# Placing the Kazarma Tholos Tomb within the Early Mycenaean Argolid

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**Abstract:** The Kazarma tholos tomb constitutes a significant monument of early Mycenaean funerary architecture in the Argolid. It was excavated at the end of the '60s by Evangelia Deilaki and it immediately attracted the attention of experts since, amongst other things, it contained richly furnished intact burials and an array of prestigious grave goods, which convincingly denote the high status and connections of the deceased.

With this presentation we will attempt to place the Kazarma tholos tomb within the natural and cultural landscape of the early Mycenaean Argolid. Thus, we will focus on two main axes, topography and social structure. First, it is necessary to discuss the position of the Kazarma tholos within the natural setting of the Argolid. Its location apparently creates intriguing questions. At the foot of a natural lookout, away from the known centres of the period, without any apparent relation to a contemporary settlement or other burial structures, but on an important road that connected the Argive Plain with the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea, the choice of the specific setting for erecting such a monumental funerary construction remains puzzling at least.

The second part of our paper focuses on the interpretation of the Kazarma tholos tomb in relation to the evolving socio-political structure at the dawn of the Mycenaean Age. What are the elements and interrelations of power in the Argolid and under what conditions does a distinguished individual decide, or is potentially allowed, to build an imposing symbol of posthumous remembrance on an important trade route? Is it even the case of a dignitary or maybe a local leader and in what way does this paradigm emerge from the overall transforming character of this early phase of the Mycenaean Argolid?

Keywords: Argolid, tholos tomb, landscape, road system, social status

# Introduction

The tholos tomb of Kazarma is located almost in the centre of the Argolid, Peloponnese, near the modern settlement of Arkadiko, 15 km east of Nauplion on the old road connecting Nauplion with Epidauros (Fig. 1). It is built at the foot of the prominent homonymous hill, which is crowned by the late Classical acropolis of Kazarma.<sup>4</sup> The citadel has so far not been systematically investigated. It has been suggested that it was in use as early as the Mycenaean period and remained in use during antiquity and medieval times. However, based on the preserved architectural remains,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The ancient *kome* of Lessa, which Pausanias saw on his way from Argos to Epidauros, has been identified by Kavvadias 1885, 22–23, with Kazarma, a view also favoured by Salavoura 2015, 602 n. 292. However, according to Frazer 1913, 233, and Papachatzis 1989, 197–199, Lessa should be identified with modern Ligourio. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1965, 66, and Alden 1981, 302–303, claim that Lessa should be identified with Ayios Adrianos. Miliarakis 1886, 89, and Lord 1939, 81, find Kastraki suitable for the site of Lessa. Piteros 2012, 209, states that Lessa extended from Ligourio to the Argive territory of the Kazarma area.



Fig. 1: The location of Kazarma in the Argolid (Th. Makris; The Kazarma tholos project)

most scholars date the fortress to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, while extensive repair and renovation works took place during the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods.<sup>5</sup>

The tomb was discovered in 1966<sup>6</sup> during construction work in the Yiannoulis plot, which resulted in the destruction of part of the dromos and the chamber. Excavations were undertaken in 1968 and 1969 by Evangelia Protonotariou-Deilaki.<sup>7</sup> The discovery of the monument immediately attracted the interest of the scientific community, as it was considered to be among the few unlooted tholos tombs in the Argolid.

The tomb is oriented on a north-south axis (Figs. 2, 3, 7). The dromos is preserved to a length of 5.60 m<sup>8</sup> and measures up to 2.50 m in width. Its walls are lined with large, roughly worked blocks.<sup>9</sup> The stomion, which is constructed in the same manner, only with slightly larger blocks, is approx. 3.00 m deep and up to 1.70 m wide.<sup>10</sup> There is no evidence of a blocking wall.<sup>11</sup> Both the dromos and the stomion are preserved up to a height of one or two courses. The existence of the lintel is reported by Deilaki;<sup>12</sup> however we have not been able to trace it around the tholos.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Scranton 1941, 69; Bon 1969, 485; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 104 n. 4, 6; Lawrence 1979, 309; Konti 1983, 189; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 44; Piteros 2012, 209; CAAC; TMA.

<sup>6</sup> Krystalli 1968.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1968; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The original length of the dromos must have been greater (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105). The dromos is surrounded by dry-stone walls (*xerolithies*) which were placed there during the excavation and have remained there ever since.
<sup>9</sup> Polem 1976, 192, sees the Coulomean technique used in the dromos blacks of London 1005, 107, 108

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Pelon 1976, 182, sees the Cyclopean technique used in the dromos blocks, cf. Loader 1995, 107–108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The width of the stomion ranges from 1.70 m to 1.55 m as it narrows slightly towards the chamber.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105, interpreted the absence of a blocking wall as evidence of the doorway left open; Fitzsimons 2006, 146 n. 472, 148 n. 476, argues against it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 104 n. 7.

