The Middle Helladic Large Building Complex at Kolonna.
A Preliminary View

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ABSTRACT
This paper introduces the so-called Large Building Complex at Kolonna, Aegina for the first time in a comprehensive way. The “Large Building Complex” is the thus far largest building found at Kolonna, except the fortification wall. The Building was constructed at the beginning of the Middle Helladic period (MH I/II) and remained in use until the beginning of the Late Helladic period (LH I/II). Within its long history, it underwent a series of changes and modifications. Size and dimensions as well as the rich finds from its interior clearly indicate that the “Large Building Complex” is the unambiguous residential building from Middle Helladic Kolonna.

INTRODUCTION
Jerry Rutter has always been willing to share knowledge and ideas about Aegean Bronze Age archaeology and also has always been interested to hear and read about new research at Kolonna. This volume is therefore a suitable place to summarize in a preliminary way some observations on the largest known MH building from this settlement, the so-called Large Building Complex.

Already in the 1980s J.B. Rutter and others pointed out the importance of the island of Aegina and its main settlement of Kolonna in the MH:

During these centuries the site of Kolonna boasted the most impressive fortifications in the Aegean world after those of Troy. The careful disentanglement by Walter and Felten of several stages of EH III and MH defensive systems at the site, together with their presentation of some of the ceramic evidence for dating them, has made abundantly clear how atypical Kolonna is for either a mainland Greek or a Cycladic site of the later third and early second millennia B.C. In addition to far-flung trade networks, monumental public architecture, and a system of marking ceramic vessels prior to firing that must be in some way connected with their surplus production of tablewares, storage vessels, and cooking pots for export, the Aeginetans at Kolonna can lay claim to the earliest known Aegean shaft grave, which furthermore may have held the earliest royal burial attested within the Helladic cultural sphere. The more we learn about Kolonna during the Middle Bronze Age, the more tempting it is to view certain novel and striking forms of behavior characteristic of the Shaft Grave period, such as the placement in tombs of large quantities of movable wealth in the form of imported ceramics, weaponry, and gold jewelry, as imitations by the mainlanders of customs learned not from the Minoans but rather from closer neighbors on Aegina with whom they were in far more frequent contact. (Rutter 1993, 776, 787; reprinted Rutter 2001)¹

Considering the importance of the settlement, it is perhaps not all that surprising that a “large building”, a “mansion”, or “palace-like” structure was to be discovered at the site of Kolonna. Indeed, parts of such a building, now christened the Large Building Complex (LBC), were excavated and recorded already by G. Welter before World War II, but it was neither mentioned nor recognized as an important structure in his brief reports. The LBC is situated in the center of

¹ See also Dickinson (1977, 33; 2010, 22–23) comments for Aegina being an atypical MH site, as well as the statement by W.-D. Niemeier (1995) regarding the role and importance of Aegina Kolonna and the summary by Gauß 2010.
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Fig. 1.1. Schematic plan of excavations.

Fig. 1.2–3. Large Building Complex phases 1 and 2 northwestern corner with older structures below.

Fig. 1.4–5. Large Building Complex foundations at northeastern corner (4) and southeastern end with door to the east.
the so-called inner prehistoric settlement and protected by a strong fortification wall (Fig. 1.1). After World War II, when the excavations at Kolonna were resumed under the direction of H. Walter and F. Felten, work was concentrated primarily on the fortification wall (Walter and Felten 1981). Nevertheless limited excavation also happened in the inner settlement (Walter and Felten 1981, 146 “Fundgruppe XX-VIII, XIX, XXX”). The LBC was first briefly mentioned in 1993 as a partially excavated “Großbau” (Walter and Weißhaar 1993, 297; see also “Haus des Königs” in Walter 2001, 128, 130–131, fig. 113). Shortly thereafter W.-D. Niemeier concluded, after having identified a Minoan mason’s mark at the site that “The Minoan ashlar block with double axe mason’s mark points to the existence of a probably monumental building with Minoan influences in the later Middle Helladic at Kolonna. Was it the Middle Bronze Age megalosstructure of which a very small part has been uncovered at the south side of the excavated area of the inner town?” (Niemeier 1995, 78). Since 1993 the Kolonna excavations resumed work under the direction of F. Felten and S. Hiller in the inner part of the settlement, partly explored already by G. Welter but left unpublished. In the course of excavations also parts of the LBC were investigated. The preliminary report of the 1993–1995 excavations refers in some detail to the LBC (Felten and Hiller 1996, 40–50). The large dimension (by then visible ca. 9 m in north-south and 8 m in east-west direction) and the use of large roughly dressed blocks for the lowermost courses for the foundations and of flat slabs for the upper courses were noted (Felten and Hiller 1996, 50; Fig. 1.2). Furthermore, the large stones used recalled the construction of the Kolonna VIII fortification wall, where similarly large blocks were used for the lowest courses (Felten and Hiller 1996, 40; for Kolonna VIII fortifications, see Walter and Felten 1981, 58–71 and in particular fig. 51 for front view of wall with large blocks).

