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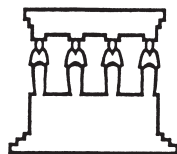
INVESTIGATIONS IN THE SANCTUARY OF ATHENA ALEA 1990–94 AND 2004

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Knut Ødegård: EXCAVATION IN SQUARES C9-C10 AND D9-D10 IN 1993

The following text is the report on the excavation in the grid squares C9-C10 and D9-D10 during the Norwegian excavations in the sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea in July and August 1993. The excavation included the area between $x = 10.00$ to 20.00 and $y = 43.00$ to 48.00 m in the grid of the excavation, a rectangular area of 5×10 m. In the documentation the two squares have been kept separated, but in this report the aim is to give a general impression of the stratigraphical situation in this northern part of the sanctuary. In this area excavations were only conducted in the summer of 1993, since the author could not resume the excavation for the last season of the programme, in 1994, for personal reasons. Generally speaking, the stratigraphical situation in the far northern end of the excavation is not very different from that encountered further south, with a few important exceptions. In this report, the emphasis will be on the particular features encountered in C9-C10 and D9-D10. For this reason, and because of constraints of space in the present publication, only a brief outline of the situation in this sector will be provided.

In both squares topsoil and contexts associated with modern houses had been removed before excavation started in July 1993. In D9-D10, excavation had been conducted by a team directed by Dr Jean-Marc Luce in the summer of 1990,¹ but apart from two contexts excavated in the last days of that season (see below), all contexts were then classified as modern and connected with a house, the remains of which were clearly visible in the summer 1993 as a long, slightly slanted wall along the eastern section of D8-D10. In C9-C10 the situation was different, since the main part of the presumed modern layers had been removed mechanically before the start of excavations in 1992. Further removal of superficial layers was completed there during the 1992 season.

In both squares excavation started in July 1993 in what was presumed to be intact stratigraphy. Even though this was certainly an advantage in many ways, in C9-C10 it was difficult to establish precisely the stratigraphical sequence of several modern cuts into the ancient layers, since it was impossible to know from which level they had been cut.

¹ See the introduction to the volume (Østby), 2, for a short account of this excavation.

The modern layers

In both squares several modern cuts were identified. These were almost invariably filled with the same material: small marble blocks, a great quantity of tile fragments, which were almost always in a dark grey, sandy soil matrix with occasional patches of brownish soil containing organic material. In C9-C10 three different modern cuts were noted. (*Figs 1, 3–6, 8*) Two such cuts (C9-C10/06 and /16) were of circular shape and rather shallow. Their function is uncertain, especially for the first one, which was extremely regular, a feature not usually encountered in pits for refuse, for instance. While both these cuts were small and restricted, a much larger cut (C9-C10/12) was found in the eastern part of C9-C10. This cut continued into D9-D10 (in this square it was called D9-D10/04) and unfortunately formed a deep interruption in the stratigraphy between the two squares. In only a few centimetres in the southern part of the two squares enough intact stratigraphy was preserved to establish a correlation between the archaeological contexts in C9-C10 and D9-D10. The exact nature of this very large cut is not entirely certain, but given its size and the fact that the bottom was almost level, a function as a cellar for the modern house excavated by J.-M. Luce in 1990 is a reasonable hypothesis.

Catalogued material:

C9-C10/04: bronze sheet **BrN-Sh 32:** fragment of a metope relief from the Classical temple **ArchN-MT 14.**

Post-Classical contexts

Contexts that were probably related to post-Classical activity in the sanctuary were present only in C9-C10, since the presumably equivalent contexts in D9-D10 had either been disturbed by modern intervention or had been removed by the excavation in 1990. Thick alluvial silt deposits were observed in the western section of this square (*Fig. 2*), and parts of these were also present on the surface in the southern half of C9-C10 when the excavation started. This silt is probably too deep to have been deposited only on one occasion, and should rather be explained by a series of floods. Similar deposits are