The circular chamber, which according to the excavator had already collapsed in antiquity, measures circa 7.20m in diameter and is preserved to a height of approx. 3.90m. The walls are built of large limestone blocks of irregular shape in the lower courses and smaller ones higher up.<sup>13</sup>

Within the chamber three roughly rectangular deep shafts (I–III) were cut into the bedrock and were covered with large slabs, resting on recesses formed along the sides (Fig. 3). The shafts were filled in with earth after the excavation and have remained covered ever since, thus any relevant data rely exclusively on the excavator's reports.<sup>14</sup>

The architectural features combined with the pottery finds indicate that the Kazarma tholos tomb was built in the LH IIA period and was in use at least throughout LH IIB. Evidence of later use of the tomb is attested by Submycenaean pottery with remains of animal bones including a red deer<sup>15</sup> that point to a ritual practice. No articulated burial was retrieved from the chamber floor, where grave goods, including palatial jars and other types of early Mycenaean vessels (Fig. 4), seals, ivory objects and several other small finds, were found dispersed along with skeletal remains and fallen stones.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 2: The Kazarma tholos tomb (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Each shaft contained one individual burial, which was found intact with wealthy grave goods. The deceased were placed in an extended position with their heads facing north. The burial in Shaft I was associated with a female, who was accompanied by a golden diadem, a necklace of amethyst beads, and possibly a silver bowl.<sup>17</sup> The burials in Shafts II and III were attributed to male 'warriors', since bronze daggers, knives, arrowheads and razors along with many boars' tusks were placed with them.<sup>18</sup> The deceased of Shaft II was also provided with five LH II alabastra, a silver vessel with golden rim, three lead weights, as well as eleven beads of glass and semi-precious stones (amethyst, carnelian) and five seals (of amethyst, glass and carnelian), which were evidently all strung on a necklace. The burial in Shaft III, apart from the bronze weapons, was additionally accompanied by two bronze discs, parts of a scale pan, an ivory comb, more than 170 beads of amethyst, and several ivory discs.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The building technique employed in the Kazarma tholos is strongly reminiscent of Tomb 1 at Megali Magoula, Galatas, in Troizenia and the Cyclopean Tomb at Mycenae (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2015, 496–498, fig. 15; Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 290).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 3-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Dr Valasia Isaakidou carried out the preliminary study of the animal bones from the tomb.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Protonotariou Deilaki 1969, 4–5; Protonotariou Deilaki 1970, 105, pls. 81α–β, 83α–ε, 84ε. Apart from the damage caused to the burials on the chamber's floor by the collapse of the roof, the existence of gold-capped rivets that do not match any of the tomb's bronze artefacts along with scattered human remains point to some kind of disturbance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 4, fig. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 4–6, figs. 5–7; Protonotariou Deilaki 1970, 105, pl. 84α-δ, ς'-ζ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Vassilopoulou et al. 2018, 80–83.

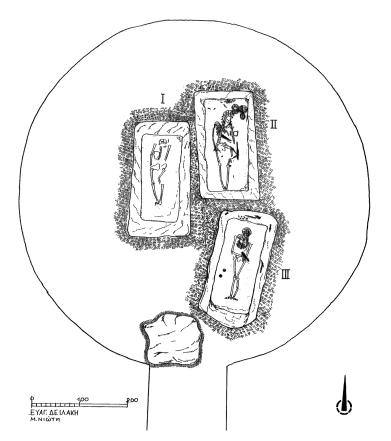


Fig. 3: Plan of the tholos chamber with Pits I–III (drawing: M. Nioti based on the excavation diaries; Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

In the last few years the archaeological material of the tholos has been re-examined within an interdisciplinary framework aiming at the full documentation and reinterpretation of the available data, as well as the reconstruction of the burial practices that took place.<sup>20</sup> A characteristic paradigm of this approach and of its rewarding contribution to the research is attested by the preliminary analysis of the human skeletal remains,<sup>21</sup> which points to the burial of eight to nine adults and three children in the tomb.<sup>22</sup>

During the conservation process of the stored finds some new artefacts of particular interest were revealed.<sup>23</sup> These include a lentoid sealstone depicting a boar's tusk helmet (Fig. 6) and a cylindrical bead of transparent colourless glass with golden caps (cf. Fig. 5), both of rare quality and craftsmanship. Furthermore, the careful study of long-known finds led to the discovery of a griffin's protome in relief on one of the bronze knives, while the classification of the tomb's ivory comb to the early type with a separate handle was determined.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Along with the archival research and the meticulous documentation of the tomb and its finds, preliminary study and analyses of the material are in process in various fields, e.g. osteoanthropology, zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, archaeometallurgy, archaeometry etc., whereas conservation work is also in progress. The aforementioned research was made possible with the generous contribution of INSTAP.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> The analysis was carried out by Dr Sevi Triantaphyllou, lecturer at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> This is especially important given the fact that the evidence on child burials in tholoi is very limited (Voutsaki 1995, 62 n. 32; Triantaphyllou 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> For a preliminary report on the new finds, see Vassilopoulou et al. 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Vassilopoulou et al. 2018, 83 n. 31. For parallels see Vassilopoulou et al. 2018, 83 n. 30, 32–35. Worth noting is that combs of the same type accompanied the impressive burial of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos, Davis – Stocker 2016, 635 n. 17, 651. See also <a href="http://www.griffinwarrior.org/gallery/">http://www.griffinwarrior.org/gallery/</a>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020).