From 2002 a new excavation in the center of the inner settlement focused on the MH stratigraphic sequence of the site (see annual reports Felten et al. 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010). As it turned out, the area chosen for excavation was almost identical with the main part of the LBC. Between 2002 and 2010 large parts of the LBC were uncovered, but it is clear that the building extends even farther to the east and west, where its remains are still covered by an upper 2 m thick sequence from Late Roman to Late Middle Bronze Age. When dealing with the LBC the following premises should be kept in mind: 1) Later building activities, such as the construction of a Mycenaean potter’s kiln, the Greek sanctuary, or the Late Roman settlement destroyed parts of the LBC and its associated stratigraphy. 2) The size and layout of the LBC make moderate differences in the depth of foundations and floor levels from one side of the building to the other very likely. Indeed, foundations and floor horizons of the southwestern part of the LBC are deeper than in the northern one, and we therefore assume a constant increase from north to south and east to west. 3) The LBC underwent a number of changes throughout its very long history. Thus far three major building phases can be differentiated (Fig. 2): LBC building phase 1 is characterized by the foundation of the building, phase 2 by a significant raising of the floor levels in its central part, together with the building of an extension towards the north and west. The LBC was abandoned or destroyed at the end of phase 2. LBC building phase 3 is characterized by rebuilding on a slightly modified and reduced plan on a higher level. 4) As a consequence of the various building phases resting on top of each other and later buildings covering part of the LBC, not all extensions, and in particular not the oldest parts of the LBC, could be excavated and investigated. 5) Future research may change interpretations and opinions expressed here.

**LBC PHASE 1 (LBC 1)**

LBC phase 1 in its central part is a long, rectangular building, oriented approximately north-south (Fig. 2). The minimum exterior dimensions are ca. 25 m in length and ca. 8 m in width, not including possible extensions towards north and east.

**Foundations**

The LBC 1 was not erected on virgin soil; its foundations partly rest on top of older structures of the final EH III and early MH settlement (on the foundations, see Kilian 1990; Küpper 1996, 52–53). This situation was observed in various trenches in 1995 and 2002–2010, and is most obvious in the area of an east-west oriented narrow street/alley (Fig. 1.2–3). It appears, however, that the builders worried that some of the older walls used as foundations were not stable enough to support the weight of the much larger and heavier walls of the LBC. Therefore, large limestone blocks were set against the interior side of the substructure, as seen at the northern and northeastern part of the foundations (Fig. 1.3) The blocks used here for this substructure are up to 1 m wider than the actual foundation wall. Other parts of the LBC foundations, such as the northwestern corner, do not rest on older walls. Here very large limestone blocks were used as the substructure, and the foundations of the LBC, also of large limestone blocks, rest on top of the exterior face of the substructure, which projects on the interior side of the foundations. Foundation trenches, a bit wider than the foundations, were thus far not observed (on the foundation trenches, see Kilian 1990, 100–102).

