

## **Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project: Excavations at Pyla-Vigla in 2019**

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The site of Vigla, excavated under the auspices of the Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project (PKAP), is a fortified settlement located east of modern Larnaca on the island of Cyprus (**fig. 1**). Primarily dating to the early Hellenistic period, Vigla offers the possibility of illuminating the island's role in the early Hellenistic period, when Cyprus came under the control of Alexander the Great and a selection of his successors. Scholarly focus on the early Hellenistic period on Cyprus has been limited compared to previous eras, in particular the Bronze Age and Classical period, when Cyprus and its city-kingdoms were largely able to exercise a certain level of independence. The significance of Vigla lies in its ability to shed light on the very difficult logistical and chronological issues that surround the early Hellenistic occupation of Cyprus. In general, the chronology of the early Hellenistic period is problematic, as both material and literary sources are limited for the crucial decades following the tumultuous events surrounding Alexander's death and the conflicts of his successors<sup>1</sup>. Vigla has the potential to provide much needed material evidence to help parse the chronological problems of the early Hellenistic period, and it represents an opportunity to examine mechanisms of subjugation and control used by Alexander's successors in conquering Cyprus.

The 2019 field season marks the 15th year of fieldwork for PKAP. Past seasons have focused on intensive pedestrian survey, limited excavation, and geophysical prospecting. Over the course of four seasons of excavation (2008, 2009, 2012, 2018) ten soundings were completed on the plateau, which have uncovered a wealth of early Hellenistic artifacts and architecture. The 2019 field season involved three excavation units on the height of Vigla along its northern edge, southern edge, and interior plain (EUs 19, 20, 21, and 22) (**fig. 2**). These units served to address four overarching research goals. First, to ascertain whether the fortification wall, uncovered in the north in 2012 and 2018, encircled the entire plateau. Second, to determine the date, size, and construction methods of the fortification system. Third, to continue to build a study collection of early Hellenistic pottery to address a broader chronology problem related to the early Hellenistic period. Fourth, to uncover structures within the fortified space to begin to reveal the domestic functions of the site.

1 ROSTOVITZEFF 1941; GRAINGER 1990; MA 2000.



Fig. 1: Map of Cyprus showing the study area of the Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project.

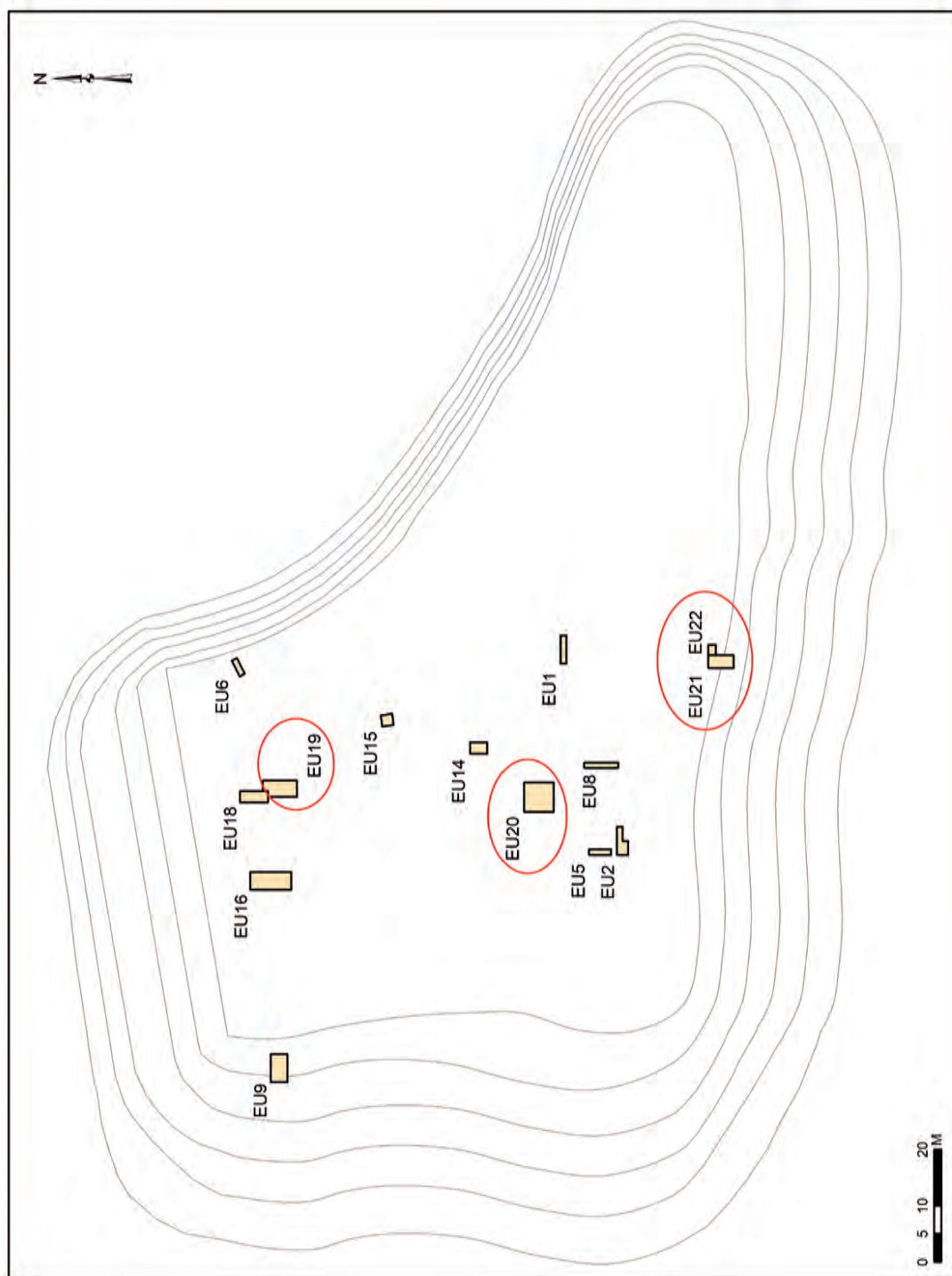


Fig. 2: A contour map of the Vigla plateau noting all previously excavated soundings and the 2019 units (EUs 19, 20, and 21/22) in red.