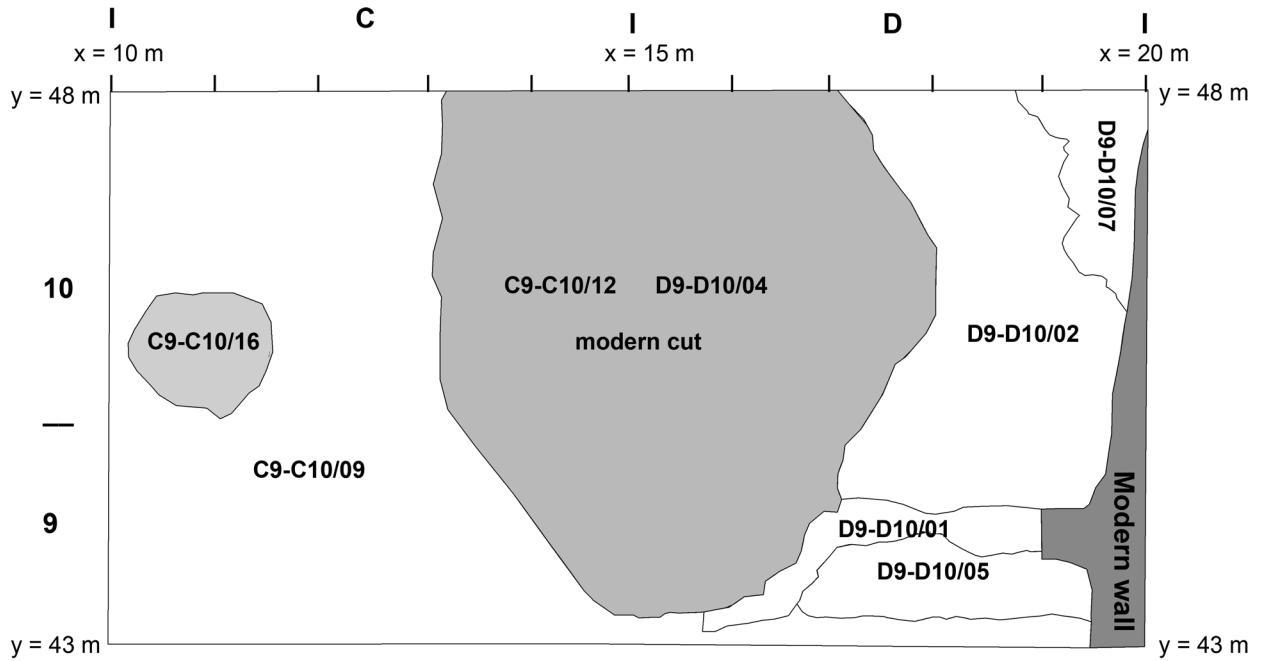


Figure 1. Plan of the upper layers in the excavation area in C9-C10 and D9-D10. (Drawing: Ødegård and D. Hill)

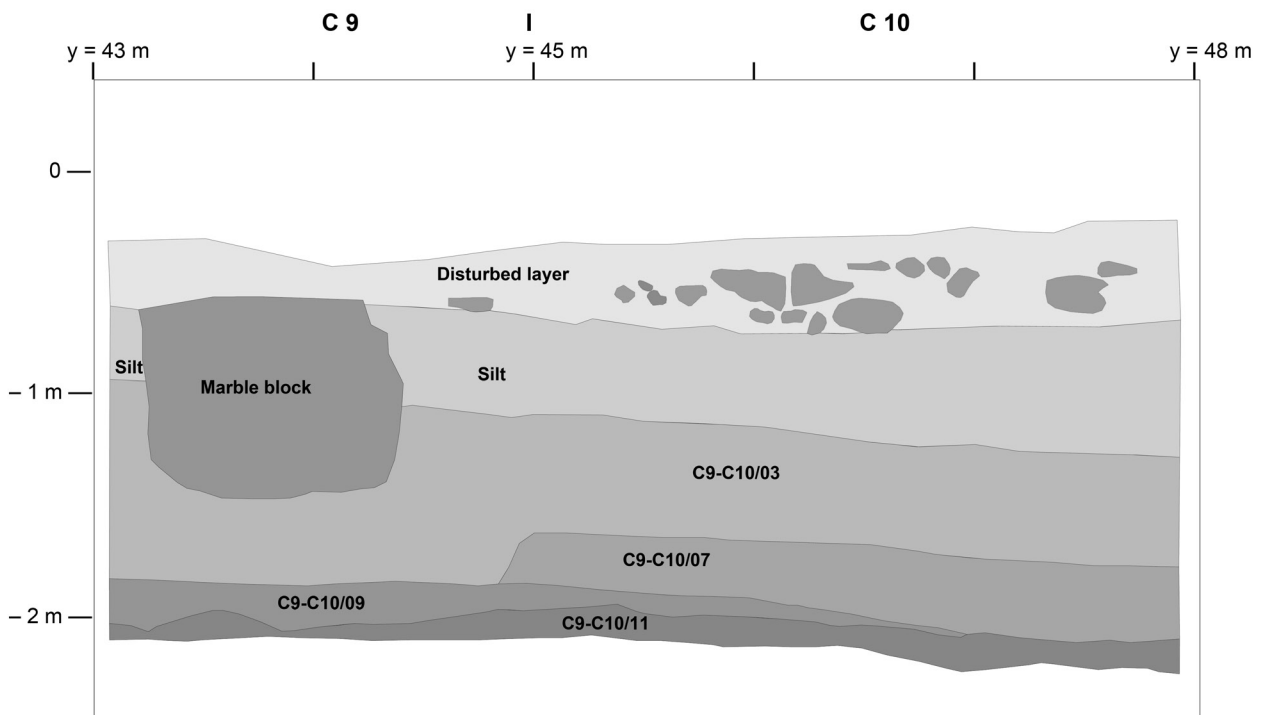


Figure 2. Section of the western trench wall in squares C9-C10, between $x = 43$ and 48 m. (Drawing: Ødegård and D. Hill)

amply documented elsewhere in the sanctuary,² and it will suffice here to mention only some aspects of the situation in C9-C10. First of all, the deposits seem to be thicker than in the other parts where they have been observed. The average thickness was around 0.60 m, increasing to

almost 1 m in the south-western corner, where, however, the stratigraphical situation is different from the rest of the square (see below). The top level of these deposits also slopes considerably towards the north, from ca. -0.90 m below the zero level of the excavation in the south to about -1.30 m in the north. This sloping tendency towards the north can furthermore be distinguished in all

² See sections **iii** (Luce), 47–9 (“Phase 4”) and **vi** (Tarditi), 103–4.