Fig. 4: Piriform jar from the chamber floor, NM 15010 (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports)



Fig. 5: Necklace from Shaft II, NM 15024– 15038, 15120 (the sealstone in Fig. 6 was also part of this necklace) (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports)



Fig. 6: Sealstone depicting a boar's tusk helmet, NM 32731 (drawing: S. Lieberknecht; Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Due to the difficult excavation conditions, the incomplete documentation, and the heavily disturbed context of the chamber, the multiple phases of the tomb's use cannot be fully reconstructed. However and while the study of the finds is still in progress, the scope of this paper is to set out some thoughts and questions regarding the relation of the Kazarma tholos with the natural, human and social landscape of the Argolid at the dawn of the Mycenaean era, and specifically at the transition from the MH III to the LH II period.

# Natural Landscape and Networks

The tholos is situated halfway between Nauplion and Epidauros, on a route that has been continuously used since antiquity<sup>25</sup> and which comprised the southern branch of the road that connected Argos with Epidauros in historical times. The landscape in this eastern part of the Argolid contrasts with that of the Argive Plain to the west, since the geomorphology of the Kazarma area is defined by the converging mountain ridge of the Arachnaion to the north and a range of hills to the south, thus forming a natural passage.<sup>26</sup>

The hill of Kazarma overlooks the aforementioned route;<sup>27</sup> its summit was fortified in late Classical times, while its slopes are strewn with sherds of later periods.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that no definite Mycenaean architectural remains have been ascertained on the hill so far, sherds dating to the MH, LH IIIA and LH IIIB periods are reported as "extending over most of the summit and also the upper slopes on the south side" (Fig. 7).<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the excavation of the tholos yielded evidence of EH occupation underneath the dromos floor.<sup>30</sup> Roman sherds were uncovered among the vault's debris, while late Roman and Byzantine architectural remains were found in the immediate vicinity of the tomb.<sup>31</sup>

The proximity of the tholos (about 500 m) to the well-known Mycenaean bridge at Kazarma<sup>32</sup> is of considerable importance; the latter, along with the three other similar bridges preserved in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Frazer 1913, 232–233; Lord 1939, 81, pl. 1; Deilaki 1977, 94, pl. 92γ; Tausend 2006, 150–151, 201, 204, map 23; Piteros 2015, 208–209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Balcer 1974, 149; Tausend 2006, 201. For the definition of a route, see Marchand 2009, 108 n. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> The hill of Kazarma is indeed the highest one along the route from Nauplion to Epidauros (Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 51; Hope Simpson 1981, 27; Liko 2012, 122).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Frazer 1913, 232–233; Hope Simpson 1981, 27. Lord 1939, 83, recognised the fortresses of Kazarma, Midea and Kastraki as Mycenaean foundations "though later work also appears". See also Ålin 1962, 51; TMA; contra: Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Hope Simpson 1965, 19; Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105, pl. 82β.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Krystalli 1968, 180; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105; Proskynitopoulou 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Kavvadias 1885, 22 n. 4; Despotopoulos 1940, 12, fig. on p. 11 subtitled "Καζάρμι. Κυκλώπειος γέφυρα" (Kasarmi. Cyclopean bridge); Wace 1949, 27, has mistaken the bridge for classical one, but in fig. 38b he refers to it as a "Mycenaean culvert on road to Berbate"; McDonald 1964, 222, pl. 10 n. 14 (on p. 238); Hope Simpson