The situation at the southern end of the LBC is far more complicated and a final understanding has thus far not been reached (Fig. 3.4–5). Later building activities destroyed parts of the east-west oriented south wall of the LBC and...
especially the southwestern corner. The southeastern corner is situated beyond the younger LBC corner and therefore is not visible (Figs. 2 and 3.4). A number of floor horizons clearly run against an east-west oriented wall, leaving no doubt that this wall is clearly part of the LBC. However, this wall is peculiar, as it is not sitting on top of massive foundations of large blocks unearthed in the area of what is an assumed but destroyed southwestern corner (Fig. 3.4–5). Less deeply founded, the east-west wall was built slightly diagonally and immediately in front (at the assumed corner in the west) as well as on top of (at the east) the massive foundations (Fig. 3.5). Profiles of the strata where both walls overlap show that floor horizons associated with the LBC run over and on top of the uppermost preserved layer of the massive foundations. No floor horizon, neither belonging to the LBC nor one older than it, abuts against the massive foundations. A decisive explanation can thus far not be offered, as the situation at the lost southwestern corner clearly shows that the massive foundations are actually part of the LBC. Could it be that the layout of the southern rear end was altered after the foundations were laid?

**Interior**

It is presently possible to differentiate three succeeding rooms consisting of a ca. 14 m long central room with a considerably smaller room at each end. Narrow doors connect the rooms with each other. No bases for wooden posts or columns have been identified. The room on the north side has two additional doors, one to the north and one to the east (Fig. 1.4). The northern one may be an entrance, as a street originally connecting the northern gate and the inner settlement passed, but was blocked. This may have happened either simultaneously with the erection of the LBC phase 1 or later in phase 2 (for the blocking, see Felten and Hiller 1996, 71). A secure date of the blocking has yet not been reached, and a blocking within LBC phase 1 has a number of important implications: 1) LBC 1 was much larger than thought and its north-south extension would measure ca. 33 m. 2) An enormous storage vessel (Felten and Hiller 1996, 36, fig. 5), apparently not of local clay according to petrographic and chemical analysis (Gauß and Kiriati in press, 33, 39, 127, 188, 196, 349, no. KOL 266, figs. 106, 130) was found in situ and would then...
Fig. 3.1–2. Large Building Complex wall phase 3 sitting on top of phases 1 and 2 walls and on final floor of phase 2.

Fig. 3.2. Pottery assemblage in extension of phase 2.

Fig. 3.3. Missing southwestern corner of Large Building Complex and deep foundation wall.
be part of the LBC extension. The volume of the vessel to preserved height at the neck is 1.6 m³. Filled with cereals it could supply a small family of two to three adults and three to five children for a year on the basis of the calculation of a similarly large vessel from Late Bronze Age Kastanas (Hänse1989, 107, 106, fig. 33; see also Foxhall and Forbes 1982 for the annual consumption of cereals based on the analysis of Greek and Latin sources). One giant vessel is certainly not enough to assume large scale central/communal storage but sherd counts from all of the areas in the inner settlement excavated so far indicate that the giant pithos was not the only major storage vessel within the MH settlement of Kolonna.

The door to the east in the north room shows that LBC 1 presumably extended towards the east, unless this is a second entrance. This doorway is built over by a very large Byzantine cistern that covers at least parts of the assumed extension (Fig. 1.4).

The southern room is much more complicated in that the plan of a number of interior walls cannot yet be determined. Close to the assumed southeastern corner of LBC phase 1 the northern part of a door to the east was detected (Fig. 1.5). Its southern part and its assumed corner are built over by the southeastern corner of LBC phase 3 and could not be investigated. The door could either be another entrance or perhaps lead to another extension. A large flat slab of the lowermost course of the doorframe shows a series of very shallow circular impressions arranged in two parallel rows at its upper surface (Fig. 1.5). The limited preservation of the southernmost part of the LBC does not allow a clear determination as to whether the shallow cup-like impressions were actually visible or covered by the next course of stones. If visible, the stone with the cup-like impressions could be interpreted as a so-called “Schalenstein” or a ker-nos (see Buchholz 1981).

The LBC is limited to the south by another street that connects the southern gate with the inner part of the settlement and was in use from LH II (Walter and Felten 1981, 38, 53, 64, 81–82, 84; Felten et al. 2006, 36). Analogous with the LBC phase 3, where part of a threshold is preserved at the southern side, it might well be that the main entrance of the LBC phase 1 was also at its southern rear end.