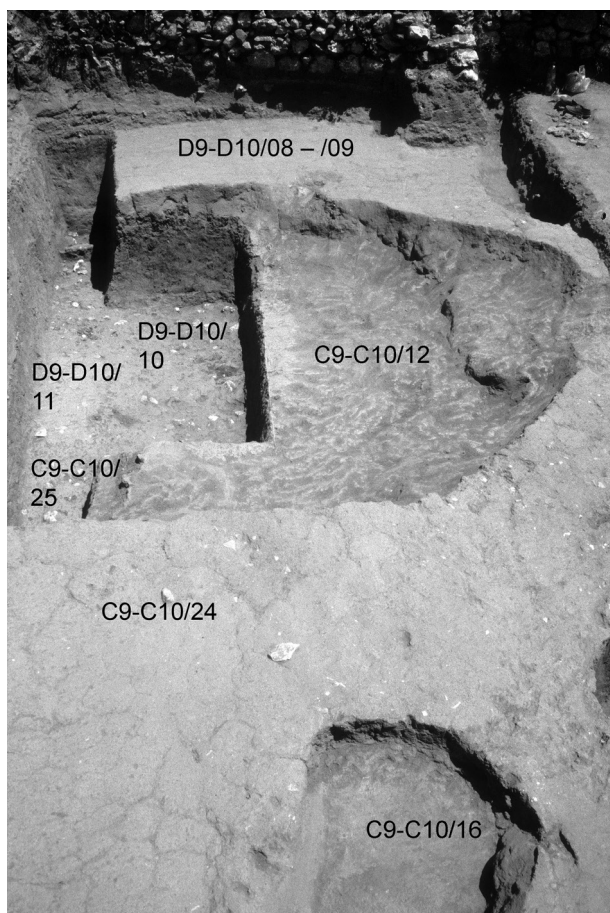


Figure 3. General view of the excavated area in C9-C10 and D9-D10 at the end of the excavation, seen from the west. In the foreground, the modern cut C9-C10/16 and the mud-brick surface C9-C10/24; in the background, the large cutting C9-C10/12 and the soundings C9-C10/25 and D9-D10/10 and /11 in the upper left corner. (Photo: E. Østby)

post-Achaic layers in C9-C10 (see also further below); it is evident in the section. (Fig. 2) This slope also explains why the deposits in C9-C10 are thicker than those further south in the sanctuary; during floods the areas at the deepest levels would have been more affected by sedimentation. The deposits excavated in C9-C10 were completely without archaeological material, and no date for these floods can therefore be proposed. It is, however, highly likely that they should be dated after the Early Medieval period, since they cover a context (C9-C10/13) probably related to the destruction of the Late Classical temple and the exploitation of its marble blocks for building material.³

Below the layers of sediments a more complex situation appeared. In the south-western corner of C9-C10, a cut (C9-C10/14) was identified which went through the possible Roman (?) context C9-C10/07 and even into the surface of the next layer, composed almost exclusively of marble chips (C9-C10/09). On this surface, small marble fragments resting on a very thin layer of yellowish silt with patches

of grey sand had been deposited. Several of the marble fragments showed evident signs of being worked, by chisel marks or smoothed surfaces. None of the fragments could be securely connected to the Late Classical temple, but nonetheless it seems convincing that they are connected with destructive activity when the sanctuary was no longer being used for religious purposes. This activity could be the cause of the cut C9-C10/14. A plausible explanation would be that the cut was made in order to reach a marble block and that the thin layer of silt and sand and the small blocks of marble are connected with the quarrying of the block. A similar situation has been documented in C6-C7.⁴

A possible Roman context?

In most of C9-C10, underneath the sediment layers, a context (C9-C10/07) characterized by yellowish-brown silt with some undiagnostic pottery fragments and several small calcareous stones and tiny pieces of burnt marble, was found. The surface of this context had probably been cut in modern times in most of the square, a situation that was, unfortunately, impossible to document properly since these modern layers had been almost completely removed by machines before the excavation started. In a small area towards the western section, however, a surface of white stones was preserved that was quite distinct from the sediment layers above it. This context unfortunately yielded only small amounts of archaeological material, including a very worn Late Classical bronze coin (Co 5),⁵ but none of the other objects was diagnostic. Bronze objects from earlier periods are very common even in modern contexts at Tegea, and this may have been the case with the coin as well. The stratigraphy, however, provides some elements for dating. The context covers a layer of marble chips discussed below (C9-C10/09), which was probably deposited in the Late Classical or Early Hellenistic period. It is, on the other hand, cut by activity probably connected with the destruction of the temple and the subsequent exploitation of the marble for building material (C9-C10/13 and /14), perhaps to be dated to the Early Medieval period, as argued above. From this evidence, a date for C9-C10/07 in the Late Hellenistic to Late Roman period is indicated, although this can at the moment only be conjecture.

Catalogued material:

C9-C10/07: bronze pendant **BrN-Pd 4**; 4th c. bronze coin from Mantinea, **Co 5**.

Late Classical/Early Hellenistic contexts: the layer with marble chips

Below C9-C10/07 a layer characterized by densely packed, small marble chips was present almost all over

³ This situation is observed in other parts of the northern sector, and is discussed in section **iii** (Luce), 49–50 (“Phase 5”).

⁴ See last note.

⁵ See section **xiii** (Ingvaldsen), 282.