To achieve these goals one 3 x 6 meter unit (EU 19) was placed immediately southeast of a previously excavated unit (EU 18) in an area that spanned the ridge that marked the northern edge of the plateau. The unit is also 5 m to the east of a stretch of the northern fortification wall exposed by looters in 2008 and approximately 10 meters east of a sounding that initially exposed the fortification wall in 2012 (EU 16). A 5 x 5 meter unit (EU 20) was placed within the plain with the goal of uncovering domestic structures and a 2 x 5 meter unit (EU 21 and a small extension to the east, EU 22) was situated on the south ridge to identify the southern fortification wall.

#### **A. Excavation of EU 19**

EU 19 was excavated from May 25 – June 11, 2019 with the explicit goal of identifying the south face of the mudbrick fortification wall founded on stone socles whose north face was identified in 2018 in EU 18 (**fig. 3**). Broader goals of this trench were to compare architectural construction methods, especially with EU 21 and EU 22 excavated this year, and to gather more data about the dating of this northern fortification.

In exposing the south face, a task not achieved in 2018, evidence concerning the size, construction methods, and track of the northern fortification system would come to light. The trench produced a sizable amount of finds, with ceramics dating from the Iron Age to the early Hellenistic period, faunal remains, shell, metal weapons including a sling bullet and two projectile points, and some worked stone. After identifying in situ mudbrick in the southern baulk of EU 19, it was clear that the southern extent of EU 19 was still within the mudbrick cover of the greater fortification system despite it being situated nearly 4 meters from the walls northern face. Because it was no longer possible to answer the initial research question, the research program changed to address two other issues. First, delineate the width of the large ashlar comprising the north wall face and second, to determine the preserved height of the wall. To accomplish this, two smaller soundings were opened within the unit, one in the northeast and another in the southeast. Excavations in the northeast sounding confirmed that the north face of the wall found in EU 18 continues NE and follows the expected trajectory. Also, the large ashlar discovered in 2018 are less than 0.5 meters thick along the upper courses. In the southern sounding there were multiple burned destruction layers of mudbrick upon which the in situ mudbricks were found. Bedrock was discovered at an elevation of 55.77 m, more than 2 meters below the current ground surface, with cultural material found throughout. Thus, the northern fortification wall was built on bedrock and is preserved to a height of at least 2 meters. Overall, this trench confirms the north face of the mudbrick wall founded on stone socles, confirms that the mudbrick superstructure was constructed in the early Hellenistic period due to the absence of later pottery styles as well as the site's overarching stratigraphic profile, and shows the difference in construction methods for different parts of the fortification wall.

#### **Features**

There were two features identified in EU 19, both of which were portions of the same wall.

- **8027\_F1:** The NE-SW oriented fortification wall with a mudbrick superstructure. Although it was not possible to identify the absolute thickness of the wall, some facts regarding its construction came to light. It was confirmed that it does, at least on its northern face, follow the NE-SW angle that was identified in EU 18 in 2018. The thickness of the wall from the first clear mudbrick in the eastern baulk to the SE corner of the trench (which is still within the mudbrick wall) is about 4.30 m. The thickness of the wall from the projected line of the ashlar (8032\_F1) is even larger at about 4.80 m because the preserved mudbrick in the eastern baulk was not directly above the line of the ashlar we found. The top of this preserved mudbrick was not far beneath the topsoil and mudbrick collapse, about 6 cm below the start of the trench. A clear line of red mortar on the north