**Date of Foundation, LBC Phase 1 Period of Use**

A number of beaten earth floors, up to 20 cm thick in total, can be associated with LBC phase 1. The sherd material found in between the floor layers dates the period of use to a later stage in ceramic phase H (see Gaß and Smetana 2007a for definition of ceramic phases). Furthermore, the pottery found below the lowest floor horizons associated with LBC phase 1 can also be assigned to a later stage of ceramic phase H and thus provide a terminus ad / post quem for the erection of the LBC. The construction of LBC phase 1 thus happened approximately at the same time or shortly after the first palaces were erected on Crete (for characterization of the Protopalatial period, see Manning 2008; Knappett 2008).

Importantly, in pottery phase H the first Cretan imports appear at Kolonna, dated to MM I (Gaß and Smetana 2007a, 62 with further references in n. 36, 38–40). Similar Cretan imports are known from Lerna phase VA and are associated with MM I or MM IA (Zerner 1978, 68–69, fig. 4, 97, fig. 10), as well as from the Royal Road South Fill at Knos-sos (Momigliano 2007, 100, 91, fig. 39, 5). The Lerna VA phase is synchronized with MH I (see in particular Maran 1992, 343, 348, 361).

**Absolute Date of Phases H and I (Construction and Period of Use)**

Bayesian modeling of C14 dates of samples from the vertical stratigraphic sequence, now preliminary published (Wild et al. 2010), provides boundary dates for the various ceramic phases. The boundary between ceramic phase G and H lies between 2150 and 2041 B.C., the boundary between ceramic phase H and I between 2049 and 1822 B.C., and the boundary between ceramic phases I and J between 1873 and 1702 B.C., all with 95.5% probability (Wild et al. 2010, 1020, table 3). C14 dating of human bone from MH graves at Lerna, Argos, and Asine by S. Voutsaki and her team indicate similar boundary dates for the relevant phases in the Argolid synchronous with Kolonna. Voutsaki et al. also tentatively suggest the following absolute chronology of the MH subphases in the Argolid: MH I: 2100–1900 B.C., MH II: 1900–1800? B.C., MH III 1800–1700 B.C. (Voutsaki et al. 2006; Voutsaki, Nijboer, and Zerner 2009; Voutsaki, Nijboer, and Zerner 2010; Voutsaki, Diez, and Nijboer 2009; note also O. Dickinson’s [2010, 22] remark on the thus far absence of a straightforward and generally accepted ceramic definition of MH I, II, and III). Regarding the absolute chronology of Northern Greece, see in particular the recently published C14 data from the stratigraphic sequence from Hagios Mamas/Olynthos (Hänse1 et al. in Hänse1 and Aslanis 2010, 301–381).

**LBC Phase 2 (LBC 2)**

The main feature of LBC phase 2 (Fig. 2) is the significant raising of the floor in its central part, 40 to 50 cm (Fig. 3.1). This floor sealed a thick fill layer containing masses of pottery including Minoan imports and locally produced Minoan type pottery (see below). Building phase 2 may also be characterized by an extension to the west, and possibly also to the north, if this had not already happened (see above,
LBC phase 1). The extension to the north significantly enlarged the building (north-south dimension ca. 33 m). The northern rear end is limited by a street leading to the northern gate (Walter and Felten 1981, 73, figs. 56–57; Fig. 1.1). At least two rooms, areas 2 and 1 in the 1996 excavation report are part of the extension (Felten and Hiller 1996, 33–40, 31–32, fig. 2), but the LBC may even have been larger, as suggested recently, thus extending up to the MH fortification wall (Gauß and Smetana 2010, 173, fig. 4).

An extension to the west is also certain. The southwestern corner of the building was unfortunately destroyed by a Late Roman/Byzantine pit and building activity (Fig. 3.4). Nevertheless excavations revealed that the east-west orientated south wall as well as the enigmatic foundations of the LBC do not stop at the assumed corner but continue towards the west and disappears beneath a Late Roman/Byzantine house wall (Fig. 3.4). Furthermore, a few east-west orientated walls and associated floor horizons in the area of the potter’s kiln and south of it abut against the north-south wall of the central part of the LBC, thus indicating also that the LBC extended towards the west (Felten et al. 2008, 75; Fig. 2). An number of high quality vessels including Cycladic stemmed and carinated bowls were found in a shallow shaft associated with the above floors (Fig. 3.3, Felten et al. 2008, 75, fig. 38.1–5). The size of the extension to the west is thus far unknown, as most of the area is still unexcavated and covered by Late Roman/Byzantine remains.