Fig. 7: View of the tholos and the acropolis of Kazarma from the south (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Arkadiko to the east, Galousi (Asprochoma) and Palouki<sup>33</sup> to the west, have been interpreted as the remains of a Mycenaean 'highway' connecting the Argive Plain with the Saronic Gulf.<sup>34</sup> This 'highway' is thought to comprise part of a larger Mycenaean road network, also provided with bridges, enabling access from Mycenae to the Corinthia, the Argive Heraion and potentially to Argos and Tiryns.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>1965, 19;</sup> Balcer 1974, 148–149, pl. 36, fig. 6; Wright 1978, 223, fig. 219; Hope Simpson 1981, 27, fig. 4, pls. 8–9; Bougia 1996, 213–215, Arkadiko Bridge II (Kasarma Bridge), pl. 51b; Knauss 2002, 335–336, fig. 11–12; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 158–159, fig. 8, pl. 29b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Deilaki 1977, 94, pl. 92γ; Bougia 1996, 212–213, 386, pl. 50b (Arkadiko Bridge I); Hope Simpson 1998, 250 n. 44, refers to the Galousi (Asprochoma) Bridge as Petrogefyri. Quoting Kritzas in ADelt 28, 1973, 250 n. 42, is wrong, it should be corrected to Deilaki. Knauss 2002, 323–359, figs. 13–18, 20; Piteros 2002, 152, pl. 69γ–δ; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 159; Piteros 2014, 253–254, figs. 33–35, for the Arkadiko Bridge. It should be noted here that the Kazarma Bridge is often referred to as the 'Arkadiko' Bridge, but this is not accurate. There is another bridge in Arkadiko (also referred to as Broutzeika). For its location as well as for the other bridges see the instructive map in Knauss 2002, 352, fig. 29. It is certainly unfortunate that the promising study by E. Deilaki and Th. Chatzitheodorou entitled "Μυκηναϊκές γέφυρες και ίχνη οδού από τη Ναυπλία προς την Επιδαυρία" which would offer a great deal of enlightening information on the topic, has not been published, cf. Pikoulas 1995, 353 n. 215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> The fact that at least four bridges have been constructed along a route that is directed to the Saronic Gulf makes it explicit that the Mycenaeans were very much interested in that access. Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 158–159, consider this road "vital for the economy and the security of the Mycenaean state (states) of the Argolid". Pullen 2015, 389–390 n. 19, promotes the port town of Kalamianos as Mycenae's principal harbour in the Saronic Gulf in the 13<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, while the land route that led to it could have been under the control of Midea.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> The work of reference on the subject is Steffen 1884. See also Jansen 2003, 28–31, figs. 15–19, and Palaiologou 2012, 158–160, for Mycenae; McDonald 1964, 221–222, pl. 8; Lavery 1995, 264–265, maps 1–2; French 2002, 119–120, fig. 3; Dickinson 1994, 162–163, fig. 5.34; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 148–156, fig. 3. Demakopoulou 2015, 194, proposed that the Mycenaean citadel of Midea, being potentially connected to the highway leading from Mycenae to Tiryns could have possibly controlled the road leading from the Argive Plain to the east coast

The bridges in the vicinity of Kazarma – and the road they would have connected, patches of which have been traced around the bridges<sup>36</sup> – have been attributed to the LH IIIB period or even earlier, mainly on grounds of their structural features related to the Cyclopean building and particularly to the corbelling technique.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the implementation of such an ambitious road network presupposed the availability of resources and skills, as well as the existence of central planning and coordination, requirements that the Mycenaean palatial system could successfully meet.<sup>38</sup>

However, people have always moved around and certainly also before the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. The existence of plain paths would have facilitated overland communication by means of transport on foot or on animal back between places on the rugged terrain of the Argolid, including prior to the later well-built Mycenaean road infrastructure.<sup>39</sup> It is these paths that were most probably converted to roads in Palatial times,<sup>40</sup> while there would certainly have been many more trails known to the local population and used in daily life that were in no need of palatial intervention.

Hence, a possible route, being merely a simple track, dating at least to the time of the tholos' use or even earlier, although probably irretrievable,<sup>41</sup> can be arguably conjectured. It could have followed, more or less, the line of the later trunk road, while its ends should be sought in the early Mycenaean settlements of the Argive Plain and the contemporary sites in the Saronic Gulf. The tholos tomb, facing south, would most probably have lain close to that track.<sup>42</sup>

Apart from being a natural passage channelling traffic, and although some details are elusive, it seems reasonable to suggest that this route could have served as a terrestrial equivalent or complementary to maritime communication and coastal transportation of goods, which had to find their way through the hinterland to the rising centres of the time.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, purely practical or social reasons for interaction, e.g. access to resources, exchange needs, local feasts etc. as well as religious or ceremonial purposes would justify its presence.<sup>44</sup> For example, the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, where evidence of early Mycenaean cult practice has been attested,<sup>45</sup> could be reached via this route.