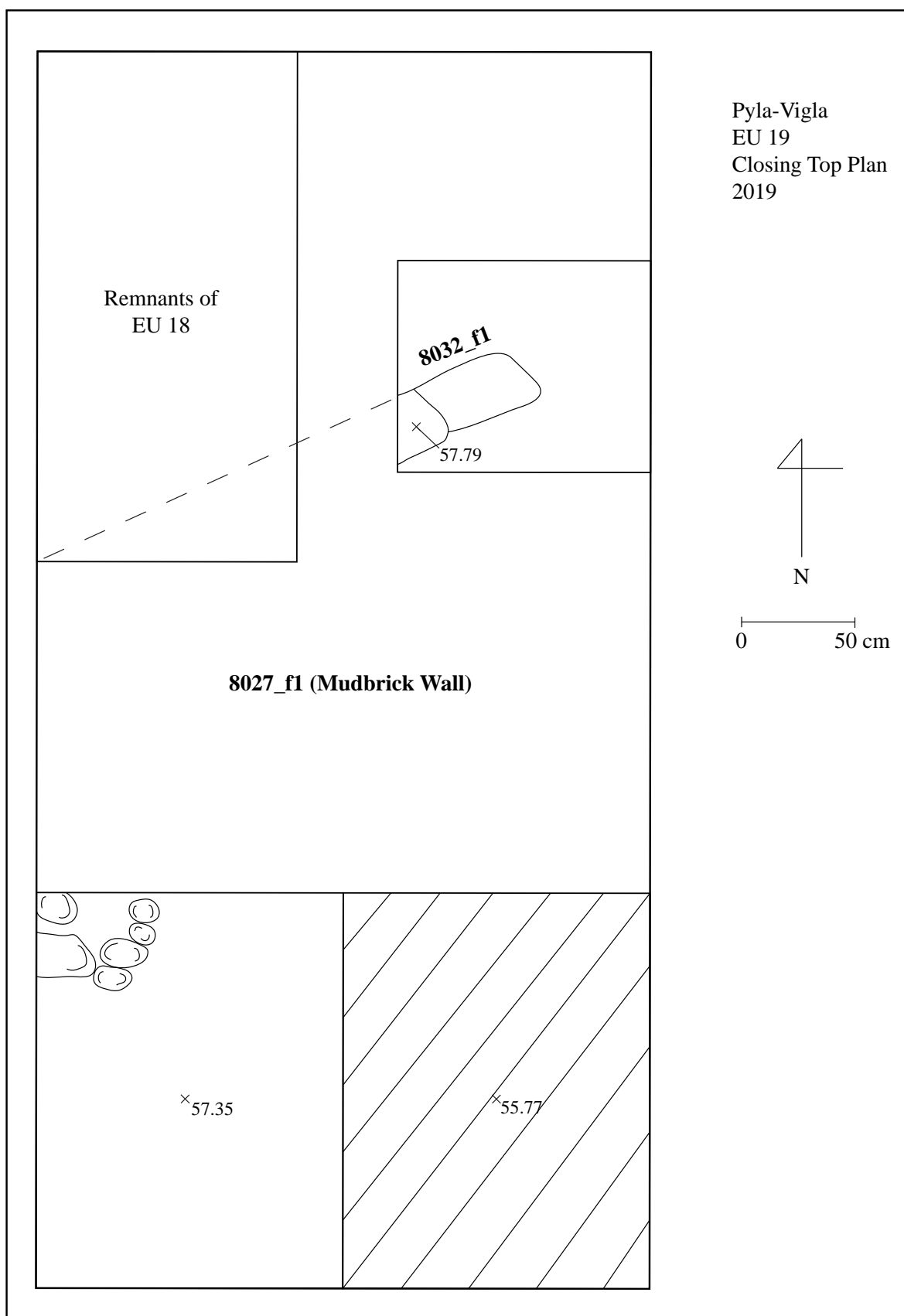


Fig. 3: Final excavated top plan of EU 19.



was observed and identical to mortar lines discovered in 2018. There was, however, a lack of in situ horizontal mortar lines, which was likely a result of the way the mudbrick wall collapsed in the south.

Unlike the mudbrick section in the northern part of the wall, the sounding of the mudbrick wall in the southern part of the wall showed that the mudbrick section, at least in that area, was not founded upon ashlar blocks. While it is difficult to interpret the construction completely, it seems like after a packing fill to even out the bedrock, there was a burning event that hardened mudbrick followed stratigraphically by numerous and successive ash layers, atop of which were positioned in situ mudbricks. While no significant cobble layers showed up in the scarps (except for the tumble in the western scarp of the mudbrick wall sounding, many cobbles and some boulders were uncovered that could have served as some sort of foundation for the subsequent fill and mudbrick superstructure. It also appears that the interior of the wall was filled with rubble and soil, instead of the wall being a solid mudbrick superstructure. At times during excavation it was difficult to differentiate between the intentional rubble fill and what was certainly a post-construction collapse. The presence of rubble in line with in situ mudbrick in the east scarp of the mudbrick wall sounding and the presence of rubble on the interior of mudbrick lines in the west scarp of the trench suggest that a rubble core was a key structural element of the fortification system.

- **8032\_F1:** The NE-SW angled ashlar that served as socles for the mudbrick superstructure in the northern section of the wall. While this feature may still be part of the same fortification wall, it confirms the construction discovered in 2018 along the northern face of the fortification wall (limestone ashlar with mudbrick superstructure). The feature consists of one full ashlar in the center of the sounding (slightly chipped in the NE corner and slightly dislodged from the connecting ashlar to its SW). Only the NE corner of the second connecting ashlar to the full ashlar was revealed in the SW corner of the sounding. The full ashlar is about 28 cm wide, 56 cm long, and 50 cm thick. We found a second ashlar course beneath the first and then, having answered our research question, stopped excavation.

### *Finds*

Most of the ceramics upon preliminary analysis date from the late Classical to early Hellenistic period. Some Iron Age sherds were identified, but these came from within the mudbrick wall. Thus, they seem to have been used as temper during mudbrick construction and are mixed in with late Classical to early Hellenistic finds. This is not too surprising since some Iron Age sherds have been found in the previous survey and excavation units. Other ceramic finds of note include an almost complete Hellenistic lamp and an almost complete echinus bowl with an alpha graffito on its base. Other significant finds include faunal bone (especially in the ash layers in the mudbrick wall sounding), shell, some worked stone, metal weapons, and a few beads. The metal weapons include one lead sling bullet, a bronze projectile point, and an iron projectile point.

### *Conclusions*

The EU revealed that the construction and plan of the fortification in the northeast section of the plain is more complex than originally thought. While the trench does not fully answer research questions regarding the wall's extant dimensions and construction style, it does show that there is a difference in construction at the northern face of the wall (ashlar with mudbrick superstructure) and the section of the wall found in the southern part of the trench (mudbrick superstructure founded upon burned mudbrick layer, cobbles, and fill). The presence of late Classical to early Hellenistic finds throughout all stratigraphic layers suggests that the original



