

ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΑ

ARCHAEOLOGY

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THE HEROON OF ODYSSEUS IN ITHACA RECONSIDERED*

In 2009, Professor H.-G. Buchholz published a paper in the honorary volume *Δώρον* for Professor S. Iakovidis suggesting that the Heroon of Odysseus (Οδυσσεῖον), the existence of which is known only from a Hellenistic inscription (208 BC)¹, cannot have been the cave on the shore at the Polis bay (Louizos cave), but most probably at the site of the School of Homer², a site which “seems to be a promising candidate”³. At the same time he maintained that the admittedly rare Bronze Age finds (Early Helladic and Middle Helladic pottery) in this area, “are no argument in favour of Homer!”.

The aim of this paper is to reconsider this view, based on the earlier archaeological data provided by the British School at Athens from the 1930’s and my recent excavations on the island (1994-2011) that this heroon should be most probably located near the well-known cave at Polis. On the other hand, I suggest that the site of the School of Homer, where a prehistoric acropolis, architectural remains and a Mycenaean underground spring and workshops came to light, was the place of the Homeric palace of Odysseus.

It must be stressed that this paper does not intend neither to underestimate in any way the valuable work and great contribution of the eminent scholar and my close friend Buchholz to Aegean archaeology nor to deny the possibility that his hypothesis and theory may be to some extent right.

* A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the 2nd Religious Seminar at the Swedish Archaeological Institute in November 2015 in Athens. I thank the organizer of the seminar Dr Jenny Wallenstein, Director of the Institute, for her kind invitation to this Seminar and all the participants for the constructive discussion and comments. Also, I warmly thank the architects A. Lagopoulos and D. Skyrogiannis. Finally, Dr. C. MacDonald should be thanked for reading and improving my English text.

¹ Kern 1900, no. 36.

² Buchholz 2009, 127-142.

³ Buchholz 2009, 133. See also Heurtley 1935, 410, n. 1.

Alternatively, it reconsiders his suggestion in the light of the archaeological data already known to him from the pre-war British excavations as well as of those deriving from our recent excavation project on the island of Ithaca and especially at the site of the School of Homer (fig. 1a)⁴. It is worth noting that some of the most important evidence came to light during the three last digging seasons (2009-2011), therefore after Buchholz wrote his paper.

Before entering the main discussion, it should be reminded that there is a general agreement about the use of the Polis cave as a cult place⁵. The problem is the location and identification of the *Odysseion*. Most scholars suggest that it was most probably located at the Polis bay (fig. 1b-c), where performances, the so-called *Οδύσσεια* took place. So far only Rigsby⁶, and more recently Buchholz opposed this identification.

What I intend to do is to present briefly the main points of the available archaeological evidence first from the Polis cave and second from the School of Homer.

The cave, known as the “cave of the tripods”, or “cave of the Nymphs” or “Louizos cave” is a karstic formation just at the edge of the sea and on the western side of the bay, the natural sea access to northern Ithaca from the west. The coastal plain around it was until recently a marshy land, but it may have been drier in the prehistoric era, as the sea level was lower. The excavations led by Benton brought to light a rich stratified deposit of pottery and votive offerings ranging from the Bronze Age to the 1st century AD. Of exceptional interest and importance are the Late Mycenaean pottery of local style (fig. 2a), the well-known fragment of a terracotta mask of the 1st or 2nd century BC, inscribed *EYXHN OAYΣΣEI* (fig. 2b), and the 12 bronze tripods of the 9th-8th centuries BC (fig. 2c-d)⁷.

⁴ For the results of the recent excavation project: Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015.

⁵ Benton 1934, 45ff; Benton 1938, 1ff, 44; Benton 1949, 307ff.; Heurtley 1943, 11; Lorimer 1950, 499; Cook 1953, 113; Stubbings 1962, 418-419; Desborough 1964, 108, Desborough 1972, 88; Hägg 1968, 51; Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979, 186; Rutkowski 1986, 210; Μαζαράκης Αττιάν 2000, 58-60, 193; Eder 2001, 208; Αλεξίου 2009, 25.

⁶ Rigsby 1996, 215, n. 61.

⁷ These 12 tripods, together with one found previously by Louizos, could be connected with those given by Alkinoos and his fellow-rulers to Odysseus (Od. θ 387ff, and ν 13-14). For this possible connection see also: Stubbings 1962, 419; Μαζαράκης Αττιάν 2000, 58; Luce 1998, 226-227. See, however, Antonaccio 1995, 154-155; Whitley 1995, 54; Ratinaud-Lachkar 2000, 260-262; Bravo III 2009, 24.

It is worth mentioning that the late Sylvia Benton, excavator of the cave (1930 and 1932), acknowledged expert and leading authority for the archaeology of Ithaca, suggested that these tripods might have been dedications to Odysseus possibly by victors at the *Odysseia*, like the tripods found at Olympia, Argos, Delphi and Delos. The masks denote a period of popularity for the shrine. An indirect commentary is supplied by a Magnesian inscription, which records the answer of the Ithacians to an invitation to the games of Artemis Leukophryene instituted in 206 BC⁸. They invite the Magnesians to their games, the *Odysseia*, and order that the inscription should be set up in the *Odysseion*, where the games were no doubt held in the small plain outside.

According to S. Benton, "the shrine at Polis was of at least local importance in Mycenaean, Geometric Archaic and Hellenistic times and it is reasonable to connect this importance with the Odyssey"⁹. Her view is supported and strengthened by the words of Prof. Heurtley, also a well-known excavator and specialist on the Ithacian archaeology: "The existence of a small town in Mycenaean times stretching round the head of the (Polis) bay is thus sufficiently well attested" and "There is some reason for thinking that the long hollow that lies at the foot of the slopes overlooking the bay of Polis is the site of a stadium"¹⁰.

Buchholz maintains that there is not enough space for a stadium at Polis or "we may well expect a place of limited space where contests could be performed"¹¹ and believes, based only on Vollgraff's report for a "tessère de theater"¹² that the only suitable place "is a very small theatre within the area of the School of Homer, cut in the natural rock"¹³. Without excluding the possibility that he is right, I must note that the morphology of the site is not suitable for a civic assembly and athletic or other performances (αγώνες), being rather steep and sloping downhill. Furthermore, no such a theatre has been recognized during our excavations at this site nor did Buchholz ever show or suggest it to us during his two years participation and personal help and advice in the project. Therefore, its drawing and location in fig. 4 of his paper is hypothetical and not yet archaeologically documented. On the other

⁸ Kern 1900, no. 36.

⁹ Benton 1934, 45ff; Benton 1938, 1ff; Benton 1949, 307ff.

¹⁰ Heurtley 1939-1940, 10-11.

¹¹ Buchholz 2009, 131.

¹² Vollgaff 1905, 168, no. 19.

¹³ Buchholz 2009, 131.

hand, Benton's suggestion that "the games no doubt (were) held in the small plain outside" (fig. 2a)¹⁴, the Polis cave-sanctuary seems to be, in my opinion and on the basis of the finds (fig. 8), more persuasive.

According to Buchholz, the site of the School of Homer (fig. 3a), "seems to be a promising candidate"¹⁵ for the Heroon of Odysseus. The excavation led by the University of Ioannina brought to light a prehistoric acropolis with partly preserved walls, constructed in the Cyclopean technique, as well as a complex of buildings occupying two terraces and dating from the Bronze Age to Late Hellenistic and Roman periods¹⁶.