Inside the central room a series of superimposed floor horizons densely packed on top of each other was differentiated. We are able to distinguish up to eleven different floors here but soil micromorphology will certainly reveal an even higher number. Thus far we have only a few indications on the interior structure of the central part of the LBC in phase 2. No additional interior walls were found and it is likely that the old tripartite separation was still used. The final floor of LBC phase 2 shows clear indications that it was exposed to fire and some objects were found lying on the floor (see below; Fig. 3.1; 4.1–2). The measured levels of the final floor also show a steady inclination from south to north and from west to east.

**Date of Foundation, LBC Phase 2 Period of Use**

An up to 40 cm thick layer containing enormous quantities of pottery, animal bones, and loose and ashy earth was found accumulated on top of the final floor of LBC phase 1, sealed by the floor layers of LBC phase 2. Thus the fill layer is a terminus post quem for the end of LBC phase 1 but also a terminus ante quem for the construction of the LBC phase 2. The layer was most extensive in the central room of the LBC, while less clear in the southern room. The northern room provided no information, as it was dug before World War II.

The amount of pottery retrieved in this layer is astonishing, with numerous mendable vessels and fragments preserving the complete profile, among which is much Minoan pottery and “Minoanizing” pottery produced on Aegina (Gauß and Smetana 2007a; Gauß 2006). This context was used to define ceramic phase I (Gauß and Smetana 2007a, 63–65). The animal bones in this layer are similarly special, as they include (high status?) hunting prey such as red deer, boar, possibly an aurochs, and a lion (Forstenpointner et al. 2010, 738). A definitive interpretation of the pottery and bone assemblage from this fill awaits further study. However, the amount of high quality locally produced (including conical cups) and imported pottery, as well as the bone material, might point to feasting/dining, perhaps a provocative working hypothesis when considered in association with the contemporary shaft grave from Kolonna (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997; see also the review by Rutter 1999 and the remark by Dickinson 2010, 18). The pottery from the shaft grave is similarly dated to ceramic phase I, and thus provides a link between the grave and the final stages of LBC phase 1 and/or the construction of LBC phase 2.

The pottery found in between the different floor layers dates to ceramic phase I and J (for definitions, see Gauß and Smetana 2007b). A few vessels (Fig. 4.2) and a completely preserved bronze shoe-socketed spearhead (Fig. 4.1) were found lying on top of the uppermost floor horizon (Felten et al. 2008, 69, fig. 28). The spearhead is of a known type (cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 23–26; Felten et al. 2008, 68 n. 58–59; Kouphovouno: Lagia and Cavanagh 2010, 336, 345, fig. 2; Argos: Protonotariou-Deliali 2009, 419 Tomb Γ, Burial ΘΠ 13 [71]). The few in situ finds thus mark the first use of LBC phase 2 and associate it with ceramic phase J. Interestingly the use of Minoan type pottery produced on Aegina is thus far not attested in LBC phase 2 and in ceramic phase J. The final floor horizon and in situ pottery was sealed by a thick layer of partly smashed and perhaps fire-exposed mudbricks and stones, thus creating another thick fill layer. The absolute date of phases I and J (construction and period of use) is now established by the recently published Kolonna C14 sequence. The boundary between ceramic phase H and I is 2049–1822 B.C. and the boundary between ceramic phases I and J 1873–1702 B.C., all with 95.5% probability (Wild et al. 2010, 1020, table 3).

**LBC Phase 3 (LBC 3)**

The reasons why LBC phase 2 went out of use are yet not clear. The uppermost floor was exposed to fire and a few objects were found in situ (see above; Fig. 3.1). Parts of the walls on the exterior eastern side also showed traces of burning but these are the only signs of destruction. After its abandonment the LBC phase 2 was partly demolished and a new building, the LBC phase 3, was built directly
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Fig. 4.1. Shoe-socket spearhead found in situ on final floor of Large Building Complex phase 2.