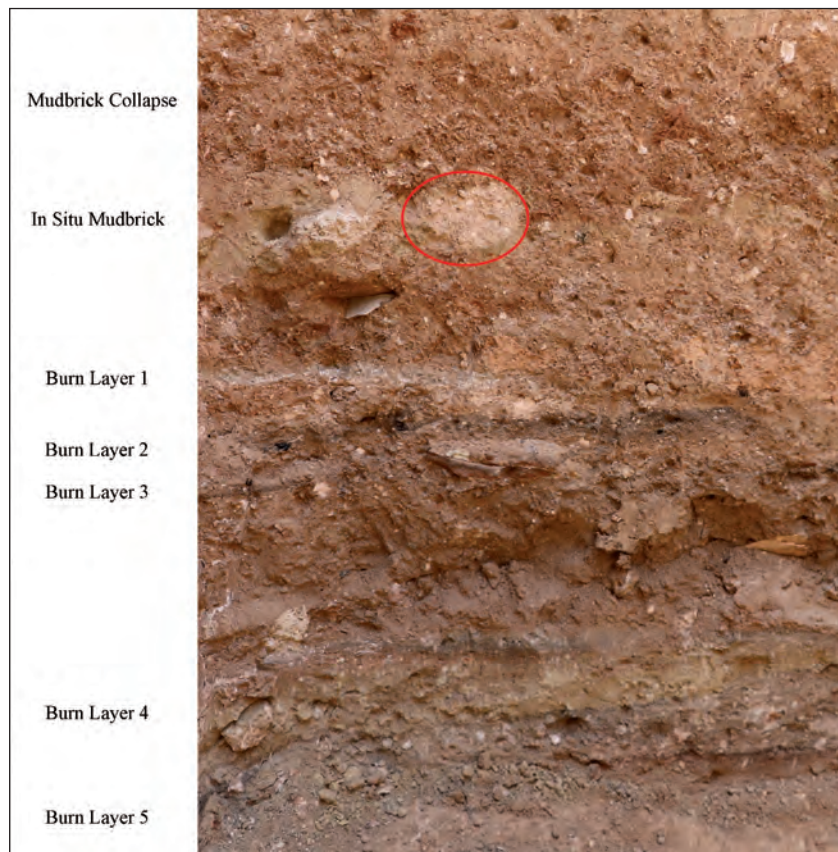


Fig. 4:  
In progress stratigraphic profile of the southern bulk of EU 19 showing the unit's basic stratigraphy: mudbrick collapse, irregularly spaced in situ mudbricks, and successive burning events.

dating of this wall to the early Hellenistic period is correct. Besides the topsoil and plow zone, there are several ancient phases that can be identified (from latest to earliest):

- **Phase 3:** Mudbrick collapse. The collapse of the mudbrick superstructure was found throughout the entire trench, indicating that the architecture had an impressive superstructure. The scarp clearly shows two lines of collapse (the gray mudbrick collapse surrounding the in situ red mudbricks and the collapse above with a few angled gray mudbricks in line with a few stones in tumble). From field analysis, no sherds later than the early Hellenistic period (mid-3rd cent. BCE) seem to have been included in this mudbrick collapse event.
- **Phase 2:** Mudbrick superstructure. This phase represents the construction of the wall. Given the differences in the construction in the northern face and the portion of the wall excavated in the south of EU 19, it is not readily clear if these two construction types were done at the same time. Due to the in situ mudbrick in the scarps corresponding to these layers, it seems like these two layers were made at the same time. The mixture of Iron Age sherds with late Classical to early Hellenistic sherds shows that Iron Age sherds were used for temper during the construction of the mudbricks in the late Classical to early Hellenistic periods (late 4th to mid-3rd cent. BCE). The ashlar with mudbrick sections are also likely from this construction event, but comparisons of deposits from EU 18 and EU 19 will have to confirm this as well as further excavation of the architecture in this area.
- **Phase 1:** Successive destruction layers. While this phase in fact represents at least five separate burning events, some of the stratigraphic burn layers are so close together that it is difficult to distinguish them even in profile. Also, given the short occupation of the

site to the early Hellenistic period, it is possible that these burning events happened in rapid succession of each other (**fig. 4**).

Although in some ways there are more questions than answers as a result of excavating EU 19, it is significant for several reasons. First, no extant ancient material later than the early Hellenistic period was found, again confirming the date of the site and the construction of this fortification wall. Second, the construction of the wall is more complex than initially assumed. The differences in construction in the northern face and the portion excavated in the southern part of EU 19 are very interesting. It should be confirmed in future years whether these two construction methods are indeed used for the same architectural feature and do date to the same construction phase. Despite its unusual form, the fortification in EU 19 must have been large and impressive. Perhaps the variation in construction, such as the use of ashlar on one side of the wall but not throughout the whole wall, indicates a sense of expediency and the inhabitants of this fortress needed to construct the site within a certain time frame. Overall, EU 19 again reinforces the notion that Vigla was used as a fortification during the turbulent Hellenistic period of different kingdom successions.

## **B. Excavation of EU 20**

Vigla EU 20 was excavated May 22 – June 11, 2019 (**fig. 5**). The purpose of the unit was twofold: first, to gain a better understanding of the types of behaviors that took place within the fortified space; and second, to explore the remains in preparation for a research program focusing on the domestic functions of the site focusing on continued excavation, material studies, and floral and faunal investigations based on botanical sampling via floatation and directed analysis of faunal remains. Material collected from EU 20 contributes also to the larger goals of excavations at Vigla including the chronological refinement of local and regional architectural phases using ceramics, comparing survey and excavation data to explore successes and pitfalls in current archaeological method, and contribute to the ongoing discussion in the eastern Mediterranean on the effects and material consequences of Hellenistic empires.

Features discovered in EU 20 include five walls delineating a minimum of three rooms, two in the east and one in the west, and a series of floor surfaces. Since coarse wares, cooking wares, and amphoras dominated the ceramic assemblage, along with some evidence for industrial or administrative activity, these rooms were likely domestic in nature. A floor surface was recovered in each room, suggesting that they were interior spaces. In the southeast and west rooms, the floor overlays an earlier architectural phase. At this stage, there were at least three phases of activity in the space. The first wall construction and associated floors has yet to be explored, the second wall construction and floors are discussed below, and the final phase consisted of a cut into the northeastern and some of the southeastern rooms. The quick succession suggested by the close ceramic dates between the floors, fills on top of them, and the pit fill supports the short period of occupation previously discovered at Vigla. The assemblages for all exposed phases date to the late Classical to early Hellenistic periods. Evidence for explicit military activity is interspersed with the implements and necessities of daily life in a domestic context.

