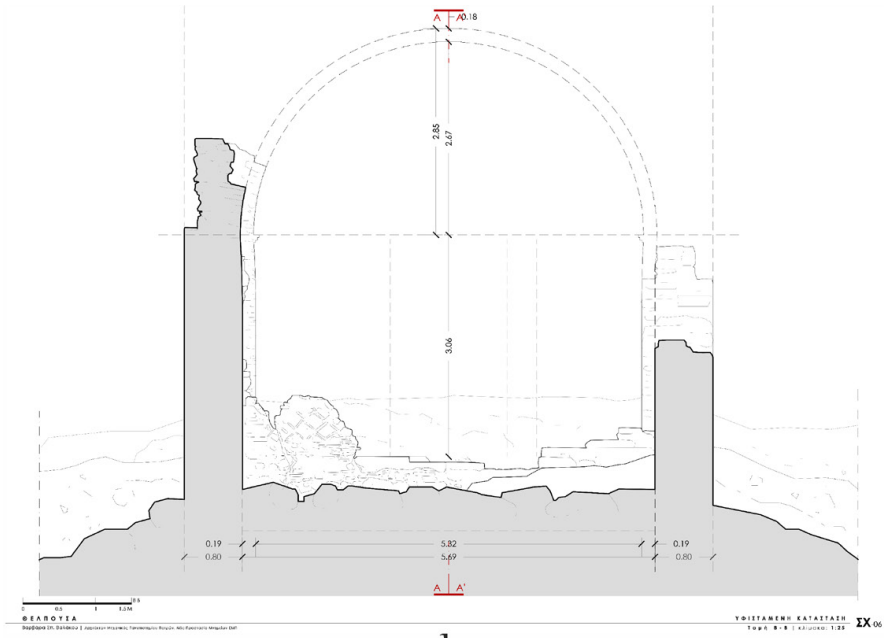


2

Pl. 2: 1 – Thelpousa, agora area (2021). Photo: Christian Seitz.

Pl. 2: 2 – Plan of the Roman building (2021). Drawing: Varvara Valakou

PLATE 3



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Pl. 3: 1 – Elevation of the Roman building (2021). Drawing: Varvara Valakou

Pl. 3: 2 – South façade of the Roman building (2021). Photo: Johannes Fouquet. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 4

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2

Pl. 4: 1 – End of season status of the trenches (2024). Photo: Wojciech Ostrowski. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 4: 2 – Segments of the collapsed rear wall in T.II. Photo: Johannes Fouquet. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 5

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3

Pl. 5: 1 – Two different floor constructions in T.II. Photo: Johannes Fouquet. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 5: 2 – Re-used inscription in the masonry of the north wall. Photo: Johannes Fouquet. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 5: 3 – Different treatment of the base coating on the interior north wall below the niche. Photo: Johannes Fouquet. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 6

1

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3

Pl. 6: 1 – Profile W of the western wall (view from the west). Orthophoto: Wojciech Ostrowski. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 6: 2 – Completion of the excavation in TT.III. Photo: Vasilis Vlachos. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 6: 3 – Limestone with rhomboid tool marks and a *cubilium* from the *opus quasi reticulatum* walls. Photo: Giorgos Doulfis. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 7

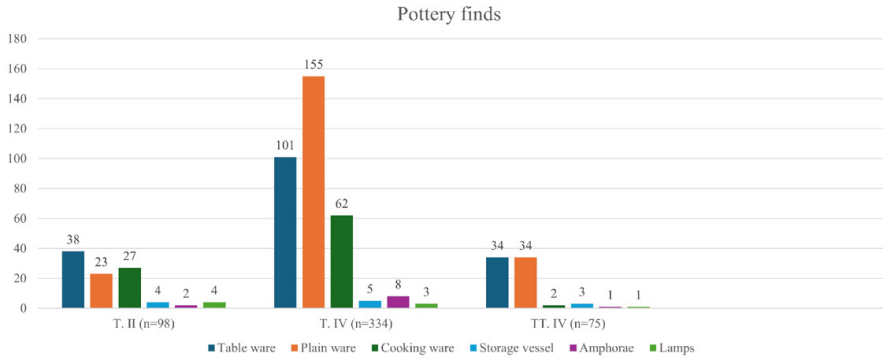
1

2

Pl. 7: 1 – Completion of the excavation in TT.IV. Photo: Giorgos Doulfis. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 7: 2 – Roughly shaped, rounded limestone architectural element with a *tenon* hole, in secondary use in the foundation of the south wall in TT.IV. Photo: Lea Thun. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 8