During the final Mycenaean building phase, the acropolis was enlarged by the addition of a roughly rectangular eastern extension, small in size but of crucial importance, in order to include and protect the Mycenaean underground spring that provided the inhabitants of the acropolis in difficult times with water (fig. 9)¹⁷.

Parts of the steep vertical face of the rock dividing upper and lower terraces were partly embellished with large blocks of stone in pseudo-ashlar style, exactly similar to those used in the Cyclopean wall of Mycenae at the east side of the approach to the Lion Gate, and partly with completely unworked irregular or roughly polygonal stones (fig. 11a-b).

On the lower terrace, the foundations of a three-roomed rectangular building in the form of a megaron dated from late Middle Helladic to the LH IIIC periods were revealed east of the architectural remains.¹⁸ One can approach the megaron from the south through a partly destroyed stone staircase and an entrance. Before reaching it, a heavy retaining wall supports the terrace on which it stands and its construction is characteristically Mycenaean being rather strong and stable (fig. 4a). At least two main phases of construction may be distinguished, although their date cannot be definitely established. Near the east side of the first room (aithousa) and before the opening leading to the next room (prodomos), a relief of a rough, irregular "oxhide ingot" (*τάλαντον*) cut into the surface of the rock bed has been recognized

¹⁴ Benton 1934-35, 54

¹⁵ Buchholz 2009, 133.

¹⁶ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015.

¹⁷ The *krene* was carefully examined and safely dated to the second half of the 13th century BC (LH IIIB2) by J. Knauss, Professor of the Technical University of Munich: Knauss 2006, 4-18; Knauss 2008, 471-486.

¹⁸ This building was omitted in Buchholz's fig. 3, but mentioned in the text p. 136 (nos. 16, 18.5, 30.7, 11). According to him, it was a vestibule or lounge of his main building (nos. 3, 9, 6, 8, 23) (fig. 3b), as shown in fig. 3b of his paper.

(fig. 4b). Whether or not this was used as an altar I cannot say. In the northern room (domos) the floor with the hearth (εστία) (diam. 3 m.) was sinking. It was built of a ring of big poros stones (fig. 5a-d), filled in the centre with fragments of Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery (fig. 5e), animal bones in greasy soil mixed with traces of burning. Auxiliary rooms laid west of the megaron (Buchholz's fig. 3, nos 3, 9, 6, 8, 23), where a broken Mycenaean Late Helladic IIIC kylix and sherds from others, sherds of prehistoric hand-made vases, large broken pithoi of later times (fig. 6), a destroyed circular bothros, remains of prehistoric walls and an underground cave-like storeroom – not a cleft – (Buchholz's fig. 3, no. 10) were found.

No bones of any kind were found in this underground cave and that the osteological material, examined by Prof. Nobis, comes exclusively from the so-called *kykloteres* (Buchholz's fig. 4E). I think that the underground cave must be taken as a storeroom of the adjacent Mycenaean megaron and not as Buchholz wrongly suggests "the main bothros for keeping what was left of meals"¹⁹ in later times.

West of the megaron and on the vertical surface of the rock a rectangular recessed niche (1.35-1.50 m high, 0.75-0.80 m wide and 1.35 m deep) was elaborately cut (fig. 11c). As no exact parallel is recorded in any other site, its purpose remains problematic. On the basis of a somewhat similarly cut in the throne room of the Pylos palace,²⁰ we firstly suggested that it was made to provide a place for the throne of the local ruler. Other possible uses can no doubt be imagined e.g. for the vertical part of a timber frame, of the vertical wall, rather similar to that from the South House at Mycenae.²¹

A three-roomed building, orientated E-W, with a round stone structure in the middle room (fig. 7a) accessed by a large door in the northern wall of the megaron seems to be a Late Bronze Age sanctuary. I would not claim that this can be proved beyond all reasonable doubt, but on the balance of probabilities I think it may well be correct.

In his paper, Buchholz claims: "If the place was identical with the heroon of Odysseus, mentioned before, it was chosen because the site was understood by the late Classic-Hellenistic Ithacians as a mythical locus and must have had to do for them with their most prominent hero. It is possible that they looked for the palace as described by Homer". For the modern

¹⁹ Buchholz 2009, 136

²⁰ Blegen & Rawson 1966, 88, fig. 70.

²¹ Iakovidis – French 2003, 17, fig. 12. Prof. Aström, who saw it, suggested it could have been to support a mechanism of unknown type.

excavator, i.e. for us there are signs of prehistoric occupation, like handmade sherds of Early and Middle Bronze Age types and wares. Some of the stones in the fundamentals of walls seem to go back to that age, centuries before the Trojan war, long before the lifetime of the mythical hero Odysseus”.²² Indeed, the modern excavator found not only Early and Middle Bronze Age, but also Mycenaean pottery, while the preserved foundations of the megaron, cavities for the base of columns (fig. 8a-c) and parts of the wall dividing the two terraces have exact parallels at Mycenae.²³ Otherwise, I agree with Buchholz that “it is possible that the Ithacesians of later times looked for the palace as described by Homer at this important and strategic place”, where I suggest the palace of Odysseus most probably existed.²⁴ Later constructions covered the prehistoric residence after the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial centres and that sanctuaries or temples (but not heroa!) dedicated to local deities were constructed in the place of the palaces.²⁵

It is surprising that Buchholz, although following and accepting Knauss’s dating of the *krene*, ignores, however, the Mycenaean finds (stems of two kylikes and of one stemmed bowl) and based only on the small amount of pre-Mycenaean pottery from the vicinity suggests that “They, of course, are no argument in favour of Homer!”,²⁶ indirectly doubting the importance and the connection of the spring with a Mycenaean residence at the School of Homer. But, in such a case, we must also doubt the Mycenaean character and connection of all others springs mentioned above with Homer. So, in view of the general similarity with the other known Mycenaean springs and taking into account the careful study of Knauss, I find it difficult to dissociate the Ithaca spring from the adjacent Mycenaean megaron.

The so-called *kykloteris* or *tholos* is another impressive prehistoric(?) monument that deserves brief discussion (Buchholz’s fig. 4.E) (fig. 10a-b). Lying to the east of the underground spring, it was badly destroyed and looted. It produced, however, many interesting finds, including a clay tablet with an incised ship and a man tied on its mast (Odysseus?), accompanied by

²² Buchholz 2009, 136.

²³ Mylonas 1962, 62, 64, figs. 36-37.

²⁴ For the arguments strengthening this suggestion offered by other scholars, see Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 469, n. 11.

²⁵ Cf. Temples of Athena at the Mycenaean acropolises at Mycenae and Athens, the temple of Hera at Tiryns, Pelopion at Olympia and that of Apollo at Thermon.