### *The North-South Oriented Wall: 8052\_f1*

8052\_f1 was the first wall to be revealed, and divided EU 20 roughly in half into two interior spaces. Similar to walls found elsewhere on the plateau, like EU 1, 8, and 14, the walls were constructed in random roughly coursed uncut field stones. No clear evidence of mortar was detected, but a compact clay soil was found between many stones. Since it is difficult to discern if that represents mortar, it likely is the result of mudbrick collapsing and filling gaps in the walls over time. The average size of the stones were small cobbles, but some stones, especially those near wall joins were larger cobbles. The width is approximately 35 cm. One stone in the centre includes a rounded cutting that could represent a space for a particular



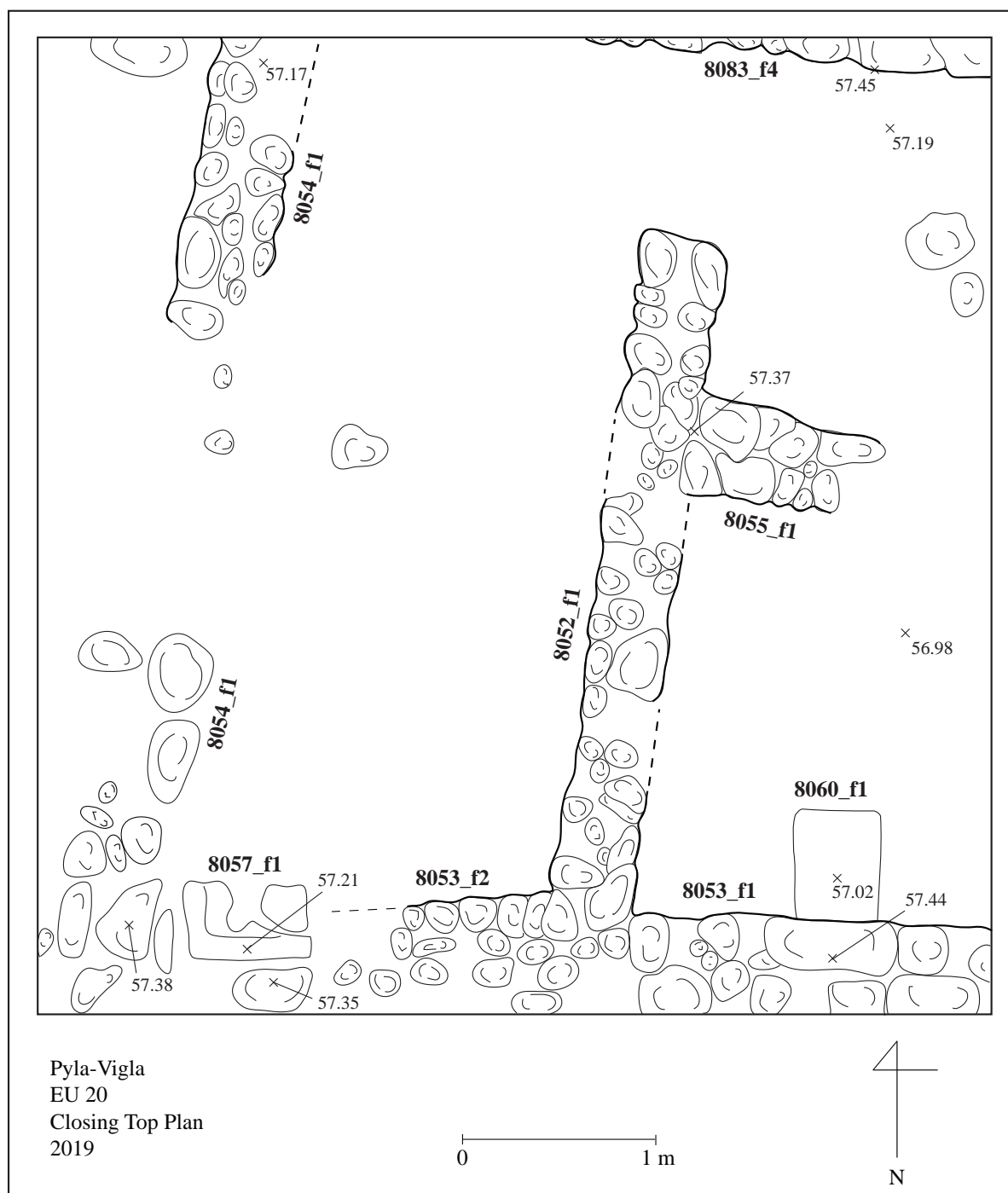


Fig. 5: Final excavated top plan of EU 20 at close of the 2019 season.

function. The round cut itself, however, does not have an even interior which would make it difficult for a door post or other instrument to operate in that space. The wall adjoins wall 8053\_f1 and 8053\_f2, indicating that they are contemporary in construction. A total of at least four rough courses were exposed by the end of the 2019 season. A doorway covered with a floor joining the floor of the northeastern room runs through the missing portion of the wall, further solidifying the contemporary nature of the eastern and western last floor phases in EU 20.

*The East-West Oriented Wall 8053\_f1*

8053\_f1 bounds the southern extent of the southeastern room of EU 20. It adjoins 8052\_f1 on its western end and continues into the scarp on the eastern end. Its maximum recorded height is 29 cm, and it likely does not go any deeper since we uncovered an earlier construction phase (8060\_f1) overlaid by 8053\_f1. It certainly had a mudbrick superstructure, made clear by the clayey soil excavated in the southeast room. The construction method is identical to 8052\_f1.