via Mount Arachnaion and Kazarma. The bibliography on Mycenaean roads is substantial, cf. Cavanagh 2001, 181–182; Feuer 2004, under the entries for "roads" and "transportation"; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 144–175. Salavoura 2015, 573–612, constitutes a recent and thorough overview of the evidence for overland communication during the Late Bronze Age.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Deilaki 1977, 94; Knauss 2002, 324, fig. 1; 344–349, figs. 20–24; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 158, fig. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Wright 1978, 222; Loader 1995, 120–122, 164; Hope Simpson 1998, 247–250, pls. 1–2, where the Kazarma Bridge is cited as Arkadiko Bridge. The dating to the Palatial period is based on two sherds found by Georgios Mylonas in trial trenches underneath Mycenae Road 1, dated to late LH IIIB, see Mylonas 1966, 87, but cf. Küpper 1996, 58; Loader 1995, 120; Schallin 1996, 173; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 149 n. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Crouwel 1981, 30; Loader 1995, 54; Crowley 2008, 268–269. Piteros 2014, 254, sees Tiryns behind the highly demanding building programme of the road and the bridges leading to Epidauros on the basis of the construction similarities between the Arkadiko Bridge and the walls of the Mycenaean citadel of Tiryns. Although this cannot be ruled out, it depends on the relation between Mycenae and Tiryns, see Mylonas 1966, 33–35; Hope Simpson 1998, 257; Maran 2015, 279. In any case, it seems most probable that the Argive palatial centres shared a common interest in the road network, see Crouwel 2008, 269–270; Salavoura 2015, 595, 609.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Crouwel 1981, 29; Nordquist 1987, 67; Bintliff 2012, 192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> McDonald 1964, 220; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 146. A much debated issue regarding the purpose of the roads remains, whether these were built solely for chariots or not. See the discussion in Pikoulas 2012, 518–521, with references in n. 261; on the morphology of the Mycenaean roads, see Salavoura 2015, 574–579, and 580–585 on the means of transport.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Fotiadis 2011, 282.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> McDonald 1964, 221, notes the likelihood of the proximity of modern roads to their ancient counterparts; Hope Simpson 1981, 27; Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 158; Küpper 1986, 58, proposes that the orientation of the tholos implies older (prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century) road arrangements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> McDonald 1964, 217–219, stresses the importance of land transport. Although the maritime communications are considered self-evident, not much attention has been paid to how the goods reached their final destinations by means of overland transportation, see Tartaron 2013, 183; Salavoura 2015, 573.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Nordquist 1987, 67; Schallin 1996, 173; Siennicka 2003, 184; Newhard 2003; Sjöberg 2004, 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Papadimitriou 1951a, 95–97; Papadimitriou 1951b, 197–199; Hope Simpson 1981, 27, 29; Wright 1994, 65, 68; Morgan 1999, 303; Rutter 2001, 144 n. 203; Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2010.

# Human and Social Landscape

But how did this early road take form and, most importantly, which were the main points of this communication?

To begin with, we should focus on the Saronic Gulf and the intense activity that characterised the area already from the Early Helladic period onwards until the phase that is under consideration. The undisputable centre of this maritime node, where important routes intersected and where exotic artefacts and customs from the Cyclades and Crete were brought in, was the site of Kolonna on Aigina.<sup>46</sup> Its significance goes beyond the fact that it was the dominant trading hub at such a strategic point or that it retained its influence over a rather impressive period of time.

In the present framework, two elements of Kolonna should be underlined. Firstly, the unique character of a MH community that thrived within a rather introverted and segregated landscape and, contrary to that, constantly interacting with the flourishing parts of the Aegean.<sup>47</sup> And secondly, the quality of an influential centre that managed to incorporate and transform while communicating the fruits of this interaction to the neighbouring populations.<sup>48</sup> In our case, the recipients of these stimuli are located in the Argolid and are situated either on the east coast or on the other end of the land route that passed the area of Kazarma and led to the Argive Plain. Starting from the coast we cannot escape noticing a setting that is characterised by minor settlements,<sup>49</sup> which apparently served as communication posts between the core of the Saronic Gulf and their inland neighbours. Nea Epidauros-Vassa<sup>50</sup> was one of them and it appears not only to have been used during the MH and early LH phases but, because of its critical position, also seems to constitute an important point of interaction between the influential activity of the Gulf and the transforming communities on the other end.

The other end-point was the fertile Argive Plain, which hosted, both in its core and the periphery a series of Bronze Age sites. Some were continuously used while others appear to be short-lived, in any case following diverse paths of development.<sup>51</sup> In this fragmented landscape, and within the final phase of the MH period, Argos<sup>52</sup> seems to have been an important player in such an idiosyncratic environment. The two important counterparts of Argos should be identified in Asine<sup>53</sup> and Mycenae,<sup>54</sup> and all three seem to form a triangle of power in the Argive Plain. Mycenae however seems to be more adaptable to the imminent changes that accompany the transition to the Mycenaean period in the region.<sup>55</sup> Lerna,<sup>56</sup> on the southern edge of the plain, retained some of the authority that characterised its record in the EH II period and which was significantly empowered by its position on the coast. Of an equal dynamic, Midea<sup>57</sup> forms another peripheral centre that should not be neglected.

Although the correlation of power in the late MH period underlines the importance of Asine and Argos, the existing communities of the Argive Plain responded variously to the transitional character of the period. Thus, some limited but still not negligible settlements seem to advance successfully into the LH period and such examples can be seen in the case of Tiryns and Nau-

<sup>56</sup> Voutsaki – Milka 2017.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Siennicka 2003; Dickinson 2010, 25–26; Gauß 2010; Gauß – Smetana 2010; Tartaron 2010, 172–176; Tartaron et al. 2011, 628–631; Alberti 2013, 31–34, 36; Rom 2013; Tartaron 2013, 215–232; Berger – Gauß 2016, 218–222.
<sup>47</sup> Gauß 2010, 171–172

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Gauß 2010, 171–172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Rutter 1993, 776, 778, 780; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2012, 70; Rom 2013, 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2001, 218; Konsolaki-Yiannopoulou 2010; Zavadil 2010, 152–154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> The acropolis of Nea Epidauros-Vassa was founded in the MH period and was inhabited throughout LH I/II until LH IIIB, see Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 53; Siennicka 2003, 184; Salavoura 2015, 594 n. 238.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> For the sites in the area: Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 27–49; Spathari 2012, 132–137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Papadimitriou et al. 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Nordquist 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> French – Shelton 2005; Shelton 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Maran 2015, 278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Demakopoulou – Divari-Valakou 2010.

plion.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, there are sites which manage to dynamically evolve in the new environment, e.g. Prosymna and Berbati.<sup>59</sup> Others, struggling with their traditional values, seem to slowly disintegrate, and Argos constitutes such a paradigm.<sup>60</sup> The decisive confrontation,<sup>61</sup> that will successively forge the landscape of power in the Mycenaean Argolid, is just around the corner, but in this transformative setting there is still time and space for players like Kazarma to evolve and reclaim their position, albeit for a limited time period.