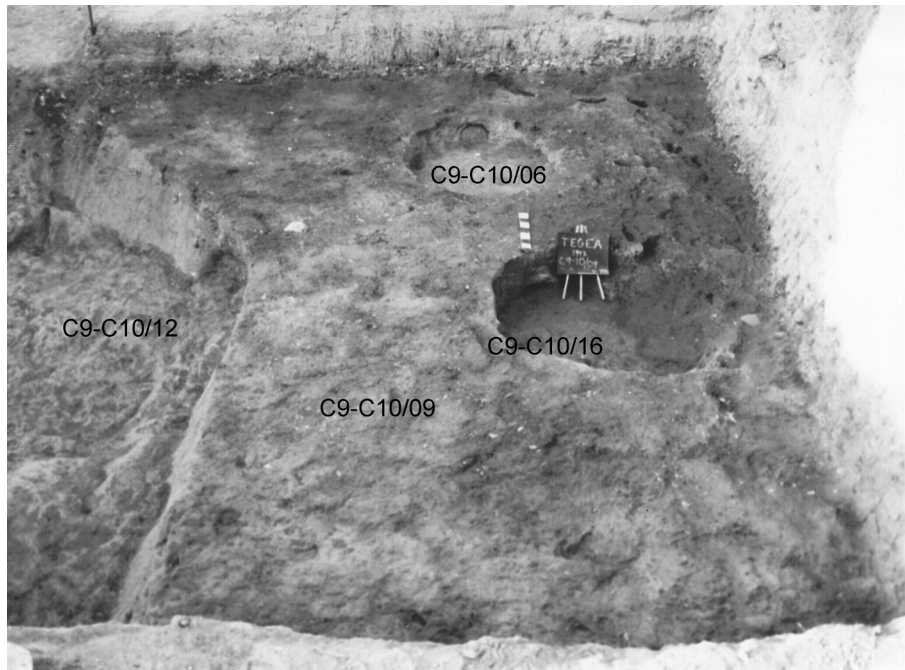


Figure 4. The surface C9-C10/09 seen from the north, with the modern cuttings C9-C10/16 and /06; to the left, the large cutting C9-C10/12. (Photo: Ødegård)

C9-C10, except for the far northern part, where it seemed to taper and end. This layer was present in D9-D10 too, but here an area of ca. 2 × 2 m had been excavated by J.-M. Luce in 1990. North of this excavated part this layer was not found; it could have tapered off and ended, but it is perhaps more likely that it had been disturbed by modern activity, which seems to have gone deeper in this part of the square than in the southern part. What remained in D9-D10 was a narrow part between the area excavated in 1990 and the modern cut D9-D10/06, which nonetheless was enough to connect it to its equivalent in C9-C10. The interpretation of this context (C9-C10/09 and D9-D10/01) is based on the evidence from C9-C10. (Figs 1, 2, 4)

Similar contexts have been excavated in other parts of the northern sector and have been associated with the building of the Late Classical temple.⁶ In C9-C10 and D9-D10, however, some features were encountered that have not been reported elsewhere. First of all, the marble chips were extremely small and densely packed, with barely any soil at all. Secondly, a great amount of the chips were very chalky on the surface and presented evidence for change in the structure of the stone. This is most likely the result either of exposure to high temperature or simply of prolonged exposure to air and sun, a suggestion perhaps also supported by the datable finds from the context (see the catalogue below). It should be noted that similar, although not identical, features have been encountered in equivalent contexts also in the other sectors of the excavation. In C9-C10, this marble chip layer was far thinner than its counterparts in the other sectors of the

sanctuary and, as remarked above, it seems to taper off and end in the northern part of the square, somewhere near $y = 47.00$ m. (See Fig. 2) If this layer was deposited for leveling purposes, as has been proposed for it in the other sectors,⁷ this could perhaps indicate that such levelling was mainly carried out in the area closer to the temple, where the differences in level between the temple and the surrounding surface were more accentuated. It is also reasonable to suppose that construction debris, which is presumed to have provided most of the material for these layers, would be more concentrated near the actual work-site and thinner towards the edges of the temenos. The small size of the marble chips towards the north is also indicative in this respect.

This context, C9-C10/09 with its counterpart D9-D10/01, can be dated rather securely, not only because of its possible association with the building of the temple, but also because of the sherds of black-glazed pottery of 4th century B.C. date (for instance **CN-CL 39** and **CN-HR 15**) which it contained. Another, but less useful element for dating is the Athenian obol **Co 1**, which was found in the south-western corner of C9-C10 and cautiously dated to the late 5th century B.C.,⁸ but this coin is of silver and may have circulated for a long time before ending up in this context. The fact that the surface of this layer was exposed for some time is also evident from the latest finds, which date to the early 3rd century B.C. (the sherds **CN-HR 9, 14**).

⁶ See section **iv** (Tarditi), 59–64.

⁷ See section **iv** (Tarditi), 61 and 64 for this explanation.

⁸ See section **xiii** (Ingvaldsen), 281.