²⁶ Buchholz 2009, 137.

mythical creatures and possible symbol(s) of Linear A or B (AB09 "SE")²⁷ (fig. 10d), pottery sherds and a great number of animal bones (400), already examined by the late Professor G. Nobis, archaeozoologist and Director of the Zoological Research Institute and the Alexander König-Museum in Bonn. It is worth noting that among these bones the most important were two *bucrania* (oxen crania) (fig. 10c), which may be related with bull sacrifices,²⁸ and bones of *bos primigenius*.²⁹

Buchholz, therefore, is mistaken, when he says that this osteological material comes from a cleft-bothros used for keeping the remains of meals at the Odysseus Heroon. His suggestion must be reconsidered, since the examined bones come from the *kykloteres* and a great part of them has been dated to the prehistoric times. On the basis of this material, I am inclined to believe that part of these bones mixed with others of later date not yet examined,³⁰ most probably comes from cultic feasts and sacrifices that took place in the Bronze Age residence or its adjacent sanctuary, following a Minoan tradition,³¹ and on the basis of presence of some other bones probably coming from Buchholz's heroon provisionally dated to later periods, that this custom continued in historical times.

Buchholz's question concerning the new architectural remains and finds on the upper terrace,³² should be treated here. Leaving aside the remains of historical times, I shall concentrate on those of the prehistoric era, namely the metallurgical installation and workshop as well as the bathroom.

The metallurgical workshop, recognised as such by Professor G. Papademetriou and Dr N. Georgakellos of the National Technical University of Athens, was found in 2009 at a distance of ca. 50 m. NW of the Hellenistic

²⁷ Kontorli-Papadopoulou *et al.* 2005, 183-186. The absence of more clay tablets, may be accidental or may be due to the catastrophe and abandonment of the palace, as is the case with the Mycenaean palace of Athens, where no such tablets have been found (Camp 2009, 33-38).

²⁸ Bucrania as remains of bull sacrifices, have been found in cult places in the Aegean and Cyprus and have been associated with the cult of the bull-god. For a recent discussion and references see, Papadopoulos 1995, 176-178; Nobis 2000, 121-134, Tafel 32-33.

²⁹ Recognised as such by Prof. Nobis.

³⁰ The osteoarchaeologist Dr Argyro Nafplioti undertook the study of this material.

³¹ Cf. Buchholz 2009, 136 and n. 56.

³² Buchholz 2009, 135

tower (fig. 12a).³³ Bronze pins and nails,³⁴ fish-hooks,³⁵ an awl,³⁶ a needle,³⁷ a flat (or ½ of double axe?),³⁸ and most importantly one broken low-stemmed monochrome LH III2 early kylix,³⁹ two lamps – one of bronze (Catling's Form 27b) and the other of lead with skillet handle –, broken and badly corroded (fig. 12e-f, 13-14).

According to Catling, "lamps with skillet handles (Form 27b) were for long represented in Crete only by a single piece from Zafer Papoura, Tomb 14, while at least six were known on the Mainland. But the two Sellopoulo finds plus fragments of two more from tomb 3 and another in the Archanes tholos⁴⁰ have shown that the type was equally common in both areas. This form seems to be no earlier than Late Minoan IIIA1/LH IIIA1. The lamp from a Late Helladic II group in Dendra Tomb 8 stands apart from these with its separately attached handle"⁴¹.

³³ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 473-474.

³⁴ For references and discussion, see Jacobstal 1956, 1ff.; Sandars 1958-1959, 236; Higgins 1961, 86; Desborough 1964, 53-54; Iakovidis 1970, 289-290; Hood 1968, 214ff.; Hammond 1967, 350-361; Papanthimou 1979, 206-9; Blegen *et al.* 1973, 160, fig. 230: 11-14; Papadopoulos 1978-1979, 139-140; Vlachopoulos 2006, 272-273 (pins). For the nails, see e.g. Iakovidis 1989, 23, 66, pls. 10α, 28β; Wace 1921-1922; 1922-1923, 350. As it is well known there are parallel horizontal rows in the walls of the dome, which according to the usually accepted opinion, gilt bronze rosettes or some other form of decoration was attached on the walls. Wace 1964, 32 (Treasury of Atreus).

³⁵ Cf. Keramopoullos 1917, 178-180; Iakovidis 1970, 354-355; Buchholz *et al.* 1973, J170-3, abb. 55h-w; Papadopoulos 1978-1979, 158-159. Cf. also, Catling 1974, 246; Benzi 1992, 180.

³⁶ For references and discussion, see Catling 1964, 65, 97-98 (Eutresis, Mycenae, Mallia, Rhodes, Lapithos, Ayios Iakovos, Enkomi, Kouklia). See also, Deshayes 1960, 39ff, II, 3, n. 58; Blegen *et al.* 1973, 158, fig. 230: 8; Iakovidis 1970, 339, fig. 145, pl. 128γ; Benzi 1992, 180, pl. 181.1-m.

³⁷ The type is well known throughout the Bronze Age, especially in Early Bronze Age II-III deposits. Our example belongs to Branigan's Type III with parallels from elsewhere (Chalandriani, Zygouries and Troy). Cf. Branigan 1974, 30, pl. 15, nos. 1230-34 (EBA II-III).

³⁸ Flat axes, most probably inserted in a slot cut in the long axis of the haft, are known from several Aegean and Cypriot sites since EBA times and have been discussed in detail by Branigan and Catling. The possibility that our small example is a chisel cannot be ruled out, as Catling suggests that "possibly some of the smallest, were mounted for use as chisels in a bone or horn sleeve". Another possibility is to be half of a double axe (Buchholz's Type I/III), but this is to be more fully considered. Cf. Branigan 1974, 24; Catling 1964, 63-64, 85-86; Buchholz 1989, 48, taf. X.b. Also, Buchholz – Karageorghis 1971, 278: 737 (Agrinion).

³⁹ FS. 264. Cf. Frödin – Persson 1938, 405, fig. 265; *BMA*, NT48: 10,11; Mountjoy 1986, 90, fig. 108.

⁴⁰ Sakellarakis 1970, 152, fig. 5.10.

⁴¹ Catling 1974, 251.

The Ithaki bronze lamp has been safely dated on the basis of its context and parallels from other sites (Dendra, Mycenae, Archanes, Zafer Papoura, Sellopoulo and Cyprus) to the Late Mycenaean period (14th century BC)⁴². Lead lamps are generally rare and in their typical form ("shallow bowl with one pinched nozzle"⁴³) are known from few prehistoric (Bronze Age) sites⁴⁴, but we cannot find any parallel to our skillet lamp elsewhere in the Aegean or Cyprus.

The bathroom, southeast of the metallurgical workshop, has an entrance to the east and a low inner dividing wall. Immediately after the entrance part of a slab-paved floor is preserved, while several sherds of Late Mycenaean pottery and parts of a broken clay bathtub (ασάμινθος), somewhat similar to that found in the Palace of Nestor⁴⁵ have been scattered on it. One cannot exclude the possibility that the bathtub has been transferred to this room after its primary use elsewhere in order to be used in the workshop.⁴⁶

The metallurgical workshop on the upper terrace should be combined with Buchholz's argument in reference to the *τάλαντον* "If she (Prof. Kontorli-Papadopoulou) will find more metallurgical evidence at the site and can explain the use of it as a workshop, she could argue with a date about 1200 B.C."⁴⁷

Other prehistoric finds from the excavation at the site include coarse handmade (*barbaric ware*), Middle (Grey and yellow Minyan) and Late Bronze age (Mycenaean) pottery (mainly sherds of one jar, one jug, four kylikes, one stirrup-jar, two deep bowls, one stemmed bowl, two kraters, a bronze spearhead, leaden rivets of the "double rivet" type, broken stone vases, a clay seal, and objects of ivory/bone (a small spoon, fragments of an ivory pyxis and a a pin) (figs. 15-16).