Fig. 4.2. Pottery and lid of Minoan stone vessel from final floor phase 2 and mudbrick layer above.

over it, repeating the same general plan but with a few significant changes (Fig. 3.1–2). The most interesting is that LBC phase 3 is not erected on top of the walls of its predecessor, that is it lacks the supporting substructure of previous buildings. The foundations of the LBC phase 3 rest directly on the top floor of its predecessor as it appears that the builders took advantage of the rather even and regular surface (Fig. 3.1). The plan of LBC phase 3 is very similar to its predecessor; however, its walls either abut against the interior side of LBC phase 2 or are set parallel to them. At the eastern side the new wall is built diagonal to the older one (Fig. 3.2), thus creating an approximately 5 m long zone of overlap where the old wall disappears and reappears on the interior side of the new wall (Fig. 2). The reason for this strange design is unclear and requires further study and explanation.

The LBC phase 3 seems to be a long rectangular building, measuring ca. 23 m north-south and ca. 7 m east-west, and thus far we have no unambiguous traces of extensions. The interior structure of the building is unclear because of later building activities and pre-World War II excavations. The southern end of the LBC was clearly limited by the old east-west street; its walking surfaces were constantly raised and finally covered the demolished walls of LBc phase 2. Flat stones, presumably the remains of the threshold, were identified in the east-west wall of LBC phase 3, and finally covered the demolished walls of LBC phase 2. Flat stones, presumably the remains of the threshold, were identified in the east-west wall of LBC phase 3, but unfortunately most of this wall was destroyed by a Late Roman/Byzantine bothros that covered most of the southern room. Therefore, only limited stratigraphic information is available in this part for the phase 3 building. The southern and central room of the LBC phase 3 is connected with a narrow door, which again is partly destroyed by a well, though parts of the threshold and door are still visible.

At the northern half of the LBC the situation is likewise difficult to understand, because of later building activity in LH III A (a potter’s kiln) and the Hellenistic and Late Roman/Byzantine periods, as well as early excavations. Recent excavations have revealed two north-south oriented walls abutting the LBC phase 3 wall, but their association with the building is ambiguous, as they rest on top of the highest floor horizons and could thus be later additions.

**Date of Foundation, LBC Phase 3 Period of Use**

As mentioned above (see LBC phase 2) a thick layer of broken and dissolved smashed mudbricks, stones, and pottery was found on top of the final LBC phase 2 floor. Thus the finds from the mudbrick fill layer give a terminus post quem for the end of LBC phase 2 and a terminus ante quem for the construction of the LBC phase 3.

The amount of pottery retrieved in the fill layer is relatively small, also in comparison to previous fill layers. No locally produced Minoan type pottery and relatively few Minoan imports have been identified. A lid of a Minoan stone vase, however, was found in the fill (Fig. 4.2). It represents the first stratified evidence for Minoan stone vessels at Kolonna so far recovered, as all the other examples were found before World War II and lack contextual information (Feltén et al. 2009, 101 n. 47). The pottery from within the mudbrick fill layer is one of the best deposits for the final stages of MH pottery development at Kolonna and characterizes ceramic phase J (Gauß and Smetana 2007a, 65).

A series of floor horizons associated with LBC phase 3 were identified in particular in the southern end and largely undisturbed part of the central room. The northern end, however, is much disturbed by later building activity and early
Fig. 4.3. Pottery found on floor of Large Building Complex phase 3.

Fig. 4.4–5. Pottery found on floor of Large Building Complex phase 3; tripod cooking pot.
excavations. One of the floor horizons in the southern end contained a significant deposit of LH I pottery, used to define ceramic phase K (Gauß and Smetana 2007a, 65). This deposit is closely comparable and thus contemporary with the fill of the shaft graves at Lerna (Lindblom 2007; Lindblom forthcoming), which, by virtue of the Lerna parallels, also links this level with the volcanic destruction level at Thera (Lindblom forthcoming; Lindblom and Manning in press). The floor horizons found on top of this deposit by comparison unfortunately contain fewer and less diagnostic sherds. Several partly preserved vessels were nevertheless found lying on these floors, including examples of solidly painted and burnished stemmed Aeginetan bowls and Aeginetan tripod cooking jars (Fig. 4.3–5). All this clearly indicates that the LBC phase 3 was in use throughout LH I and possibly also at the beginning of LH II (ceramic phase L). The construction of a LH IIIA potter’s kiln marks the ultimate end of the LBC, because the kiln is constructed directly on top of its walls (for the kiln, see Gauß 2007). The foundations of the kiln cut deeply into the LBC layers and unfortunately destroyed parts of the stratigraphic sequence. It is, therefore, unknown whether or not the top preserved floor horizon of LBC phase 3 was the final one.