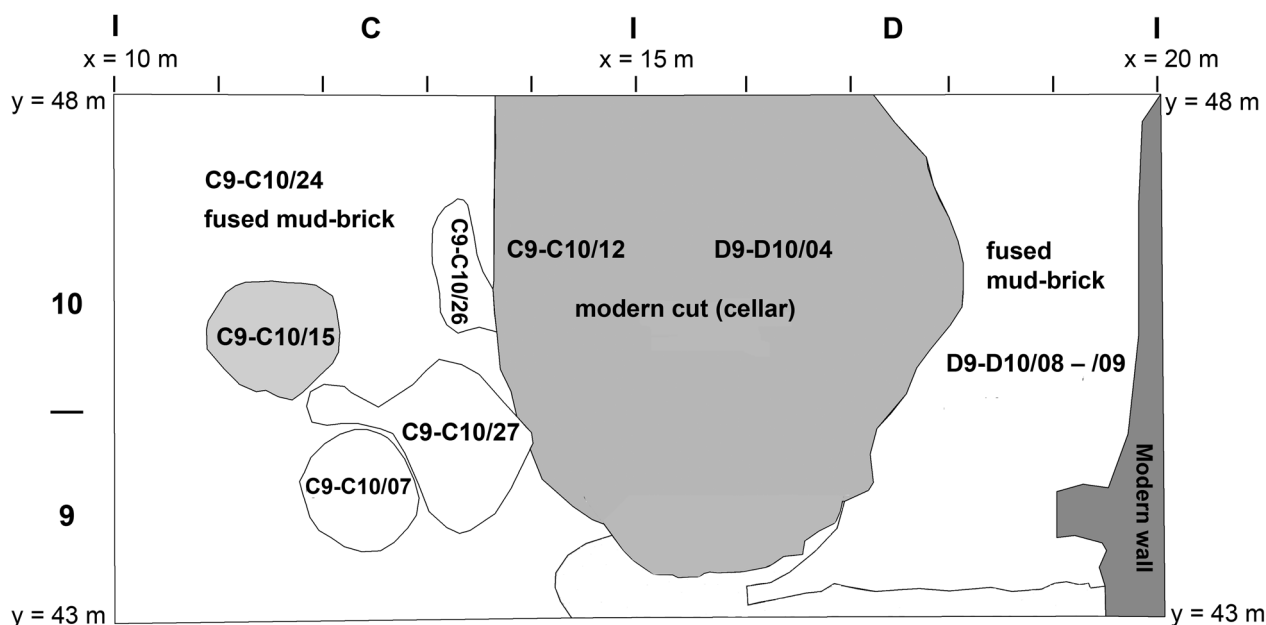


Figure 5. Plan of the lower layers in the excavation area in C9-C10 and D9-D10. (Drawing: Ødegård and D. Hill)

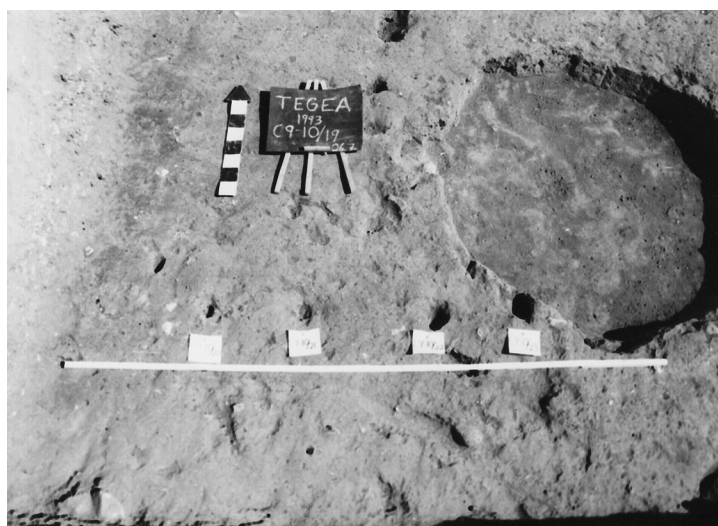


Figure 6. Close-up photo of the surface C9-C10/19, with the modern cut C9-C10/06 to the right. The small holes with white labels (C9-C10/20 – /23) are probably root holes. (Photo: Ødegård)

Catalogued material:

C9-C10/09: sherds: CN-CI 39; CN-HR 9, 14, 15; miniature vase CN-MinIII 24. Bronze pin BrN-P 10, bronze ring BrN-R 52, bronze pendant BrN-Pd 8; lead ring LdN 47; glass bead GIN 1; Attic obol Co 1.

C9-C10/10: bronze arrow BrN-Ar 2; terracotta figurine TcN 13; stone bladelet StN 4.

D9-D10/01: no catalogued material.

The Archaic layers

Immediately below the context with the marble chips (C9-C10/09 and D9-D10/01 – /02), a different stratigraphical situation appeared in the two squares. (See the

section and the plan, Figs 2 and 5) In C9-C10, a layer of brownish silt with some pottery, bronze objects and small stones appeared (C9-C10/11 and /19). There was some evidence for root activity in this layer, especially in the south-west corner of the square, which was at first erroneously associated with possible postholes (C9-C10/20 – /23). (Fig. 6) Towards the bottom of C9-C10/19, two distinct areas appeared in the central part of the square. One (C9-C10/27) was distinguished by a dense concentration of white stones and several iron fragments, as well as other metal objects and pottery. The other (C9-C10/26) was much smaller and was characterized by a large number of very small pieces of pottery, almost as if they were crushed on the spot. These two areas did not



Figure 7. Close-up photo of the mud-brick surface D9-D10/08 - /09. (Photo: E. Østby)

