

THE WALL PLASTER IN THE LM IIIB:1 AND LM IIIA:2 LEVELS

by

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The wall plaster from LM IIIA:2 and B:1 levels was most often found as isolated fragments dispersed over the excavation area. The fragments are dated depending on the find contexts, but also on technical grounds. The systematic observation of wall plaster fragments from all levels of the excavation has shown that lime plaster included with grits seems only to belong to LM IIIA:2 and later phases. The inclusions make this plaster heavier and it can be distinguished from the light, almost pure plaster of the LM I period and earlier.

In the LM IIIA:2 levels the number of recovered wall plaster fragments amount to 26. The LM IIIB:1 phase is richer in this respect, most probably due to an increased building activity. The presence of two buildings in this phase gives ample evidence of wall plaster.

WALL PLASTER IN LM IIIB:1 LEVELS

Building 1

Room C

At least some of the walls in Room C were covered with a heavily gritted clay plaster, which also included stones and shells. The remains of burnt clay adhered on some pieces, which may give a clue to the kind of material on which the plaster was applied. The surface of this plaster was rough and unpainted and had been damaged by fire since many of the pieces found were spotted with black burning marks. The plaster fragments were found on the floor: 80-FR 006 (*Pl. 234c:13*), 80-FR 007 (*Pl. 234c:7*), 80-FR 012 (*Pl. 234e:1*), 83-FR 001 (*Pl. 234c:5*), 84-MISC 053 (*Pl. 234c:12*), 87-FR 005 (*Pl. 234e:2*) and in levels above the floor: 77-MISC 024 (*Pl. 235c:4*), 87-FR 003 (*Pl. 235c:5*). Below the floor, in a levelling deposit, a monochrome red LM I plaster piece was found: 78-FR 015 (*Pl. 235h:1*).

Room D

The same kind of rough, unpainted clay plaster found in Room C apparently coated the walls of Room D as well. One fragment was found on the floor: 80-FR 013 (*Pl. 236b*) and two fragments were found in a layer of stones above the floor: 82-FR 014 and 82-FR 015 (*Pls. 233a* and *233c:2*). Moreover, several pieces of LM I plaster were found in Room D – on

the floor: 78-FR 028 (*Pl. 236c:2*) and in the floor: 80-FR 008 (*Pl. 237a:6*), 80-FR 011 (*Pl. 237a:4*), 80-FR 019 (*Pl. 237a:3*). The LM I plaster is only slightly gritted, often has a smooth surface and is mostly painted monochrome with blue and red pigments. On two of these LM I fragments are the remains of string impressions: 80-FR 008, 80-FR 011b.

Space G

From the dump below the upper floor came some fragments of plaster, which may have coated the wall of the LM IIIB:1 area: 77-FR 001 (*Pl. 240b:2*). This plaster is gritted and the surface was made smooth with a coating of lime on top of which either blue or red pigments were applied. These fragments have one feature in common; namely that the surface of all of them is covered with yellow, irregular spots. One more fragment was found in the same dump and this is made of gritted lime and has a monochrome light blue surface: 77-FR 008 (*Pl. 240b:1*). It probably belongs to the same period as the rest of the fragments found in the dump. Moreover, the same kind of painted plaster, covered with yellow, irregular spots was found in the original floor of Space G: 23-Floor 11: 77-FR 011 (*Pl. 239b*).

Space G, 23-Floor 11 also contained unpainted, gritted plaster fragments, which probably belong to the LM IIIB:1 phase as well: 77-FR 012 (*Pl. 239e:4*), but there were also LM I plaster fragments in this deposit: 87-FR 011 (*Pl. 239e:6*), 87-FR 012 (*240d:1*), 87-FR 165 (*Pl. 240d:2*). This plaster is distinguished by being light and almost pure from grits. The LM I pieces are monochrome red or blue, except for one fragment which contains a spiral motif in blue and red: 87-FR 011.

Room E

Three fragments of hard, gritted plaster were found in Room E. They seem to belong to early constructions in this room and date either to LM IIIA:2 or IIIB:1: 72-FR 002 (*Pl. 242c*), 73-FR 007 (*Pl. 241e:2*), 74-FR 004 (*Pl. 243a:5*), 74-FR 005 (*Pl. 242a:1*).

Corridor

From the layer with stones come two heavily gritted plaster fragments: 82-FR 001a and b (*233b:7*). They are of the same kind as the fragments from Building 1, Rooms C and D and burnt clay also adheres to these pieces. 82-FR 001b differs

from the rest of these heavily gritted plaster pieces, since this fragment is decorated with a yellow, wavy band.

Building 2

Room A

Two fragments of a hard, gritted plaster were found above the lower floor of Room A: 87-FR 001 (*Pl. 246a*). These pieces were covered with a white, yellowish wash. The plaster is similar to the plaster fragment found in the area south of the LM IIIA:2 building and consequently also belongs to LM IIIA:2.

Courtyard

The fragments from this area, are made of a medium hard, only slightly gritted plaster and are painted monochrome red: 82-FR 007 (*Pl. 246d:1*), 77-FR 006 (*Pl. 247c*). This plaster belongs to the earlier, LM I architectural phase.