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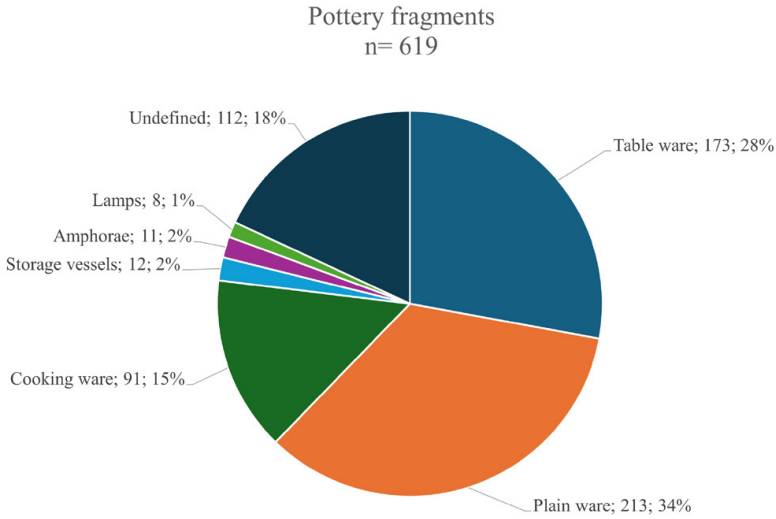

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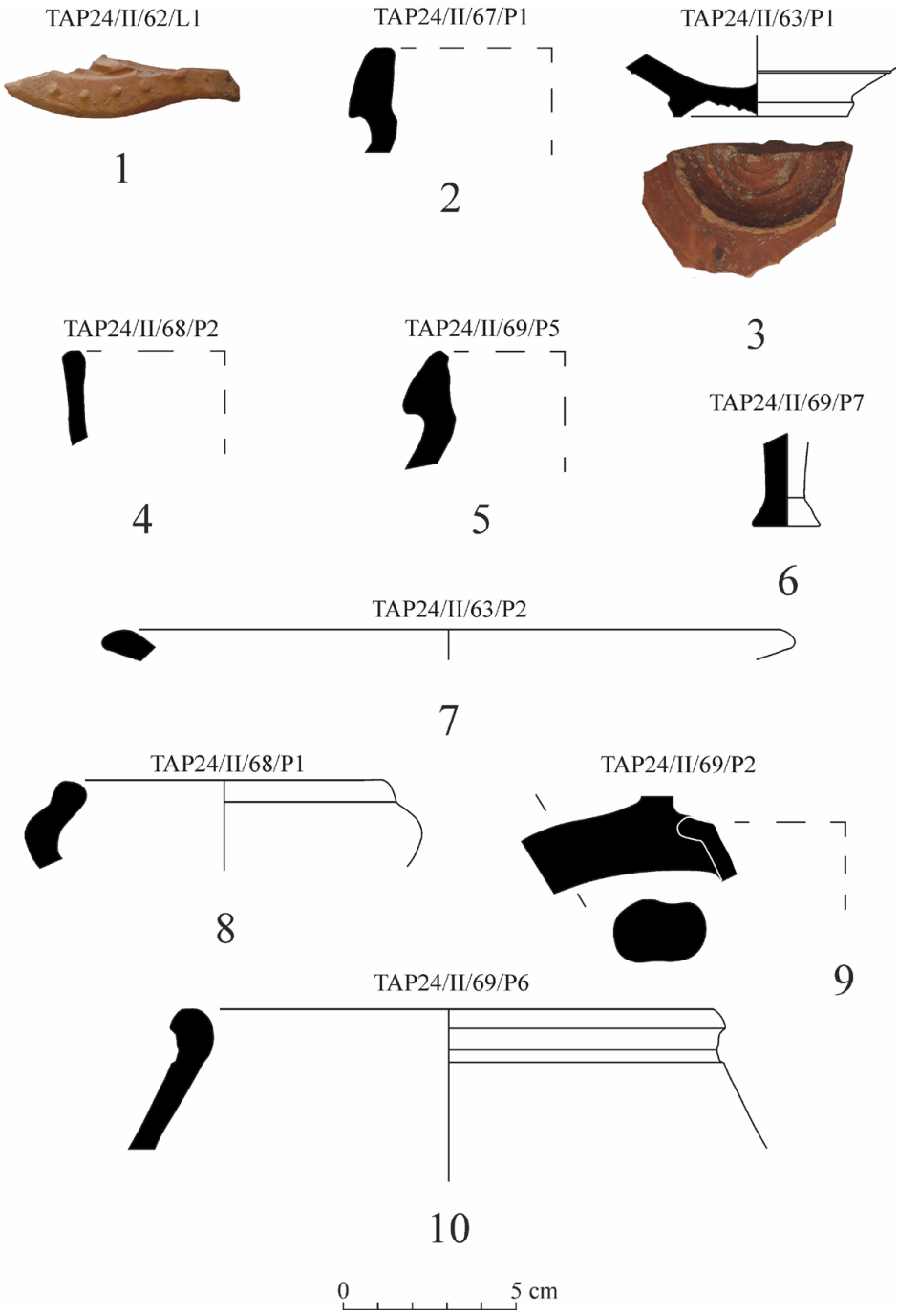
Pl. 8: 1 – Percentage of the functional groups in the assemblage recorded in 2024. Graph: Małgorzata Kajzer