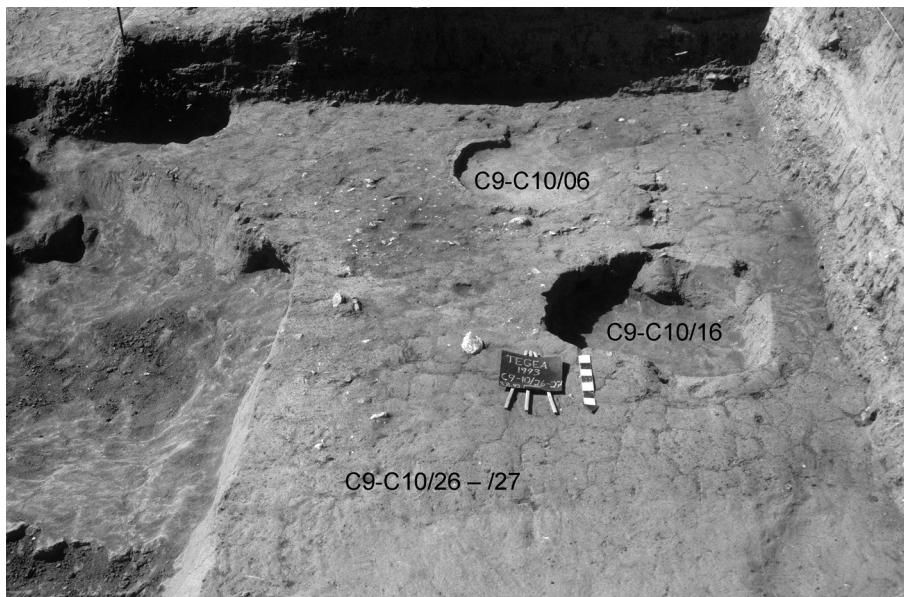


Figure 8. The western part of the excavation trench seen from the north, with the two modern pits C9-C10/16 and /06, and in front of them the surface of the mud-brick construction, C9-C10/26 - /27. (Photo: E. Østby)

connect, but both may have been separated by the modern cuts C9-C10/06 and /16 (the cuts for the two circular pits C9-C10/05 and /15) and C9-C10/12 (the large cut between C9-C10 and D9-D10). Apart from the small area C9-C10/26, no clear surfaces were distinguished. The latest material from all these contexts in C9-C10 points to a date in the 4th century B.C., although earlier material was also present, mainly in C9-C10/11. The processes behind the deposition of these layers are not at all clear. There are few, if any, elements that could point to any specific activity exactly at the spot, and it is definitely a possibility that the soil of these layers and its contents were brought from a different context and deposited here.

Underneath these contexts, a layer very similar in composition and appearance to D9-D10/08, which is proba-

bly a collapsed mud-brick wall, appeared. It was, however, not possible to examine this situation more closely.

In D9-D10, the layer D9-D10/02 below the marble chips layer D9-D10/01 had already been excavated partly by Dr Luce in 1990 (as units D9-D10/24 - /26). An important component of the soil in this layer was some small bone fragments, completely calcified – probably because they had been burnt at a high temperature. Since numerous votive offerings were also found in this context, Dr Luce proposed in his documentation from 1990 that this was a dump of discarded material from offerings in the sanctuary. In the small area excavated in 1993 in the northern part of D9-D10, no new elements appeared that would contradict this interpretation. The proposed date of both layers is the Late Archaic period.

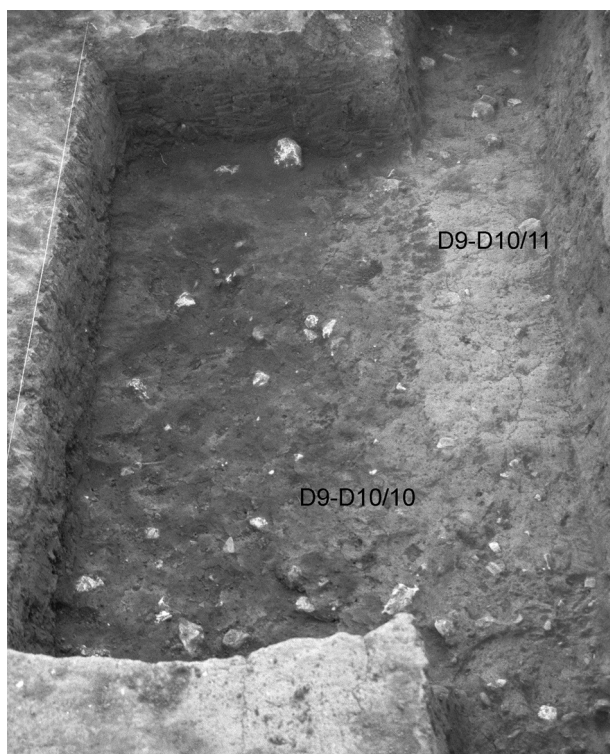


Figure 9. The layer with stones D9-D10/10, with the concentration of pottery D9-D10/11 in the background. (Photo: E. Østby)