*The East-West Oriented Wall 8053\_f2 and Installation 8057\_f1*

8053\_f2 bounds the southern extent of the western room of EU 20. It adjoins 8052\_f2 on its eastern end. The western end remains unclear, but likely continues into the scarp. Overall the construction method and socle height (approximately 20 cm) mirror 8053\_f1 and 8052\_f1. Two moments of its construction make it unique, however. The first is the installation in the wall, 8057\_f1. This installation consists of a cut square block on two levels, with a square indentation on the lower level, made in a different non-local sparkling stone. To the immediate west of the square block is a large upright stone slab that is likely part of this installation. Many of the stones to the west of this slab were loose and removed, but the slab itself continues into the soil beyond the depth that was excavated. The upright stone and square stepped installation suggest that this space was a demarcated entryway from the exterior to the interior of the building. No parallel for this exists at Vigla so far. The other unique feature is the incorporation of a likely earlier construction phase immediately east of 8057\_f1. The small square cut block is also of a similar stone to 8057\_f1, but has not been given its own feature number at this point because its original use (if not its current position) remains unclear. The cut stone, however, is similar to 8060\_f1, found in the southeastern room, made of cut blocks prior to the current standing socles. Unlike 8053\_f1, however, 8053\_f1 incorporates this block into its construction. This reuse of a cut block could be to further accentuate the entryway.

*The East-West Oriented Wall 8055\_f1*

8055\_f1 is contemporary and adjoining 8052\_f1 near its center and runs toward the east, splitting the eastern half of EU 20 into two rooms. Its construction is identical to 8052\_f1 and the walls exposed in 8053. The current end of the wall within EU 20 could represent the doorway between the northeastern and southeastern rooms, but cut 8056\_f1 prevents us from full understanding that relationship. The easternmost set of stones jut into 8056\_f1.

*Ashlar Wall in Southeastern Room 8060\_f1*

8060\_f1 is an earlier wall, overlaid by 8053\_f1 and the surface, 8060. Like other units on the plateau, the latest floor overlays an earlier phase of wall construction. The exposed wall only includes one large cut ashlar block and a series of three smaller cut blocks to its west. Since this is all of the wall excavated to this point, the direction in which it would have run is unclear. Both the stratigraphy and the masonry style confirm that this is a different phase of construction from 8053\_f1. The field stone wall overlaying cut ashlar is similar to what was found in EU 21 and 22 this season, though the scale is much smaller.





Fig. 6: Photograph of the floor surface (8060) discovered in the southeast room of EU 20 with an echinus bowl and bronze coin in situ shown in red.

### *Floor Surfaces*

8060: Surface deposit in southeast room (sandy silt, moderately compact), which represents the final occupational layer on top of the latest floor in the southeast room of EU 20. The surface overlays at least two ashlar blocks (8060\_f1) that represent the currently exposed section of an earlier wall in the area (**fig. 6**). Large amphora sherds and many cooking wares were removed but fine wares were much rarer with the exception of the complete echinus bowl (8060\_FS\_1001). A bronze coin was also found on this floor.

8061: Surface Deposit in west room – Upper Level (silty sand, moderately compact) represents the majority of occupational debris, rather than tumble and fill, in the west room of EU 20. Although soil was removed to excavate the vessels sitting in this deposit, the majority of the excavation in this stratigraphic unit was the removal of pottery itself. The ceramic vessels include an almost complete cookpot and plate, a basket-handled amphora, and at least one imported amphora.

8062: Fill in northeast room, Level 2 (sandy silt, compact). SU 8062 represents the second layer of tumble debris in the northeastern room of EU 20. The removal of this layer exposed a redder and looser soil. The soil and its stone inclusions looked nearly identical to that excavated in the southeastern room. 8062\_FS\_1001, a sling bullet, and 8062\_FS\_1002, a complete bronze nail, were recovered along the northwestern edge of the room. The complete profile of a disc-footed incurved rim bowl was also excavated in this layer, from the southern edge of the room. Two bags of ceramics, one of stone, one of shell, one of beads, and one of iron were collected. A net weight was also found in this unit, comparable to those found elsewhere in EU 20.

8064: Surface Deposit in Northeast Room (silty sand, lightly compacted). SU 8064 represents the occupational debris of the final use life of the northeast room of EU 20. The floor surface continues into the area north of SU 8052\_f1, which confirms that the wall terminates in

a doorway at this point. The large rocks exposed in that area were all removed since they were tumble. Other large stones, possibly tumble from 8055\_f1, were removed from the boundary of 8064 and 8056. Fewer artifacts were removed on this floor than SU 8060 or 8061 elsewhere in EU 20. Local coarse ware sherds and some transport amphora dominate the collected pottery. One bag of pottery, one of bone, one of beads, and one of shell were collected.

### *Finds*

Most of the finds from EU 20 consisted of late Classical to early Hellenistic ceramic material. There is a high proportion of transport vessels, small storage vessels, and cooking wares, but fine wares remain fairly rare. Most appear to be in local fabrics, or Cypriot amphora fabric, but Attic fine ware imports and imported amphoras were found. An array of metal and stone special finds, however, show the diversity of objects deposited in this space. Artifacts found include the following: a bronze ring, three lead sling bullets, three bronze coins, a bronze implement, an echinus bowl, and a bronze nail.

### *Conclusions*

EU 20 has exposed a minimum of three rooms whose latest occupation dates to the late Classical to early Hellenistic periods. Natural soil below plow furrows sealed the deposits in EU 20, preventing any risk of later contamination in units with numbers higher than EU 8053. The last activity in the space was the cutting and filling of a bothros (pit), which removed part of the east-west wall 8055\_f1 along with the latest floor levels and abandonment fill in the building. Although no definitive typological differentiation can be made of the ceramic material from the pit and the repertoires of earlier stratified levels at this point, the unique rolled lead and higher quantities of fine wares suggest that the fill did not originate in the rooms in EU 20. The functional assemblage of this bothros, though certainly in a secondary context, suggests that its content did not match the domestic function of the rooms in EU 20.