It must be noted that the relative scarcity of prehistoric/Mycenaean finds is most likely due to the continuous habitation of the site and, as it has been

⁴² For references and discussion, see Catling 1964, 182-183, fig. 21: 8,9; Catling 1974, 238-239, fig. 24: 35-36, and Catling 1974, 251. Also, Matthäus 1980, 302-304, Taf. 52-54; Demakopoulou 1988, 228, no. 221; Xenaki-Sakellariou 1985, 206, pl.92.V (Χλ. 3045); Immerwahr 1971, 167-168, pl. 33.

⁴³ Cf. Aström 1972, 474, fig. 60.9.

⁴⁴ Aström 1972, 474; Buchholz 1972, 12, 41, nos. 20a-b; Dikaïos 1969, 100, 278, 463, 519, 813, pl. 163: 64, 65; Matthäus 1980, 267-8, Taf. 163, nos. 586-588.

⁴⁵ Blegen & Rawson 1966, 187-188, figs. 37, 139-140, 422.

⁴⁶ The metallurgical workshop points to the reference in *Odyssey* Σ 328 (χαλκίηον ἐς δόμον) and the bathroom to P 85-90 (ἐς δ' ασάμινθους βάντες).

⁴⁷ Buchholz 2009, 137.

rightly observed by Hope-Simpson and Dickinson⁴⁸ “later (Hellenistic and Roman) remains on the hill above the spring may have removed much of the Late Helladic (Mycenaean) level”. It is also worth mentioning that many more prehistoric finds and of later periods of habitation at the site have been unearthed and are housed in the storerooms of the local archaeological museums, awaiting preservation and detailed study.

Finally, an answer may be permitted to the Buchholz’s last statement “I have argued that we have to expect ancient “heroic” evidence at a site, where a heroon was placed afterwards. Whoever will do more archaeological investigation at the “School of Homer” is well advised to look for more prehistoric finds in that area”⁴⁹. After further archaeological investigation and more discoveries, including very important prehistoric finds from the site presented here, I shall continue, following the opinion of the British excavators and other scholars, as well as, my experience and knowledge of Ithaca, to believe that the “heroon of Odysseus” or *Odysseion* is to be sought at the Polis bay. In my opinion, it cannot be elsewhere than there. On the other hand, I still consider, based on the presented above archaeological evidence, and until more significant remains and objects are found in an equally suitable site elsewhere, that the “School of Homer” occupies an important and strategic prehistoric residence, commanding the whole undulating plateau, which constitutes the most fertile area of the rocky island with easy access to the harbours of Polis, Aphales and Frikes, and seems to be a promising and strong candidate for the political centre of the island and the Homeric palace of Odysseus (figs. 17-18).

In conclusion, it is tempting to suggest a correlation of the archaeological record with the Homeric tradition.

⁴⁸ Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 185-186. Cf. also, Camp 2009, 37 (...η μεταγενέστερη οικοδομική δραστηριότητα και η εκτεταμένη χρήση της Ακρόπολης (των Αθηνών) ως ιερού, κατά την Αρχαϊκή και την Κλασική περίοδο, έχουν εξαλείψει σχεδόν κάθε ίχνος του (“μικροναϊκού ανακτόρου”).

⁴⁹ Buchholz 2009, 138.

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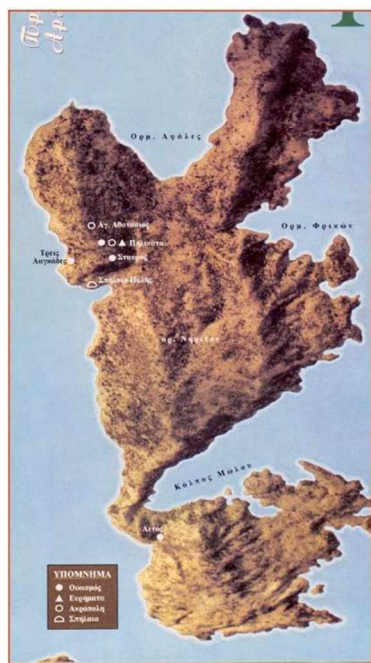
ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΘΑΝΑΣΗΣ Ι. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

ΕΠΑΝΕΞΕΤΑΖΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΟ ΗΡΩΟ ΤΟΥ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΙΘΑΚΗ

Ο στόχος της παρούσας συμβολής είναι η επανεξέταση της άποψης του καθηγητή Buchholz, σύμφωνα με τον οποίο το Οδυσσεΐον στην Ιθάκη πρέπει να τοποθετηθεί στη θέση της Σχολής του Ομήρου. Ωστόσο, με βάση τα ευρήματα της Βρετανικής Σχολής Αθηνών, αλλά και των πιο πρόσφατων ανασκαφών μου στο νησί (1994-2011), υποστηρίζεται εδώ ότι το «Ηρώο» θα πρέπει να τοποθετηθεί στο Σπήλαιο της Πόλης, ενώ τα αρχιτεκτονικά κατάλοιπα και μια μυκηναϊκή υπόγεια κρήνη στην θέση της Σχολής του Ομήρου θα πρέπει να αποδοθούν στο ανάκτορο του Οδυσσέα.

Στο παρόν άρθρο παρουσιάζονται τα προϊστορικά ευρήματα τόσο από το Σπήλαιο όσο και από τη Σχολή του Ομήρου. Η στρατηγική θέση της δεύτερης, μιας εύφορης πεδιάδας με εύκολη πρόσβαση στα λιμάνια της Πόλης, των Αφαλών και των Φρικών, την καθιστούν την ισχυρότερη υποψήφια για το πολιτικό κέντρο του νησιού της Εποχής του Χαλκού όπου πρέπει να αναζητηθεί και το ομηρικό ανάκτορο του Οδυσσέα.

List of plates**a****b****c****Plate 1.** a. Map of Ithaca. b- c. Polis bay from NE.