# The Tholos and its Setting

According to the early Mycenaean mortuary patterns in the Peloponnese, the location of the tholos and other tombs does not appear to have been determined by a single factor: geomorphologic conditions and structural convenience, perception of space and interest in display, tradition and vicinity to a settlement or communication routes are some of the factors which were probably taken into consideration when deciding where to place a tomb or a cemetery.<sup>62</sup>

The tholos of Kazarma was not an exception. It seems that its location is associated with the nearby road, a practice also known from other Mycenaean sites.<sup>63</sup> In terms of tradition in land use, it has been suggested that early Mycenaean burials were located in areas known to have been inhabited in the past.<sup>64</sup> In Kazarma, architectural remains and pottery dating to the EH period<sup>65</sup> have been unearthed underneath the dromos floor of the tomb and point to a prior occupation of the site.<sup>66</sup>

However, the puzzling question regarding the tholos remains the fact that neither residential nor funerary evidence dating to the same period has been confirmed close by. The principal early Mycenaean communities of the Argive Plain definitely lay far from Kazarma, and the same is valid for the Epidaurian sites of Vassa and Apollo Maleatas. The nearest settlement that has yielded evidence of LH II occupation is Ayios Adrianos-Prophitis Ilias,<sup>67</sup> about 5 km northwest of the tomb.

This perceived isolation of the tholos is a rare phenomenon.<sup>68</sup> Tombs were usually placed in association with others, perhaps as an expression of some kind of relationship between groups.<sup>69</sup> In Kazarma such a scenario currently cannot be supported, although there are a few, as yet unverified, references to the existence of a second tholos nearby.<sup>70</sup> In the Argolid, the early tholoi of Mycenae are integrated into a landscape comprising varied funerary and scanty building remains.<sup>71</sup> The Berbati<sup>72</sup> and Prosymna<sup>73</sup> tholoi lay at a distance of about 1 km from the contemporary sites of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Maran 2015, 278–279; Piteros 2015, 248, 252.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Voutsaki 2010, 100; Klintberg 2011, 97, 99, 110–111; Lindblom 2011, 77, 89–90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Philippa-Touchais – Papadimitriou 2015, 464–465; Philippa-Touchais et al., this volume.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Voutsaki 2001, 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Cavanagh - Mee 1990, 55; Georgiadis - Gallou 2008, 179; Galanakis 2011, 224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Dickinson 1977, 88; Wilkie 1992, 231. For a different view see Mee – Cavanagh 1990, 228–229, with a response by Lavery 1995, 264 n. \*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Boyd 2002, 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> In the excavation diary Deilaki mentions a circular stone construction, which she dated to this period on the basis of the few EH sherds found.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> The early Mycenaean tholoi of Voïdokoilia and Koryphasion in Messenia also occupy part of an area, which was taken up by an EH settlement (Boyd 2002, 34, 37, 43, 50, 125–126).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1965, 65–66, pls. 81–82; cf. Balcer 1974, 149; Bintliff 1977, 307–308; Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 51; Salavoura 2015, 601 n. 290. Furthermore, Dietz 1991, 287 n. 732, reports briefly on a MH IIIB site excavated on the hilltop of Prophitis Ilias in 1981 by Evangelia Deilaki and Klaus Kilian; Rutter 2001, 131 n. 147. For a cave with evidence of religious rites at the same site, see Kilian 1990, 190–193.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Darque 1987, 202 n. 79; Boyd 2002, 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Boyd 2002, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> See below n. 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> French – Shelton 2005.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Holmberg 1983, 9; Santillo Frizell 1984, 25–44; Georgiadis – Gallou 2008, 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 330–338.

Mastos and the Argive Heraion respectively. The tholos of Dendra<sup>74</sup> belongs to a wealthy chamber tomb cemetery, attributed to the citadel of Midea, which lies 1.6 km to the southeast as the crow flies. At Kokla, the tholos and the chamber tombs are associated with a nearby settlement, which lies 300–400 m to the north.<sup>75</sup> On the eastern peninsula of the Argolid, three tholos tombs were established in the early Mycenaean period at Megali Magoula (Galatas); LH residential remains have been reported close by, but have not been fully investigated.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, the existence of a settlement in the surrounding area of the tholos or even on the acropolis, which is only 300 m away to the north, should be taken into serious consideration (Fig. 7). This assumption, especially in the case of the acropolis, is reinforced by the fact that prehistoric occupation levels were most probably cleared away during the late Classical and Byzantine periods. The potential existence of other burial structures – of unknown dating – in the neighbourhood of the tholos has been occasionally implied or even indicated;<sup>77</sup> the vagueness of these suggestions though, along with the lack of systematic investigation in the vicinity, does not allow, at least for the time being, their practical evaluation. A future survey in the area of Kazarma could shed some light on the prehistoric use of the site.