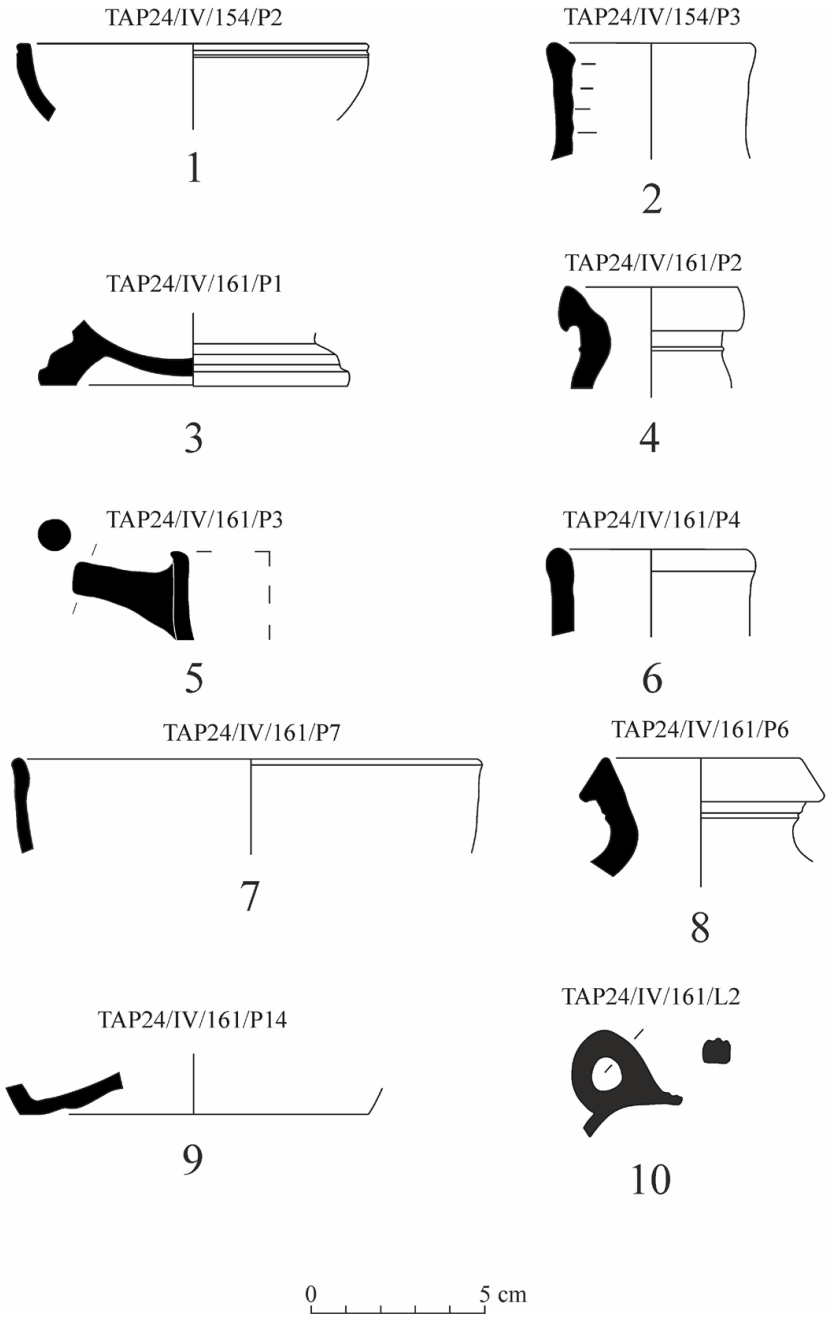
Pl. 8: 2 – Distribution of particular functional groups in trenches. Graph: Małgorzata Kajzer