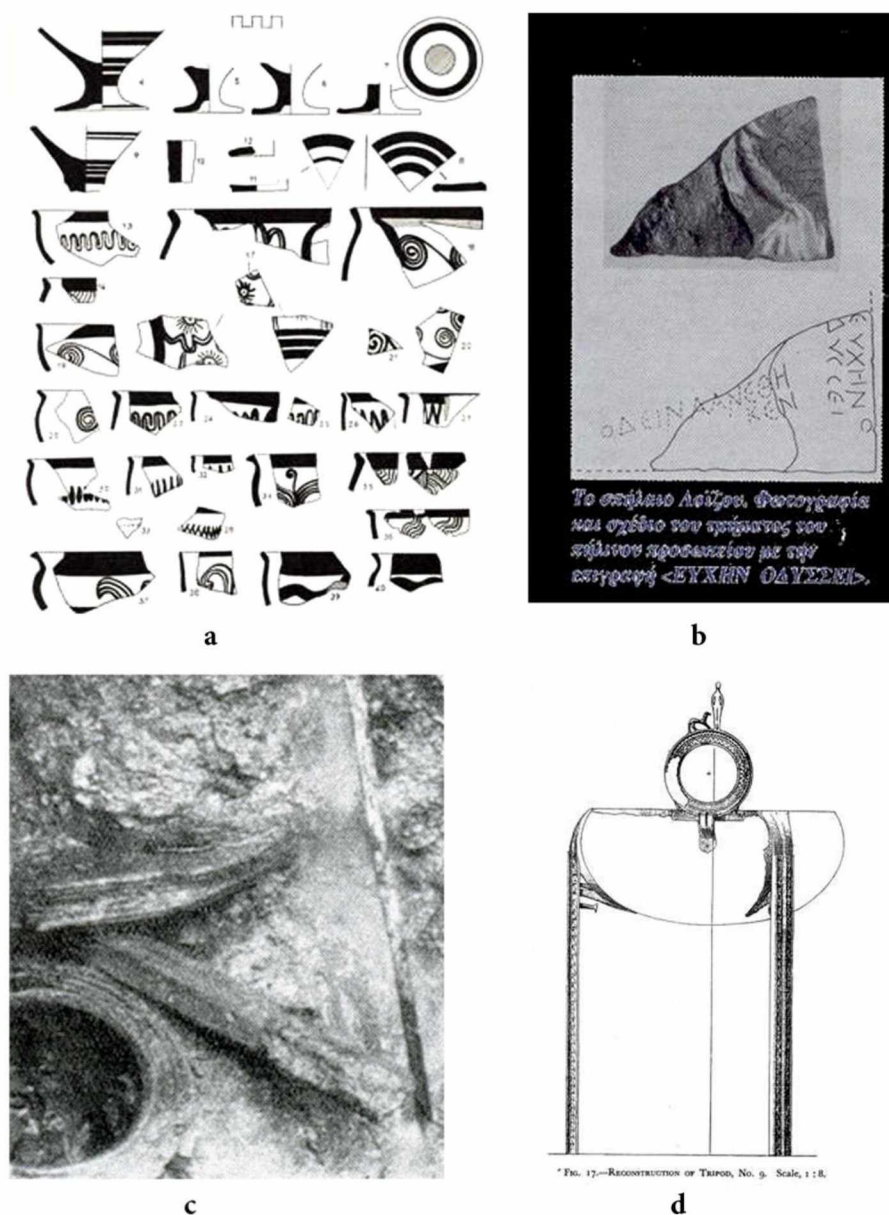


Plate 2. a. Mycenaean pottery from Tris Langades –Polis (Benton 1973, fig. 3), b. Inscribed mask “ΕΥΧΗΝ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙ» (Benton 1934-1935, fig. 7), c. Tripods *in situ*, d. Reconstruction of tripod (Benton 1934-1935, figs. 6, 15).

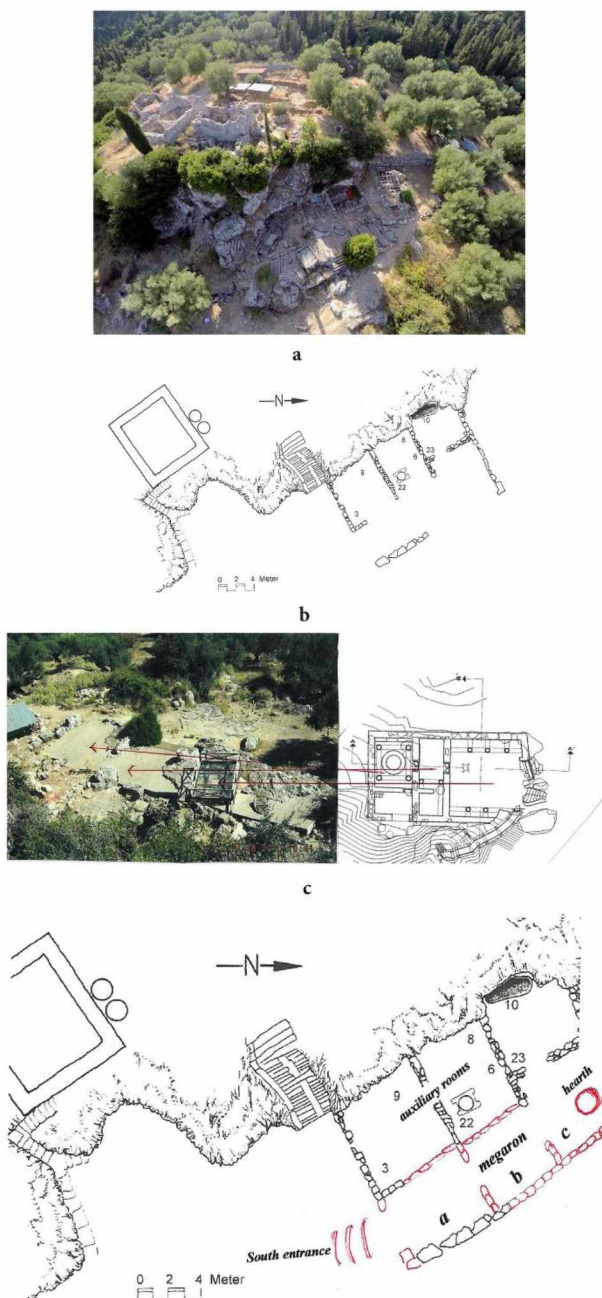


Plate 3. **a.** School of Homer (air photo), **b.** Retaining wall and south gate leading to megaron, **c.-d.** Air photo of the lower terrace and provisional reconstruction of the megaron

**a****b**

Plate 4. a. School of Homer (Buchholz 2009, fig. 3b), **b.** Lower terrace-megaron, **c.** “oxide ingot” cut on the rock.