The abandonment fills match the qualities of comparable deposits discussed from elsewhere on the plateau. A substantial quantity of mudbrick in the soil confirms the presence of a mudbrick superstructure on the smaller buildings found at Vigla, in addition to the mudbrick used for fortification walls. The presence of sling bullets only in the upper levels of these fills could lend credence to a forced abandonment of the site, however the lack of definitive ash levels suggests that if there was a forced removal of the population, it did not result in any destruction of the infrastructure.

Continuity in floor construction (compact earth with scarce patches of gypsum flooring) at a comparable elevation, suggests that the final use of the entire structure was contemporary. The nature of the occupation appears to be domestic, but the lack of table wares suggests that drinking and dining in these rooms was minimal. The abundance of cooking wares paired with the lack of burnt surfaces or soil patches suggests that the actual cooking occurred in either controlled elevated braziers, now missing, or elsewhere inside or outside the structure. Without comparanda from elsewhere on the site, it is difficult to assess the importance of a demarcated threshold on the entryway. The potential storage quantity in this building, reflected through storage vessels and transport amphoras, could reveal a useful comparative statistic with which to place the importance and/or function of this building in relation with its contemporaries on the plateau after the opening of other large 5 x 5 excavation units.

The importance of EU 20, even in the early stages of its excavation, are twofold. First, EU 20 provides the largest glimpse into life on the Vigla plateau assessed by PKAP to this point. It offers the opportunity to create the first dataset for comparative studies that operate at the room-wide or building-wide scale. Second, the presence of many consistent artifact types from a roughly contemporary time period further confirms the tight chronological range in which this site was occupied.





### C. Excavation of EU 21 and EU 22

Vigla EU 21 and EU 22, Unit 21's small eastern extension, was excavated from May 23 – June 8, 2019 (**fig. 7**). The purpose of Vigla EU 21 was to ascertain whether the monumental fortification wall discovered in 2012 in EU 16 continued around the entirety of the plateau and determine its date and construction. The purposes of extending EU 21 following its excavation included the following: determine if the ashlar construction at the base of the field-stone wall continues to the east, excavate a pottery deposit exposed in the eastern bulk of EU 21, and use the aforementioned ceramic deposit to provide further dating evidence for the construction.

The unit produced an assemblage of artifacts consisting of varied ceramics, metal weapons, shells, and three coins. The main feature uncovered in the trench was an in situ two-phased field stone socle. Its later phase is comparable in size and construction to the wall excavated in 2012 (EU 16). The stone socle and its mudbrick super structure served as the fortification wall for the southern slope. The earlier wall phase was set immediately atop bedrock. Altogether this excavation substantiates the chronology and overarching site function of Vigla, established by four previous seasons of limited excavation in 2008, 2009, 2012, and 2018, continuing to indicate an early Hellenistic presence at the site military in nature, while the earlier phase of construction demonstrates at the very least a small likely pre-Hellenistic presence on the site and one that the early Hellenistic inhabitants incorporated into their building plan.

#### *Features*

There were two features identified in Vigla EU 21 and EU 22.

- **Late phase of the fortification wall 8076\_f1:** This fortification wall was found directly beneath the overburnt layer (SU 8076). The southern edge of the wall was visible prior to excavations. It is an unevenly founded wall of rough-hewn fieldstones that runs across the trench from east to west, with a maximum height of six courses measuring 0.75 m. The size and construction methods of this feature mirror are similar to those discovered in EU 16 in 2012 along the northern edge of the plateau. The wall is founded in the west on a pre-existing feature (8084\_f1) and in the east on a layer of sediment, used as a leveling agent, set atop bedrock. The wall served as a stone socle for the site's main southern fortification wall.
- **Earlier phase of the fortification wall 8084\_f1:** This feature is immediately beneath the rough-hewn field stone socle discussed above (8076\_f1). Its exact size could not be determined as it was impossible to distinguish its extant dimensions, though parts of the feature are visible on both sides of the later wall. The west side of the feature continues into the west bulk of EU 21, while its eastern edge was identified approximately 2.3 meters from the west bulk of EU 21. The feature is constructed with a single course of cut ashlar arranged in a linear fashion and set immediately atop bedrock. The function and precise date of this feature is unknown.

#### *Finds*

Most of the artifacts excavated in EU 20 and EU 21 consisted of ceramics of primarily late Classical to early Hellenistic date. The pottery categories include cooking wares, utilitarian and storage vessels (amphorae), and fine wares bowls, dishes, and cups. There was also a sizeable assemblage of stone, shell remains and metals. Artifacts of note found in EU 20 and EU 21 include the following: two bronze coins, an iron knife point, iron projectile point, and a lead weight.