But if a settlement indeed existed nearby, who were the people buried in the Kazarma tholos tomb and how did they relate to the transformations taking place during this transitional period in the Argolid?

# **Uprising from Within**

The type of the tomb, an 'instrument of display' itself, the labour investment for its construction and the conspicuous grave goods demonstrate that the deceased were prominent members of their community, potentially designating a local kin-based elite group.<sup>78</sup> Apparently, they were acquainted with and emulated the trends of their time by placing emphasis on mortuary distinction, which was possible since they had access to and possessed valuable goods of high quality and varied origins.<sup>79</sup>

The funerary offerings, some of them now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Nauplion, comprise high-quality pottery, bronze weapons and implements (daggers, knives, arrowheads, razors), scale pans and lead weights, exceptional sealstones bearing strong Minoan influence, beads of amber, glass, and semi-precious stones, ivory objects, plates of boar's tusks,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Persson 1931, 3–4; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 42; Schallin 2016, 161, 164, 167, 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Demakopoulou 1989, 83–85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Konsolaki-Yiannopoulou 2012, 506–511.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 5; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105–106 n. 14, on a second tholos, information that has been reproduced by other scholars like Dickinson 1970, 415, 500; Pelon 1976, 181, 464. Alden 1981, 305 n. 2, on her visit to the site in 1976 mentions having seen "something that looked extremely like a chamber tomb on the south side of the acropolis, at the foot of the hill, between the tholos and the well-known bridge". Voutsaki 1993, 78, refers to "a knoll [that] may conceal a second tholos". In his detailed account of the bridges and their function as a result of his on-site research in 1997 and 1998, Jost Knauss remarks on the existence of a partly preserved chamber tomb above the eastern arch of the Palouki Bridge (Knauss 2002, 340, 343, fig. 18). Thanks to his detailed mapping and description, we were able to witness a concave cutting in the rock during our own inspection of the site in September 2016, but its nature could not be determined. Knauss also mentions a "well preserved tholos tomb" near and to the west of the Palouki Bridge; the only relevant (?) structure that we were able to trace in the vicinity was a funnel-shaped rock-cut structure of unknown dating, crowned with contemporary stones, which was filled up with soil and debris. Finally, he speaks of another chamber tomb near Galousi Bridge, which, due to the heavy vegetation and the steepness of the ground, was not possible to trace.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Dickinson 1983, 56; Cavanagh 2008, 337; Heitz 2008, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> French – Shelton 2005, 182; Cavanagh 2008, 337; Heitz 2008, 8; Galanakis 2011, 226; Fitzsimons 2011, 93–94, tab. 5.7; Papadimitriou 2011, 467–473.

metal vessels, and gold ornaments that clearly indicate the wealth of the deceased and their participation in gift exchange networks within the Late Bronze Age Aegean.<sup>80</sup>

Such a distinguished group may well have emerged from the population settled in Kazarma. The exploitation of the advantages that the physical environment provides surely contributed to the prosperity of the local community. The site offers access to arable land, water,<sup>81</sup> and to a land-scape that supports animal husbandry, while it affords an unobstructed view of the overall region, being situated midway along the key path connecting the Argive Plain to the Saronic Gulf.

Moreover, the continuity of the site's occupation, as indicated by the EH remains and the dispersed MH sherds, adds to the argument for the evolution of a kin-based leading group within the local social framework, whose members probably established their higher rank and reputation as hunters, warriors or even participants in the exchange system of their time.<sup>82</sup>

This is in accordance with the socio-political pattern of the period, where eminent members of the community competed with their peers in neighbouring centres in order to ascertain their position in the arena of power.<sup>83</sup> In this respect, Kazarma, as well as other early Mycenaean sites with tholoi, may represent an independent local centre in this transformative Prepalatial period.<sup>84</sup>

# **Under Mycenae's Thumb**

An alternative scenario would highlight Kazarma's advantageous position for the monitoring of the inland passage, which was from early on appreciated by a rising Argive centre, most probably Mycenae,<sup>85</sup> resulting in the development of a mutually beneficial relationship. The nature of this relationship is difficult to define. One could postulate a kind of alliance or even gradually developing dependence.<sup>86</sup>

The awareness of the traffic on this land route of communication would have been useful for the maintenance of Mycenae's emerging power, while its influence in the region would become evident. Keeping an eye on the pass could also secure access to the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean and by extension to the routes of exchange and inter-regional networks. On the other hand, through this relationship, the Kazarma leaders could claim links to the powerful, thus legitimising their position within their community and potentially in the eyes of their neighbours. Furthermore, the significant advantage of accessing prestigious objects necessary to signal their own individual status would be secured.