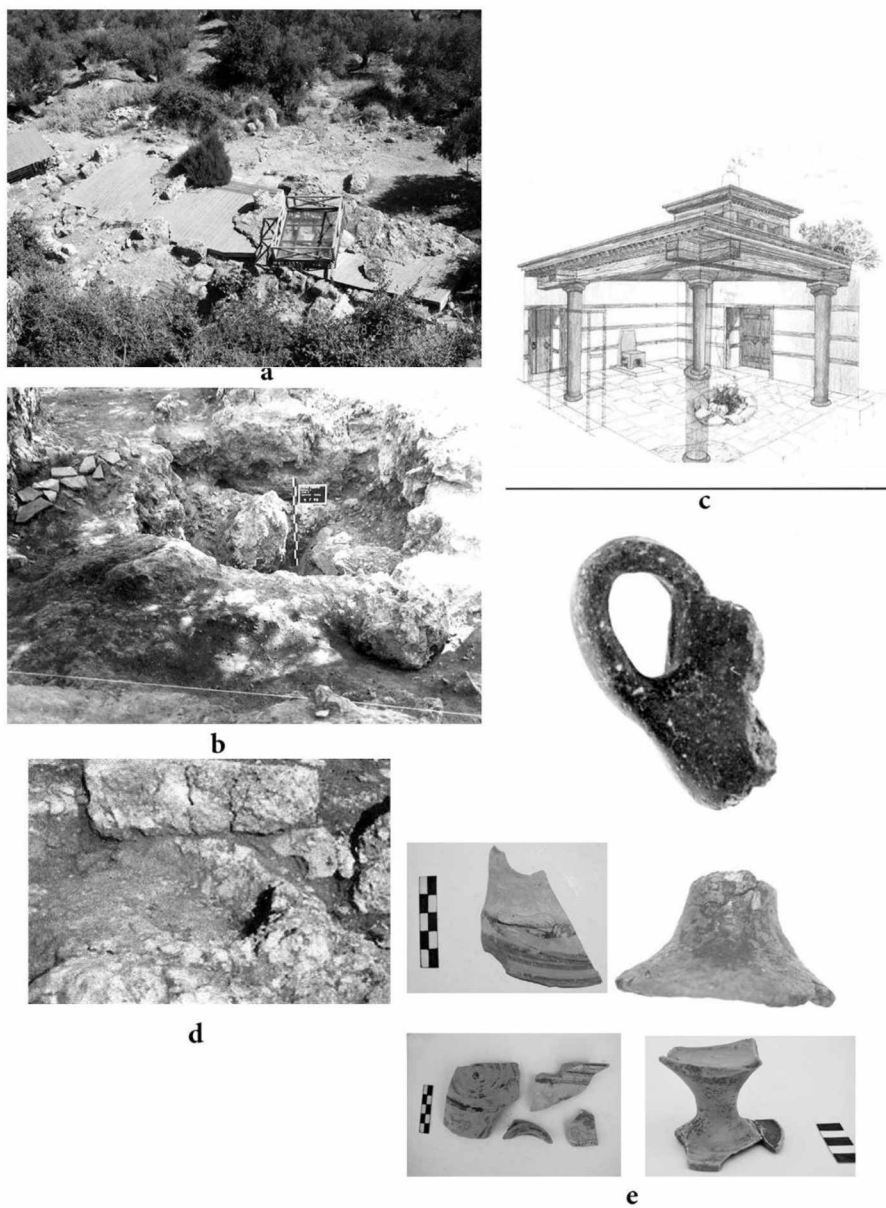


Plate 5. a. School of Homer, Megaron, b-c. Hearth and provisional reconstruction of the domos, d. cavity on the rock for the base of a column, e, Handmade and Mycenaean pottery from the hearth.



Plate 6. a-e. School of Homer, Prehistoric pottery from the megaron, **f.** Pottery of historical times.

**a****b****c****d****e****f**

Plate 7. a. School of Homer, Sanctuary(?) north of the megaron, **b-f.** Finds from the sanctuary (?).

**a****b****c**

Plate 8. School of Homer, lower terrace, Mycenaean architectural remains.

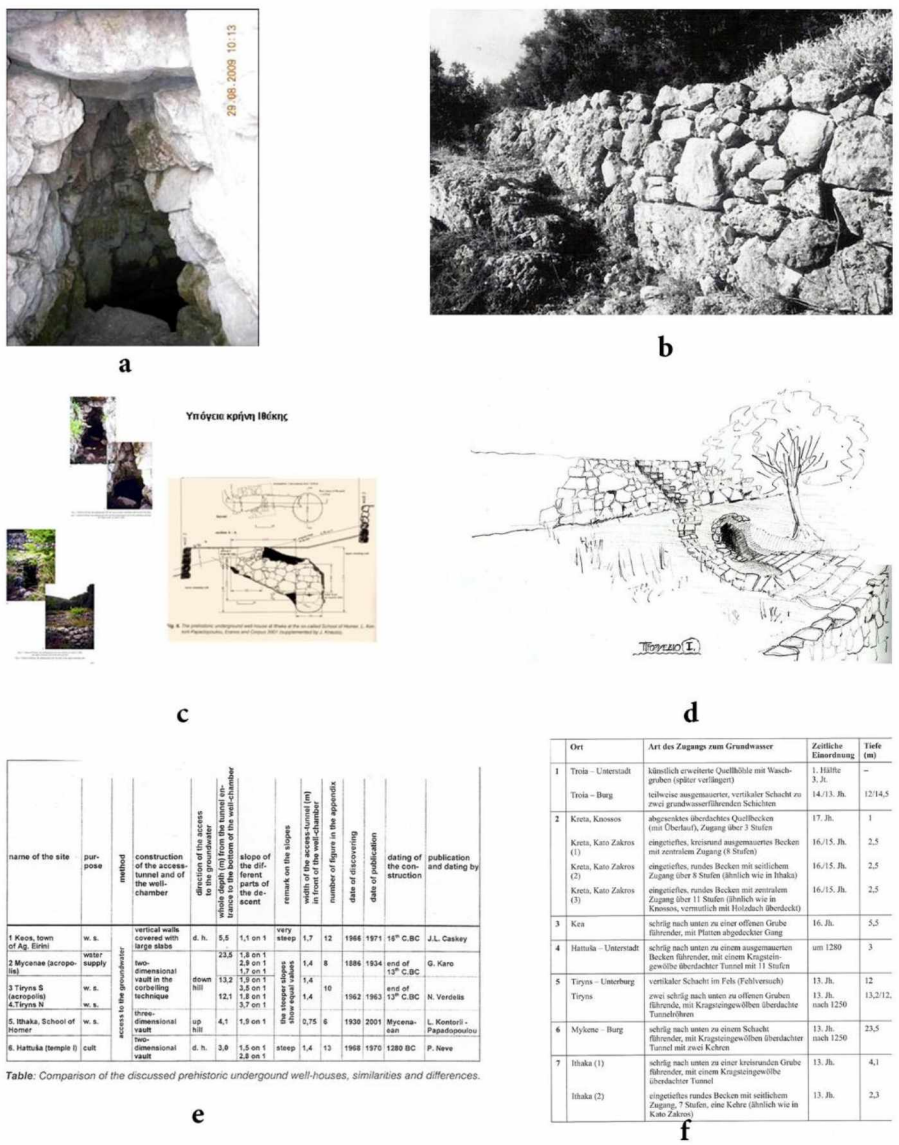
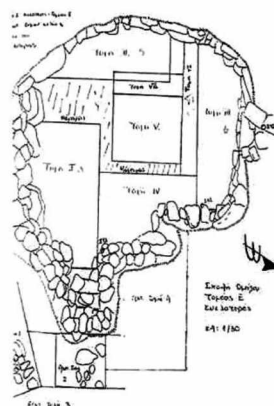


Fig. 1. Prehistoric groundwater systems around the Agia: suggested examples.

Plate 9. a-e. School of Homer, Underground spring (Knauss 2006, figs. 2, 5, table, 2008, figs. 1-2,6, **d.** Provisional reconstruction.



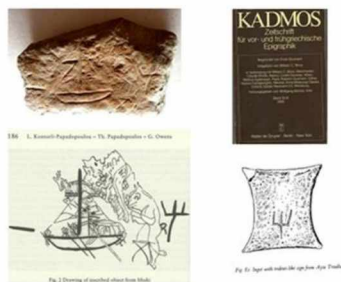
a



b



C



d



e



f

Plate 10. a,c-d. School of Homer, The so-called “Κυκλοτερές» monument and finds, **e-f.** Staircases cut on the rock.

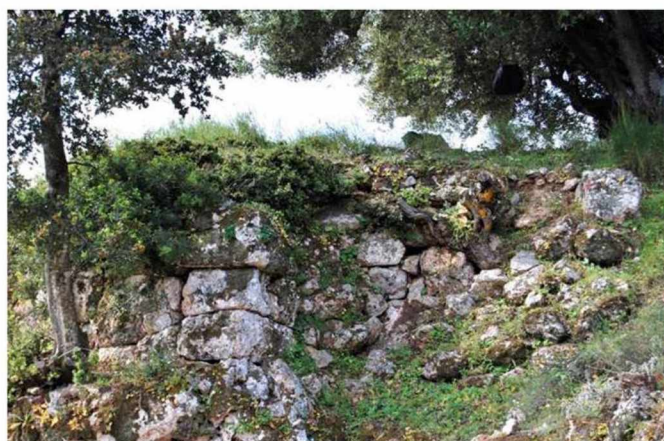
**a****b****c**

Plate 11. a-d School of Homer, remains of Mycenaean walls and parallel from the acropolis of Mycenae, **e**. Recessed niche west of the megaron.