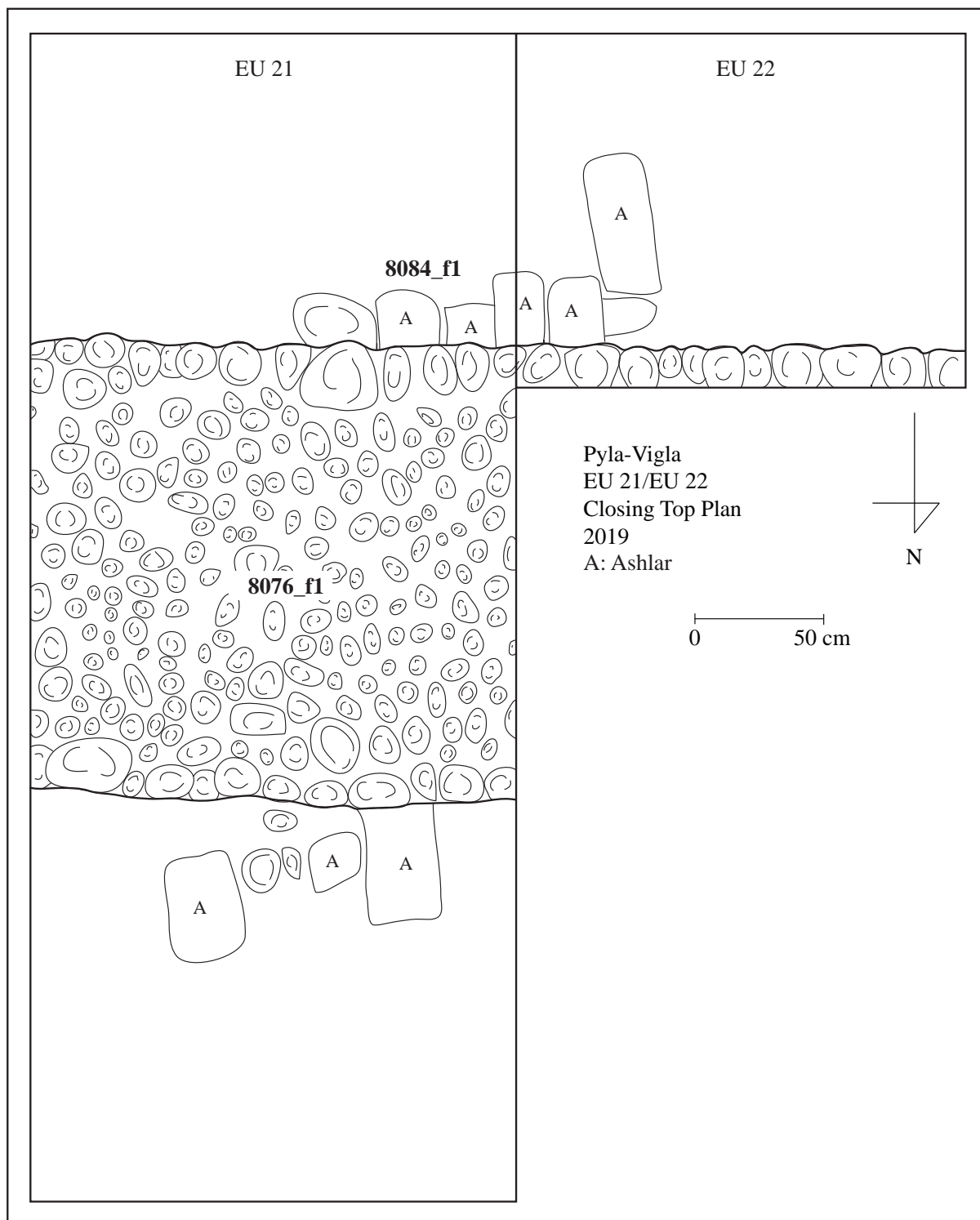


Fig. 7: Final excavated top plan of EU 21/22.



Fig. 8: Photograph of the southern fortification wall exposed in EU 21/22.

### *Conclusions*

EU 20 and EU 21 have helped us further parse the fortification system surrounding the Vigla plateau and challenged some of our assumptions about the nature of the occupation at Vigla. Architecture found up to this point has been small in scale, mainly consisting of roughly-hewn field stone socles with mudbrick superstructures, and set immediately atop bedrock (fig. 8). The discovery of an ashlar feature predating the construction of the socle associated with the southern fortification wall provides evidence of activity on the Vigla plateau before the construction of the massive fortification system in the early Hellenistic period. Future seasons of excavation are needed to clarify the nature of this structure and its date. What follows is a preliminary interpretation of the phasing of the trench.

- **Phase 1:** The first phase of EU 20 and EU 21 is the construction of the ashlar feature (8084\_f1). The function of the ashlar construction is at present unknown, as is its date. It certainly predates the late stone socle but to what extent will have to wait until the recovered material culture is fully analyzed.
- **Phase 2:** The second phase is the construction of the field stone socle (8076\_f1). The construction of the stone socle was, to our knowledge, the most monumental undertaking of all past construction efforts on the Vigla plateau. The sheer size, up to 3 meters wide in places, attests to an imposing fortification wall constructed of stones socles and a mudbrick superstructure protecting the plateau.
- **Phase 3:** The third phase is a mudbrick collapse episode, encompassing SUs 8080 and 8103. This level represents the collapse of the mudbrick superstructure associated with the fortification wall (8076\_f1). The absence of this layer on the south side of the trench suggests that the majority of the collapse occurred inwards and whatever mudbrick remains that fell to the south eroded away over time.

#### D. Interpretation and Future Work

The continued excavation at Vigla offers great potential to making a meaningful contribution towards our ever-evolving understanding of the early Hellenistic period. The 2019 excavations yielded a series of site level conclusions and revealed several avenues for future research. First, based on excavations in EU 19 and EU 21/22, the 1.5 meter wide fortification wall first discovered in 2012 did encircle the plateau with a possible gate in the northwest corner. The fortification shows a significant investment by an incipient imperial body at a period of transition for the island. Second, the material remains discovered in 2019 further substantiate the site's chronology (ca. 350–275 BCE), military function, relative short life span, and the overall integrity of the stratigraphy. The site was occupied for less than a century and the remains are unobscured by extant earlier remains or later deposits. Finally, excavations in EU 20 and previous soundings on the plateau demonstrate, through the presence of multiple in situ floor surfaces associated with extant stone socles and mudbrick debris, the possibility of investigating the domestic functions of Vigla's inhabitants. Future work will focus on this very issue.

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