If we are to accept that the relationship between the two components was one of dependence, one should also consider that the Kazarma tholos, undoubtedly a status symbol of its owners, could serve at the same time as a kind of 'territorial indicator', advertising Mycenae's power.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> All types of metal, a highly appreciated commodity of the time, are present in the tomb. The scale pans and lead weights found among the burial offerings in the shafts are linked to prestige ideology and stress the importance of exchange, cf. Dickinson 1977, 84; Dickinson 1994, 245; Alberti 2003, 337. According to Younger 2010, 333, the pairs of sealstones and cylinder seals with common motifs, shape and material, indicate the sharing of authority among the deceased of the tholos. The tholos also yielded a considerable number of beads made of amber, a material that has long been recognised as an important proof of foreign contacts (Maran 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Miliarakis 1886, 70, 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Wright 2008b, 243; Wiersma – Voutsaki 2017, viii-xiii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Voutsaki 1997, 45; Wright 2008a, 11–13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Pappi 2008, 402: "The monumental tomb was likely an expression of autonomy and local dominance during a period of instability and social competition that preceded the formation of the hierarchical and centralized Mycenaean political system of the nearby citadels and palaces"; Palaiologou 2012, 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Mycenae's pre-eminence has been underlined by several scholars, e.g. Dickinson 1977, 88, 110; Voutsaki 2001, 183–184; French – Shelton 2005; French 2010, 672; Voutsaki 2012, 166; Maran 2015, 278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Mee – Cavanagh 1984, 50–51; RMDP, 59; Wright 2004, 127; Drakaki 2008, 21–22, 119–120; Dickinson 2010, 25; Petrakis 2010, 414; Voutsaki 2010, 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> See the discussion in Fitzsimons 2006, 184–187.

# Stranger in a Strange Land

Still, if we accept the possibility of a local elite kin-based group that maintained a complex and refined relationship of exchange and cultural interaction with an Argive centre, why not consider an even more challenging scenario? While the theory of a settlement in the Kazarma area remains sound and relatively likely, its dynamics should be put into perspective. The archaeological finds that predate or succeed the use of the tholos are minor and someone could question the potential of such an insubstantial community to 'generate' a family of elite status. Then again, the attributes of the deceased undoubtedly point to a social group that knew well the symbolic language of the evolving state of affairs in the neighbouring plain.<sup>88</sup>

Is it possible that this group or, potentially, their ancestors had resettled in this advantageous area, got accepted by the few inhabitants and progressively gained their leading position within the community? It seems that if their approach was non-violent, their prominent position would be recognised by a humble community that, despite the apparent, upsetting break with tradition, could foresee a promising, prosperous future under propitious guidance.

While this hypothesis may escape the provocative question of provenance of this expatriate (potentially from Mycenae, but why not Asine or Argos?),<sup>89</sup> the essential challenge connects to the reasoning behind the act of mobility.<sup>90</sup> Either it relates to the initiative of a dynamic kin group to move from their original establishment for reasons of ambition, antagonism or conflict or it is the case of a representative directly influenced by, or even serving an early centre.<sup>91</sup> Even if it seems that it is quite early for such a strategic player in the region, is this scenario to be rejected without consideration?

# **Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, any attempt to place the Kazarma tholos within its natural and social landscape is inevitably defined by the fragmented archaeological record and the transforming character of the early Mycenaean period. In any case, the choice of the specific setting for erecting a monumental tomb that hosted richly furnished burials of a local elite has been examined under different, yet hypothetical perspectives. The notable elements of topography were described, emphasising the important communication routes bringing together the Argive Plain and the Saronic Gulf. On the other hand, attention was drawn to the correlation of power between the rival centres of the Argolid that struggled to legitimise their position in a competitive and fragile environment. Finally, some possible scenarios have been suggested that could offer answers to the intriguing question of the origin of the tomb's occupants and, chiefly, of how they perceived and defined themselves in the complex framework of the early Mycenaean era.

Whether or not the answers proposed are satisfactory enough, one thing seems to be clear; in the Kazarma tholos tomb social space is tightly interwoven with the significance of the place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Heitz 2008, 29–31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Maran 2015, 278. See also Philippa-Touchais et al., this volume.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Bintliff 2010, 758, 761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Wright 2004, 127.

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# Illustrations

Fig. 1: The location of Kazarma in the Argolid (Th. Makris; The Kazarma tholos project)

Fig. 2: The Kazarma tholos tomb (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Fig. 3: Plan of the tholos chamber with Pits I–III (drawing: M. Nioti based on the excavation diaries; Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Fig. 4: Piriform jar from the chamber floor, NM 15010 (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports)

Fig. 5: Necklace from Shaft II, NM 15024–15038, 15120 (the sealstone in Fig. 6 was also part of this necklace) (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports)

Fig. 6: Sealstone depicting a boar's tusk helmet, NM 32731 (drawing: S. Lieberknecht; Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

Fig. 7: View of the tholos and the acropolis of Kazarma from the south (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

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