The most important feature excavated in 1993 in this square appeared immediately under D9-D10/02. In a layer of very pure, brownish and clayey silt, inclusions of grey clay appeared in what seemed like a grid pattern (D9-D10/08 – /09). When cleaned, it became clear that these lines of grey clay enclosed mud-bricks of irregular shape. (Fig. 7) Since the area in question was far too wide (about 2 m) to be understood as a standing mud-brick wall of normal size, and since the mud-bricks were rather irregular in shape, the structure is better interpreted as a collapsed mud-brick structure. In a narrow area running exactly north–south in the eastern part of the square, a darker area was clearly visible, especially in slightly humid conditions and in the morning light. This could be the remains of a standing wall (D9-D10/09). To investigate more closely this structure, a 1 m wide area in the northern part of the square was excavated through what was probably the collapsed wall (D9-D10/08) and the possible remains of a standing wall (D9-D10/09). The mud-brick debris proved to be very deep, around 0.80 m from the surface of D9-D10/08 – /09, and seemed to continue into C9-C10, where the context C9-C10/24 is probably the counterpart of D9-D10/08. (Fig. 8) In section, the structure of the wall was very difficult to define. In the horizontal level, however, single mud-bricks could be observed all through D9-D10/08 – /09. The difficulty in observing the structure in section was probably due to decay and the infiltration of water from above which may have destroyed the vertical joints between the mud-bricks.



Figure 10. The layer D9-D10/11, seen from the north. (Photo: Ødegård)

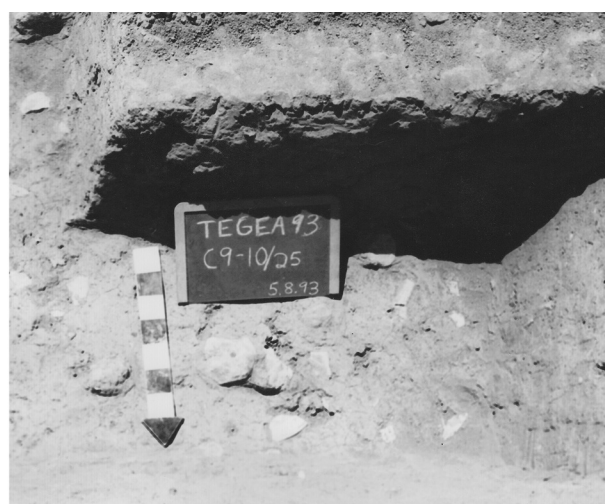


Figure 11. Close-up photo of the unit C9-C10/25. (Photo: Ødegård)

At the bottom of the layer of decayed mud-brick, several different contexts were observed. In D9-D10, a group of stones of different sizes was mostly concentrated in the far northern end of the trench and probably continued northwards (D9-D10/10). (Fig. 9) These stones were laid in a soil matrix of grey clay with some inclusions of pottery. This group of stones was interrupted by a clay layer with a dense concentration of pottery sherds (D9-D10/11) towards the western end of the square. (Fig. 10) At about $x = 16.00$ m, another group of stones seemed to go southwards. Furthermore, in C9-C10, in the continuation of the trench dug in the northern 1 m wide area, grey clay with very frequent inclusions of small and large pieces of charcoal was noted (C9-C10/25). (Fig. 11) In this area, the stones were still present and it is possible that the concentration of stones continued from the eastern end of D9-D10 into C9-C10.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to investigate more closely these contexts in 1993, and the following interpretation must therefore be considered preliminary and only based on a superficial analysis of the situation. The stones mentioned above were neither continuous enough nor big enough to be plausible remains of a stone

foundation for a mud-brick wall. We may, however, have managed only to clear the surface of such possible foundations. The most reasonable theory, however, would be that this is a collapsed mud-brick wall, the foundations of which must be sought elsewhere, for instance under the modern country road just a few metres further north. This road, which has existed since the first excavations in the sanctuary of Athena Alea, may have exploited the firm foundations of this mud-brick structure, as was the case with modern roads and the city wall at Mantinea, and perhaps even with the city walls of Tegea,⁹ although this has yet to be documented properly.

The pottery associated with the probably collapsed mud-brick wall is of a different date, but the latest material (such as the sherds **CN-Arch 20, 42**) seems to be datable to the late 6th century B.C.

Catalogued material:

C9-C10/11: sherds **CN-Arch 14–16, 30, 33; CN-CI 34; CN-HR 16;** miniature vases **CN-MinII 4, 8.** Bronze pins **BrN-P 34, 48, 64, 72;** bronze disc **BrN-Di 11;** lead disc **LdN 28;** terracotta figurine **TcN 10;** stone bladelets and flakes **StN 5, 19–21, 26, 27, 30, 34.**

C9-C10/13: bone fragment with incised double axe **BoN 7.**
C9-C10/17: sherds **CN-Arch 17, 24;** terracotta pendant **TcN 67.**

C9-C10/19: bronze pins **BrN-P 54, 79, 87, 97, 98;** bronze rings **BrN-R 20, 72, 75, 94;** sheet **BrN-Sh 40;** lead plaque **LdN 17;** terracotta wreath **TcN 54;** bone object **BoN 12;** stone objects **StN 6, 22.**

C9-C10/25: sherds **CN-Arch 42.**

C9-C10/27: sherds **CN-Arch 18–19;** lead disc **LdN 27;** lead ring **LdN 60;** stone bladelet **StN 13.**

D9-D10/02: sherds **CN-Arch 43;** bronze pins **BrN-P 70, 92;** bronze rings **BrN-R 3, 16–18, 26, 40, 42, 47;** bronze sheet **BrN-Sh 18;** bronze pendant **BrN-Pd 2;** bronze handle **BrN-Mi 8;** lead objects **LdN 29, 63;** lead rings **LdN 58–59;** stone bladelet **StN 23.**