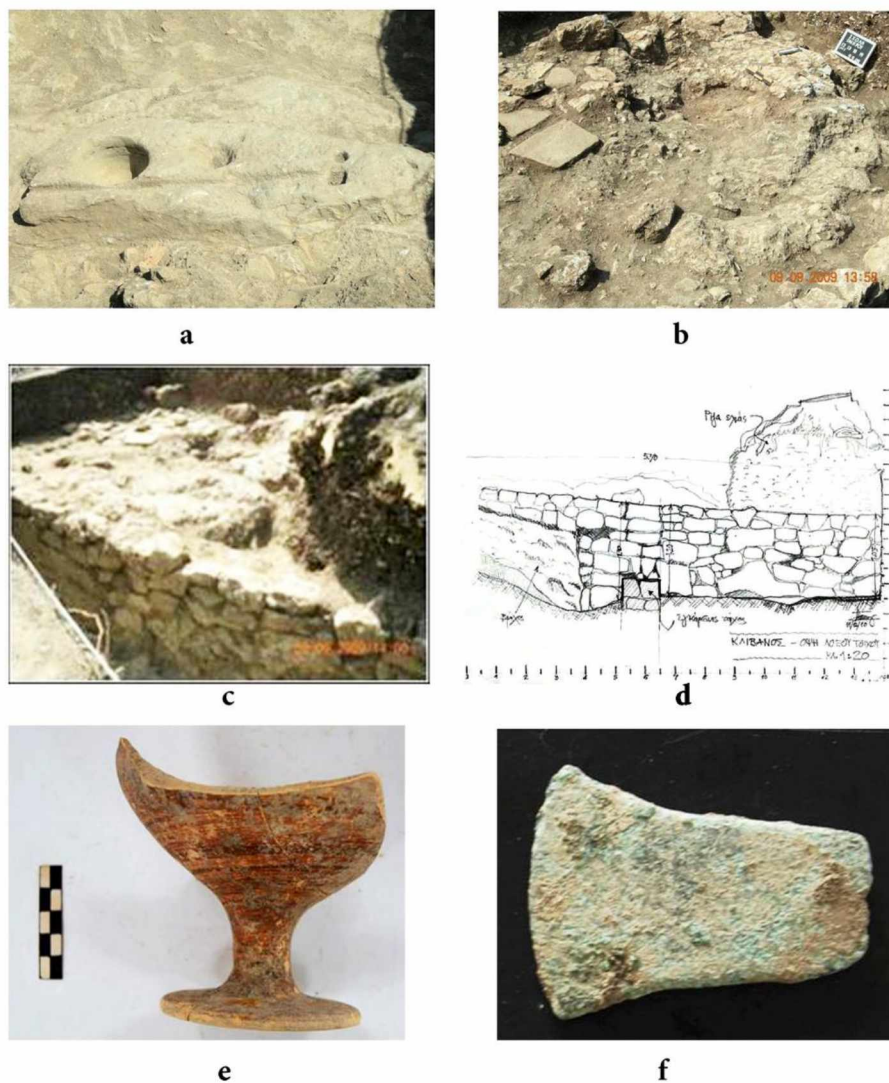


Plate 12. School of Homer, upper terrace. Metallurgical workshop, provisional reconstruction and finds

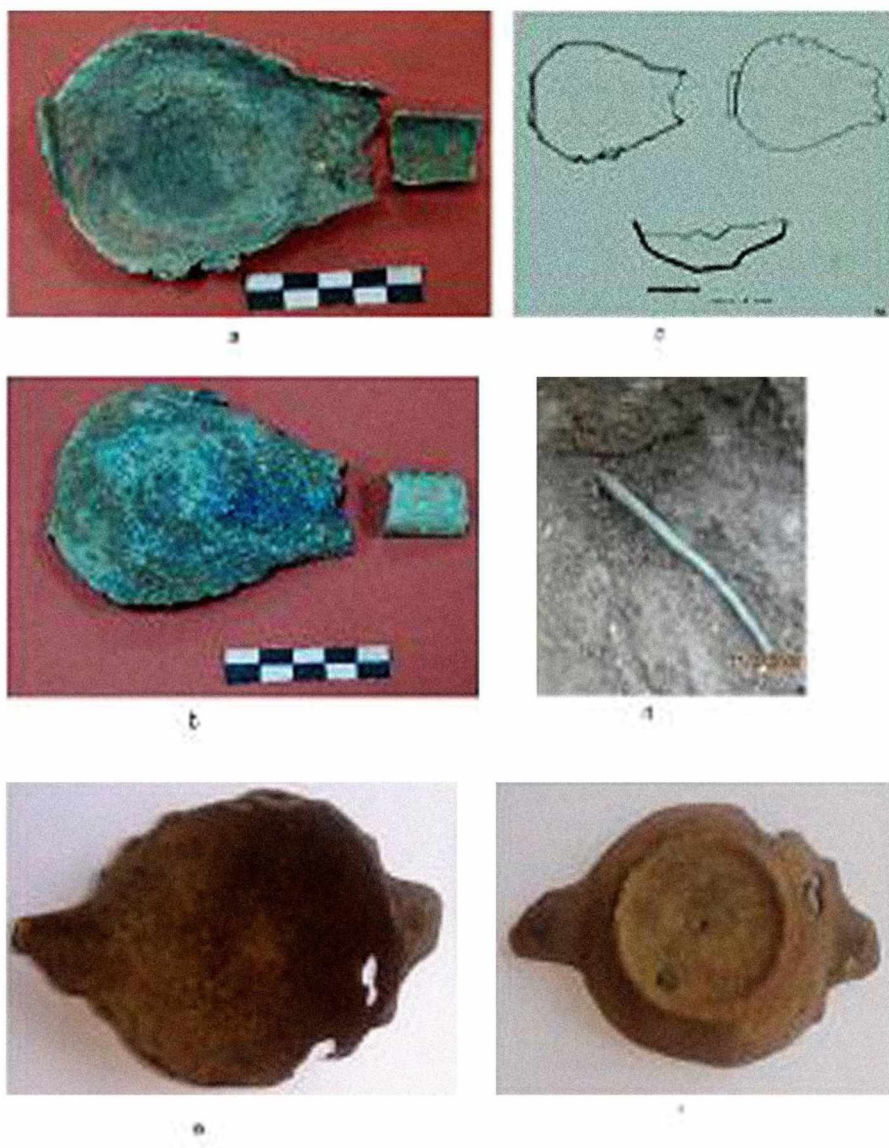


Plate 13. School of Homer. Metallurgical workshop, bronze and lead lamps.