Between Buildings 1 and 2

A number of plaster fragments were found in the area between Buildings 1 and 2. The fragments belong to various architectural phases. Some unpainted, gritted fragments may belong to the LM IIIB:1 phase: 77-FR 015 (*Pl. 250e:2*), 77-MISC 025 (*Pl. 250c:2*). The medium hard, almost pure plaster pieces belong to LM I. They were mostly unpainted: 76-FR 006 (*Pl. 250c:1*), but one LM I fragment is painted blue: 77-FR 004 (*Pl. 252c*).

North of Buildings 1 and 2

Some plaster found north of Space G of Building 1 is similar to the light blue plaster found in a dump inside Space G. These pieces presumably date to LM IIIB:1 70-FR 001 (*Pl. 253b:7*), 70-FR 003 (*Pl. 253b:4*), 70-FR 004b (*Pl. 253b:3*), 78-FR 006 (*Pl. 252g:6*). One piece is unpainted, made of hard, gritted lime and the surface is smooth: 70-FR 004a (*Pl. 253b:3*), just like another fragment in the levelling deposit inside Space G. Other fragments in this area probably date to LM IIIA:2 because they are made of a gritted plaster which, in contrast to earlier periods, is indicative of the plaster of LM III. The following fragments are of the same kind as pieces from LM IIIA:2 contexts: 70-FR 008 (*Pl. 254c*), 71-FR 017 (*Pl. 253c:3*), 71-FR 018 (*Pl. 253c:4*). The fragments were painted red, brown or blue. Yet other fragments, made of soft, almost pure lime, date to LM I or are even earlier: 70-FR 002 (*253b:6*), 01-FR 008 (*Pl. 252e:1*). These fragments are either unpainted or painted monochrome blue, brown or red and on some pieces are the remains of burnt clay: 73-FR 006 (*254b:4*), 73-FR 008 (*254b:1*), 01-FR 007b (*Pl. 252e:1*), 01-FR 008 (*Pl. 252e:1*). The fragments 76-FR 001a-b (*Pl. 254d:3*) are

not possible to date closely, but they are probably not earlier than LM I.

WALL PLASTER IN LM IIIA:2 LEVELS

Space E

Two plaster fragments, coated monochrome red, come from Space E in a levelling deposit under Room E of the LM IIIB:1 phase: 74-FR 001 (*Pl. 256e*). The plaster is light, slightly gritted and corresponds to LM I plaster.

South of LM IIIA:2 building

Two gritted plaster fragments come from this context: one covered with a blue pigment, 77-FR 002 (*Pl. 258d:3*), and another with a yellow wash, 77-FR 005 (*Pl. 258a:2*). They may belong to the LM IIIA:2 phase.

Courtyard

One hard, gritted plaster fragment, painted orange-red, was found in this area: 82-FR 010 (*Pl. 260d:2*). Chronologically, it probably belongs to LM IIIA:2.

Building 2

Two plaster fragments come from Room B1 in Building 2. The plaster is only slightly gritted and one piece is unpainted: 84-MISC 082b (*Pl. 260c:2*), while the other has the remains of burnt clay on the underside and the surface shows traces of a reddish-brown paint: 84-MISC 082a (*Pl. 260c:2*). The almost pure plaster may be indicative for LM I, but a LM IIIA:2 date cannot be excluded.

Rubbish Area North

Gritted plaster, painted monochrome blue or brown most probably belongs to LM IIIA:2: 71-FR 002 (*Pl. 262e:4*), 73-FR 009 (*Pl. 262b*). Another unpainted fragment, with pebbles attached to the underside, may also belong to this period: 71-FR 005 (*Pl. 262e:3*).

Several fragments of unpainted, light, finely gritted LM I plaster come from this area: 71-FR 001 (*Pl. 262e:1*) is painted monochrome blue, while 76-FR 004 (*Pl. 261a:4*) and 76-FR 005 (*Pl. 261a:5*) consist of only lime.

CONCLUSION

The remains of wall plaster from the LM IIIA:2 and B:1 levels are fragmentary and do not display fanciful iconography.

The majority of the fragments merely consist of lime plaster – there are also quite a number of examples of lime plaster mixed with clay. The lime often includes sand, which gives a gritty quality to the texture. The surfaces are occasionally smooth and often covered with a monochrome either blue or red pigment. A large part of the fragments recovered belong to earlier phases, preferably the LM I period. The plaster of these fragments is characterized as consisting of almost pure lime. The surfaces were often coated with monochrome red and blue pigments.

The wall plaster fragments in LM IIIA:2 levels do not seem to have been found *in situ*. They occur sporadically and in small numbers over the excavated areas, most often in

levelling deposits, reused areas or pits, and only very few of them can be given an LM IIIA:2 date.

In LM IIIB:1, on the other hand, wall plaster fragments are more plentiful. From both buildings there are remains of a coarse clay plaster, which seems to have coated Rooms C, D and the Corridor of Building 1 and Room A of Building 2. In Space G, which may have been one of the rooms of Building 1, the remains of an LM IIIB:1 wall plaster of a finer quality was found. The plaster is gritty, but the surface is smooth and covered with either blue or red pigments, on top of which are yellow spots. Hard and gritty plaster fragments also come from Room E of Building 1.