D9-D10/03: bronze ring **BrN-R 23.**

D9-D10/05: lead ring **LdN 48.**

D9-D10/08: sherds **CN-Arch 20, 31,** miniature vase **CN-MinII 10;** bronze ring **BrN-R 14;** terracotta figurine **TcN 11.**

D9-D10/10: bronze pendant **BrN-Pd 6;** iron clamp **IrN-14;** terracotta figurines **TcN-41, 57.**

D10/24: sherd **CN-Arch 44.**

D9-D10/25: bronze pins **BrN-P 51, 77, 104;** bronze ring **BrN-R 5.**

D9-D10/26: bronze ring **BrN-R 6.**

Conclusions

How is this mud-brick structure to be interpreted? Since neither the plan, the direction nor the foundation of this structure is clear, it is obvious that only more or less speculative theories can be proposed here. This must have been a monumental structure, given the simple fact that the mud-brick debris was documented in an area covering 5 × 10 m and for a depth of almost

1 m. It should be noted that the evidence from the more recent archaeological contexts (particularly C9-C10/09, the contexts with marble debris associated with the building of the Late Classical temple) would seem to suggest that the stratigraphical situation became different in this northern part of the sanctuary. There is, consequently, some evidence suggesting either that the border of the temenos was located close by, or that this area had a different function within the sanctuary than the area closer to the temple. It can hardly be a coincidence that this monumental structure is located just at this stratigraphically important point in the sanctuary. Whether the structure belongs to the temenos, marked its border as a temenos wall or belongs to a structure situated outside the temenos is difficult to decide.

Fortunately, the Norwegian Arcadia Survey 1999–2001, directed by the author, has provided some further information for reconstructing the historical topography to the north of the sanctuary. As discussed elsewhere in this volume¹⁰ we now know that ancient riverbeds passed to the south, west and north of the sanctuary, effectively separating the sanctuary of Athena Alea from the city of Tegea further north. Our mud-brick structure is situated only about 10 m south of one of these riverbeds and should perhaps be identified as a temenos wall, although the size of the wall would seem curiously monumental for this purpose. The exact function of this structure can only be ascertained through future excavation.

This mud-brick structure is the only monumental feature encountered during the excavation in C9-C10/D9-D10. Although this structure seems to have been buried by Late Classical, Hellenistic and later layers, these later contexts, particularly C9-C10/09 and D9-D10/01 (the marble-chips layer), also seem to taper off and end at the same point, indicating that there was a change in function here in later times as well. It should also be stressed that there was a considerable slope in this area towards the north throughout the ancient period. At the time of the construction of the Late Classical temple, the associated context C9-C10/09 tapered off and ended in the northern section at a level 2.10 m below the euthynteria of the Classical temple. From the evidence of this northernmost sector in the Norwegian excavation, it seems quite clear that the temple was constructed on a higher level than the surface of the temenos to the north of it.¹¹ The topographical situation to the south of the temple may have been similar. So far, no extensive excavations have been made in the area to the south of the temple, but in 2004–05 the Greek Archaeological Service undertook a limited excavation in connection with the building of a new house about 50 m south of the temple, inside the present village of Alea. This excavation removed more than 3 m of soil below the

¹⁰ See section ii (Ødegård and Klempé).

¹¹ See for this point also the introduction, 6; section iv (Tarditi), 59; and section xvi (Østby), 340–1 with *Fig. 16*, on the evidence for a slope between the temple and the bases north of it.

⁹ V. Bérard, “Tégée et la Tégéatide,” *BCH* 16, 1892, 547–8.

present surface without encountering anything but sterile silt and, interestingly, water-borne gravel. Although this evidence is not conclusive, it could point to a similar situation to the south of the temple as well as north of it. In this hypothetical reconstruction, the temple in the Archaic and Classical periods was located on a low hill, partly formed by a geological rise in the terrain and partly by cultural layers, and surrounded by fluctuating river-courses and marshes. Only the sedimentation from the Sarantapotamos in the post-Roman period and in contexts associated with the early modern and modern village houses in the area completely levelled this area to the plain it is today.¹²

One interesting chronological aspect remains to be emphasized: the mud-brick structure discussed above is

¹² See section ii (Ødegård and Klempe), 35–6.

probably to be dated to the late 6th century B.C. Through the Norwegian Arcadia Survey (1999–2001) and the recent magnetometric survey of the area of the ancient city of Tegea (2003–06), we now know that this period quite closely coincided with the foundation of Tegea as a regularly planned city, with fortifications that left the sanctuary of Athena Alea south of the city, outside the inhabited area.¹³ A construction of an imposing temenos wall in mud-brick would clearly have defined the sanctuary as well as provided protection for it, and would have been a suitable frame for the most important sanctuary of the *polis*.

¹³ See section ii, 32–3; K. Ødegård in *AR* 53, 2006-07, 23–4; *id.*, “Urban planning in the Greek motherland: Late Archaic Tegea,” in S. Sande (ed.), *Public and private in the realm of the ancient city (ActaAArtHist* 23, N.S. 9), Rome 2010, 9–22. The full publication of the NAS survey is in preparation for *Tegea* III.