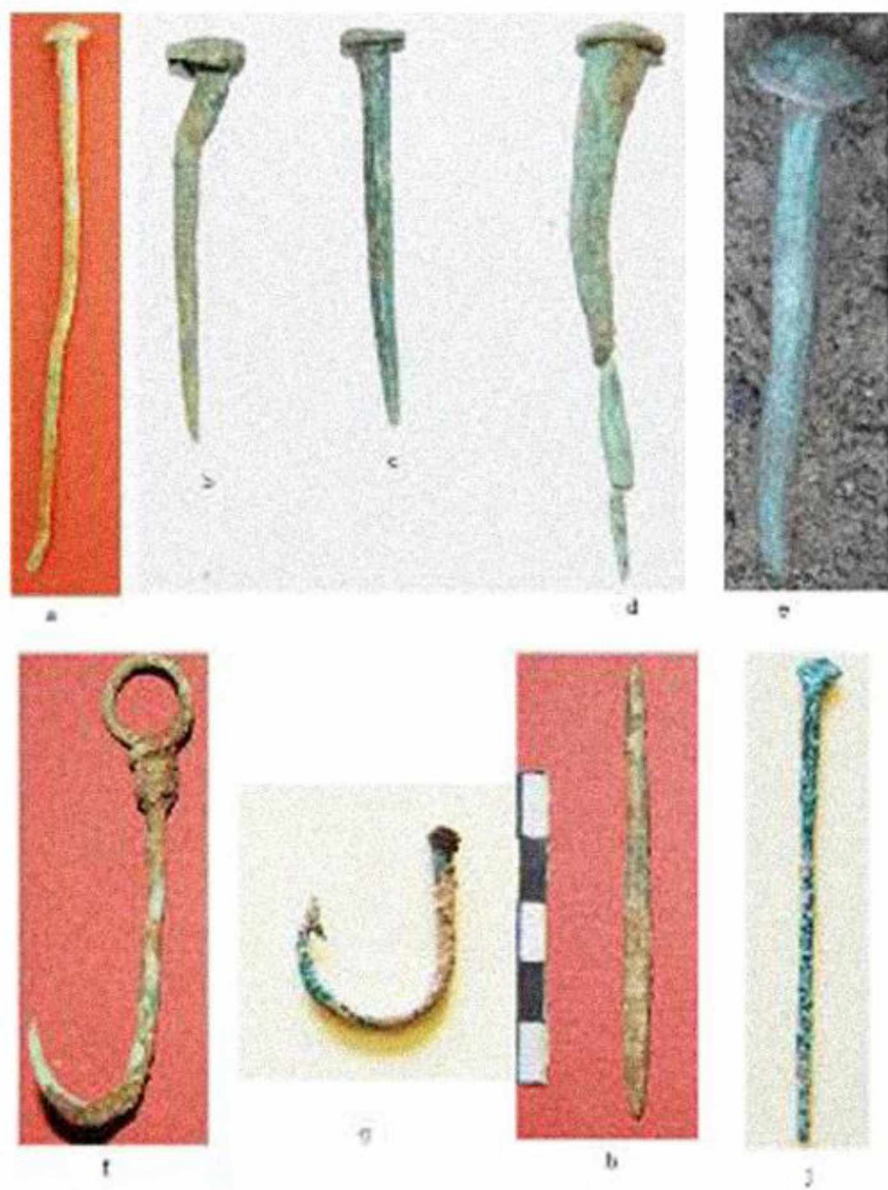


Plate 14. School of Homer. Several prehistoric finds (bronze and bonepins, nails, fish-hooks).



Plate 15. School of Homer, **a-c.** Prehistoric finds (handmade and Mycenaean pottery, **d.** broken stone vases, **e-f.** bronze spearhead and leaden rivet.



a

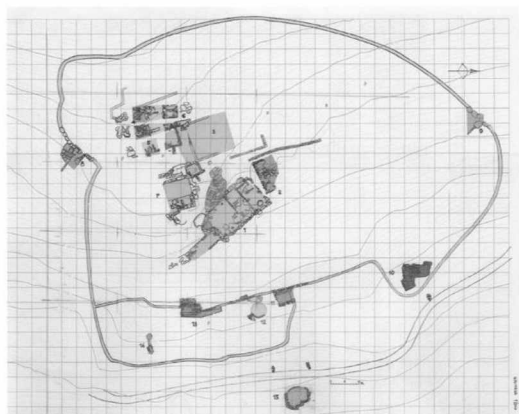


b

Plate 16. School of Homer. **a-f.** Bone prehistoric objects, **g.** clay seal and Minoan parallel.



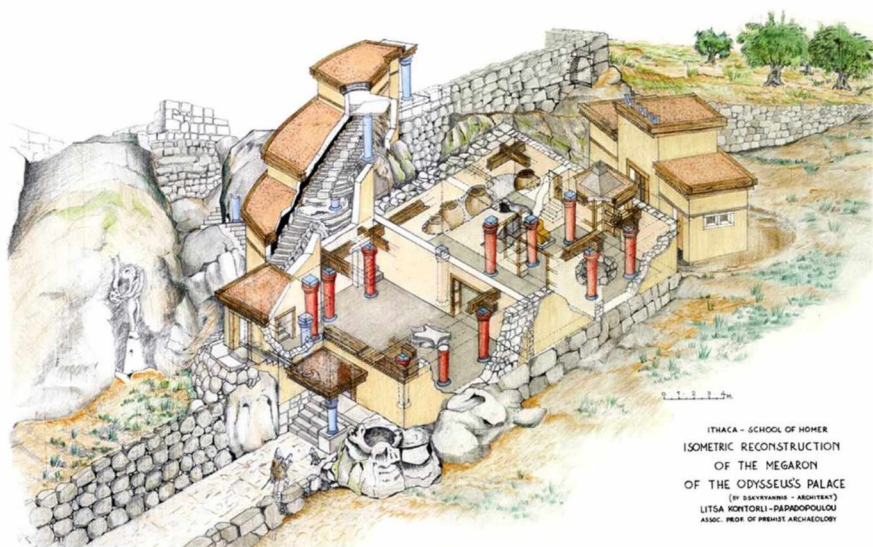
a



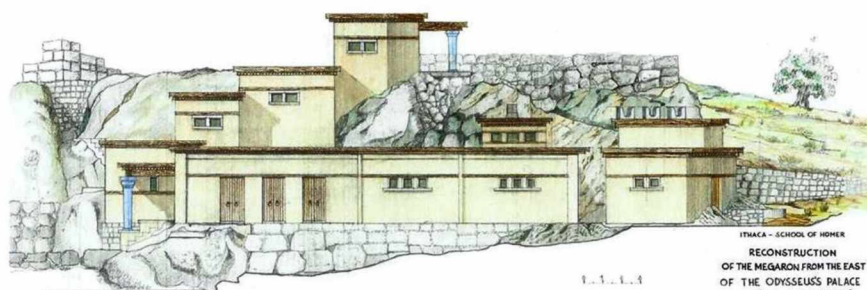
- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Megaron A | 9. North Gate |
| 2. Tripartite Temple | 10. Burial Monument |
| 3. Megaron B ? | 11. North east Gate |
| 4. Metallurgical Workshop | 12. Tholos ? |
| 5. Bathroom | 13. East Gate |
| 6. Store Rooms | 14. Underground Spring |
| 7. Hellenistic Tower | 15. Kykloteris |
| 8. Southwest Gate | |

b

Plate 17. School of Homer. Topographical plans of the Mycenaean acropolis.



a



b

Plate 18. School of Homer. Provisional reconstruction of the palace of Odysseus.