Whereas during most of its long history, the LBC was a unique building in MH terms, things changed at the beginning of the LBA. Other previously identified large scale and important buildings, such as the LH II Mansion I at the Menelaion (Catling 2009; Wright 2008, 246–247); the LH I building at Tsoungiza (Wright 2008, pl. 10.2); the LH “megaron” at Aigion (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010); the assumed predecessor of the palace of Pylos (Wright 2008, 246, 250); on the LH I to LH II structures, see also Nelson 2001, 195–200), and others (Wright 2008, 248–250 with references), clearly testify to the appearance of new regional centers (“polities” according to Wright 2008, 245) in the Peloponnese and in central Greece (see, in general, Wright 2008, 238–252 and Zavadil 2010).

Absolute Date of Phases J and K (Construction and Period of Use)

The boundary between ceramic phase I and J is according to the Kolonna C14 1871–1702 B.C. and the boundary between ceramic phases J and K 1742–1623 B.C., all with 95.5% probability (Wild et al. 2010, 1020, table 3). The boundary dates to the next ceramic phase L are only weakly defined, as only one C14 sample was thus far analyzed (Wild et al. 2010, 1019, 1020, table 3). More samples for analysis are therefore clearly needed in order to verify or reject the preliminary assumption that the Kolonna data “[…] very tentatively […]” support the scientifically established date of the volcanic destruction layer at Thera (Wild et al. 2010, 1019). With regard to the absolute date of LH I, see now in particular the contribution of Lindblom and Manning in this volume and furthermore the C14 analysis from the stratigraphic sequence of Hagios Mamas/prehistoric Olynthos (Hän sel et al. in Hän sel and Aslanis 2010, 301–381).

SUMMARY AND FURTHER THOUGHTS

The foundation of the Large Building Complex in the early MH was of major importance for the settlement at Kolonna, in that for the first time an unambiguous residential building, perhaps what we might call a mansion, is attested at the site. Perhaps not surprisingly, the foundation of the mansion is approximately contemporary with the first appearance of Minoan imports at Kolonna and presumably its construction occurred at about the same time or soon after the beginning of the first palaces on Minoan Crete. Huge stone blocks were used for the foundations of this LBC and, as it seems, also for the contemporary fortification walls. It would add to our understanding of labor organization to know exactly where those blocks came from in the nearby vicinity and how much manpower was needed to build the mansion. Extensions to the north, east, and perhaps even to the west are possible, but need further investigation. A fascinating aspect of the material culture evidence, namely the local production of Minoan type pottery, is associated with this structure, as it seems to occur exclusively with the first phase of the LBC.

The foundation of the second building in the late MH does not display major changes in its central plan. However, the building was extended in particular to the west. A series of superimposed floor horizons indicates that the building was renewed a number of times, thus perhaps implying that it had a rather long life. The top floor was exposed to fire and a few objects, including a shoe-socketed spearhead, were found lying on the floor. The building may have suffered destruction by fire and gone out of use. Thus far there are no buildings known in MH Peloponnese and central Greece that could compete or even compare with the LBC at Kolonna.

The third building phase covers the latest part of the MH and the early LBA and is characterized by the erection of a new building on a reduced plan. The walls of this new structure do not rest on older walls but on the final floor of the second phase. The third building at Kolonna, although having a unique history of its own, is no longer unique, as other regional centers make their appearance with notable edifices in the Peloponnese and central Greece.

The existence of the Large Building Complex throughout almost the entire MH and the beginning of the LBA emphasizes once more the importance of the Kolonna settlement and the island of Aegina.
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