PLATE 9



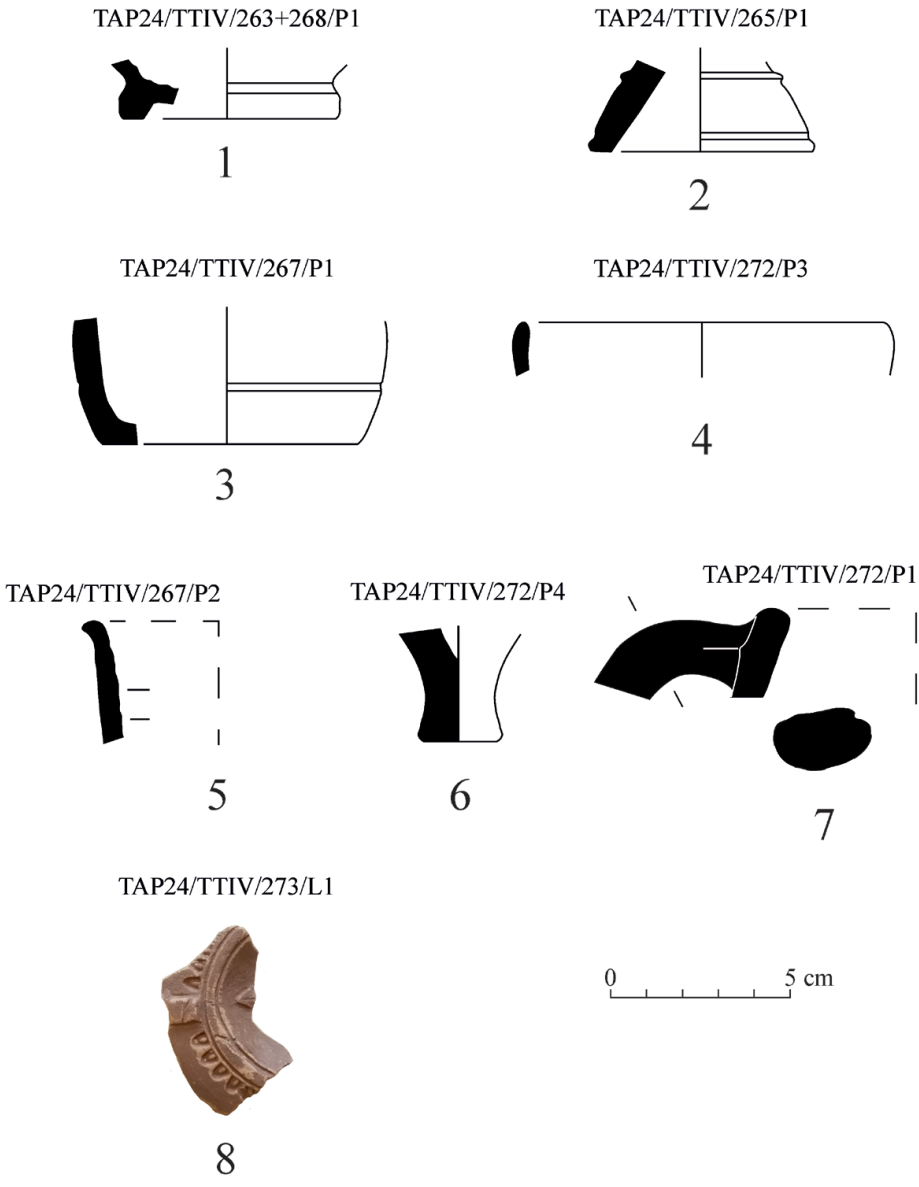
Pl. 9 – Selected pottery finds from T.II. Drawings: Małgorzata Kajzer. Photo: Małgorzata Kajzer. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 10



Pl. 10 – Selected pottery finds from T.IV. Drawings: Małgorzata Kajzer.

PLATE 11



Pl. 11 – Selected pottery finds from TT.IV. Drawings: Małgorzata Kajzer. Photo: Małgorzata Kajzer. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

PLATE 12

1

2

Pl. 12: 1 – Selection of ceramic building materials with imprinted animal paws found in T.II and T.IV. Photo: Małgorzata Kajzer. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia

Pl. 12: 2 – Limestone block with two stylised lion legs and an ivy leaf, re-used in the *anta* of the north wall of the Roman building. Photo: Giorgos Doulfis. © Ministry of Culture/Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia