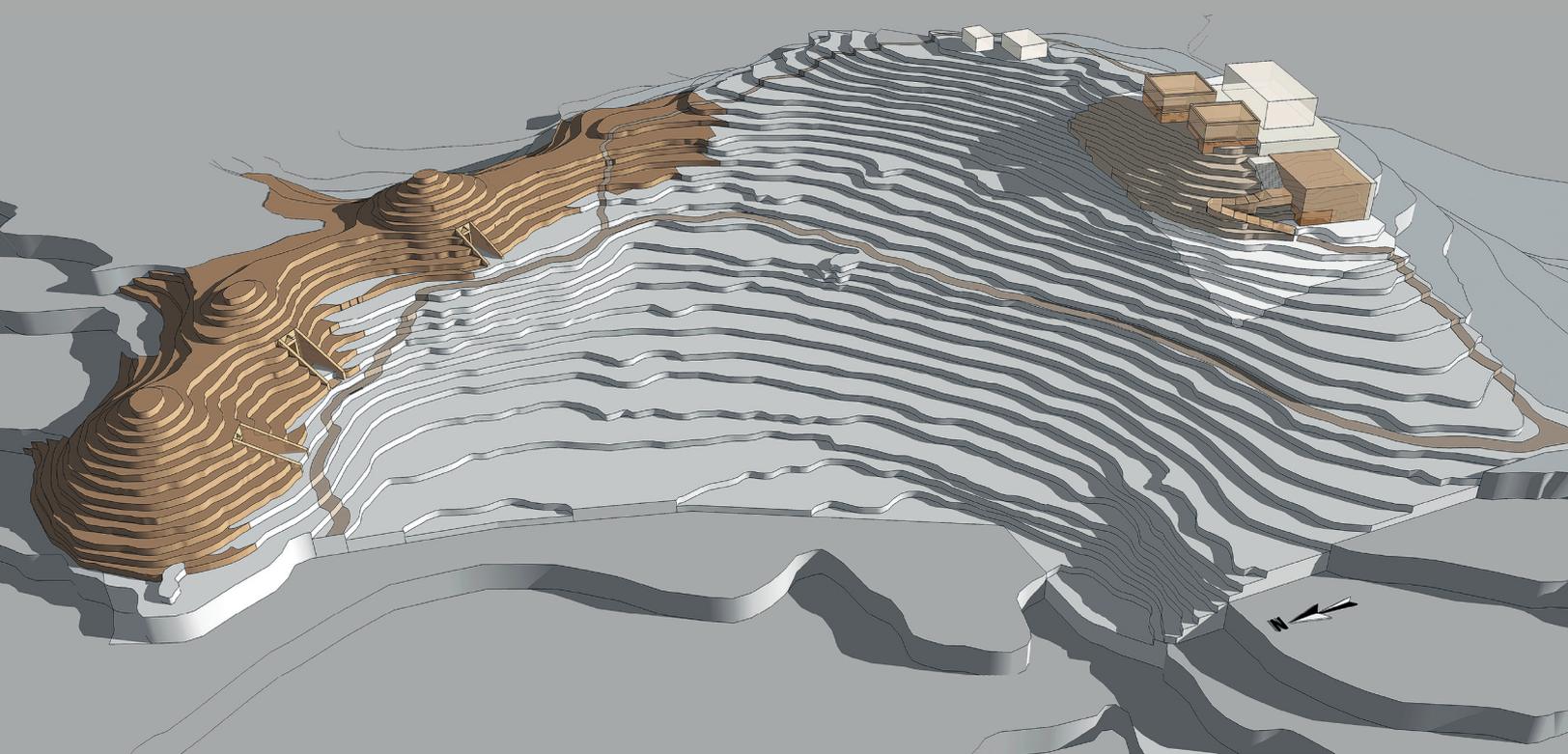


Birgitta Eder – Michaela Zavadil (eds.)



(SOCIAL) PLACE AND SPACE IN EARLY MYCENAEAN GREECE

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(Social) Place and Space in Early Mycenaean Greece

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Abbreviations

Journals

AA	Archäologischer Anzeiger
AAA	Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εξ Αθηνών
ADelt A/B	Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον (A = Μελέτες, B = Χρονικά)
AEphem	Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AM	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
ARepLond	Archaeological Reports
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London
BSA	The Annual of the British School at Athens
Hesperia	Hesperia. Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens
JASc	Journal of Archaeological Science
JbRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz
JdI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
JFieldA	Journal of Field Archaeology
OpAth	Opuscula Atheniensi
OxfJA	Oxford Journal of Archaeology
Pharos	Pharos. Journal of the Netherlands Institute at Athens
Prakt	Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας
ProcDanInstAth	Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens
SMEA	Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici

Series

ActaAth	Acta Instituti Atheniensis regni Sueciae
Aegaeum	Aegaeum. Annales d'archéologie égéenne de l'Université de Liège
BARIntSer	British Archaeological Reports. International Series
BSA Suppl.	British School at Athens Supplementary Volume
CMS	Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel
PBF	Prähistorische Bronzefunde
SIMA	Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
SSAA	Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology

Frequently Cited Works

Mesohelladika	A. Philippa-Touchais – G. Touchais – S. Voutsaki – J. Wright (eds.), Mesohelladika. Μεσοελλαδικά. La Grèce continentale au Bronze Moyen. Η ηπειρωτική Ελλάδα στη Μέση εποχή του Χαλκού. The Greek Mainland in the Middle Bronze Age. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française d'Athènes, en collaboration avec l'American School of Classical Studies at Athens et le Netherlands Institute in Athens, Athènes, 8–12 mars 2006, BCH Suppl. 52 (Athens 2010).
RMDP	P. A. Mountjoy, Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery (Rahden/Westf. 1999).

General Abbreviations

approx.	approximately
asl	above sea level
c.	circa
cat. no.	catalogue number
cf.	confer (consult, compare)
CM	Chora Archaeological Museum
d.	diameter
Diss.	Dissertation
DOL	Dark-on-Light
ed./eds.	editor(s)
e.g.	for example
EH	Early Helladic
EM	Early Minoan
esp.	especially
et al.	et alii
etc.	et cetera
fig./figs.	figure(s)
FM	Furumark Motif
FN	Final Neolithic
FS	Furumark Shape
G	Geometric
h.	height
HM	Heraklion Museum
i.a.	inter alia
i.e.	id est
ill./ills.	illustration(s)
inv.	inventory
l.	length
LBA	Late Bronze Age
LC	Late Cycladic, Late Cypriot
LH	Late Helladic
LM	Late Minoan
LOD	Light-on-Dark
max.	maximum
MBA	Middle Bronze Age
MH	Middle Helladic
MM	Middle Minoan
Mt.	Mount
n.	note(s)
NAA	Neutron Activation Analysis
NM	Nauplion Archaeological Museum
NMA	National Museum Athens
no./nos.	number(s)
ÖAW-ÖAI	Austrian Academy of Sciences-Austrian Archaeological Institute
p./pp.	page(s)
PG	Protogeometric
pl./pls.	plate(s)
PPL	Plane Polarised Light
SubMyc.	Submycenaean
s.v.	sub voce
tab./tabs.	table(s)
vol.	volume
XP	Crossed Polars

Preface

The present volume of the *Mykenische Studien* is the outcome of the conference “(Social) Place and Space in Early Mycenaean Greece” organised by Birgitta Eder and Michaela Zavadil, both at that time members of the Institute of Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The volume continues the well-established research tradition going back to the series’ initiator Fritz Schachermeyr, the founder of the *Mykenische Kommission* in 1971, a predecessor of the OREA Institute. His main emphasis was publishing new finds of the Mycenaean period in its core areas in Greece and the neighbouring regions with a focus on Bronze Age palatial cultures in the Aegean, their genesis and further transformation. During the subsequent decades, research into the Mycenaean period became a wide field including an immense number of new finds and studies. Taking these and further academic developments into account, the *Mykenische Studien* series changed its focus after the late 1980s. Aside from various specialised monographs, most of the volumes were proceedings of international conferences bringing together archaeological and linguistic specialists to present their new results on the palatial and post-palatial Mycenaean period of Greece, including its written sources. In any case, the study of the Mycenaean World has changed considerably since those days and transformed into a multi-disciplinary and well-conceptualised research discipline in the 21st century, as demonstrated perfectly in the present volume.

The editors managed to integrate multiple perspectives on Early Mycenaean Greece by bringing together 29 contributions from a total of 51 well-known experts and young scholars in the field and combining them into one concise book. They not only cover a wide range of topics, sites and materials from the Middle Helladic period in the early 2nd millennium BC to the peak of the Mycenaean times; a number of papers moreover integrate aspects of the conceptual and theoretical framework of the rising political, social and cultural power, which additionally show the impact of state-of-the-art studies of the Mycenaean in our times. Contextualising the early Mycenaean into ‘social space and place’ turns out to be a fruitful and thought-provoking approach by the organisers B. Eder and M. Zavadil, as reflected in the presented outcome. It vividly demonstrates the progress in the scientific field and our conceptual understanding of the Mycenaean from the time when the *Mykenische Kommission* was founded in the early 1970s through to today.

As series editors, we warmly thank the authors for sharing their expertise and perspectives about the early Mycenaean societies and extend our gratitude to Birgitta Eder and Michaela Zavadil for their highly engaged work in creating the 35th volume of the *Mykenische Studien*.

Our sincere thanks for financial support of the conference and its proceedings go to several Austrian and international institutions, foremost among them the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the Holzhausen Fund of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the Hellenic Government-Karakas Foundation at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the OREA Institute and the OeAI in Athens. We would like to thank Ulrike Schuh for the coordination of the publication process, Nicola Wood for language editing, Andrea Sulzgruber for the layout and the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

Eva Alram-Stern and Barbara Horejs
Series editors
Vienna, 4th September 2020

(Social) Place and Space in Early Mycenaean Greece: An Introduction

*Birgitta Eder*¹ – *Michaela Zavadil*²

Social Space

The title of this conference pays tribute to the seminal book on the Production of Space by Henri Lefebvre, who conveys his message in a succinct formula: “(Social) space is a (social) product”.³ Thus, every society produces its own social space through social practice, which affects relations between subjects and objects. Human agency creates space as it takes place in space: spatial practice shapes and transforms the physical, social and metaphysical space and guides human movements in and towards buildings, structures and objects. These practices reproduce not only the spaces themselves but also the social structures that these spaces support.⁴

Human agency shapes geography as an area of political, economic and social interaction. The political and economic conditions of a given society determine the technical development and organisation of the landscape in the form of e.g. roads, fortifications, cemeteries and tombs, settlement types and settlement patterns. Thus, every culturally defined period gains its typical geography. Through the interaction with the environment and the building of palaces, towns, villages, farms and associated cemeteries a cultural system is virtually inscribed into the landscape, thus generating a particular set of spatial practices in terms of social communication and interaction. Social space locates the specific social relationships in their hierarchical structures.

The Mycenaean culture of Greece (c. 1700 – mid-11th century BC) has left a particularly outstanding material legacy of buildings and artefacts. Large, stone-built tholoi and the fortifications of the palace centres of Mycenae and Tiryns are still present in the landscape of the Greek mainland. For a long time, the exploration of the Mycenaean culture has concentrated on palaces and funeral monuments and has, in fact, revealed a large number of important finds.⁵ However, the state of research has changed markedly in recent years, because modern excavations and research projects provide new perspectives for a wider understanding of the emergence of the Mycenaean culture in the 17th to 15th centuries BC that is based on diverse information from various regions of the Greek mainland.

The Transition to Mycenaean

The formative period of the Mycenaean civilisation began in the second half of the Middle Bronze Age and was characterised by a series of processes that reshaped Middle Helladic traditions and created a new cultural and political landscape with corresponding spatial practices on the Greek

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³ Lefebvre 1991, 26, 30.

⁴ Smith 2003, 72.

⁵ Cf. Maran 2006; Thaler 2006; Wright 2006 on Mycenaean architecture as performative space.

mainland.⁶ The increasingly elaborate, sometimes monumental tombs with their occasionally rich funeral gifts have for the longest time determined our knowledge of the formative phase of the Mycenaean civilisation.⁷ They form one material dimension of the increasingly stratified organisation of social groups on the Greek mainland at the time, when compared to the earlier Middle Bronze Age. Soon after the first discoveries in the Shaft Graves of Mycenae at the end of the 19th century, the strong Minoan impact that effected the adoption of images and figurative motifs and their integration into the early Mycenaean material culture was recognised.⁸ Despite the important role that Neopalatial Crete played in the formative phase of the Mycenaean culture, the independent, although not self-contained, character of the mainland developments should not be underestimated. In comparison, there are many differences between Minoan and Mycenaean cultural practices in terms of tomb architecture, burial customs, the architecture of residential and representative buildings, and settlement organisation,⁹ but also in the production and consumption of pottery.¹⁰

The research carried out in recent years offers new perspectives for approaching the social practices that created and shaped the spaces and places of early Mycenaean Greece. This applies to the current interest in the Greek Middle Bronze Age,¹¹ regional studies, publications of important sites such as Ayios Stephanos,¹² Menelaion,¹³ and the Aspis of Argos,¹⁴ and renewed excavations at already known sites such as Pylos, Iklaina, Kakovatos, Malthi and Aigina-Kolonna.¹⁵ New research projects have specifically focused on settlements of the early Late Bronze Age, which are essential for understanding the social space in terms of the relationship between cemeteries/tombs and areas of habitation.

New Regional Perspectives

Recent fieldwork in the region of Triphylia provides the background for this conference on early Mycenaean Greece. New excavations at Kakovatos in 2010–2011 revealed remains of an early Mycenaean residential complex, and the related research project is emphatically dedicated to a regional perspective (Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume; Nikolentzos – Moutzouridis, this volume). The concurrent analysis of the rich grave offerings from the associated tholos tombs (de Vreé, this volume), the simultaneous evaluation of the Late Bronze Age pottery from Kakovatos and three neighbouring sites in the area (Kleidi-Samikon, Epitalion, Ayios Dimitrios) and the systematic petrographic and chemical analysis of the pottery from all these sites (Huber et al., this volume) offer a wealth of archaeological data that can be interpreted in terms of social space. The region therefore provides a suitable basis for modelling the processes of emerging hierarchical structures, settlement patterns and super-regional contacts at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the southwest of the Peloponnese. The region has rarely acquired any political importance in history, but the early Mycenaean period witnessed the rise of Kakovatos as the seat of the regional elite, which was linked to far-reaching networks and furnished its tombs with burial gifts rivalling those of contemporary Mycenae, Pylos and Peristeria.

⁶ Cf. Dickinson 1977; Dickinson 1989.

⁷ E.g. Wright 1987; Cavanagh – Mee 1998; Voutsaki 1998; Boyd 2002; Bennet – Galanakis 2005; Galanakis 2011; Murphy 2014; Zavadil 2013.

⁸ Evans 1929; cf. Schoep 2018.

⁹ Cf. Kilian 1987; Wiersma 2014.

¹⁰ Cf. generally Groggianni et al. 2016.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Mesohelladika; Wiersma 2014; Wiersma – Voutsaki 2017.

¹² Tylour † – Janko 2008.

¹³ Catling 2009.

¹⁴ Philippa-Touchais et al. 2014; Philippa-Touchais 2016.

¹⁵ Cf. the contributions in the present volume; for Malthi see now: Worsham et al. 2018.

In order to view the developments in Triphylia during the early Mycenaean period in the context of contemporary phenomena in the Peloponnese, our international conference has brought together scholars who have presented and discussed new results of current excavations as well as new perspectives on older materials. A comparative view of regional trends and super-regional phenomena contributes to a more geographically balanced yet differentiated picture of the time of the emerging Mycenaean culture and its culturally specific landscape.

The eponymous site of Mycenae has always played a key role for research into Mycenaean Greece.¹⁶ Since the expeditions of Heinrich Schliemann at the end of the 19th century, archaeological research conducted in the Argolid has shaped our basic understanding of the Late Bronze Age on the Greek mainland. However, one of our aims was to look beyond Mycenae and the other famous Argive sites that became the seats of Mycenaean palaces and fortifications. As part of our conference, the presentation of new data as well as the (re)assessment of already known finds has opened new perspectives on the often unknown early Mycenaean period in other regions of the Peloponnese. The discussion of settlement as well as of burial sites promises new approaches to their interpretation under regional and superregional perspectives. The cross-regional evaluation of similarities and differences in burial customs and of the combination of grave goods of different categories¹⁷ offers insights into contemporary concepts of value and related strategies for elaborating social hierarchies. Systematic archaeometric and archaeological analyses of Mycenaean and non-Mycenaean pottery (for example from Crete, Kythera, Aigina) allow us to trace the production and distribution of vessels in their geographic dimension and to recognise supra-regional networks in the early Mycenaean Aegean. This affects fine ware pottery, cooking pots and storage vessels equally.¹⁸ Thus, the current archaeological research in all parts of the Peloponnese provides a broad basis for understanding social strategies of power and the mechanisms of supra-regional contacts in the early Late Bronze Age Aegean.

The conference on “(Social) Place and Space in Early Mycenaean Greece”, which took place at the Austrian Archaeological Institute at Athens, 5th–8th October 2016, pursued the regional approach with an explicit focus on the spatial and social aspects. The present proceedings bring together 29 contributions in a regional sequence. After the introduction to the theoretical framework and the general setting in the Aegean at the onset of the Late Bronze Age, thirteen papers are dedicated to the early Mycenaean remains in Triphylia, Messenia and Zakynthos Island. Thus, case studies of early Mycenaean tombs and residential sites in the southwestern Peloponnese form the first part of this volume and are supplemented by ten papers covering the other areas of the Peloponnese and adjacent islands (Lakonia and Kythera, Achaia, Arkadia, the Argolid, and Aigina). As will become clear in the following, one major aim was to contextualise the results of the recent archaeological research project at Kakovatos in Triphylia at regional as well as supra-regional levels and to compare developments in the southwestern Peloponnese with those in other regions. Our original idea of also integrating new information and results from excavations and research projects on the Central Greek mainland proved to be oversized in the context of a single conference. Many new projects in this area deal with important settlement sites (Mitrou,¹⁹ Kirrha²⁰) or exciting funeral evidence (Shaft Grave of Plasi at Marathon in Attica,²¹ Blue Stone Structure at Eleon in Boiotia,²² to name just a few). The early Mycenaean archaeology of the central Greek mainland and also the northern Peloponnese as well as the relations across the

¹⁶ E.g. Voutsaki 1995; Wright 1987.

¹⁷ For Mycenae, cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986.

¹⁸ E.g. Zerner 1993; Kalogeropoulos 1998; Broodbank et al. 2005; Zerner 2008; Gauß – Kiriati 2011; Gauß et al. 2015; Lindblom et al. 2015.

¹⁹ Mitrou: <<https://mitrou.utk.edu/>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020); Van de Moortel et al. 2019.

²⁰ Kirrha: <<https://www.efi.gr/index.php/en/recherche/sites-de-fouilles/grece-centrale/kirrha>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020); Lagia et al. 2016.

²¹ Plasi-Marathon: <<http://www.marathonexcavations.arch.uoa.gr/index.php/mycenaean-grav>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020).

²² Eleon: <<https://ebapexcavations.org>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020); Burns – Burke 2019.

Corinthian Gulf would deserve a conference of their own. Therefore, it is clear that this volume with its almost exclusive focus on the Peloponnese can only constitute a start that is worth continuing (Fig. 1). However, a final group of four papers covers aspects that are more general and explores questions of pottery production and consumption, issues of religious emulation and adaptation and the development of a mortuary landscape in early Mycenaean Greece.

The opening key note by James Wright foregrounds the various issues that were raised during the conference in different ways and in different case studies: the investigation of changing spatial distributions of archaeological data relating to residence, industry and storage, burial, transport and exchange, and worship creates the basis for tracing social and economic processes.

J. Wright stresses the importance of the mobility of people in creating opportunities for interaction and competition across space and time and enabling the acquisition of knowledge. Variations in mobility, and thus in access to knowledge, resources and contacts contribute to differentiation within social groups. Mobility promotes creating social networks, which are in turn important for the acquisition of (more) knowledge as well as of foreign goods and materials. Networks in the Aegean (on land and sea) have a long history reaching way back into the third millennium BC and even beyond. The material evidence of the early Mycenaean period illustrates exchange within the Aegean, but also extending across a wide geographical area from Europe across the Mediterranean to the East. The acquired knowledge and goods were strategically employed to bolster alliances and to consolidate social hierarchies. Interaction between the mainland and Crete may have taken place first via the Aegean islands, and only with the beginning of the Late Bronze Age increasingly became more directional. The islands of Aigina and Kythera, as well as the seaports in the Cyclades played a crucial role in mediating the contacts on various levels. Although there was no single trajectory for the emergence of the Mycenaean culture, the volcanic eruption of Thera marked a turning point in creating a new situation in the network of interactions between Crete and the mainland.

Triphylia and Zakynthos

Current archaeological research in the region of Triphylia on the west coast of the Peloponnese began with renewed interest in the site of Kakovatos in 2009 (Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou), which had become widely known through the discovery of three early Mycenaean tombs by Wilhelm Dörpfeld about 100 years earlier. On the hill near the tholos tombs, the recent excavations revealed the remains of a residential architectural complex with storage rooms and a substantial terrace wall of LH IIA–B date. The evaluation of the stratigraphy suggests that this complex in an elevated position above the plain was created in the LH I/IIA transition, and the storage facilities imply the control of dependent personnel and of part of the agricultural production by the resident group. The stratigraphic sequence of pottery deposits enables us to study the successive development of a repertoire of Mycenaean type vessels out of the regional MH tradition.

Contemporaneously with the architectural complex, the tholos tombs were built (de Vreé). The evaluation of the grave goods indicates a revised chronology for the earliest phase of use in LH I/IIA. The various categories of funeral gifts (weaponry, pieces of horse harnesses, jewellery of gold, amber, lapis lazuli) are either precious, custom-made objects or imported items and find their parallels in a small number of richly furnished tombs on the Greek mainland (e.g. Mycenae, Dendra, Peristeria, Pylos, Thorikos, and Volos). A limited group of peers of high social rank apparently used similar status symbols, although particularly close connections with Mycenae as well as with Peristeria and Pylos in Messenia are apparent. Moreover, the comparison of early Mycenaean tomb contexts suggests the existence of several distinct categories of funeral assemblages. Recurrent patterns of combinations of offerings point to certain rules governing the selection and deposition of grave goods according to social rank. Comparable assemblages suggest widely accepted social rules across a large geographical area and indicate a high degree of communication among the various groups of early Mycenaean Greece. High-ranking funerals

must have been special occasions that offered the opportunity for developing and entertaining a common set of values and normative behaviour.

At Kakovatos, imported pottery comes from the Argolid, Crete and Kythera and the south-eastern Aegean (Huber et al.) and illustrates the integration of the Kakovatos group into a wide network of contacts spanning the Peloponnese and the southern Aegean. Contacts with Messenia seem to have been close from early on and suggest that Triphylia shared the cultural connections of the southwestern Peloponnese. These regional and super-regional networks were responsible for the circulation and exchange of prestige items and valuable materials that were deposited with the elite burials of the period.

In terms of social space, the building of the residential complex and the tholos tombs of Kakovatos at the turn of LH I/IIA must have reshaped pre-existing communication patterns and social hierarchies within the micro-region. The construction of the largest tombs of the region required mobilisation of the workforce, which would have created and permanently manifested asymmetric social and economic conditions. The remote and elevated location of the site also had a distancing effect on the surrounding population (for example of Kleidi-Samikon), certainly enhanced by the unusual riches of foreign origin that were attached to the resident group of Kakovatos and ostentatiously displayed during burial ceremonies. Funerals will possibly have attracted people from near and far and offered an occasion for representing the resident group, but also for communal festivities enhancing social cohesion. Driving chariots and hunting offered means of controlling territory, although it is difficult to determine the area in northern Triphylia that was overseen by the Kakovatos residents, even if it seems likely that Kleidi-Samikon was part of it.

The burials of the Kakovatos group (at least in Tholos A) belonged to the highest category of funeral gifts according to Christine de Vreé, and burial assemblages of equal level are known

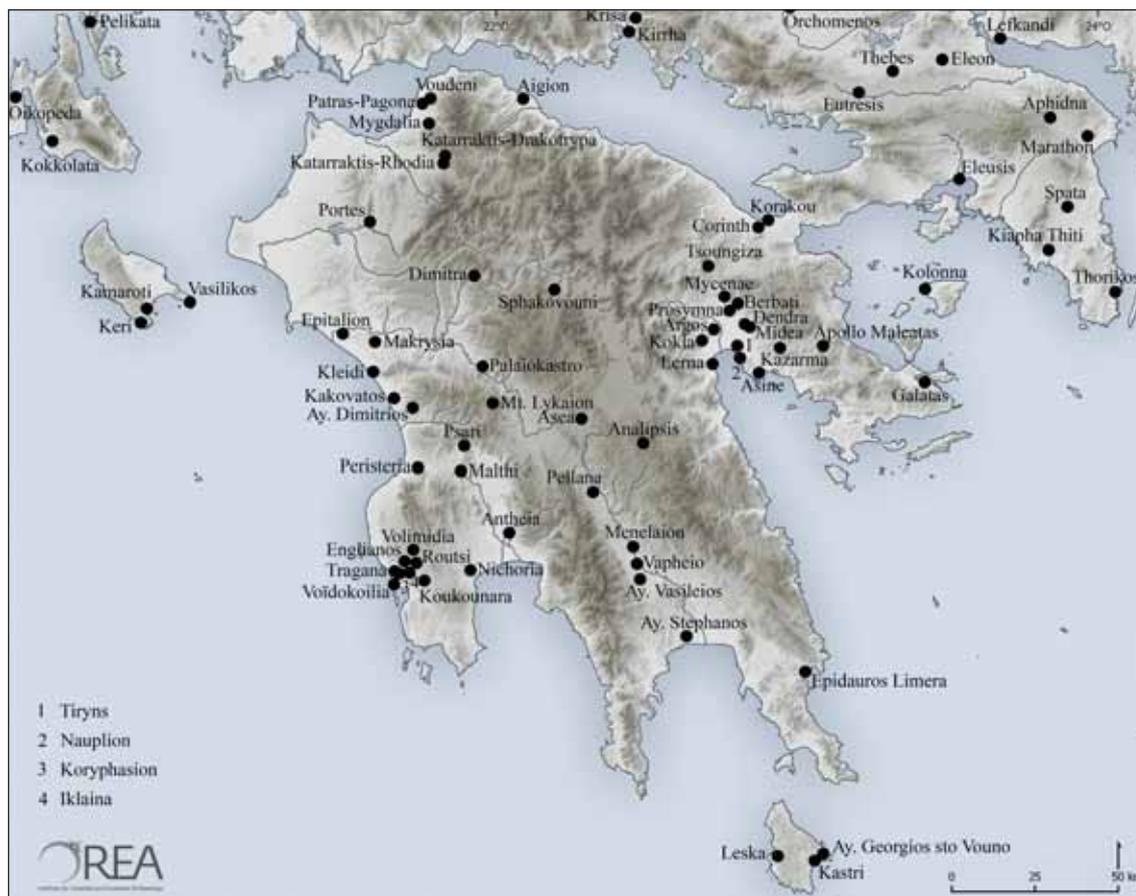


Fig. 1: Map of selected early Mycenaean sites mentioned in the present volume (M. Zavadil, B. Eder)

from Mycenae, Vapheio, Pylos, and Peristeria. Tombs with burials of lower categories seem to have often been spatially separated. In the case of Triphylia the large and richly furnished tholos tombs stood all by themselves, and the smaller built tombs with much more modest grave offerings were located at Kleidi-Samikon or at Makryisia (at a distance of 10 km and 15 km respectively as the crow flies). The evaluation of the Mycenaean pottery from the recent excavations at Kleidi (Nikolentzos – Moutzouridis) illustrates that this strategically located site was contemporaneously in use with Kakovatos, but seems to have been of hierarchically subordinate importance. However, it apparently survived the fall of Kakovatos, which was destroyed in LH IIB. The political geography must have changed again generating new patterns of communication.

Recent fieldwork on the island of Zakynthos (van Wijngaarden et al.) has produced data that can be compared with the adjacent islands and neighbouring regions of the mainland. The Ionian Islands apparently did not form a cultural homogeneous entity, but material evidence suggests different patterns of relations and areas of interaction. Early Mycenaean pottery is present on Zakynthos and has good parallels in Messenia, and this pattern seems to be mirrored in Triphylia, where LH I–IIA pottery can be found up to the Alpheios River, while it is virtually absent from the region north of the river in the later region of Elis (Huber et al.). These close connections are still reflected in the Linear B texts from Pylos, which are 200 years later, and contain onomastic references to the wider Alpheios region and Zakynthos.²³

Messenia

The construction of the new roof at the Palace of Nestor entailed archaeological research that in turn produced stratigraphical evidence of MH III–LH IIB date at Ano Englianios (Karapanagiotou et al.). From at least LH I, an architectural complex at the site of the later palace employed ashlar style masonry. Remains of a fortification wall also date to the early Mycenaean period. Some rooms were already decorated with painted plaster and indicate that wall paintings existed long before the decorative programmes of the LH IIIIB palace (Egan). Wall painting fragments of LH IIA date were previously known only from Mycenae, but similarly early examples are now attested in Pylos as well. Moreover, fragments from MH III/LH I deposits suggest the adoption of Minoan-style mural painting at the very beginning of the Mycenaean age in Pylos. Although the picture is still fragmentary, the site apparently featured a representative architectural complex from early on. The presence of Minoanising painted pottery and imports of coarse red micaceous vessels from Kythera confirms the Cretan cultural influence (Vitale et al.). The evaluation of a LH IIB pottery deposit at the site now allows us to illustrate the gradual decrease of MH Matt-Painted and Minoanising painted vessels and the consistent increase in Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery and the development of a Mycenaean pottery assemblage out of a multi-faceted repertoire of pottery traditions. Goblets, conical cups, kylikes, dippers, and basins as well as cooking jugs and tripods supplement miniature goblets and fragments of painted offering tables from this deposit, making up the composition of ceramic shapes as part of ritual equipment. They may be considered suggestive of a feasting assemblage, which seems to be contemporary in date with the destruction of Kakovatos in an advanced stage of LH IIB. At both sites the presence of one-handed angular kylikes seems to foreshadow developments of LH IIIA (see also Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou). Similarities and differences in the LH IIB pottery deposits from these sites offer interesting perspectives for future research. For instance, the absence or presence of Ephyraean goblets and conical cups may be the result of different cultural connections.

Contemporaneously with the representative building complex, the mortuary landscape at Pylos witnessed the building of the large tholos tombs that profoundly transformed the social space around Pylos (Murphy). The funeral activities physically created, expressed, and reinforced

²³ Eder 2011, 111–114; cf. more generally Bennet 2017 on Linear B texts and geography.

a new socio-political ideology within the related community. “(...) the investment in the mortuary arena through the construction of the tombs and the deposition of significant wealth therein indicates a break with the older order, a shift to separate into family groups, and an emphasis on achieved status.” The tomb of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ adds a new component to the traditional funeral landscape.²⁴ One may ask whether the choice to bury this special male person with his funeral assemblage in a deep shaft betrays something of his relation or non-relation to the rest of the elite group tombs in the immediate surroundings.

Four kilometres to the northeast as the crow flies, lies the large chamber tomb cemetery of Chora-Volimidia that was likewise founded in MH III/LH I (Vlachopoulos). Four different clusters comprised 34 tombs that belong to the earliest chamber tombs on the mainland with their architecture possibly imitating tholos tombs. Contemporary with the site at Ano Englianos, this cemetery must have developed with an associated settlement or habitation clusters. The tomb clusters may reflect groups of kinship. Because of their proximity, Ano Englianos and Chora-Volimidia and their social space should be considered together. In contrast to the rich funerary assemblages of the tombs of Pylos, the chamber tombs of Volimidia were rather poor. If we apply de Vreé’s categories of social rank, the people buried in the tombs of Volimidia belonged to lower levels of the social echelon than those of Pylos and represent an additional and complementary section of the population. Remarkably, as in the case of Kakovatos, the elite groups at Pylos appear to have aimed at separating themselves physically from other groups in life and death.

The relationship with Pylos is also a matter of discussion in the case of the settlement of Iklaina, less than 4 km to the southeast as the crow flies (Cosmopoulos). Later than the representative complex at Ano Englianos the earliest substantial remains at the site date to LH IIA–B, and the first monumental architecture belongs to LH IIIA2, when a massive platform in Cyclopean masonry was erected. The question remains, when the site was integrated into the realm of the Pylos polity.

In her study of the development of the tholos, Zavadil covers a wider area and includes the evidence from the southwestern Peloponnese. In MH III/LH I the few existing tholoi hardly show any considerable differences in terms of construction or in the choice of building materials. However, differences are expressed in the composition of the burial goods. By LH I not only the choice of grave goods, but also the size of the tombs had apparently become indicators of social distinction. With the wider distribution of the tholoi in LH II, the special design of the stomion and (sometimes) of the façade was introduced as a further means of differentiation in the area south of the Neda River. This does not apply to the region north of the Neda: as far as the poor state of preservation allows us to tell, the exceptionally rich tholoi of Kakovatos do not seem to have received any special architectural design. This may indicate that in northern Triphylia the competitive employment of burial architecture may not have been considered necessary, or the chronology of the tombs predates this stage of additional aggrandisement. Notwithstanding these differences, these richly furnished tholoi may have been the burial places of the chiefs of small territories, who had probably already begun to rise in some regions in MH III/LH I.

The creation of visible markers in the shape of tumuli formed one of the primary display strategies in MH Messenia, when regional variability reflects the lack of supra-regional interaction and competition among elites (Pettrakis). Both Michaela Zavadil and Vassilis Pettrakis suggest that social stratification was already present in the MH, even if it was only expressed more or less cautiously in material terms. There was an inherent relationship between tumuli and the development of the tholos tombs, both of which manifested externally through a mound of earth. In the Middle/Late Bronze Age transition, profound changes took place in the funeral landscape of the southwestern Peloponnese with the emergence of novel distinctive features in the architecture of tombs and of various types of built tombs including the tholos. The new tholos form had an impact on other regions and contributed to the creation of supra-regionally shared features marking an elitist

²⁴ Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Davis – Stocker 2018.

tomb architecture. In addition to the similarities within the repertoire of burial gifts, the spreading of common types of tombs bears witness to the intense interaction among elite groups of the early Mycenaean mainland. Moreover, as Yannis Galanakis (see below ‘General Aspects’) makes clear, convergences developed between the architecture of tholos and chamber tombs throughout the Mycenaean mainland.

Lakonia and Kythera

Since 2008, the new excavations at Ayios Vasileios in the central Eurotas Valley have revealed the scattered remains of a representative architectural complex on the one hand and a group of early Mycenaean burials on the other. The North Cemetery forms the early Mycenaean extramural burial ground of the settlement and was established at some point in the Middle/Late Bronze Age transition (Voutsaki et al.). The realm of the deceased was clearly separated from that of the living and the tombs manifested a strategy of representing a distinct social group transcending the smaller group of the family or household. Stone-built cist tombs form the majority of the graves, which vary in respect of the size and quality of the selected material, and one of them stands out due to the light blue colour of the carefully cut schist slabs. The blue colour associated with tomb structures brings the rectangular Blue Stone Structure at Eleon in Boiotia into mind, which separated eleven tombs of the early Mycenaean period from a larger burial area.²⁵ A built tomb of unrivalled size contained more than 25 burials and forms some kind of intermediate stage in the development towards larger built tombs with multiple burials. It exemplifies the phase of experimentation with tomb architecture that can be seen in almost every region at the very beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The burials in the North Cemetery are generally poor in offerings, which are usually confined to a few, if any vases at all, and differences in wealth remain minimal. However, variations in the size and the quality of construction of the tombs imply differences in the mobilisation of labour and increasing differentiation in mortuary treatment. This is characteristic of the transformation of mortuary practices on the southern Greek mainland at the onset of the Mycenaean era.

To the southwest of the cemetery, two porticoes flanking a large courtyard provide evidence for studying the foundation system of the residential complex and thus offer invaluable insights into the origins of Mycenaean palatial architecture (Vasilogamvrou et al.). The foundations of the porticoes served at the same time as retaining walls with two faces. They supported a system of terrace platforms and were probably constructed in LH IIIA2 Early. Several differences exist between the terraces of Ayios Vasileios and later palatial and earlier defensive terraces on the Greek mainland, and the foundation terraces of Mansion 2 at the Menelaion, which were built almost at the same time, provide the best parallels in regional terms. For some details of the construction there are Cretan parallels that suggest a Minoan influence on the architectural design of the early palace in Ayios Vasileios.

Because of its geographical position, the island of Kythera has often been considered key in connecting the southern Peloponnese with Crete. However, recent fieldwork in the course of the Kythera Island Project has helped us to gain a better understanding of how Kytherans might have operated between the palatial societies of Minoan Crete and the diverse groups emerging on the Mycenaean mainland (Kiriati – Broodbank). During the Neopalatial period, the landscape of Kythera experienced a dramatic increase in the number of sites across the island combined with a growth of the settlement at Kastri and the establishment of two Minoan-type peak sanctuaries reflecting a thorough process of Minoanisation. While Kastri and the surrounding area proved to constitute the centre of specialised production and consumption, the rural landscape was characterised by small farmsteads, which may have been responsible for the supply of agricultural goods

²⁵ Eleon: cf. above n. 22.

to Kastri. Two broad groups of pottery fabrics – Mudstone-tempered and Red Micaceous – are associated with the local pottery production exhibiting Minoanising features. Both main Kytheran pottery classes apparently arrived on the mainland, and even potters from Kythera may have worked temporarily or more permanently in certain places in the Peloponnese, and thus became part in the transfer of some Minoan technologies.

Achaia and Arkadia

The MH III/LH I transition was also the period of the establishment of the settlement of Mygdalia in the Patras region. Current excavations provide a perspective into the early Mycenaean period of the area, which is mainly known for a series of ‘warrior burials’ of the Postpalatial period of the later 12th and early 11th century BC (Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis). Located on a hill with a view of the Patras Plain, habitation spread across three terraces and shows clear evidence of use from LH I/IIA onwards. A strong retaining wall in the southeast supported the lowest terrace, where a large house of 20 m in length with substantial walls was covered by a destruction level. It contained an assemblage of bronze knives, tweezers, needles and other objects. Pottery dates the destruction to LH IIIA1 Late/IIIA2 Early and seems to mark the abandonment of Mygdalia. The plundering of the nearby tholos in roughly the same period suggests a period of crisis in the region at the onset of the Palatial era. Reoccupation of the site in the Palatial period was apparently limited.

The survey of sites in Arkadia (Salavoura) offers welcome evidence for Bronze Age habitation in the mountainous heart of the Peloponnese, although prehistoric Arkadia never seems to have formed a regional unit of its own. River valleys opened routes of communication within the Peloponnese and linked the interior to the developments of other regions. The most prominent site is that of Analipsis featuring the only tholos in the region and elaborate finds such as palatial jars (LH IIA–B/IIIB1). The site lies on an inland route leading from the Eurotas Valley into the northeastern Peloponnese. In LH II, the first chamber tombs were cut at Palaiokastro in the upper Alpheios River valley, which connected the northwestern with the southern Peloponnese. The imitation of the roof of a tholos with a central cavity at the top forms a feature that first seems to appear in the chamber tomb cemetery of Volimidia (cf. Vlachopoulos) and also in Pellana in Lakonia and illustrates the distribution of major trends in tomb architecture across a wide geographical area. Near Palaiokastro, the ash altar of Zeus on Mount Lykaion provides the most interesting finds of recent years, where ritual activity seems to have started in LH IIB and attracted people from the surrounding communities to join religious festivities.

Argolid and Aigina

It was our deliberate choice not to dedicate entire contributions only to the emergence of Mycenae, Tiryns, and Midea, the later palatial centres in the Argolid,²⁶ within the framework of this conference, because these debates tend to overshadow the developments that took place in other sites of the region. However, references to these major sites are always present when discussing the early Mycenaean evidence from Asine, Argos, Kazarma, Dendra, and Aigina.²⁷

The diverging trajectories of different communities in the early Mycenaean Argolid become evident when the burial record of Asine is compared with that of Mycenae (Voutsaki). The various aspects of burial practices, correlations and variations in time and space manifest social relationships and networks. In MH III–LH II noticeable patterns of variation exist among the commu-

²⁶ Cf. recent volumes summarising the work in the northeastern Peloponnese: Voutsaki 2010; Kissas – Niemeier 2013; Schallin – Tournavitou 2015.

²⁷ For a discussion of the role of Aigina, see Tartaron 2010.

nities of the Argolid in terms of location and types of tombs. With the move to the extramural cemetery at Asine and the use of a tumulus with a few richer offerings, the burial group differentiated itself from the rest of the community. However, mortuary practices then remain remarkably homogeneous and comparatively stable well into LH I, albeit some variation is apparent in the burial gifts. In LH I a single inhumation with a dagger and 14 vases exemplifies an attempt at distinction, although the cist burial still seems to conform with the local tradition. After LH I the East Cemetery declines and LH IIA marks the start of the chamber tomb cemetery on Barbouna Hill. By contrast, the first burials of Grave Circle B at Mycenae already combined traditional practices with innovative features in terms of the tomb architecture and burial gifts. Material connections lead to Aigina, Crete and the Cyclades favouring the creation of new norms. Ostentation, elaboration and innovation increased in the course of the use of Grave Circle B that correlated with the expanding networks of the group at Mycenae. Locally different micro-traditions characterise the mortuary practices of the two sites in the Argolid at the onset of the Mycenaean era. Developments were neither uniform nor linear, and Mycenae was apparently not representative of the entire region.

Mycenae also comes into play, when assessing the development of Argos, which was one of the most important Middle Bronze Age settlements in the Argive Plain (Philippa-Touchais et al.). The MH period witnessed varying patterns of progress and setback of individual settlements in the region. The case of Argos exemplifies again the assumption that the history of the region was probably more complex than generally believed. While Argos experienced significant growth of the settlement on the Aspis hilltop and the construction of funeral tumuli on the plain in MH II, the situation in Mycenae seems to have remained unchanged until its spectacular rise at the end of the Middle Bronze Age, which manifested itself in the establishment of Grave Circle B. By that period Argos underwent a period of severe changes, if not of decline: the settlement on the Aspis started to extend into the Lower Town (the former burial ground) and was abandoned by LH II, when settlement activities were confined to the plain. Some of the inhabitants of the Aspis may even have emigrated to Mycenae and participated in her ascent. Lerna was probably the most important port of the Argive Plain for most of the MH, but it experienced similar developments to Argos. With LH I, Nauplion emerged as a new harbour site and Lerna seems to have rapidly declined by LH IIB.

On the road connecting the central Argive Plain with the eastern Argolid lies the tholos of Kazarma indicating the importance of this route in the early Mycenaean period (Keramidas et al.). Most likely built in LH IIA, it remained in use at least throughout LH IIB. Three shafts with intact burials contained rich funeral gifts in the form of amethyst jewellery, seals, precious metal vessels and a range of weapons that seem to conform to the standard elite burial assemblage of the period. The idea of an independent centre competing with its peers in the Argive Plain has already been abandoned by Sofia Voutsaki in favour of the concept of a dependent and allied partner of Mycenae. "(...) the deeply hierarchical distribution of goods, and foremost the temporal and spatial patterns in their circulation leaves little doubt: I believe that the distribution of *a few* valuable goods in *selected* sites in the *eastern* part of the plain does not imply loss or absence of central control, but rather that creating and maintaining alliances was a key element in the process of centralization. Mycenae, the emerging power, did not want to prevent everyone from acquiring valuable items, but rather to control the process of distribution of insignia; more precisely, she wanted to promote her allies and to thereby ensure their loyalty, to exclude her rivals and thereby cunningly pave their downfall in the competitive arena. I therefore suggest that valuables were not acquired independently, but rather by cultivating links with the Mycenae elites (...)"²⁸

While the archaeological evidence seems to indicate a progressive centralisation towards Mycenae in LH II,²⁹ Dendra is one of the sites where the tholos is still in use in LH IIIA1–2.

²⁸ Voutsaki 2010, 103.

²⁹ Voutsaki 2001; Voutsaki 2010.

The undisturbed burials discovered in 1926 provide invaluable information about the composition and the quality of the grave goods, which regularly belonged to the equipment of elite burials (Konstantinidi-Syvridi). The funerary gifts of the male burial, conventionally addressed as ‘king’, consisted of gold, silver and bronze vessels, jewellery and seals, as well as several swords of horned and cruciform types with gold-plated hilts and pommels, knives and spearheads. Similar assemblages are known from contemporary tombs in the Argolid, Messenia and Crete. Eleni Konstantinidi-Syvridi addresses technical aspects of the finds, e.g. the composition of inlaid materials on metal vessels and of finger rings made of different precious metals. The production of this type of custom-made artefact as well as highly specialised techniques such as ‘gold embroidery’ did not survive into the Palatial period, when production of jewellery and other valuable items was subjected to more industrialised processes. Did that have anything to do with the fall of Knossos?

When compared to the developments in the Argolid, the island of Aigina exemplifies the differences in the processes of Mycenaeanisation that occurred throughout the mainland (Gauß). The fortified settlement of Kolonna was the major site in the Saronic Gulf in the Early and Middle Bronze Age featuring a large building complex as a potential administrative centre. Pottery is the main, but not only evidence for contacts to Minoan Crete and the Cyclades. Mycenaean pottery makes its appearance in the first stages of the Late Bronze Age, while Aiginetan Matt-Painted, bichrome-painted pottery and kitchenwares are widely distributed in the Aegean. Only by LH IIIA had this picture changed: Mycenaean pottery styles and related forming techniques now dominated the ceramic assemblage. Mainly Aiginetan cooking pots continued to be produced and exported in noteworthy numbers during the Mycenaean Palatial and early Postpalatial period. Almost symbolically, a potter’s kiln had taken the place of the monumental building complex.

General Aspects

The production and consumption of pottery forms one of the key topics in the study of the MH/LH transition and early Mycenaean period. There are marked differences between the regions of the Peloponnese in terms of MH pottery production and consumption, and one would assume that they followed different trajectories to becoming Mycenaean (Dickinson). However, some general trends can be observed in the increasing preference for light-coloured wares, the continuation of the traditional shapes of kantharoi and stemmed goblets as well as the production of small shapes such as cups and small jugs. Minoanising pottery appears in varying quantities in the southern and northeastern Peloponnese including lustrous decorated wares. Within the context of fine Minoanising pottery, the evolution of the Mycenaean decorated wares took place, most probably in the Argolid from where it spread to Lakonia and Messenia. There seems to be no trace of an independent or parallel LH I development.³⁰ The patterns of Mycenaean decorated pottery started to follow almost entirely Minoan traditions, although there is some variation in the selection of the motifs. LH I pottery, especially cups, travelled as far as the northern, southern and eastern Aegean and to the Gulf of Naples in the west. Stylistic innovation seems to have emanated from the Argolid for the greater part of the existence of the Mycenaean ceramic style.

Slightly earlier and contemporary with the LH I pottery style, polychrome decoration was a very popular, although comparatively short-lived feature of the fine ware pottery production on the Greek mainland and the adjacent islands. Several different regions from southern Thessaly to Boiotia, Aigina, and the Cycladic Islands (Keos, Melos, Thera) are the origin of more or less widely distributed classes of bichrome matt-painted pottery (Lindblom – Rutter). When the corresponding classes of Cycladic origin experienced their decline, Aiginetan Bichrome was becoming popular throughout the central Aegean and was widely exported to the northeastern Peloponnese,

³⁰ Cf. however, Lindblom et al. 2015.

central Greece and the Cyclades during LH I. It is different in several respects from the contemporaneous Boiotian Bichrome, which was produced in a number of places in central Greece and encompassed a complete tableware assemblage rather than the much narrower subset of shapes characterising Aiginetan Bichrome. At the same time there were also other polychrome ceramic classes, including the Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class, known from sites in the Corinthia, the Argolid and the Saronic Gulf, which is closely related to the Mycenaean ceramic style of LH I in terms of shape and decoration. Local southern Lakonian and Messenian classes complement the varied picture of bichrome and trichrome pottery production. The restrictive repertoire of decorative patterns leads Michael Lindblom and Jeremy Rutter to the assumption that “(t)here must have been a virtual taboo in Helladic culture on creative artisanal expression that only the craftsmen imported into the service of Mycenae’s shaft-grave elite at the end of the MH period were ultimately able to break up (...)”.

Minoan models had a formative influence on the religious iconography of the early Mycenaean period, when figurative art developed after the essentially aniconic Middle Bronze Age (Weilharter). Religious motifs and symbols were employed in constructing an ideologically founded identity of elites in support of their claims to power. In the Shaft Graves of Mycenae, for example rhyta, ‘sacral knots’ or golden cut-outs in the shape of a tripartite shrine or a double axe framed by the horns of a bull feature among the ritual equipment and religious symbols that originated in Minoan Crete. However, the selection of religious objects and motifs seems to have taken place subsequently under certain criteria, since in some cases the adoption had lasting effects. In this sense, the figurative motifs and cult objects could have been employed in enhancing and promoting already existing cult practices. For example, libations had probably been part of MH religious traditions, but the performance underwent a significant transformation as specialised vessels (rhyta) of sometimes costly materials added the dimension of symbolic display. The continuous production of such rhyta documents in an exemplary manner the long-lasting effects of the encounter between the Minoan and Mycenaean cultural worlds. The adoption of cult implements and also of figurative illustrations by Mycenaean mainlanders seems to have been rather selective and primarily guided by their own religious concepts and ideas.

In the formative period of the Mycenaean culture, tombs also underwent a significant transformation, and many papers in this volume highlight the experimental character of new architectural tomb types. The tholos and chamber tombs are the most prominent among the new emerging types that progressively experience an increase in size and elaboration (Galanakis). Shared cultural codes and craft practices characterised the development of both types and point to multi-scale networks of interaction in the Aegean. They had a similar layout serving multiple burials and creating performative space for ritual action. Chamber tombs could be as monumental as tholoi from LH I onwards, and in LH II–III some outstanding examples in Mycenae and Thebes display impressive long dromoi and dramatic façades achieving a similar impression to that of tholoi. The blending of tholos and chamber tomb architecture becomes manifested in true hybrid constructions as in the case of the Kokla tholos in the Argolid. At least in LH IIA, the social significance of a tomb did not depend on whether it was stone-built or rock-cut. A few monumental rock-cut hybrid tholos-chamber tombs may have been considered as representative as the equally large built tholos. As part of this competition in elaborating tomb architecture the quite distinct type of chamber tomb with rectangular design and pitched or flat roof, long dromos and deep façade emerged, perhaps emulating house architecture. The progressive standardisation in funerary architecture across the Greek mainland reveals the interactive development of common standards and codes of social differentiation and testifies to an ideology based on ranked descent.

Conclusion

The structuring of social relationships is intimately linked to the environment, because political, economic and social processes take place in space. Social space was highly contested in the early Mycenaean period. We were able to follow the processes that transformed the funerary landscapes and reshaped the social differentiation of the Middle Bronze Age societies of the Greek mainland. The location and the design of the tomb architecture played an important role in the creation of new social structures and a highly visible built environment. The residential architecture is much less well known, but at least we have gained an insight into the concepts of design and form of some places, which already, from the early Mycenaean period, both brought about and reflected the social stratification of society. Minoan influence is present in the design of architecture, early frescoes in Pylos, but especially in the production of pottery, and Kythera's mediating role should not be underestimated. A variety of regional trends characterise the early Late Bronze Age phases, and experimentation with different designs at different locations illustrates the fundamental atmosphere of departure that is equally apparent in the southern, southwestern and northeastern Peloponnese. However, at the same time, intensive contacts prevailed between the individual regions of the Greek mainland, which was already the case in the preceding MH period. Mobility of goods and thus of people (craftsmen, intermarriage, political alliances, etc.) between the regions of the mainland and the Aegean islands (and beyond) was part of the story. From LH I onwards, convergences become tangible in material evidence. These concern the distribution of tholos and chamber tomb, which were innovations created in the southwestern Peloponnese, but also the development of standards in elite burials establishing different categories of rank. The development of the Mycenaean pottery style took place in a pluralistic environment of a multitude of pottery styles probably in the northeastern Peloponnese, from where it spread to the rest of the mainland and even beyond. At the same time, many regional traditions continued to exist for a long time, it was virtually a period of the 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen' ("the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous").³¹ LH IIIA certainly again marked a turning point, when after the fall of Knossos, palaces were established on the mainland which must have been the driving forces behind the remodelling of the early Mycenaean (social) space in the Aegean.

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³¹ Cf. Bloch 1977.

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Illustration

Fig. 1: Map of selected early Mycenaean sites mentioned in the present volume (M. Zavadil, B. Eder)

KEYNOTE

Mobility and Agency in the Context of Space and Place in Early Mycenaean Greece

*James C. Wright*¹

Abstract: This paper outlines an approach to interpreting the archaeological evidence that is fundamental to an understanding of the origins of Mycenaean society. It discusses this process from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age through the founding of the palatial states on the mainland about 1400 BC.

Keywords: Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, Minoan, Mycenaean, mobility, space, mortuary, settlement, religion, social organisation, elites

Introduction

In this contribution I will outline an approach to interpreting the archaeological evidence that I believe is fundamental to an understanding of the origins of Mycenaean society. I will discuss this process from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age through the founding of the palatial states on the mainland about 1400 BC. In the interest of brevity, I will omit detailed consideration of the evidence, which deserves a monograph, and only lay out a framework for such an extended study.

I begin with a brief review of the state of affairs during the latter half of the 3rd millennium BC and through the transitional period at the end of the millennium into the beginning phase of the Middle Bronze Age. I do this to explain the evolving nature of interaction among communities across the Aegean archipelago, specifically the mainland of central and southern Greece, the Cyclades and offshore islands of southern Greece, and Crete. At the turn of the third millennium change in interaction throughout this area is driven by external developments, such as the introduction of sailing vessels and access to the copper resources on Cyprus, and also by internal developments, notably the rise of the first palaces on Crete and the position of key settlements among the islands such that they became *entrepôts*.

These developments demonstrate the necessity of recognising mobility as a primary concept that enlivens the archaeological record and exposes the social processes that underlie the formation of leadership among many different communities on the mainland and the islands during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. These processes may be documented by examining the changing spatial distributions of standard archaeological information that correlates with socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-ideological behaviours: residence, industry and storage, burial, transport and exchange, and worship. Each of these has geographical correlations that expand from the household outwards through the community and its territory into a wider world that ultimately falls within the embrace of a culturally specific view of the cosmos. Such an approach enables a systematic, diachronic and multi-spatial examination of the evidence within a dynamic model that accounts for our current state of knowledge of the evidence.

The incontrovertible fact of the employment of Linear B, the earliest written form of the Greek language, for the administration of Knossos immediately after the end of the Neopalatial era, provides a chronological and historical juncture that demands explanation in terms of the

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developments of the final phase in the rise of Mycenaean society. This paper ends with a suggestion of how the changing relationships between emerging leaders on the mainland and those at Knossos led to the founding of the palaces and the palace-administered territories of the Mycenaean era on the mainland of Greece.

The Framework

Today there is consensus that there was no single trajectory for the emergence of the civilisation we call Mycenaean. Instead, individuals and groups led the way forward according to how they responded to local circumstances and through a variety of engagements with the external world. The archaeological evidence for these activities is well-known but often misrepresented in terms of unifying concepts like Mycenaean and Palace Society. Their use signals a focus on the apex of the phenomenon of polity formation at key centres of Middle and early Late Minoan Crete, in the Cyclades, and in southern and central Greece. Fundamental as they are for describing the civilisation we term Mycenaean, as a result of such a focus they overshadow the important societal developments in areas such as Achaia, Elis, Triphylia, and Arkadia in the Peloponnese; Laureotiki and Marathon in Attica; Phokis, Lokris, Phthiotis, Euboea; Thessaly, and Magnesia in central Greece. These regions represent a diversity that is often referred to as the periphery of the Mycenaean world but they are vitally important at the beginning of the Mycenaean era (MH–LH IIB) and at its end (LH IIIB–C) for understanding the dynamics of relations to the Adriatic, the Balkans, Anatolia and the southeast Aegean, Cyprus, and the eastern and western Mediterranean. Likewise, during the acme of the Mycenaean palaces these regions played significant roles that remain under-appreciated (though no longer under-studied) without having become concentrated, urban centres like Thebes and Mycenae.

In line with the theme of the conference, I understand spatial theory to be inseparable from the sociological study of the old problem framed by Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx on how historical processes shaped the lives of humans and thus influenced the formation of society. The structuring of social relationships is a continuous historical process tied to the physical past and constrained by the environment as argued by Braudel.² Landscapes are shaped by humans interacting within them and for sedentary societies are marked outwards from the primary place(s) of residence to the most distant ones travelled to. Properly speaking, the *longue durée* is a view that takes into account environmental constraint as a variable. Technical responses to these constraints permit societies, within limits, to contend with them. With the establishment of states there occurs a critical shift in such responses. This is because the state exists to manage increasingly larger aggregates of population, territory, and political-economic relations they have to contend with, and also develops administrative solutions to the increasing diversity of its population in socio-economic and socio-political terms. States and empires are not better than other societal forms, they are rather institutions created to cope with these larger scale challenges.

Mobility

The concept of mobility is deployed in this analysis because it is a primary characteristic of human occupation of archipelagos. Mobility implies human agency in terms of decisions about movement, but mobility is also driven by nature in terms of available resources and the changing circumstances of their access. Mobility is also social because of interrelationships (or networks) that transfer knowledge and values across landscapes and between generations. The concept of agency employed here is not individual agency, though the role of individuals is recognised, but rather it

² Braudel 1958.

is social agency, because, as Marx argued in the introduction to his *Grundrisse*, individuals do not exist outside of social groups, which define their individuality and extend it towards identity.³

Mobility is foremost to consider because it is how biological necessities are met and the necessities of culture acquired.⁴ In social terms, mobility is necessary for our mental faculties, as mobility enables the acquisition of knowledge. Thus the resources readily available in the immediate and wider surroundings are knowable and exploitable for the production of material culture. Equally, knowledge of them is transferable from generation to generation. Hence mobility is an act of agency. It enables humans to create culture. On the other hand, a lack of mobility is constraining; both nature and agency play roles here, since the one naturally inhibits while the other does so socially.

Mobility across a wide geography gives access to exoteric knowledge and for both social and biological reasons not all persons or groups are able to travel widely outside their home base. Hence mobility as travel contributed to differentiation within social groups.⁵ Mobility is thus a concept by which different standpoints can be differentiated, for example, infancy and childhood, adulthood, and gender. This is especially apparent when considering how travel advances social networks, as distant travellers not only learn about exotic resources and how to navigate different geographies but establish social relationships that connect them with different social groups and their different social and material cultures. These networks are intergenerational and vitally important for maintaining exoteric knowledge through times of stress when mobility may be constrained and infrequent. Finally, mobility is demonstrable through material acquisition. In the same sense in which a souvenir legitimises travel, the acquisition of a foreign item may authenticate a claim of distant travel and it may also legitimise claims of differentiation by virtue of the resources necessary to support such displays of mobility. The same is true for the knowledge gained, but such things as technical and navigational knowledge are of special importance, since it is necessary for maintaining the social links and, insofar as it is handed down from generation to generation, such knowledge connects people and places through the troughs of times of stress and dislocation.

Space and Place

Space and place are simply terms of speech denoting what is around us in the most general and limitless sense (space) and in the specific and demarcated sense (place). Hence space is made visible or is felt in relation to place, which marks out a defined area.⁶ These distinctions are meaningless except as they are activated by processes through time occurring as a result of human movement and human manipulation of nature. In the first instance then, space is about the relationship between individuals and their social groups to the cosmos, while in the second that relationship is materialised as place through practices that are embodied, framed through movement, and secured through construction using the materials of nature. In other words, places are the fashioned environment, whether a mound in a landscape, a trail, a building, or even an article of clothing (as something inhabited). As such they structure the experiences of those who use them purposely and for those who encounter them afterwards.⁷ This diachronic aspect of materialised social and physical ‘landscapes’ is fundamental for understanding change and adaptation. For archaeologists this is easy to understand since it is a prime directive of archaeological theory that we identify and explain materialised cultural practices as spatio-temporal relationships, that is as *contexts*.

³ Elster 1986, 3–20.

⁴ Purcell 1990; Horden – Purcell 2000, 123–172, *passim*; Broodbank 2000, 89–106, *passim*; Hahn – Weiss 2013; Kiriatzi – Knappett 2016.

⁵ Helms 1988.

⁶ Casey 1996.

⁷ Tilley 1994.

Contexts cannot be interpreted or understood except as they are traced in process. Social theory introduces archaeology to the people of the past actively living their lives and actively engaged in group practices that constitute and reconstitute their material and social worlds.

Occupation and Settlement

Occupation and settlement are by their very nature spatial.⁸ People inhabit and exploit landscapes. Their knowledge of them is handed down through generations, hence names and stories attach to places within them. There are many dimensions to the occupation of landscapes, from seasonal hunting and gathering to nomadism to sedentary occupation for agriculture and industry. The earliest occupation then exists within a territory, whose outlines and uses are adapted to support settlement. The changing location of settlement needs explanation in terms of the internal dynamics of changing resource availability (largely driven by the environment) and need (largely driven by biology), and equally according to culture, which consists of such things as cosmological and religious concepts and the impact of external political economies. Within a socially defined territory there may exist one or more settlements and they may share common space among them. How common space is defined and utilised presents specific problems for archaeological survey, but also interesting challenges for interpretation as common space is redefined over time. Likewise, common space may exist between territories and it will change as territories expand and contract and, especially, as they compete with each other. Finally, the spatial structure of settlements is important to understand as a reflection of the social relations that exist within the settlement. Over time these may reinforce a sense of the durability of the community or change in ways that correspond to evolving political relations, including imposition or merely emulation of external concepts of organisation, structure, and form. Obviously the evolution of settlement organisation and the types and changing forms of residential and other structures are very important to trace through time.

Mortuary Space and Place

Another form of occupation is mortuary space and in many ways it connects all the aspects of human activity.⁹ Mortuary activities mediate between the living and the dead and in so doing they mediate between the living and the cosmos insofar as the deceased are understood as returning to nature. The locations of mortuary activity are direct expressions of an inhabitation and marking of the social space and the landscape. The deceased may be strewn about in meaningful ways, such as we know from Aborigine practices, or emplaced in edifices that mark the landscape to influence how others, including many subsequent generations, use and understand the landscape.¹⁰ Because the dead are linked to the living over generations, we tend to think that the material expressions of mortuary behaviour may reflect the structure of social relations. Ethnographic examples caution us to be careful in asserting these associations, and we understand that mortuary behaviour may tell us as much if not more about the actions of the burying group than about the deceased. The spatial correlations, therefore, are limitless, extending from placement in the landscape to the minutest placements of objects around and on the deceased and throughout the burial. At some level, these spatial relations may tell us about biological, social, economic, political, and spiritual relations – all of which might be renegotiated at the time of burial. Often we may need to rely on locations of mortuary practices as proxies for settlements. Always it is necessary to study mortuary practices and their spatial distributions over time.

⁸ Clarke 1972.

⁹ Parker Pearson 2000.

¹⁰ Littleton – Allen 2007.

Religious and Cosmological Space and Place

Closely related to the mortuary sphere is the cosmological, which we classify as a series of rituals that may group into a form we call religion, but which, again, ethnographic examples caution us not to project from our own deeply biased notions.¹¹ Fundamentally religious practices are mediations to the cosmos and therefore deeply embedded in nature, identified as meaningful in terms of sky, earth, water, light and dark, cold and warm, wet and dry, and to the abundant varieties of life that inhabit the lived-in landscape. Naturally these have specific places that humans mark out and populate with spirits. The mediating role of ancestors to the cosmos, and the roles of animals and plants are important in ritual and its representation through myth and legend. Hence we regard representation as an abstraction of spatial relations and we seek to recognise the natural foci, often marked out or built up as loci of ritual and worship. These loci must be sought as expressions of the senses: sound, smell, image, and material form. They may be located on or around places marked out by others who preceded and who are recognised either through some intergenerational knowledge or through fictionalised legitimating legend or myth, which are frequently authenticated through material demonstrations. As with everything else, the places of religious expression mark out landscapes and communities within them, and we know they may connect different communities and different regions through communalities and differences.

The Emergence of the Mycenaean World

The foregoing are theoretical and methodological considerations of how the application of social and spatial analyses need be considered when thinking about the problem of the rise of what we term ‘Mycenaean civilisation’. Because the subject of this conference is specifically the ‘early Mycenaean’ world, I want to offer an abstract and idealised map of it in two primary arenas. The first I term ‘the spatial geography of a trans-egalitarian society’ (Fig. 1), and the second ‘the world of the Centre Man/Man-of-Renown’ (Fig. 2). I use the term ‘trans-egalitarian’ as defined by Brian Hayden in order to capture a level of social organisation that is more fluid than the early notions of Band and Tribe and the contentious term of ‘chief’.¹² Trans-egalitarian societies encompass communities with minimal social differentiation through the inception of leadership all the way to its formation into a durable, probably heritable status that would encompass the emergence of a stratified level of organisation. Leadership is generally of factions (groups of kin and non-kin) within a community and potentially among different communities.¹³ Such leaders may become Big Men who seek, through self-aggrandisement and promotion of their faction, to secure stable positions of power over their community and other communities.¹⁴

The spatial geography of trans-egalitarian societies (Fig. 1) is defined by a territory within which is the Home Base, the primary place of residence. It consists of a population made up of families, kin, non-kin, and sometimes slaves – all of whom form a labour pool that is necessary for the fundamentals of the economy. The basis of the economy is agriculture, with produce from gardens, middle and outer lands, where crops are sown and harvested or gathered and where animals forage and graze. Throughout this territory are natural resources available for exploitation. Mobility and geographic knowledge of this territory are generally shared by the community. Agricultural activities extend from the inner area of the home base outwards to the farthest extension of the territory – the boundary area that defines some geographic limit in real and conceptual terms.¹⁵ Coursing through these dimensions are social networks that are defined by such things as

¹¹ Sahlins 1996.

¹² Hayden 1995; Hayden 2001; Pauketat 2007, 4–6, *passim*.

¹³ Brumfiel 1994.

¹⁴ Sahlins 1963; Wright 2004b, 70–76.

¹⁵ See Clarke 1972; on cycles of activity that have spatial implications see Bourdieu 1990, 200–270.

Spatial Geography of a Trans-egalitarian Society:
The World of the Center-Man

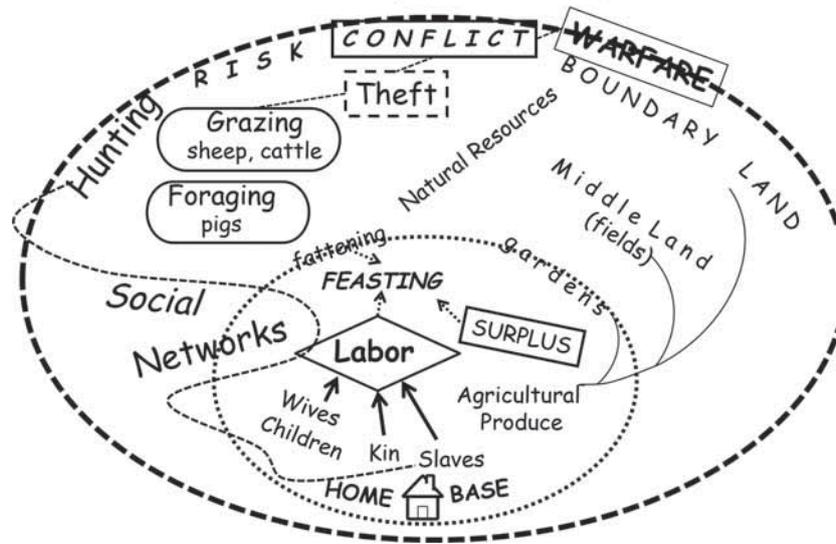


Fig. 1: The spatial geography of a trans-egalitarian society (J. Wright)

different kinds of labour, procurement, and activity. Some of these are defined by status roles, by gender and age, and by other relationships. Herding, as an activity that occurs in the outward territory, entails both a geographic knowledge and a degree of risk, such as theft of animals. Hunting is another activity that can be intensely social as a group activity, presumably of males, though it can be solitary. In any case, whether carried out by male or female, in groups or alone, hunting has a demonstrable result in the sharing of the catch and the social credit of acknowledged skill, both in the fashioning of weapons or traps, their deployment and use, and in the sharing of meat. Ethnography is important in understanding the many dimensions of hunting, for example how kill sites and the sharing of meat play out in the formation of social relationships and how skill can be exploited for social differentiation.¹⁶ On the basis of the artefactual remains of the Bronze Age in the Aegean, it is safe to posit that skill in hunting conveyed *renown* and that there was a transference of skill as a hunter to skill as a warrior. All of these activities take place in boundary areas and are displayed or aggrandised in Home Base settings. The geography of the trans-egalitarian community and the social actions and networks that exist within it are displayed in social gatherings at the Home Base, where all the status differences are recognised, contested, and confirmed. It is fair to say there is common agreement today that the many forms of feasting are a central social activity for the display of these many dimensions of social relations.

The World of the Centre-Man/Man-of-Renown (Fig. 2) describes the geography of those who travel outside the boundaries of the territory of the Home Base. Normally they are probably factional leaders and their retinue. I suggest that for the world of the mainland of Greece with which we are concerned renown is largely centred around achievement in hunting and warfare, but this is not to exclude renown for craft abilities and special talents that may also lead to itinerant lifestyles e.g. knappers, metal-workers, and story-tellers.¹⁷ Fundamental to this world is mobility. Travel is necessarily maritime, so sailing is a special craft with its own renown.

The spheres of interaction are arenas external to Home Base territories. When speaking of the core during the Middle and early Late Bronze Age, a natural orientation is to Crete with its palace centres and their territories. Key to interaction from any point on the mainland are the

¹⁶ Collier – Rosaldo 1981; Wiessner 2002.

¹⁷ Helms 1993, 28–51; Wiessner 2002; Ruppenstein 2012, 61–62; Kiriati – Knappett 2016.

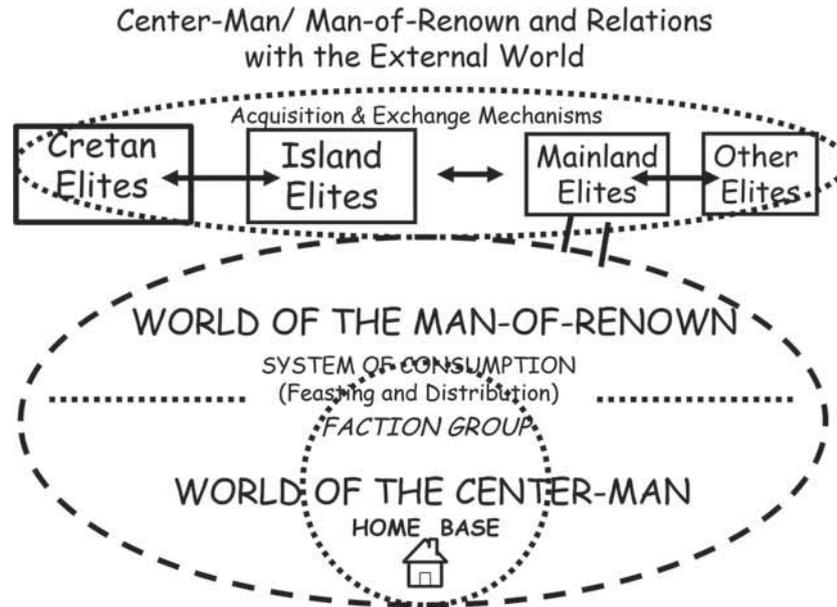


Fig. 2: The world of the Centre Man/Man-of-Renown (J. Wright)

islands, of which the Cyclades are paramount mediators. But Aigina and Kythera are primary key players because of their proximity to the mainland. However, as distance from Crete increases, other Small Worlds come into play, as we understand when looking at western Greece and its preoccupation with the Ionian Islands, the Adriatic, and even southern Italy, Sicily and the Tyrrhenian Coast, or the special structure of social groups in central Greece, the orientation of the northern regions to the Balkans, Thrace and the northwestern Anatolian sphere. These geographic considerations are especially important in view of their role during the Early Bronze Age and its aftermath during the centuries from c. 2100 to 1900 BC.

Over the course of the late Early Bronze Age, throughout the Middle Bronze Age, and into the early phases of the Late Bronze Age, the movement of Men-of-Renown from many different Home Base communities on the mainland created many opportunities for interaction and competition at different arenas outside their native territories. The material evidence indicates prestige exchange among elites that describe the known world at that time – a cosmos that extends across Europe, the Baltic and the British Isles, westwards to the central Mediterranean, north through the Balkans to the Carpathian Basin, and eastwards into central Anatolia, but transpiring especially within the Aegean Basin with Crete as the focus.¹⁸ Acquisition through exchange and plunder, and the formation and reinforcement of social networks throughout these geographic arenas fashioned multiple outer worlds for the Man-of-Renown and for his faction. Acquisition included special knowledge, special social networks, and all forms of exotic material possessions. These were strategically deployed within the faction and also within the Home Base in order to cement alliances and loyalty. The different geographical orientations created the diversity we see in the kinds of status objects found in settlements and especially among grave goods. In life, distribution and feasting were primary vehicles for the factional leader or Big Man and his group. A primary goal for these status-seekers was to stabilise relations of power so as to pass them on through designated heirs.

¹⁸ Ruppenstein 2012, 39–42, argues that the emergence of elites at Mycenae in particular is owed to their role in accessing tin from Cornwall; cf. Maran 2004.

Problems in Aegean Archaeology

What is outlined above is a perspective from the standpoint of the mainland of Greece, especially central and southern Greece. I propose this because my aim is to organise an explanation of the rise of Mycenaean society. However, I firmly believe that Aegean studies have fallen into a dangerous trap by classifying the Aegean according to geographic regions: the Greek mainland, the Islands, and Crete. Over generations of scholarship these have created fictional containers that we have filled with reified notions of difference and largely untested notions of identity that, even as they are challenged, frame the discourse of our scholarship. Colleagues try to overcome them with notions like ‘Minoanisation’, ‘core-periphery’, and ‘world systems theory’ that have some heuristic value but sustain a flawed discourse.¹⁹ Within the application of the concept of network theory Maria Relaki has made a useful observation that avoids the polarity of centrality within networks, namely her suggestion that we consider ‘networks of relevance’, a term that better characterises the intensely social nature of networks.²⁰ I would argue that the circum-Aegean world was highly fluid and that such ideas as Protopalatial and Neopalatial on Crete, especially, need to be dismantled not merely in terms of what was happening within Crete but in terms of what was happening within the wider Aegean world. In arguing this I ask that we consider how many of the developments towards centralised, complex and increased scalar configurations of populations and political economies are products of many actors from different parts of the Aegean rather than simply products of some unarticulated ‘Minoan’ actors with roots in the Neolithic settlement of the great island, or ‘Minoanised’ actors thronging to participate. In turn the islands, particularly the Cyclades are also open vessels that in fact thrive on the arrival and participation of persons from elsewhere. In this sense, it is not the Cyclades, but all the islands – the Sporades, the islands of the north and northeast Aegean, the islands off the Anatolian coast (especially the Dodecanese) – that supply the cultural diversity of the Aegean world. Indeed, we study an Aegean world rather than a Hellenic one. Likewise the *epirotic* mainlanders are neither free agents nor tethered to central cores; rather they inhabit all landscapes, communicate through inland mountain passes, across plains and coastal margins into peri-maritime regions, and their communities are subject to migration flows from many directions. This is especially seen when we consider the powerful axis of the Corinthian Gulf and its outpouring at the west, as we know all too well from the ‘colonial’ outburst of the 8th–6th c. BC. All of these are geographically constant, and therefore familiar. Hence when taking a view of the *longue durée* we understand how many roots and routes were laid down during the Neolithic and subsequently refashioned throughout the metallurgical and other technological revolutions of the Bronze Age.

The Prelude of the Third Millennium

The setting for studying the emergence of Mycenaean civilisation must consider the entire Middle Bronze Age in the widest Aegean sphere. To understand this, however, requires taking some account of what went before during the Early Bronze Age, not least because of the collapse and contraction during EH III and into MH I, nowadays in large part corresponding to the 4.2ka climatic event.²¹ One way to focus on this is to recall the imprint of the past in the navigation of the Aegean as defined by the reach of a long-boat journey as argued by Cyprian Broodbank.²² These paddled boats commanded the circumference of the Aegean basin. They effectively established

¹⁹ Broodbank 2004, 50–65, *passim*; Whitelaw 2005, 60–61; Knappett 2011; Maran 2011; and Harding 2013, the last of which is a very useful review of these concepts; see now Girella et al. 2016, 3–7; Knappett 2016; Galaty 2016: I have not had time to peruse thoroughly the other articles in this new study.

²⁰ Relaki 2004, 172–173, *passim*.

²¹ Weiberg et al. 2016.

²² Broodbank 1989.

the link between the mainland and the western Anatolian coast. This link presumably gave access to old overland routes through Anatolia to northern Syria and the Akkadian states. The breakdown during the intermediate period of the end of the third millennium disrupted that system of interaction. By contrast, the inception of the sailing vessel at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age radically transformed the reach of interaction.²³ Instead of only the old overland route it was now possible to sail throughout the eastern Mediterranean, from coastal North Africa and the Nile delta, along the Levantine coast including Cyprus, all of the Anatolian coast and up into the Black Sea. Crete was best poised to take advantage of these new possibilities and the result was the rise of the first palaces. This new system, however, was laid over the older one, which was remembered and revitalised in new ways.

At the local level the imprint of these changes is visible in the archaeological record. For example, apsidal buildings were introduced during EH II, not merely with the inception of EH III as John Caskey had claimed on the basis of his discoveries at Lerna.²⁴ Furthermore, Jeremy Rutter has demonstrated that within EH II Anatolian pottery technologies were being introduced as demonstrated by such assemblages as the final deposits of the House of the Tiles at Lerna and in the Lefkandi I and Kastri assemblages on Euboea and Syros respectively.²⁵ Surely it is permissible to suggest that the Early Bronze Age II period in the Aegean-Anatolian sphere was one of great interactions between different communities with different technologies and different access to resources?²⁶ Surely, this gave rise to a world where people of different cultural backgrounds, customs, beliefs, and languages lived side-by-side and intermingled and even intermarried, and therefore became knowledgeable of the wide geography of this sphere of interaction? Migration could certainly have played a role, especially if the 4.2ka event was as widespread as it seems to have been.²⁷ We may not yet be in a position to explain exactly why settlements like Lerna during the occupation of the House of the Tiles were destroyed, but by taking a processual perspective we can understand better how different generations towards the end of the 3rd millennium related to each other. For example, the settlers of Lerna IV (EH III) recognised and respected the tumulus that had been heaped up over the remains of the House of the Tiles at Lerna. Only in succeeding generations did the apsidal houses encroach on the tumulus, as memory and respect for the past faded.²⁸ Elsewhere, for example at Kolonna on Aigina, occupation was unbroken. The continuous use of the fortification wall throughout the Early and Middle (and Late) Bronze Age settlements signalled the durability of the settlement and its inhabitants. For us this settlement is evidence of how knowledge of the wider world and of the traditions of earlier generations were carried forward through the troubled times of the late Early Bronze Age into the Middle Bronze Age.

When we expand the view of the geography of the Aegean and focus again on the routes of interconnection, then the imprint of the past is visible in important ways. I follow Broodbank and Rutter, who in examining the distribution of Early Bronze Age III duck vases argued that they create an arc that runs from west to east, extending from the region of the Saronic Gulf through the Cyclades to southwestern Anatolia all the way up the Maeander Valley to Beycesultan.²⁹ Broodbank argues that in the wake of the disturbances at the end of the Early Bronze Age the networks reconfigured along lines that reflect the imprint of the previous Early Bronze Age network but in a more regional manner, such that he describes a North Aegean Network, an Island Network, and a southwestern Network.³⁰ The last two set the stage for major developments during the Middle Bronze Age. The former locates the importance of Kolonna on Aigina as the western anchor

²³ Agouridis 1997; Broodbank 2000, 341–349.

²⁴ Forsén 1992, 199–203 (Tiryns, Asine?, Pylos?, Kouphovouno, Athens Plato's Academy?, Rouf, Manika, Lino-vrochi?, Mourteri, Thebes, Orchomenos); Weiberg 2007, 31–33, 119–152.

²⁵ Rutter 1983; Rutter 1995.

²⁶ Maran 1998, 432–450, *passim*; Weiberg – Finné 2013.

²⁷ Weiberg et al. 2016 with references; Rutter 2017, 18–25.

²⁸ Weiberg 2007, 103–185; Banks 2013.

²⁹ Rutter 1985, 574 and n. 9.

³⁰ Broodbank 2000, 351–356.

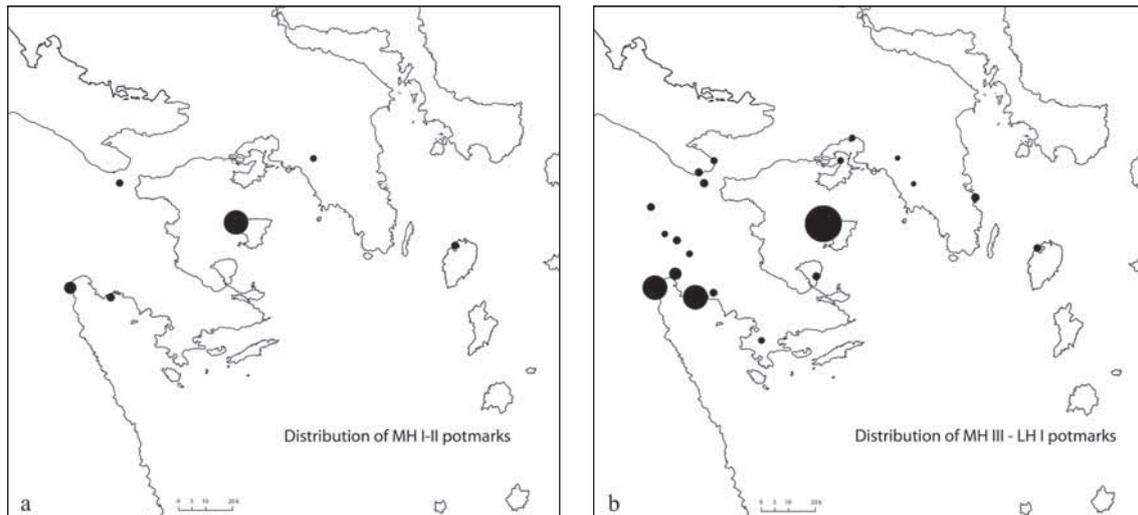


Fig. 3: Distribution of Aiginetan potmarks: a. MH I–II; b. MH III–LH I (from Lindblom 2001)

for connections across to Anatolia, while the latter connects the Gulf of Argos along the eastern Thyreatis down through Lakonia and Kythera to Crete. Significantly, these networks do not take into account what happens when the sail is introduced and when the first palaces are established in Crete.³¹

One way to model how these networks worked in relation to the mainland is to use Michael Lindblom’s distribution of Aiginetan potmarks as a proxy for Aiginetan interests through the Middle Bronze Age (Fig. 3a).³² For the early phases the distribution is limited to Aigina and key sites of Ayia Irini on Keos and in the Argolid. The increase in distribution when the MH III/LH I potmarks are mapped shows dramatically how much the influence of the Aiginetan pottery industry had spread (Fig. 3b), such that it is reasonable to describe the entire Saronic Gulf region and outwards to the islands and to the Argolid as lying within Kolonna’s reach. This distribution raises a larger question concerning how the various networks of the Aegean evolved over the course of the Middle Bronze Age, namely to what extent were routes driven by local factors (mainland to islands, islands to islands) as opposed to the interests of rising centres on Crete?³³ For the purposes of this essay, a major question to ask is, “To what extent was Kolonna’s sphere of interest restricted to the Saronic Gulf region owing to competition with other island centres throughout the Middle Bronze Age?” Secondly we may consider, as Broodbank does, how Cretan interests during the Protopalatial period transformed these networks. At this point we may recall Jack Davis’ 1979 hypothesis of the Western String during the Neopalatial period; he postulated it to describe the nature of the primary connections from Crete up towards the mainland (Peloponnese and central Greece) and vice versa.³⁴ Since then other scholars have both questioned this hypothesis and added to it, considering for example such places as the Mesara and the Euboian Gulf.³⁵ Importantly the durability of the southwestern route is now firmly established thanks to the research of the Kythera Island Project (KIP).³⁶

³¹ Rutter – Zerner 1984; Berg 1999; Berg 2007.

³² Lindblom 2001; admittedly this distribution is a product of the limited evidence from a few systematically excavated and studied sites; see also Pullen – Tartaron 2007, and Niemeier 1995 for a consideration of the rise of Kolonna on Aigina as a dominant player from MH into early LH.

³³ Broodbank 2000, 356–361; Broodbank 2004; see also Berg 2007; Van de Moortel 2007; Van de Moortel 2010.

³⁴ Davis 1979; Berg 2006.

³⁵ Berg 2006 argues that on the basis of ceramics, Davis’ postulation of a linear ‘string’ of relations is not sustainable.

³⁶ Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Broodbank – Kiriati 2014.

What happens when we attempt to factor in the role of strong agents travelling these routes during the Middle and early Late Bronze Ages? Perhaps the earliest examples of this new era that we can point to are those mariners known from burials outside the fortification gates at Ayia Irini on Keos and at Kolonna on Aigina.³⁷ The warrior burial from Kolonna contained a wealth of items that anticipate the shaft graves at Mycenae. As is well-known, during MH III several small burying groups, possibly kin, decided to set themselves apart from others utilising the prehistoric cemetery on the western ridge of Mycenae by erecting the circular enclosure known as Circle B and then beginning to inter in pit and cist graves within it. Over the course of the three phases of use defined by Giampaolo Graziadio from MH III–LH I,³⁸ each of the three clusters of burials increased in density and also in elaboration as shaft graves and elaborate built cists were installed, with increasingly luxurious and numerous grave goods, and also, as some of the burials became collective, facilities for successive burials. These developments, as is well-known, show in their material expressions a lively, sustained, and focused interest on acquisition of valuable items from the major centres of the Cyclades and from the palaces of Crete. In view of the abstract diagrams of Home Base and Centre-Man/Man-of-Renown geographies sketched above, several questions are pertinent.

- Did some or many of the emerging leaders buried in these tombs find their way among the islands and to Crete on the bottoms of Aiginetan freighters?
- Did they initially, or perhaps later, decide to take their own or other vessels from the Gulf of Argos along the western coast of the Argolid, around Spetses and across the Myrto Sea straight to the emporia of Phylakopi on Melos and Akrotiri on Thera – thereby avoiding Aigina?
- Were Phylakopi and Akrotiri gateway communities that controlled access to Crete or were they merely way stations for travellers continuing to such ports as Poros-Heraklion, Amnisos, and further east and west?
- To what extent does the role of competition among different groups contesting for prominence among these island arenas create constraints on some actors and opportunities for others?
- How might these probabilities of changing permutations among the actors play out as we examine the evidence of change throughout the successive periods of the Late Bronze Age?

The same questions may be asked of the role of Kythera as a mediator between the mainland, especially Lakonia and Messenia, as the developments from the Middle Bronze Age into the early phases of the Late Bronze Age.³⁹ Of particular importance is to take account of the long history of this relationship from the Early Bronze Age extending durably into the Late Bronze Age. In this regard the importance of the recent discovery of the so-called Griffin Warrior Tomb at Pylos-Ano Englianos cannot be overestimated, even though it represents a later, mature stage of the chain of interaction.⁴⁰ What was established in this sphere of interaction has its roots early in the Middle Bronze Age as witnessed by the settlement at Ayios Stephanos and the tumuli at Antheia-Kastroulia.⁴¹ The presence of MM I pottery at Ano Englianos clearly indicates that these routes were effective in advancing and stimulating interactions between Crete and Lakonia and Messenia in an unbroken sequence through these periods.⁴² They set the stage for the establishment of Ano Englianos as a major focus within the Middle Bronze Age, its eventual dominance of southwestern Messenia and ultimate takeover of Kythera under Pylian control during the palace period.⁴³

³⁷ Overbeck 1984; Overbeck 1989b; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2003.

³⁸ Graziadio 1988.

³⁹ Broodbank et al. 2005.

⁴⁰ Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017.

⁴¹ Rambach 2007; Taylour † – Janko 2008.

⁴² Davis – Stocker 2010.

⁴³ Bennet 1999.

Neopalatial Crete

It is now necessary to turn attention to the Neopalatial period. During this period the Minoans dominated much of the traffic throughout the Aegean and may have succeeded to some extent in consolidating their power throughout much of the island-scape of the central and southern Aegean including parts of coastal Anatolia.⁴⁴ At the same time, traffic in and out of Crete was managed through such ports as at Poros-Heraklion, which had by then surely taken on a cosmopolitan character, including arrivals from such faraway places as Cyprus, the Levantine ports, and perhaps also occasional visitors from the west.⁴⁵ The recognition of Messenian and Kytheran pottery at Kommos is a clear indicator that such trade was hardly limited to ports along the northern coast of Crete.⁴⁶ These interactions are in addition to the abundant evidence of Minoan impact on the settlement of Akrotiri on Thera and Phylakopi on Melos. Indeed, the original excavations at Phylakopi demonstrated, as Alan Wace and Carl Blegen early recognised, the importance of these islands as nodes in networks, with connections to Crete and the mainland, and we should note also to Cyprus.⁴⁷ By the Neopalatial the Western String and all the other directional networks were fully activated, yet it is worth observing that for all the evidence of Cretan contact, Ayia Irini itself maintains a local character that reflects not only its greater distance from the central sources in Crete but also its connections to the burgeoning source of wealth at Thorikos and the emerging centres throughout central Greece.⁴⁸

No one today would consider reviving Arthur Evans' argument that the mainland at this time was colonised.⁴⁹ The little that we know about from excavations at Kolonna, Kiapha Thiti, Thorikos, Vrana, Lerna, Argos, Asine, Mycenae, Ayios Vasileios, Ano Englianos, Kakovatos, Kirrha, Thebes, Eleon, Mitrou, Kastro-Volos and Dimini (to name the most salient) would lead us to think that the occupants of these settlements were recipients of such domination by the culture of the Minoan palaces during LH I–IIA (LM IA–IB) as reflected in their form, organisation, customs, and material culture.⁵⁰ Instead we witness in such contexts as the Shaft Graves the specific results of a multi-generational tradition of acquisitive interactions of small groups of powerful and successful players in the external arenas of the Cyclades and Crete. The material expression is highly selective, as frequently noted in studies of the contents of the Shaft Graves, a phenomenon that still begs for a more satisfactory explanation, one of which, as Florian Ruppenstein argues, is trade in metals, specifically tin.⁵¹ What it shows is the emergence of factional leaders and the processes and results of their competition among each other in local and wider settings.⁵² This transformation takes generations to accomplish and that is why we term this formative period early Mycenaean.

⁴⁴ The most vocal proponent of a Minoan dominance is Wiener 2016, with full references; but see against this view Nikolakopoulou – Knappett 2016 and Davis – Grogan 2008.

⁴⁵ The absence of evidence at the harbour site is a problem of publication, since salvage work by the Ephorate has recovered material from the area but for now only tantalising hints of this port are published: Dimopoulou 1997; Dimopoulou 2000; Wilson et al. 2004; Dimopoulou et al. 2007; Wilson et al. 2008; Dimopoulou 2012. Compare with Kommos, a site with almost no disruption after the Bronze Age, which demonstrates more clearly the cosmopolitan character of Minoan ports at this time: Rutter 2004; Rutter 2006; Rutter – Van de Moortel 2006; Van de Moortel 2007; Van de Moortel 2010; Tomlinson et al. 2010.

⁴⁶ Day et al. 2011.

⁴⁷ Wace – Blegen 1939, 141: "(...) the people of the Mainland were in touch with the Islands, but the extreme scarcity of their pottery in Crete hints that direct relations between the Mainland and Crete were rare and not cordial"; Edgar 1904, 158, fig. 4, illustrates a rim sherd of an Early White Slip Cypriot bowl, which is on view in the National Museum.

⁴⁸ Davis 1986, 103–104; Overbeck 1989a, 9–16; Wiener 2016, 144.

⁴⁹ Schoep 2018 with full bibliography.

⁵⁰ I refer here to those places reported on in this conference.

⁵¹ Wolpert 2004; Voutsaki 2010; Ruppenstein 2012; Harrell 2014.

⁵² Wright 2004a; Wright 2004b, 76–80.

There are two aspects of this transformation that deserve consideration. One has been drawn to our attention by Marisa Marthari and this is the strong evidence of a preference for polychrome vessels, especially products from Phylakopi and Thera in the burials of Circle B.⁵³ On the one hand, this might merely be a visual preference for the attractive decorative schemes, especially the representation of animals and vegetation that has its roots in the Middle Bronze Age II circulation of bird jugs with pulled away spouts, but it is likely as much, if not more, an indication of the extent to which these two island emporia were gateway communities to Crete already from the early second millennium. Closely related is a second phenomenon that I believe stands to reason, namely that what we are witnessing is the result of several generations of interaction of mainlanders with the islands and with Crete. The roots of this interaction go back to the founding of the Cretan palaces; it was first recognised on the mainland by Jeremy Rutter and Carol Zerner as a phenomenon demonstrable through the distribution of Cretan imports of MM IA date⁵⁴ but also is recognisable as a sign of expanding Cretan interest further abroad – to the north at Lemnos and Samothrace and to the farther east at Lapithos on Cyprus – surely in search of copper and tin.⁵⁵ We understand little about what happened during Middle Bronze Age II but the relationship quickens with the beginning of Middle Bronze Age III,⁵⁶ perhaps stimulated by the rebuilding, consolidation and centralisation that accompanied the onset of the Neopalatial period, which certainly was focused at Knossos, probably much in the manner of it being recognised as the *axis mundi* of Crete as argued by Jeffrey Soles.⁵⁷ This scenario particularly describes the changing relationships of the diverse mainland regions to Crete during the Neopalatial period. My sense is that it was not only dynamic and competitive but also was built upon a set of relations already established on Crete, for which, most unfortunately, there is virtually no material evidence.⁵⁸ In this arena the regions of the Argolid, Corinthia, the Saronic Gulf, eastern Attica, Keos and southern Euboia, and central Greece provided players. Equally involved are those from Messenia and Lakonia, acting through Kythera and exploiting the old network of relations with western and central Crete.

Often it is remarked that the Neopalatial period stands in great contrast to its predecessor.⁵⁹ The cause of the destructions of the Protopalatial edifices, especially at Mallia and Phaistos is still not known, but it is clear that what follows was different by a considerable magnitude.⁶⁰ Have we adequately pursued the question of what infused the new life we see in the art, architecture, economy, and political structure of the Neopalatial world? Was there something that places like Mallia, Phaistos-Ayia Triada, and Knossos (to name the most salient) were stimulated by that we have not appreciated? We often look to the remains at Akrotiri, Thera, to grasp the dynamism that must have been apparent in the monumental art of the palaces, but at the same time we have clouded our perceptions of the Neopalatial period by viewing it as quintessentially ‘Minoan’ and by a history of retrojecting some of what we find of later periods (LM II–IIIA1) into it. Further, as research into the Late Bronze Age I phase (LM IA and B, LC I, LH I–IIA) advances, we recognise its longevity, perhaps as much as c. 190 years (Tab. 1),⁶¹ that was punctuated by events within it that demonstrate how poorly it corresponds as a phase to the reality of what happened over that period of time.⁶²

In the midst of this scrum the volcanic eruption of Thera occurs. It was adumbrated by a major seismic event in early LM IA, more or less contemporary with apparently severe tectonic activity

⁵³ Marthari 1993; Marthari 1998.

⁵⁴ Rutter – Zerner 1984.

⁵⁵ Grace 1940; Matsas 1995; Boulotis 2010; Ruppenstein 2012, 39–40, 50, *passim*.

⁵⁶ See the contributions in MacDonald – Knappett 2013a.

⁵⁷ Soles 1995.

⁵⁸ Early recognition of Minyan at Knossos by Wace – Blegen 1939, 141 n. 4, citing Evans 1928, 309.

⁵⁹ MacDonald – Knappett 2013b.

⁶⁰ Broodbank 2004, 49; MacDonald – Knappett 2013b, 2, and *passim*; Carinci – La Rosa 2013.

⁶¹ Dates for Tab. 1 are drawn from Wiener 2018 (I thank Malcolm Wiener for an advance copy of this publication) and from Barnard – Brogan 2011, 448.

⁶² Brogan – Hallager 2011.

Period	Dates BC*	Span in Years
MM III/MH III	c. 1700?–1620	80
LM IA/LH I	c. 1620–1520	100
LM IB/LH IIA	c. 1520–1440/1430	80–90
LM II/LH IIB	c. 1440/1430–1400/1390	40
LM/LH IIIA1–2	c. 1390–1290	100
LH IIIB1–2	c. 1290–1200	90

* low chronology for Thera following Pearson et al. 2018

Tab. 1: Absolute chronology (from Wiener 2018; Barnard – Brogan 2011, 448)

in western and central Crete.⁶³ The Theran eruption and tsunami caused widespread destruction and disruption across the northern coast of Crete from its central through eastern areas. In terms of the life of Crete and the Aegean, however, it seems apparent that there was a relatively quick recovery and for some years thereafter life went on as before, but not without a sense of insecurity.⁶⁴ One thing is certain: Akrotiri ceased to be a gateway community. The whole island of Thera ceased to be a node in the network. Hence our map must be redrawn and we must consider how this disaster changed the dynamics of the networks of travel, particularly from the mainland centres that trafficked the islands. For example, did the loss of Akrotiri increase direct connections between Mycenae and Knossos?⁶⁵ Did it contribute to a downgrading of Phylakopi as a node, or rather increase its role?⁶⁶ What might have been the consequences for ports like Poros-Heraklion and for major centres like Knossos?

The last is a pertinent question in light, first, of the review of the possible effects of the volcanic explosion on Crete by Jan Driessen and Colin MacDonald,⁶⁷ and, second, in consideration of the interesting analysis by Laura Preston of the changing dynamics of mortuary practices in the Knossos area during LM I and II.⁶⁸ She argues convincingly that these changes reflect social stress, even social disorder within this period. What is missing from these discussions, however, are two phenomena that must be staring us in the face: first, the long presence of small numbers of mainlanders and also certainly islanders since at least back into the Protopalatial period and, second, the presence of refugees after the destruction of Thera. It seems obvious that many if not most of those who escaped from Akrotiri ended up on the shores of Crete. Ports like Poros-Heraklion were already cosmopolitan centres mixing local and foreign residents who had developed relationships over the generations and likely even intermarried. Into this mix came mainlanders, especially the small but influential warrior groups whom we recognise from the mainland burials of MH III–LH II. Some may have returned to their Home Base as successful individuals (as for example the LH II example of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos),⁶⁹ others, however, may have intermarried and established strong bonds with kin groups in Crete. The likelihood of intermarriage needs to be posited because one among other consequences would have been entry into Cretan society and, even, if at a sufficiently high status, entry into the nobility of the court of Knossos or other palaces.⁷⁰

⁶³ Marthari 1990.

⁶⁴ Driessen – MacDonald 1997, 82–83, *passim*; Preston 2004.

⁶⁵ Dickinson 1982.

⁶⁶ Whitelaw 2005, 45–49.

⁶⁷ Driessen – MacDonald 1997, 85–104.

⁶⁸ Preston 2004.

⁶⁹ Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017.

⁷⁰ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985; Andreadaki-Vlazaki, n. d. [2009], 114–127, 156–164, 166–179; the conclusions of Nafplioti 2008 notwithstanding, as argued in this paper, it is no surprise that the osteological material she sampled showed the interred to have been born in Crete; that conclusion, however, has no bearing on the question of main-

Admittedly, this is largely speculation but it is what we know from other historically documented events that caused refugees to flee their homelands. Even today we can witness this phenomenon with our own eyes, including how wealthy and connected elites find safe harbour in the upper echelons of their new host societies. Such a scenario makes it easier to conceptualise what was driving the leaders whom we find buried in the wealthy shaft graves of Circles B and A and in similar built tombs of MH III through LH II at other locations in the Argolid, the Corinthia, Lakonia, Messenia, and elsewhere. Likewise, in envisioning dynamic social relations such as these, we may have a way of viewing the development of the warrior tombs that show up at Poros-Heraklion as early as MM III and, of course, those that define the character of the new chamber tomb and shaft burials around Knossos, Phaistos and Chania beginning in LH II–IIIA1.⁷¹

By taking this view into account the Neopalatial period can be viewed as a product of a rainbow spectrum of persons, factions, and interests and not merely an end trajectory of a pristine ‘Minoan’ civilising process. Such a view conforms with the ethnic complexity of interrelations we know about in the ancient Near East and Egypt and it rescues us also from maintaining the patently false dichotomy of a mainland/Cretan divide.

The Mainland

One of the things that drove the mainlanders whom we find in the Shaft Graves and in tombs that emulate their wealth of grave goods was a strong sense of the individual. Perhaps this was a consequence of the traditional social order on the mainland, whether we are in Thessaly or Phokis, Achaia or the Corinthia, Triphylia or Messenia. This was an order that through lineages reinforced direct lines of descent. It might also have been reinforced through the competitiveness that was encouraged both within the Home Base for position within factional groups and in the exoteric arenas of interaction that took place among the islands and within Crete. Certainly demonstrations of prowess and success in leadership inspire the kinds of displays that we witness in the items placed in the Shaft Graves: vases commissioned to tell of feats, success as a hunter shooting a stag from a horse-drawn chariot, and, borrowing from Near Eastern iconography, daring to combat the lion, the master of the animals, in single combat. Even more elaborate stories of conquests were displayed, as in the *repoussé* scene on the Silver Siege Rhyton from Shaft Grave IV or the conclusion of a seaside battle on the north wall of the West House at Akrotiri, Thera, and now the Combat Agate from Pylos. In these stories, as Sarah Morris has suggested, we may have the beginning of oral cycles that take on epic form.⁷²

I would be remiss not to take notice also of the selection of items that were deposited in the Shaft Graves, since from early on it reflects a focused interest in high status items primarily found in Crete and only in extremely special places within the palaces. The earliest of these is the small faience strap-handled cup from Shaft Grave A.⁷³ Similar ones were found in the ‘Temple Repositories’ at Knossos.⁷⁴ This extraordinary link to the innermost deposits at Knossos is reiterated by other finds from Grave Circle A, for example the bull rhyton from Shaft Grave IV and the numerous items that find their closest parallels in the ‘Treasure Room’ at Zakros.⁷⁵

The individuality of the warrior elite is readily recognisable in the artefacts assembled in the Shaft Graves and also in other wealthy tombs on the mainland, beginning even in MH II but especially evident during LH I and II. Individuality is displayed through the subjects of representation:

landers being present among the population of those interred in the cemeteries around Knossos between LM I and LM III, which is a matter to be settled by DNA analysis.

⁷¹ Muhly 1992, 165–175; Preston 2013, 59, 61, 63, 68.

⁷² Morris 1989; Morris 2000; Stocker – Davis 2017, 602, with references to recent scholarship.

⁷³ Mylonas 1972/1973, 27, *passim*, pl. 16.

⁷⁴ Evans 1921, 499.

⁷⁵ Wright 1995, 72, 76 (tab. 1); Ruppenstein 2012, 38–40.

individual images of males on seal-stones, individual and group images of hunting and combat, contests even between a single male in combat with a lion, assemblages of boars' tusks, objects like sceptres, axes, swords, and daggers denoting individual power, and especially representations of horses drawing chariots and actual pieces of related equipment.⁷⁶

How should we understand the situation at Akrotiri before the catastrophe where we have buildings such as Xeste 3 with some Cretan elements and others like the only partially explored Xeste 4 with emblematic displays of a row of boar's tusk helmets painted on the wall of a major room?⁷⁷ Is not the West House reasonably interpreted as one belonging to a ship captain? Islander, mainlander, or Cretan, we cannot discern with certitude, but his ships clearly transport warriors armed with scabbarded swords, long spears, and tower shields, and outfitted with boar's tusk helmets. Significantly there are no representations of horses or chariots. Their representation is confined to a few signet rings and seals and to the mainland grave stelae – their later appearance on frescoes is primarily a mainland phenomenon.

The chariot may well have entered Crete through the Levant, as Joost Crouwel has argued.⁷⁸ But the horse seems to have come from the north, probably from the Carpathian Basin, and early – during LH I, as recently argued by Aleydis Van de Moortel and Joseph Maran.⁷⁹ It remains a tantalising mystery to try to imagine how the horse and chariot were brought together, but thinking about it leads to the probability that among the mainlanders present in Crete were occasional warriors with horses – presumably leaders of armed bands.⁸⁰ How long had they been active in Crete? Did they accompany Cretan overlords or their representatives on journeys to the East where they became acquainted with chariot technology? These are fundamental questions that result from acknowledging the importance of mobility as a factor in recognising the role of agency by individuals and small groups in the archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age. They may reflect the degree to which the Cretan palaces were now inhabited by diverse social groups including islanders and mainlanders. The impact of such groups on the development of political and social relations and on the formation of political economies would have been profound. We must continue to seek to make sense of these problems in order to inspire new research agendas and also to write new narratives of explanation – not master narratives but instead local ones, such as we can imagine could be written about the exploits of the Griffin Warrior from Pylos.

Knossos – a Troubled Era

In closing, I want to consider the phenomenon of the transition from the Neopalatial era to the Mycenaean. As I noted earlier, the insightful work by Preston promotes the notion of social unrest within the community, or at least the elite community, at Knossos during LM IA and IB and into LM II. As a process this might be considered to be reflected in the dynamic changes that occur in pottery production during this time, as vividly reflected in the variety of papers presented at the conference on LM IB pottery of 2007.⁸¹ As Rutter noted in his summation of the evidence from Kommos the “(...) conventional picture of a single destruction horizon across virtually the entire island at the end of LM IB, followed by a period of widespread abandonment during the ensuing LM II period, (...)” is now much more complicated, as anticipated by Driessen and MacDonald in 1997.⁸² Still the evidence continues to support the notion that multiple fire destructions across

⁷⁶ Stocker – Davis 2017, 602; Ruppenstein 2012, *passim*.

⁷⁷ Vlachopoulos 2010.

⁷⁸ Crouwel 1981, 148–149; but see Harding 2005, 297, for an argument for a northern connection.

⁷⁹ Maran – Van de Moortel 2014; see also Harding 2005 for a summary of other horse trappings from the Carpathian region.

⁸⁰ Ruppenstein 2012, 39–41.

⁸¹ Brogan – Hallager 2011.

⁸² Rutter 2011, 326; Driessen – MacDonald 1997.

the island were violent and led to the flight of inhabitants from their settlements, who in many instances did not return for some time.⁸³ The invention of Linear B and the succeeding deposition of the tablets in the Room of the Chariot Tablets at Knossos in LM II, perhaps as late as c. 1400–1390 BC establishes a baseline of fact that begs for more clarification.⁸⁴ In actual chronological terms, however, for this whole period we are talking about a range of some 180–190 years from the beginning of LM IA/LH I to the end of LM IB, roughly from 1620 to 1440/1430 BC. If we add in another 40 something years (a long generation?) for LM II we reach c. 1400/1390 BC. And then, during the next 25 years or so, we find ourselves with the phenomenon of the ‘warrior tombs’ in the chamber tomb cemeteries at Knossos, at Ayios Ioannis below Phaistos, and at Chania. These are transformed landscapes in which mainlanders rule at Knossos and make themselves felt across Crete as they begin to remake the cosmic axis of the Aegean according to their own customs and beliefs. Our understanding of their rule is not without its interpretive problems, as is also the case for the next act.

The ‘final’ destruction of Knossos was probably an act of an alliance of forces, likely made up of such centres as Mycenae and Thebes. It broke the Knossian-‘Mycenaean’ monopoly over economic, technological, administrative, and ideological resources on Crete and across the Aegean. As a consequence, other centres were now able to assert themselves and develop the infrastructure and apparatus of governing states. The centre of power shifted decisively to the mainland. These events were followed by a remarkable expansion in settlements throughout the Aegean sphere, marked especially by the spread of chamber tombs across the islands of Crete and Rhodes, at Miletus and elsewhere along the coastal margins of southwest Anatolia, and throughout the Peloponnese and central Greece.⁸⁵ This is also when large Mycenaean Corridor Houses and architectural ensembles at important secondary centres appear on the mainland, on the island of Melos, and at multiple places on Crete.⁸⁶ It is apparently a demographic explosion that is accompanied by the widespread increase in the production and distribution of Mycenaean material culture throughout the Aegean and the eastern and western Mediterranean. At this time Linear B must have been widely employed as the administrative tool at the newly fortified palace centres across the mainland. At the same time an inter-polity exchange system developed, as witnessed in the distribution of Cretan inscribed stirrup jars, and it had its international counterpart in the wider distribution of transport stirrup jars.⁸⁷ From this point on, the citadels with their palaces functioned as state-level administrative centres with accompanying and emerging secondary centres scattered throughout their growing territories. It is because of this development that the need for and role of a monumental palace became paramount as the centre of administration and power. The production of this centre was not merely a quirk of evolution but rather a self-consciously crafted form, best preserved at Pylos and Tiryns, and notable at Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes, and Pylos for their claims on the ancient cosmic centre of power of Knossos.

Conclusions

This conference, by taking an explicitly spatial and social approach to the early Mycenaean era, brings together scholars for the first time in over forty years to consider this formative period. I have drawn heavily on the notions of space and mobility to try to activate the dynamics that led to the emergence of leaders in communities across the mainland. In doing so I have attempted to outline how they engaged with islanders including Cretans. I have sought the roots of these interactions in the remnants of relations established during the 3rd millennium. I have indicated

⁸³ Rutter 2011, 326 and 340–341 (tab. 4); Barnard – Brogan 2011, 448–449; Brogan et al. 2002.

⁸⁴ Driessen 1988; Ruppenstein 2012, 61–62.

⁸⁵ Preston 2004; Mee 1988a; Mee 1988b; Cavanagh – Mee 1998.

⁸⁶ Wright 2006, 21–25.

⁸⁷ Haskell et al. 2011.

how the offshore islands of Aigina and Kythera and the *entrepôts* of the Cyclades were essential to engagement with the palace-communities of Crete and suggested this process is already underway throughout the Middle Bronze Age, such that, with the dawn of the era of the New Palaces, small groups of mainlanders were active and familiar players. The dynamics of these interactions, coupled with the devastations of the volcanic eruption of Thera, led to a process of socio-political turmoil that ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the palace centres of Crete. Once admitted into the Minoan courts the mainlanders did not let go.⁸⁸

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⁸⁸ For an up-to-date survey of this next stage, see Eder – Jung 2015.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: The spatial geography of a trans-egalitarian society (J. Wright)

Fig. 2: The world of the Centre Man/Man-of-Renown (J. Wright)

Fig. 3: Distribution of Aiginetan potmarks: a. MH I–II; b. MH III–LH I (from Lindblom 2001)

Table

Tab. 1: Absolute chronology (from Wiener 2018; Barnard – Brogan 2011, 448)

TRIPHYLIA and IONIAN ISLANDS

Strategies in Space: The Early Mycenaean Site of Kakovatos in Triphylia

*Birgitta Eder*¹ – *Georgia Hadzi-Spiliopoulou*²

Abstract: Kakovatos is mainly known for its three large and richly furnished tholos tombs that rival the wealthiest burials of their time on the Greek mainland. New research in Kakovatos revealed the remains of a building complex of the early Mycenaean period on the so-called acropolis. Excavations of the site by Wilhelm Dörpfeld in 1907–08 had remained more or less unpublished. The recent fieldwork offered the rare opportunity to explore an early Mycenaean habitation site together with the group of associated tombs. The integration of data from neighbouring sites allows us to study the development of Kakovatos in the regional context of Triphylia.

The stratigraphy of the excavated building complex provides valuable information about the history of the site in the early Mycenaean period, when places of regional prominence emerged in the Peloponnese. A rebuilding of an earlier architectural phase took place in LH IIB, and during an advanced stage of this phase, the architectural complex was destroyed. Just as the tombs stood out among the tombs of the region by their size, expenditure in terms of construction and wealth of grave offerings, the building complex on the acropolis hill was set apart spatially, clearly visible above the Triphylian Plain. We can recognise this as one of the strategies of early Mycenaean elites to elevate themselves symbolically, socially, economically, politically and spatially above the rest of the population.

Keywords: Kakovatos, early Mycenaean residential remains, ¹⁴C data, stratigraphy, storage, spinning bowls

Kakovatos: The Site

“(Social) space is a social product”.³ The ground-breaking works of the French sociologists Henri Lefebvre and Pierre Bourdieu had a fundamental impact on the perception of geography and its built environment as a social construct that is produced and reproduced in everyday practice by social agents. Every society thus produces its own space, because social structures and related practices are translated into physical space with its hierarchies of sites, places and relational positions, the space of the living and the dead. Social agents always occupy specific places in physical space, and in the words of P. Bourdieu, “their habitus shapes their habitat” and vice versa.⁴

Our paper is dedicated to the evaluation of the recent excavations at Kakovatos, where we can trace the emergence of an early Mycenaean site with (the very last remains of) residential buildings and associated burial places. With a review of our finds and the associated stratigraphy, we would like to look at the creation and demise of the building complex on the acropolis and the tombs at Kakovatos. The chronology of developments will allow us to examine the dynamic changes in the organisation of social space and the political landscape of the region.

On the western coast of the Peloponnese, south of the Alpheios River and north of the Neda, between the historical regions of Elis and Messenia lies the region of Triphylia, which only rarely gained any political significance in history. In 1907–08 the renowned Wilhelm Dörpfeld discovered and excavated the Mycenaean site of Kakovatos, which he identified with the Homeric Pylos

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³ Lefebvre 1991, 26, and passim.

⁴ Bourdieu 1999, 128; Bourdieu 1991. Cf. Smith 2003 on the relation between political landscape and the built environment in early complex societies; on the reflexive relationship between architecture and society, cf. Maran 2006.



Fig. 1: Excavations on the hilltop of Kakovatos in 1907–08 by W. Dörpfeld (in the background). The area in the photograph corresponds with the recent excavation areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 (German Archaeological Institute Athens)

based on the geographical indications contained in the Homeric *Iliad*.⁵ Apart from three tholos tombs, he uncovered building remains of what he called ‘the royal house’ with storage facilities on the acropolis hill (Fig. 1).⁶ Unfortunately, he never completed his plan to publish the results of these excavations with detailed maps and documentation.

The site lies on a hill of about 70 masl in a prominent location, now about 2 km off the sandy shoreline. The hilltop offers a perfect view of the region. Towards the south lies Messenia with the dominant ridge of the Aigaleon and with Kyparissia just at the foot of the mountain.⁷ The view across the coastal plain to the north ends at Samikon, where the Bronze Age site of Kleidi lies on the western tip of the Lapithos Mountain range (Fig. 2).⁸

At the foot of the Kakovatos hill lay three large tholos tombs (Fig. 3), which were excavated by W. Dörpfeld and published in an exemplary manner by Kurt Müller shortly after their discovery. A thorough and detailed re-evaluation and republication of the burial goods by Christine de Vreé is under way.⁹

Almost exactly a hundred years after W. Dörpfeld, renewed fieldwork began in 2009 when Birgitta Eder resumed the archaeological work at the site of Kakovatos with a team from the University of Freiburg and in collaboration with the Greek Archaeological Service under the direction of Georgia Hadzi-Spiliopoulou and in cooperation with Barbara Horejs, who managed the excavation fieldwork.

⁵ Dörpfeld 1907; Dörpfeld 1908; Dörpfeld 1913.

⁶ Dörpfeld 1907, XIV; Dörpfeld 1913, 130–131.

⁷ Cf. Eder 2018a, 90–91, with illustration.

⁸ Cf. Nikolentzos – Moutzouridis, this volume; Eder et al., forthcoming; Huber, forthcoming.

⁹ Müller 1909; Eder 2011b; Eder 2018a, 90–92; cf. de Vreé, this volume.



Fig. 2: View from the hilltop of Kakovatos to the northwest, towards the western end of the Lapithos Mountain range (photo: B. Eder, 2010)



Fig. 3: Terrain model of the site of Kakovatos (Ch. Kurtze)

A survey in 2009 established that traces of human activity in the form of built structures and pottery fragments concentrated in the west of the acropolis plateau, where the remains of Dörpfeld's excavations were located. There was no evidence pointing to the existence of ancient buildings in the east of the acropolis or further downhill.¹⁰ However, the hilltop had apparently suffered

¹⁰ Eder 2010.

from intensive erosion, because the natural soil was present almost everywhere. Geoarchaeological borings at the foot of the hill confirmed the existence of up to 3 m-deep colluvial layers with remains of cultural deposits.¹¹ Like the rest of the region in general, the geology of the hill is made of Neogene sand and marl and thus easily susceptible to erosion by wind and rain.

The Character of the Residential Building and the Destruction Horizon of LH IIB

In 2010 and 2011 excavations took place on the acropolis, where three trenches were laid out in the western part of the plateau, and the terrain model in Fig. 3 illustrates the locations of the excavation areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 on the acropolis plateau and Ka 2 further downhill on the western slopes. In areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 two corners of two different built structures were revealed next to each other. In Ka 1 the southeastern corner and the smaller western wall of the building were still preserved, while the northern end remains unclear due to the erosion of the slope (Fig. 4).

A pebble layer appeared in large sections throughout the building of Ka 1 and indicated a floor of river pebbles. Pieces of secondarily fired clay and pottery with signs of secondary burning in situ on the floor suggest a final destruction of the building by fire.¹² For example, a ring-handled cup (FS 237) and a Keftiu cup with foliate band (FS 224) were found broken and discoloured by fire. They were almost completely restored and offered the first indication of a LH IIB date for the destruction of the building. In addition, the pottery from this deposit includes plain goblets (FS 254) and a squat jug (FS 87). Fragments of the characteristic Ephyraean goblet with the motif

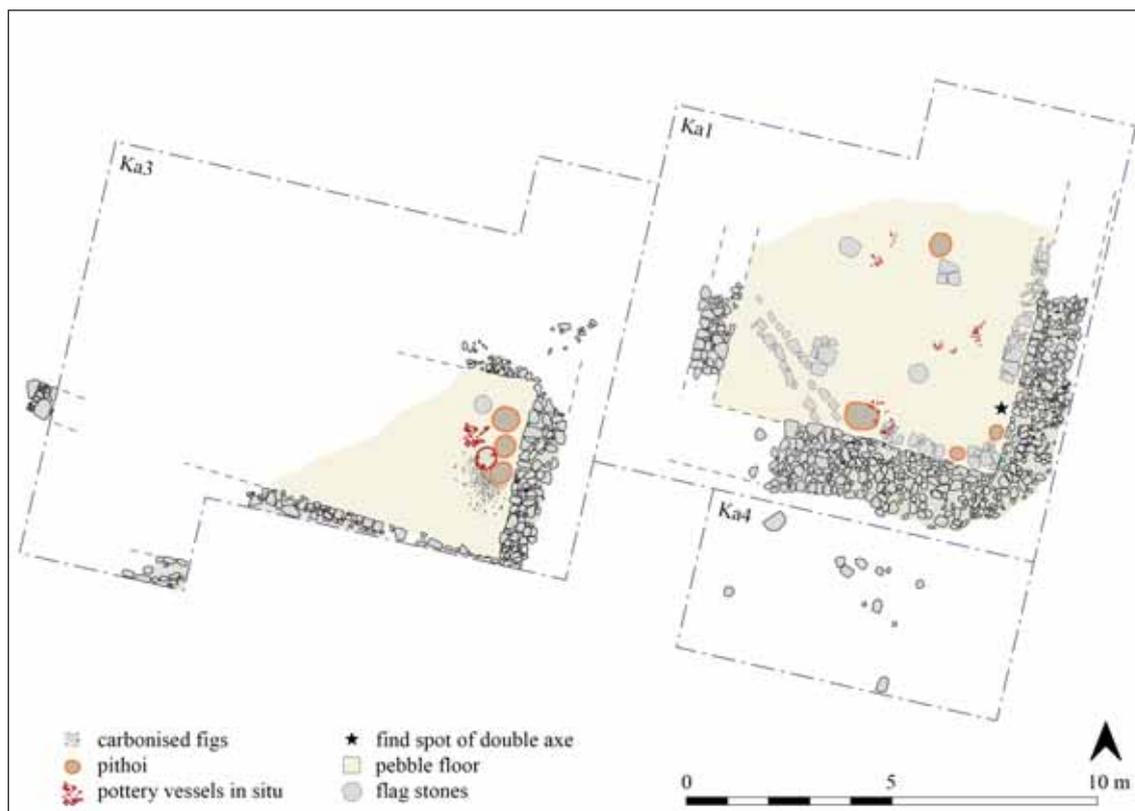


Fig. 4: Plan of the building remains and finds in situ in the excavation areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 on the hilltop (M. Börner)

¹¹ Geoarchaeological borings were conducted in 2011 by Andreas Vött and his team from the Institute of Geography of the University of Mainz.

¹² Eder 2011a, 95–96; Eder 2012, 92–93; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou 2016a, 780–781; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou 2016b, 313–314.



Fig. 5: Pottery from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1: Mycenaean fine ware (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

of an argonaut (FS 254) also come from the destruction horizon and conform to the LH IIB character of the assemblage (Fig. 5).

The group of vases may mirror the emergence of a Mycenaean drinking set.¹³ The elegant shallow cup with broad rim and ring handle (FS 287) represents a typical shape of the early Mycenaean period,¹⁴ which had been taken over from the Cretan repertoire and frequently appears in

¹³ Wright 2004, 98–99.

¹⁴ Cf. RMDP: LH IIA: 93, fig. 15; 95, no. 61; LH IIB: 101–103, fig. 18, no. 91; and *passim*.

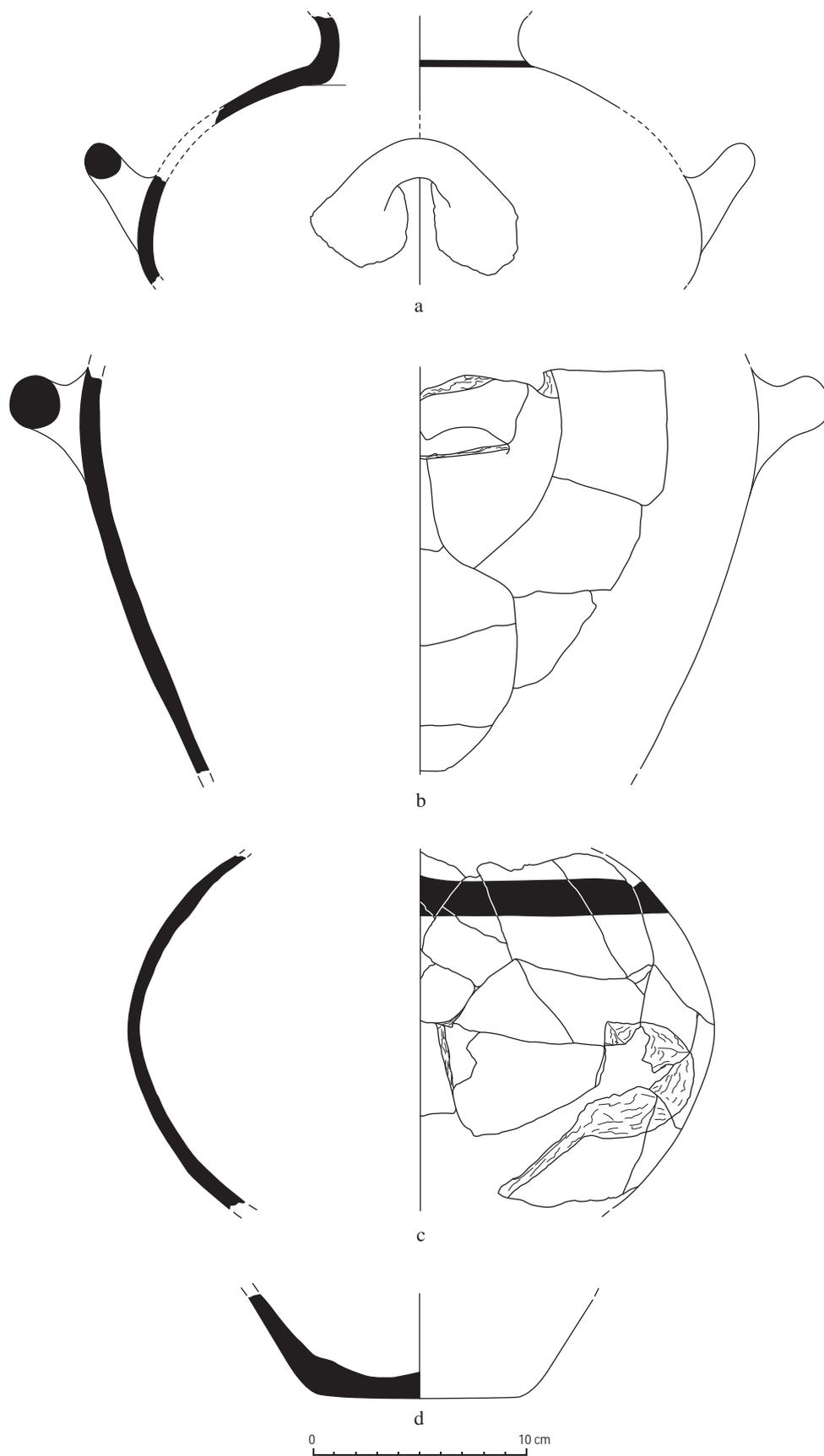


Fig. 6: Pottery from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1: handmade closed vessels (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)



Fig. 7: ‘Spinning bowl’ from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1 (photo: I. Geske)

metal form (gold, silver, bronze) in wealthy tomb assemblages of LH I–IIIA1 date.¹⁵ The shallow form, broad rim with (occasional) spout, and ring handle suggest that this cup was not so much intended for drinking, but for pouring liquids. When the vessel was tilted while pouring the liquid, the interior decorative pattern, which is common on the ceramic examples, became visible. Hartmut Matthäus has already noticed the religious connotation of some bronze specimens on Crete,¹⁶ and the conversion of this shape into precious metal vessels may imply the important role it played on special occasions. All this appears to be characteristic of a libation vessel, which was used during religious ceremonies.

Moreover, the presence of handmade household vessels such as amphorae and at least one ‘spinning bowl’ in the destruction context of Ka 1 illustrates that handmade MH-type vessels and Mycenaean pottery were contemporaneously in use (Fig. 6). In general, the preliminary results of the evaluation of the pottery from the LH IIB destruction horizon suggests that mainly closed or rather large shapes continued to be made in a MH tradition, when smaller, mainly drinking vessels of Mycenaean-type pottery decorated with lustrous paint were produced.

Several aspects allow reconstructing the character of the room, which can be described as a workspace and storage area. Three pithoi or rather the bases of these storage vessels were found inside the room, and one of them still contained a few carbonised figs. Shaft smoothers provide evidence of craft activities that are associated with the processing of wood. A large pit next to the southern internal wall face was formed by a large pithos, which was directly connected to a drain running through the southwestern corner of the building. This drain was probably intended to channel away fluids from inside the building. The purpose of the installation is far from clear, but it points to some sort of craft activity and underlines the workspace character of the room (Fig. 4).

In addition, numerous burnt fragments of a basket-like container with an interior handle belong to the destruction phase (Fig. 7). Similar bowls are almost exclusively known from Messenia, where they occur in settlement and tomb contexts of MH III to LH IIA and have no

¹⁵ For bronze vessels, see Matthäus 1980, 207–218 (large one-handled broad-rimmed bowls); 222–224 (one-handled broad-rimmed cups); for examples in precious metals, see Davis 1977, 260–261, 297, nos. 46, 97 (Mycenae, Shaft Graves IV and I), 107 (Vapheio), 112 (Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10), 129 (Mycenae, Tsountas Chamber Tomb 84), 137 (Kazarma); Demakopoulou 1993, 59, pl. 1c (Kokla, tholos). A golden ring-handled cup was apparently also among the burial gifts of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ of Pylos: Davis – Stocker 2016, 634–635.

¹⁶ Matthäus 1980, 213–214.



Fig. 8: Distribution map of 'spinning bowls' in the southwestern Peloponnese (B. Eder, J. Huber)

further parallels on the Greek mainland (Fig. 8).¹⁷ Spyridon Marinatos has already explained the use of these bowls in the context of textile production.¹⁸

Bowls with interior handles (one, two, but also three or four handles) are known mainly from Egypt and the Levant from the second and first millennia BC. Their identification as spinning bowls is based on the grooves that are visible on the underside of the loops and derive from the wear and tear caused by textile threads. However, one has to be aware that the Messenian 'spinning bowls' are much larger, and their interior handles do not show any grooves.

Egyptian tomb paintings of the 12th Dynasty, but also models of textile workshops, illustrate their potential function and use. Here, working men and women pull the thread out of the bowl to add twist to the fibre and in the other hand hold the spindles rolling up the spun thread. The primary function of these bowls was to keep the fibres clean and tidy. Secondly and more importantly, the interior handles served to add tension to the fibre. This is less suitable for bundles of combed wool, which are far too

fluffy, but these bowls are quite useful for processing flax.¹⁹ The so-called spinning bowls from the southwestern Peloponnese display similar concave and convex shapes as the ones on the Egyptian wall paintings, and, despite their much larger capacity, we are inclined to understand them as related to textile production.

In Kakovatos, there are fragments of at least eight such either concave or convex 'spinning bowls' from various contexts. Their characteristic shape relates the bowls from Kakovatos to their Messenian counterparts, and this is only one of the clues that indicate the existence of close cultural ties between Kakovatos and Messenia in the early Mycenaean period.²⁰ Together with a few clay spindle whorls (Fig. 9) and spools or reels (Fig. 10), the so-called spinning bowls indicate textile production that can be associated with the room in Ka 1.²¹

¹⁷ For the Messenian sites with 'spinning bowls' (Nichoria, Volimidia, Koryphasion, Malthi), see Zavadil 2013, 199–201 with references; cf. Lolos 1987, 338, figs. 250–252 (Koryphasion, tholos); 364–365 (Kephallovryso, Tomb 1 at Volimidia). Chasiakou 2003 mentions in her μέρος Γ, Κεραμεικές Κατηγορίες – Σχήματα, αγγεία υφαντικής (22/39) broad strap handles from Koutounara-Katarrachaki, which she considers to belong to such vessels. In addition, the recent excavations at Pylos and Iklaina have brought to light more examples of 'spinning bowls', and we are grateful to Sharon Stocker and Michael Cosmopoulos for their permission to refer to them. Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki, this volume, mentions the fragment of a bowl with interior handle from Mygdalia in Achaia, which could represent the first 'spinning bowl' from the northwestern Peloponnese.

¹⁸ Marinatos 1966, 88 (δίπτυχος) on the examples from Volimidia-Kephallovryso, where he points out that a spindle whorl was found next to one bowl supporting the interpretation.

¹⁹ Barber 1991, 70–76 (spinning bowls); 83–91 (ground loom) with references to the wall painting in the tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan, and the model of a textile workshop from the tomb of Meket-Re at Egyptian Thebes, 12th Dynasty.

²⁰ Strong cultural relations between Messenia and Triphylia in the Mycenaean period: Eder 2011b; Nikolentzos 2014; Eder et al., forthcoming; Huber et al., this volume; Huber, forthcoming. Cf. more generally on the tholos tombs in the 'cultural zone' of the southwestern Peloponnese, Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 146–147; Korres 2012, 437–438.

²¹ 'Spinning bowls' in the southwestern Peloponnese may be related to a MH tradition of processing textile fibres that did not survive into the Palatial period, when it was probably substituted by more industrial techniques of spinning



Fig. 9: Spindle whorls from the residential buildings at Kakovatos
(photo: I. Geske)



Fig. 10: Two spools from the residential buildings at Kakovatos
(photo: B. Eder)

We met a similar situation in Ka 3, which lies just west of Ka 1 (Fig. 4). Here, three walls form the southeastern part of another building, the rest of which has fallen victim to the erosion of the slope. Between the preserved walls, a burnt layer of clay covered a floor, which was again paved with pebbles.²² In this layer stood three pithoi, or rather the lower parts of them, and several vessels in situ (Fig. 11). The group of vessels comprises a piriform amphora, a large spouted handmade krater, another smaller open vessel in a handmade fabric of possibly MH tradition, a small miniature amphora and a one-handled carinated kylix of an early type (FS 267), which suggests that this deposit may date to an advanced stage of LH IIB (Fig. 12).²³

with distaff and weaving with the warp-weighted loom. Currently, there are no later examples known than that from the LH IIB destruction level at Kakovatos. In this context, it may appear of interest that the excavation has produced only spindle whorls and longitudinally pierced spools, but no loom weights, which could suggest the employment of the warp-weighted loom. For Middle Bronze Age spools and their possible association with the use of the horizontal loom cf. Cutler 2012, 148; Pavúk 2012, 123–126, with references. Kostas Nikolentzos has taken over responsibility for presenting and discussing the implements for textile production in the final publication of the Kakovatos Excavations.

²² Eder 2012, 94; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou 2016b, 315.

²³ Carinated kylikes become common in LH IIIA, but start to appear already in LH IIB. For a review of the current evidence, see Thomas 2011, 302; Kardamaki 2017, 98–99. Kylikes with a similar profile as the Kakovatos specimen come from Pit E in the subfloor of Room VII of Mansion 2 at the Menelaion, where they should be associated with the construction of Mansion 2 in LH IIB/IIIA1; cf. Catling 2009a, 49, 109–110, cat. nos. VII49, VII52;



Fig. 11: Destruction deposit in Ka 3: broken pithoi and storage vessels in situ (photo: Kakovatos project, 2011)

Typical elements of LH IIIA such as kylikes and monochrome goblets seem to be lacking in both destruction contexts at Kakovatos. However, one should be aware of the preliminary character of the present discussion that only takes account of the more complete vases on the floors, and only the full documentation and statistical evaluation of all the pottery will provide the complete evidence for the composition of the destruction deposit.²⁴ Pure LH IIB deposits remain rather rare on the mainland, and assemblages with comparable material comprise LH IIB/III A1 contexts at Tiryns (House D1), Asine (Room F, Layer 3), the construction deposits for Mansion II at the Menelaion, four early Mycenaean wells from the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis, and Ayia Irini (Phase VIIc) on Keos.²⁵ LH IIB deposits from Tsoungiza have been published very recently.²⁶

The pottery from buildings Ka 1 and Ka 3 on the acropolis of Kakovatos conforms to a typical settlement assemblage, with fine, coarse and cooking wares as well as storage vessels. A systematic petrographical analysis of the pottery is being undertaken in collaboration with the Fitch Laboratory of the British School at Athens under the direction of Evangelia Kiriatzi together with Georgia Kordatzaki. This study is complemented by NAA conducted by Hans Mommsen in Bonn. Among cooking pots and storage vessels, several clearly foreign fabrics were macroscopically identified. Our assessment indicates that the buildings on the acropolis stored pithoi and storage vessels of various sizes and fabrics as well as cooking pots from Kythera, in addition to transport containers from Crete. A cooking pot of Aiginetan tradition and other vessels of non-local pottery were identified. The presence of flat-based tripod cooking pots suggests some influence from

Catling 2009b, 133, fig. 137. Cf. Rutter 2020, 704–705 (Tsoungiza); Vitale et al., this volume, where one-handed angular kylikes are also considered as indicative of a late stage of LH IIB.

²⁴ Cf. the arguments of Kardamaki 2017, 80.

²⁵ For references and discussion, see Kardamaki 2017, 74–78, and *passim*. Cf. Cummer – Schofield 1984, 60–61, pl. 29a–e, h–i, k–l for the plain and Ephyraean goblets from the LH IIB level in Room 10 (Ayia Irini, House A).

²⁶ At Tsoungiza in EU 2, substantial LH IIB deposits (Group G) were recovered consisting of numerous examples of common shapes for drinking such as conical cups, teacups, and painted (including Ephyraean) and unpainted goblets as well as angular kylikes. Cf. Wright et al. 1990, 633; Thomas 2011, 302; see now Rutter 2020, 657–818.

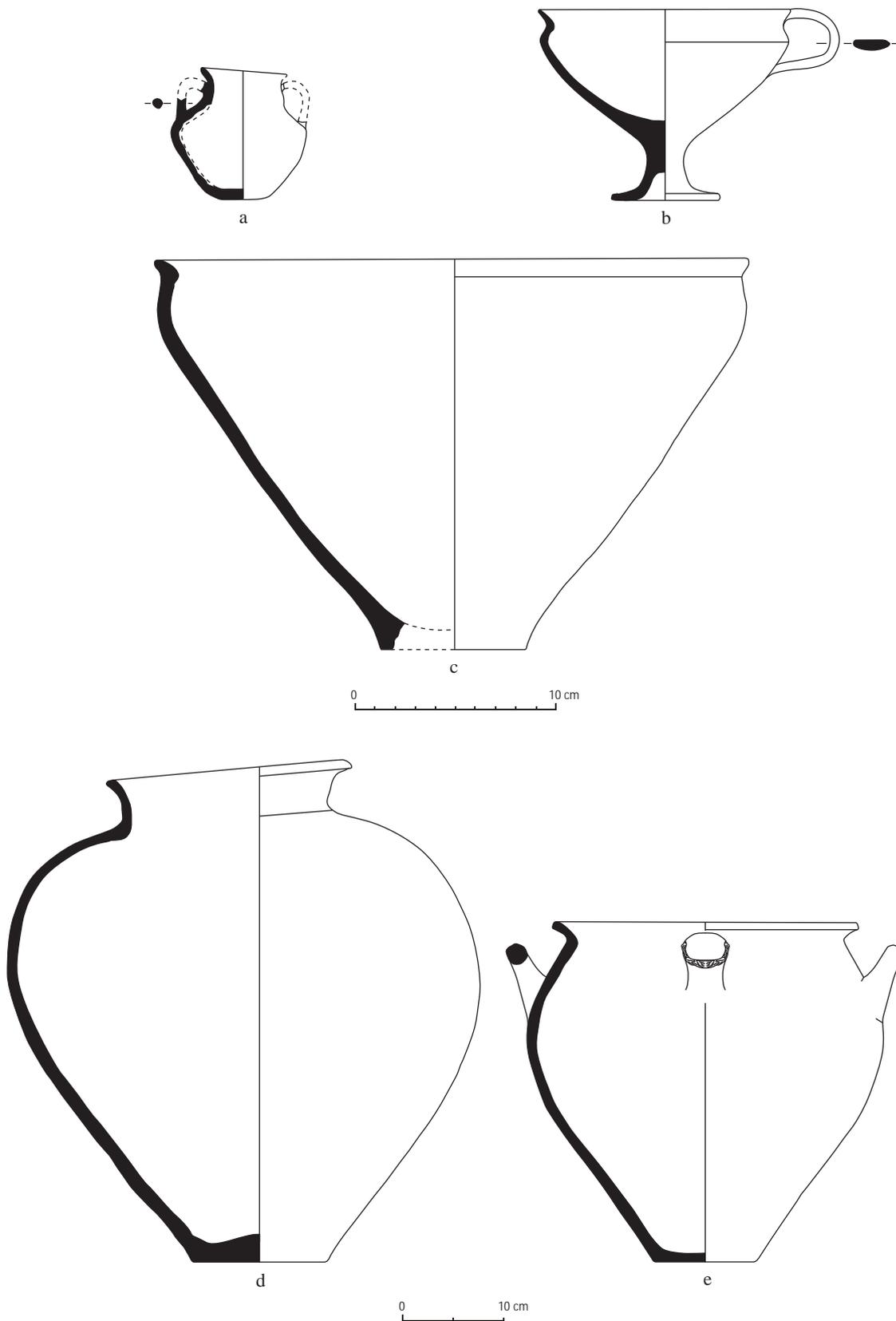


Fig. 12: Pottery from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 3 (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Cretan cuisine, which may well have gone beyond the mere introduction of Cretan-type cooking vessels and included also Minoan(ising) recipes.²⁷

The excavation revealed intense concentrations (of about 6 kg) of carbonised figs, and the botanist Simone Riehl (University of Tübingen) was also able to identify charred grains of barley as the content of the storage vessels. In this context it deserves mention that figs and barley constitute the components of food rations to dependent workers in the Linear B texts from the palace at Pylos, which are, however, more than 200 years later than our present archaeological context.²⁸ Storage capacities point not only to the ability to provide foodstuffs for dependent personnel, but also to the control of a part of the agricultural production of the area, which was administered by the group residing in Kakovatos.

The analysis of the animal bones is being conducted by Norbert Benecke and his team at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin. He suggests that we found the rather common remains of meat consumption. Species of domestic animals include cattle, pig, sheep and goat. However, bones of red deer, hare and wild boar and even of a brown bear complement the variety of animals and illustrate that people from Kakovatos went hunting. The presence of cockleshells, purple dye murex and dog cockle (or ‘amandes de mer’) shows that seafood also formed part of the diet, although fish bones were not preserved. The hunt was probably one of the favourite pastimes of Mycenaean elites from early on, as the illustration of the deer hunt with the chariot on the golden signet ring from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae makes abundantly clear.²⁹ Likewise, the boar hunt must have played an important role as boar’s tusk helmets feature prominently in early Mycenaean burials, and the one from Tholos A of Kakovatos provides an example in point.³⁰

According to our current state of knowledge, we have uncovered the remains of an early Mycenaean residential complex, of which two corners of two separate rooms in the basement are still preserved. These buildings were perhaps part of an originally larger complex, whose remains fell victim to the erosion of the marly and sandy geology. The excavated rooms should be considered the storage areas and workspace in the basement of two buildings, which were originally taller. The width of the walls of these rooms, between 0.90 m and 1.60 m, speaks for reconstructing two or even three-storeyed buildings (Fig. 19).

Nine short-lived botanical samples from LH IIA and LH IIB contexts were submitted for radiocarbon analysis to laboratories in Mannheim (Germany) and Athens (Greece) (Tab. 1). In order to determine the date for the transition between LH IIA and LH IIB, as well as for the LH IIB destruction at the site, a Bayesian probability approach was employed to make full use of the stratigraphy of the site. Bayesian analysis allows taking additional information into account, such as the sequence of the samples based on archaeological stratigraphy.³¹ Radiocarbon calibration and modelling was done using OxCal 4.3.2 and the INTCAL13 radiocarbon calibration curve.³² According to our model, the LH IIB destruction horizon in Ka 1 and Ka 3 ends sometime between 1496 and 1410 BC, most likely around or just before 1450 BC (Fig. 13).³³

The presence of one complete carinated kylix (and a few additional fragments of this type) may be taken to suggest that this date correlates with an advanced stage of LH IIB. Moreover, the excavation data support this assumption, because the large western terrace wall was also built within LH IIB, before the final destruction (see below).

²⁷ Cf. also Huber et al., this volume.

²⁸ Cf. Chadwick 1988; Gregersen 1997; Killen 2004.

²⁹ CMS I, no. 15.

³⁰ Cf. de Vreé, this volume.

³¹ Buck et al. 1991; Weninger et al. 2006; Bronk Ramsey 2009.

³² Bronk Ramsey 2009; Reimer et al. 2013.

³³ ¹⁴C analysis was carried out at the Curt-Engelhorn-Centre for Archaeometry at Mannheim, where the organic materials were processed by Bernd Kromer and Ronny Friedrich. In addition, K. Nikolentzos had carbonised figs from Dörpfeld’s excavations examined in the Demokritos Laboratory (DEM-1996): Nikolentzos 2011, 401. A detailed report on the radiocarbon dates and their implications for Late Bronze Age Aegean chronology is currently in preparation by Felix Höflmayer and Birgitta Eder.

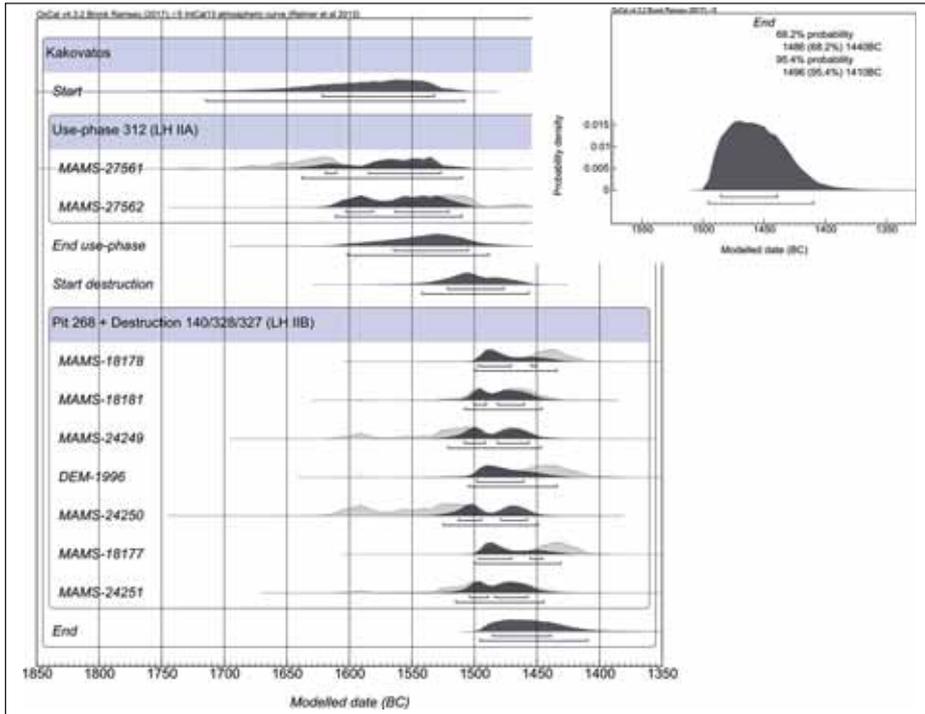


Fig. 13: Modelled probability ranges for each individual sample and boundaries. Light shaded areas represent individual calibrated ^{14}C determinations; dark shaded areas represent modelled calibrated ^{14}C determinations based on the stratigraphic sequence of the site (F. Höflmayer)

Event	Labcode	Sample description	Measurement	Calibrated date		Modelled date	
				68.2%	95.4%	68.2%	95.4%
Start						1622–1533	1715–1508
	MAMS-27561	Bone: cattle Ka 1: SU 312	3330±26	1661–1607 (47.8%) 1583–1559 (17.1%) 1553–1547 (3.2%)	1686–1531 (95.4%)	1620–1611 (5.3%) 1585–1528 (62.9%)	1639–1511
	MAMS-27562	Bone: sheep/ goat Ka 1: SU 312	3259±25	1607–1583 (19.5%) 1559–1554 (3.2%) 1546–1500 (45.5%)	1614–1496 (91%) 1476–1460 (4.4%)	1603–1582 (21.8%) 1564–1521 (46.4%)	1612–1511
End use-phase						1565–1506	1602–1489
Start destruction						1522–1477	1543–1457
	MAMS-18178	Fig Ka 1: SU 140 (Pithos)	3175±17	1494–1479 (19.6%) 1456–1427 (48.6%)	1497–1418	1498–1471 (63.2%) 1455–1451 (5.0%)	1500–1435
	MAMS-18181	Carbonised figs Ka 3: SU 328 (Pithos)	3217±17	1504–1492 (19%) 1483–1453 (49.2%)	1516–1437	1501–1491 (22.7%) 1482–1461 (45.5%)	1508–1447
	MAMS-24249	Grain Ka 3: SU 327 (Pithos)	3241±24	1595–1589 (3.7%) 1532–1494 (47.5%) 1478–1457 (16.9%)	1608–1581 (11.7%) 1562–1446 (83.7%)	1509–1492 (27.6%) 1482–1457 (40.6%)	1522–1447
	DEM-1996	Carbonised figs (Dörpfeld excavations, Ka1/3)	3179±30	1496–1474 (26%) 1461–1427 (42.2%)	1507–1407 (95.4%)	1499–1461	1505–1435
	MAMS-24250	Barley Ka 1: SU 268	3261±24	1607–1583 (20.1%) 1559–1553 (3.6%) 1546–1501 (44.5%)	1615–1496 (92.3%) 1475–1461 (3.1%)	1513–1495 (33.6%) 1479–1459 (34.6%)	1526–1450
	MAMS-18177	Carbonised fig Ka 1: SU 218	3166±18	1490–1484 (6.6%) 1452–1418 (61.6%)	1497–1471 (20.4%) 1465–1411 (75%)	1497–1471 (57.1%) 1456–1446 (11.1%)	1500–1432
	MAMS-24251	Grain Ka 1: SU 218	3226±24	1518–1491 (30.2%) 1484–1451 (38%)	1600–1586 (3%) 1535–1432 (92.4%)	1504–1490 (24.6%) 1484–1458 (43.6%)	1516–1445
End						1486–1440	1496–1410

Tab. 1: Radiocarbon determinations, individual and modelled calibrations for samples from Kakovatos

The Stratigraphy and Chronology of the Residential Building

The stratigraphic investigation in Ka 1 makes it possible to reconstruct the deposition of several layers and to model the history of this architectural complex.

The fill that had been levelled for the subfloor (stratigraphic unit, hereafter SU, 218) of the final (pebble) floor contained plenty of pottery, of which most seems to be of MH character, notwithstanding its factual absolute chronology (Fig. 14): there are fragments of MH-type goblets and kantharoi (Fig. 14f–h); bowls (Fig. 14j–k); storage vessels (Fig. 14p); conical cups (Fig. 14i), which are quite frequent in this layer in comparison with what comes later; two fragments of ‘spinning bowls’ (Fig. 14l) and pottery with incised decoration (Fig. 14m–o). The pebble floor with the LH IIB destruction provides a *terminus ante quem* for this layer. A few painted Mycenaean sherds are assigned to LH IIA, such as the piriform jar fragment with the traces of an ivy leaf (?) decoration (FM 12) (Fig. 14e). The shallow cup sherds with spiral pattern (FS 218) (Fig. 14a–b) as well as the body fragment of a semi-globular cup (?) with the decoration of a double axe (FM 35) (Fig. 14c), and one of a piriform rhyton (?) with curved stripes (FM 67) (Fig. 14d) also conform well to a LH IIA chronology.³⁴ This may be taken as a *terminus post quem* for dating the construction of the latest floor. The graph in Fig. 15 schematically illustrates the stratigraphy in Ka 1 with the destruction layer, the final pebble floor (SU 70) and the fill (SU 218) underneath.

The removal of the pebble floor of the destruction phase and of the underlying fill brought to light an earlier phase of the building. Just in front of the eastern wall, a completely preserved double axe of bronze lay on the ground.³⁵ Its position under the final floor level may suggest a foundation deposit that corresponds to the latest building phase.

A few patches of an earlier pebble layer indicate a previous level of use of the building. According to the current state of the evaluation of the pottery from the first floor level (SU 312), fragments of Mycenaean pottery comprise two Keftiu-type cup fragments (FS 224) with spiral and tangent with blob (FM 46) and possibly a squat jug with hatched loop (FM 63) (Fig. 16). They should be not later than LH IIA and provide an approximate date for the first phase of use of the room.³⁶ The earliest level (SU 334) corresponds to the fill under the first pebble floor (Fig. 15). It contains at least one, although not very characteristic, fragment of Mycenaean pottery, but which is indicative of a Mycenaean chronology, i.e. LH I or IIA.

Apart from Mycenaean-type pottery, plenty of shapes and fabrics in a MH tradition are present in the various levelling fills, which also include a variety of fragments of incised pottery that has been termed ‘Adriatic Ware’ in the past. This might be taken to suggest the existence of chronological phases preceding LH II and an even earlier phase of occupation on the hill during the MH III/LH I transition. However, no architectural remains can be associated with this potential MH III–LH I phase. We are thus inclined to propose that pottery in a MH tradition continued well into LH IIA and was only gradually substituted by Mycenaean pottery wares. It therefore seems quite possible that habitation started (early) in LH IIA or in the LH I/IIA transition. This scenario suits perfectly the re-evaluation of the chronology of the tholos tombs by Ch. de Vreé, who suggests that Tholos A at least was founded in the LH I/IIA transition.³⁷

³⁴ For a comparable LH IIA context from Tsoungiza, see Rutter 1993. LH IIA deposits with similar pottery have been distinguished at Keos (Ayia Irini, Phase VIIa–b): cf. Cummer – Schofield 1984, 80, pl. 60, no. 678 (Room 17); 118, pl. 81, no. 1415 (Room 28) for shallow cups (FS 218) with spirals; 126, no. 1561, pl. 86 (Room 31) for a complete piriform rhyton with curved stripes and rows of dots from Period VII destruction deposits in House A; Schofield 2011, 72, pl. 52 nos. 834, 835, for cups with double-axe motif (Room W.50, Phase VIIa context, i.e. earlier LH IIA).

³⁵ Small double axe with oval shaft hole, Type IV after Buchholz 1959, 8–9: Eder 2012, 93, fig. 7; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou 2016b, 314, fig. 24; Eder 2018b; see also the illustration in Weilharter, this volume.

³⁶ For comparanda for the Keftiu cup with tangent spiral and blob, see Mountjoy 2008, 368, no. 3645, fig. 6.35 (from Area Nu at Ayios Stephanos); Schofield 2011, 59–60 no. 838, pl. 52 (Room W.50, Phase VIIa context, i.e. earlier LH IIA, at Ayia Irini on Keos), cf. Lolos 1987, 392–396, for references to examples from the southwestern Peloponnese; see also RMDP, 315 with n. 109. For LH IIA squat jugs with racket motif, see O. Dickinson, in: Shay 1992, 225–226, no. P3002, fig. 4.24, pl. 4.18 (Little Circle at Nichoria); Cummer – Schofield 1984, 61, pl. 51 (Period VII, Room 11, House A, Ayia Irini, Keos); cf. Lolos 1987, 453–456, for examples from the southwestern Peloponnese.

³⁷ See de Vreé, this volume.

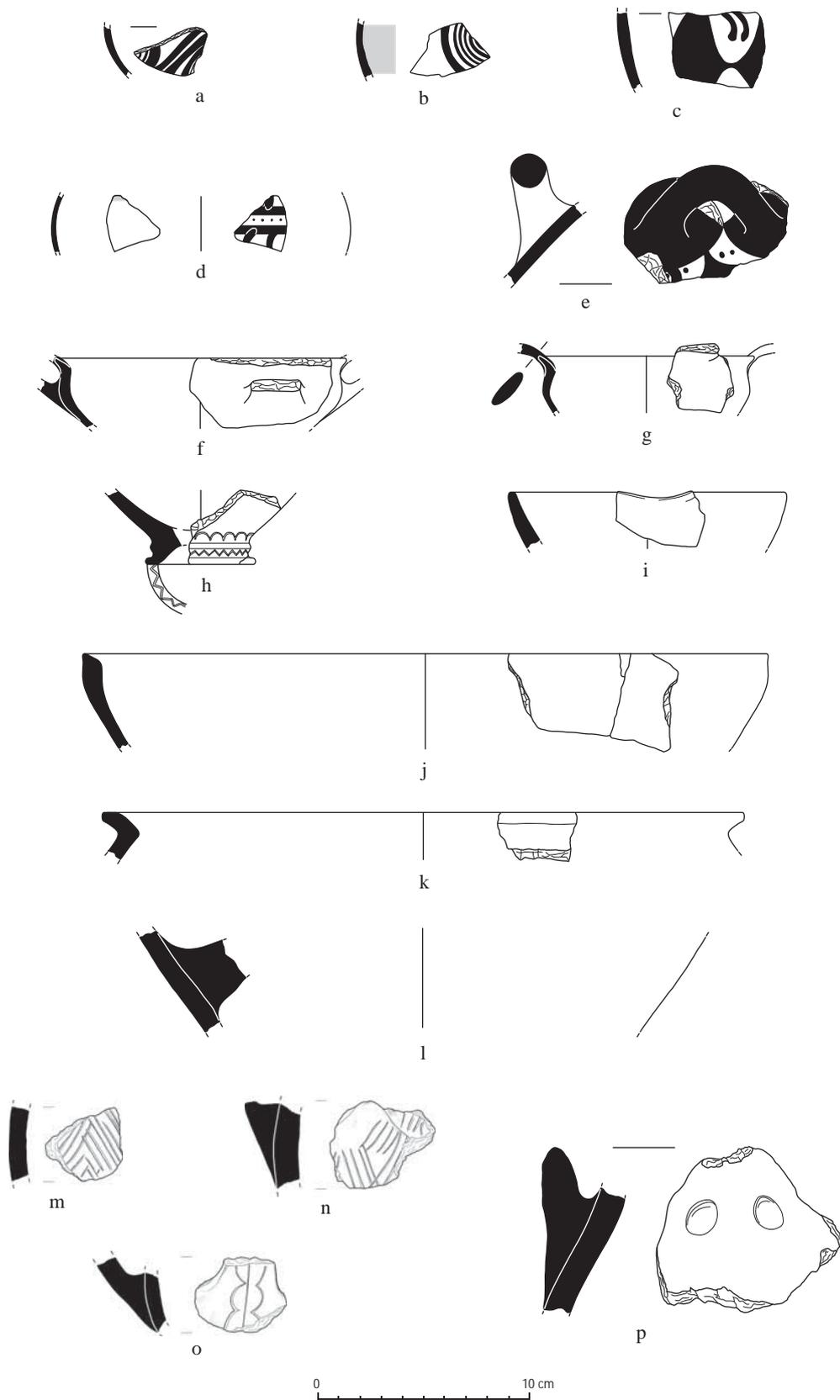


Fig. 14: Selected pottery fragments from subfloor SU 218 (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

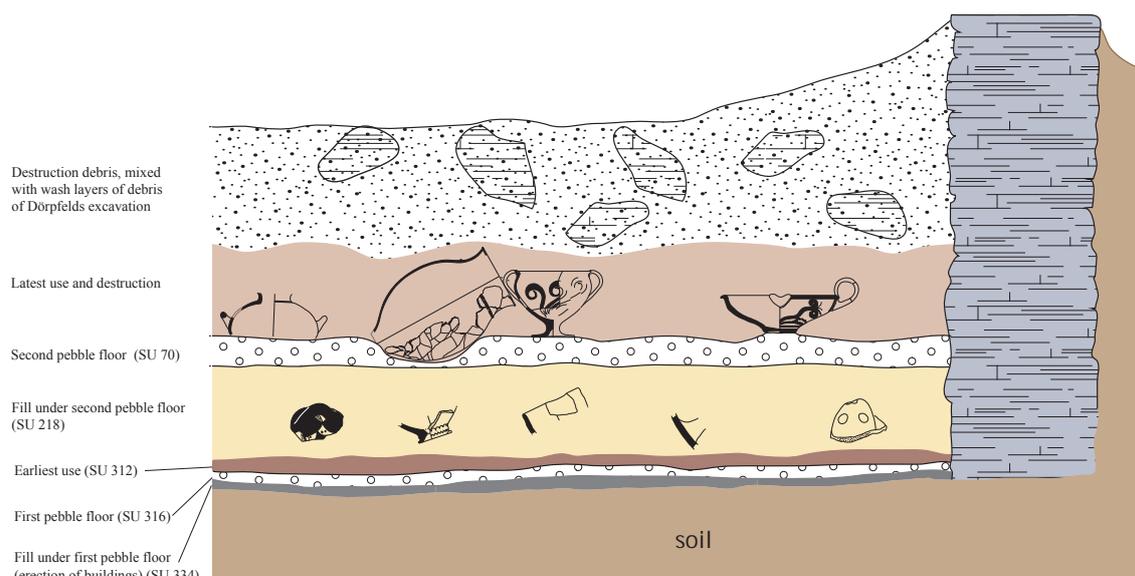


Fig. 15: Schematic graph of the stratigraphy in Ka 1 (J. Huber)

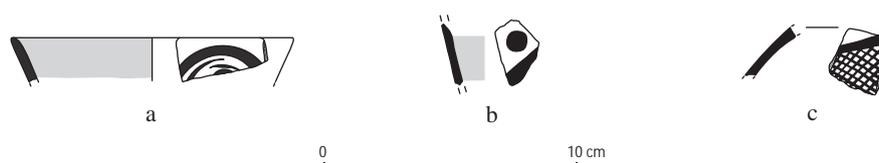


Fig. 16: Fragments of Mycenaean decorated pottery from the first floor level SU 312 (drawings: B. Eder, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Summing up the results of our stratigraphic study of the acropolis buildings, we can trace the erection of parts of an originally larger architectural complex on the acropolis of Kakovatos back to LH I/IIA and follow its use until its destruction in LH IIB.

Aggrandisement: The Western Terrace Wall

Just before the final destruction in LH IIB, the Kakovatos architectural complex underwent a period of aggrandisement and monumentalisation. On the western slope of the acropolis, a wall corner of massive blocks with an external face was built against the marly geology of the hill. This section, which lies about 7 m below the upper plateau, is characterised by intensive slope erosion and colluvial layers (Fig. 17).

A pit on the north side of the wall, which runs underneath it, contained an Ephyraean goblet, which provides a date for the construction of the wall within LH IIB.³⁸ The large wall probably served as a massive retaining wall for structures on the plateau above, which are now lost due to soil erosion. Its visibility and massive construction underline its symbolic character; its thickness suggests a rather tall structure. It is not part of a peripheral fortification wall, but a terrace wall with representative character, which perhaps supported a building on the upper plateau. (Fig. 18)

In terms of layout and orientation, the construction of this wall is related to the buildings on the plateau above it, and it was therefore likely part of an intentional overall plan. The poorly pre-

³⁸ Eder 2012, 94; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou 2016b, 316.



Fig. 17: The corner of the terrace wall on the western slope of the Kakovatos hill (photo: Kakovatos project, 2011)

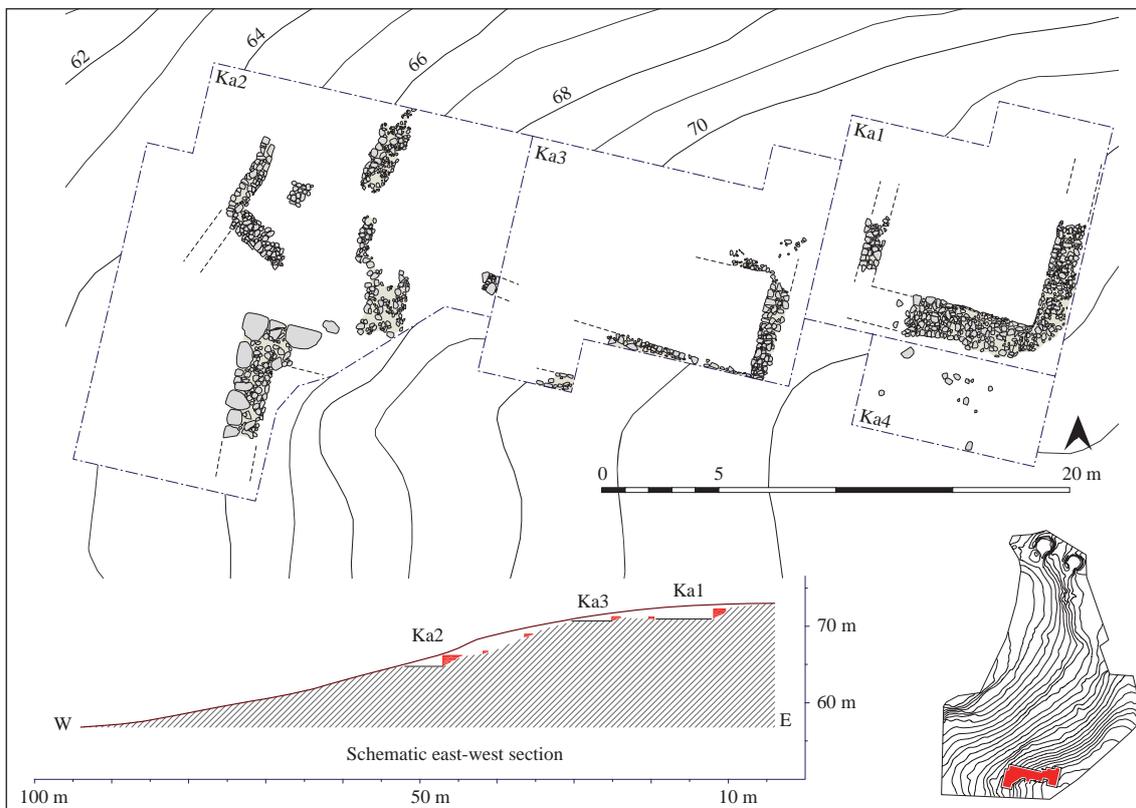


Fig. 18: Overall plan of the architectural remains in Ka 1, Ka 2, and Ka 3 (topography: Ch. Kurtze, plan: M. Börner)

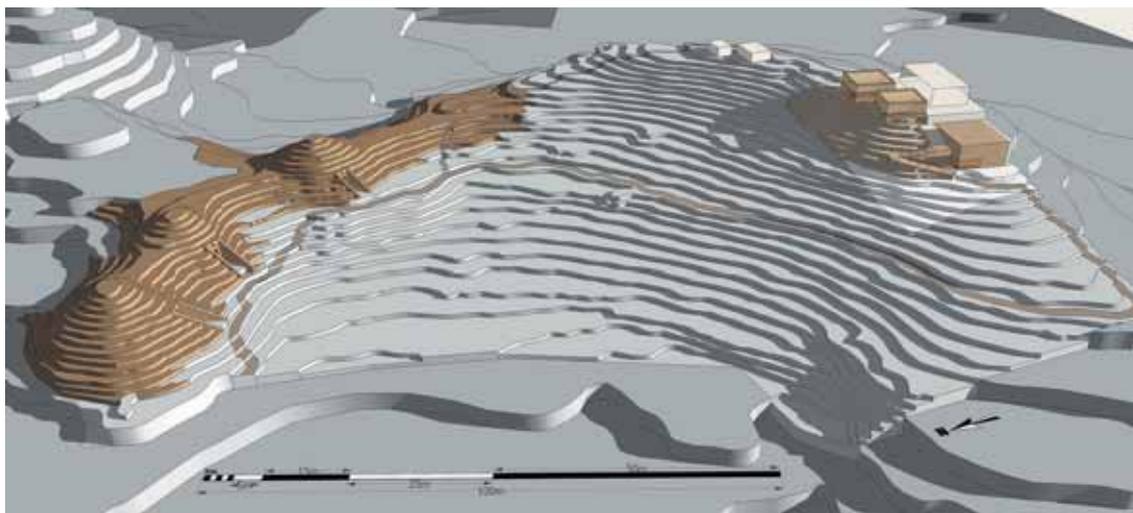


Fig. 19: Reconstruction of the early Mycenaean site of Kakovatos with residential buildings and three monumental tholos tombs (Ch. Diedrich, B. Eder)

served stretches of additional smaller walls further north probably also served as retaining walls and may be connected to a path leading to the buildings on the plateau. Based on the available evidence, the following three-dimensional reconstruction of the architectural complex of Kakovatos has been created (Fig. 19).

Built structures which have been documented during the excavation, as well as those features which can be safely restored, have been rendered in dark brown. Medium brown is the colour of more conjectural parts of the reconstruction that can be argued on the basis of the preserved structures. The exact appearance of these parts remains uncertain. Entirely hypothetical elements of the reconstruction have been translated into transparent white.

A ramp next to the great terrace wall probably led to the hilltop, while we suggest a quite hypothetical staircase for covering the last section of the slope. This part of the reconstructed ascent and the exact appearance of the slope behind the terrace wall must remain relatively uncertain. However, the indirect access via a ramp and subsequent steps and the multiple changes in the orientation of the path correspond generally with the access to Mycenaean representative buildings, as we know them from the later Mycenaean palaces.

Although much fell victim to soil erosion, it is clear that the two basement rooms lay next to an area that was supported by the large terrace wall on the lower slope (Fig. 20). Due to the massive character of the terrace wall, we consider it a reasonable assumption that the area just behind it on top of the hill once carried a building too. This notional construction of a central building has been rendered in transparent white in order to emphasise the hypothetical nature. The three tholos tombs stood at the foot of the acropolis, probably next to an ascending path, which lead to the western entrance area.

The Micro-regional Perspective

The building complex of Kakovatos apparently lay outside any settlement. Our survey has provided no evidence of a settlement or tombs in the immediate vicinity, neither on the slopes of the hill nor in the adjoining valley. Birgitta Eder has thus developed the working hypothesis that the tholos tombs and the architectural complex of Kakovatos always stood by themselves within the otherwise populated landscape. Just as the graves stood out among the tombs of the region by their size, expenditure in terms of construction and wealth of grave offerings, the building complex on the acropolis hill was set apart spatially, clearly visible above the Triphylian Plain.



Fig. 20: View of the plateau with building remains at the end of the excavation 2011: The area left to the storerooms may originally have carried an additional building (photo: Kakovatos project)

Even more hypothetical is the assumption that each of the two foothills adjoining the acropolis once also carried a residential building. The acropolis hill is the highest elevation in a group of hills and connected by cols with the two lower foothills in the northeast and the southwest. Two small pockets of sherds found during the 2009 survey may suggest some activity on these foothills in the Bronze Age. The three tholos tombs at the foot of the acropolis would be in accordance with such a perspective.

The comparison with the well-known Menelaion in Lakonia helps to support this interpretation. The representative building complex of LH IIB, the so-called Mansion 1, was equipped with a central hall and laterally adjoining rooms.³⁹ The Menelaion also lay on a ridge above the Eurotas Valley, and the immediately adjoining hilltops, the North Hill and Aetos respectively, produced also traces of activity in the early Mycenaean period. Although the three hills are located at a close distance of some 650 m to each other, they are clearly separated by cols.⁴⁰

In summary, the architectural development of the Kakovatos site suggests a major transformation in the LH I/IIA transition, when the tholos tomb(s) were built and an architectural complex with substantial storage capacities was erected. In LH IIB we can trace the enhancement of the complex through the building of an impressive retaining wall, which was possibly crowned by a representative building. Pottery from the storage areas and prestige objects from the tombs betray that the inhabitants were integrated into an Aegean network spanning at least the Peloponnese and the southern Aegean.⁴¹ Compared with the much more modest tombs in the region at Samikon and Makryisia,⁴² we can recognise this as strategies of early Mycenaean elites to elevate themselves symbolically, socially, economically, politically and spatially above the rest of the population.

³⁹ Menelaion/Mansion 1: Catling 2009a, 23–32; Catling 2009b, 11–15, figs. 12–16 (plans).

⁴⁰ For the topography, see Catling 2009a, 445; Catling 2009b, 1–4, figs. 1–4.

⁴¹ De Vreé, this volume; Huber et al., this volume.

⁴² De Vreé, this volume.

All social relations are spatial, and all spatial relations are social. The building and extension of the architectural complex and the construction of the tholos tombs transformed the built environment and the social relations between the social groups within the region of Triphylia alike. The construction of the site certainly served the expression of a political and social hierarchy, but also contributed to reinforcing asymmetrical relations and related spatial practices.

While Kakovatos emerged as the most important site of the region of Triphylia in the LH I–IIA period, LH IIB formed a turning point, when the fall of Kakovatos changed the political landscape again. There appears no evident successor to the site, which was destroyed and not rebuilt again.⁴³ However, sites on a medium level of hierarchy like Kleidi-Samikon apparently continued. This may reflect the expansion of another political power, i.e. probably Pylos, but this is an entirely different story.⁴⁴

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⁴³ However, during W. Dörpfeld’s excavations LH III pottery was recovered from the col, which separates the acropolis hill and the southwestern foothill. The character of this assemblage, which includes a great number of kylikes, is far from clear. Dörpfeld’s assumption that it may be related to a sanctuary rests on the find of a Mycenaean figurine (Dörpfeld 1908, 130–131). LH III material from the recent excavations on the acropolis is almost non-existent apart from two single fragments from colluvial layers.

⁴⁴ Cf. Eder 2011.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Excavations on the hilltop of Kakovatos in 1907–08 by W. Dörpfeld (in the background). The area in the photograph corresponds with the recent excavation areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 (German Archaeological Institute Athens, D-DAI-ATH-Triphylien-0065)

Fig. 2: View from the hilltop of Kakovatos to the northwest, towards the western end of the Lapithos Mountain range (photo: B. Eder, 2010)

Fig. 3: Terrain model of the site of Kakovatos (Ch. Kurtze)

Fig. 4: Plan of the building remains and finds in situ in the excavation areas Ka 1 and Ka 3 on the hilltop (M. Börner)

Fig. 5: Pottery from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1: Mycenaean fine ware (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Fig. 6: Pottery from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1: handmade closed vessels (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Fig. 7: ‘Spinning bowl’ from the LH IIB destruction layer in Ka 1 (photo: I. Geske)

Fig. 8: Distribution map of ‘spinning bowls’ in the southwestern Peloponnese (B. Eder, J. Huber)

Fig. 9: Spindle whorls from the residential buildings at Kakovatos (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0782)

Fig. 10: Two spools from the residential buildings at Kakovatos (photo: B. Eder)

Fig. 11: Destruction deposit in Ka 3: broken pithoi and storage vessels in situ (photo: Kakovatos project, 2011)

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Fig. 13: Modelled probability ranges for each individual sample and boundaries. Light shaded areas represent individual calibrated ¹⁴C determinations; dark shaded areas represent modelled calibrated ¹⁴C determinations based on the stratigraphic sequence of the site (F. Höflmayer)

Fig. 14: Selected pottery fragments from subfloor SU 218 (drawings: A. Ferretti, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Fig. 15: Schematic graph of the stratigraphy in Ka 1 (J. Huber)

Fig. 16: Fragments of Mycenaean decorated pottery from the first floor level SU 312 (drawings: B. Eder, N. Math, R. Pritz)

Fig. 17: The corner of the terrace wall on the western slope of the Kakovatos hill (photo: Kakovatos project, 2011)

Fig. 18: Overall plan of the architectural remains in Ka 1, Ka 2, and Ka 3 (topography: Ch. Kurtze, plan: M. Börner)

Fig. 19: Reconstruction of the early Mycenaean site of Kakovatos with residential buildings and three monumental tholos tombs (Ch. Diedrich, B. Eder)

Fig. 20: View of the plateau with building remains at the end of the excavation 2011: The area left to the storerooms may originally have carried an additional building (photo: Kakovatos project)

Table

Tab. 1: Radiocarbon determinations, individual and modelled calibrations for samples from Kakovatos

The Tholos Tombs of Kakovatos: Their Place in Early Mycenaean Greece

*Christine de Vreé*¹

Abstract: The Mycenaean tholos tombs of Kakovatos in the western Peloponnese belong to the largest of their time (LH I–II). Even though they were looted, they still contained a considerable amount of highly valuable objects. Parallels to these objects come from various richly furnished tombs from all over the Greek mainland. Some categories distinguish very few sites only (Mycenae, Dendra, Kakovatos, Pylos, Peristeria, Thorikos, Thebes and Volos-Kapakli): Imports from the Near East as well as from Europe represent specific types of jewellery, while cheek pieces of horse harnesses, bone discs or buttons with the design of the so-called ‘Carpathian-East Mediterranean wave band decoration’ are closely related to the privilege of chariot driving. It is argued that foreign necklaces and collars as well as horse harnesses were part of a set of status symbols that were used only by a small group of peers across the Greek mainland. All these similarities indicate the existence of certain rules concerning the variation and combination of grave goods. In her investigation of the Shaft Graves of Mycenae and the younger ‘Warrior Tombs’ of Knossos Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier has demonstrated that the various sets of grave goods served a hierarchy of social distinction. It will be argued that this general pattern may also be valid for other early Mycenaean regions, and that the comparison among sites will help to place Kakovatos within the network of early Mycenaean sites on the Greek mainland.

Keywords: Kakovatos, horse harness, weapons, amber, palatial jars, social rank

Introduction

The site of Kakovatos with its three tholos tombs, famous for their amber jewellery, was originally excavated by Wilhelm Dörpfeld in two short campaigns in 1907 and 1908. The tholos tombs of Kakovatos lie at the foot of the acropolis hill and their locations follow the rising slope. The hollows of Tombs A and B are still visible today, while the sparse remains of Tholos C have disappeared below the concrete floor of a parking area. With diameters of about 12, 9 and 10 m, the tombs belong to the largest tholoi of the early Mycenaean period.² Of the contemporary tombs, only the Lion Tomb and the Tomb of Aegisthus at Mycenae with diameters of 14.35 m and 13.96 m respectively are larger than Tholos A of Kakovatos (Tab. 1), while Tholos 1 of Peristeria is about the same size. Although the tholos tombs of Kakovatos had all been disturbed or emptied since antiquity, they still contained a large quantity of highly valuable objects including 22 palatial jars, glass objects, gold, lapis lazuli, agate and amber jewellery and even an iron ring. Most finds were recovered in Tholos A, because its dome had already collapsed in ancient times and the debris had protected the objects. Even though quite thoroughly looted, Tholos B still contained a long bronze sword of Type A and a bowl of dark cobalt-blue glass, so far a unique piece in Mycenaean Greece, and Tholos C provided fragments of a bronze vessel with spiral decoration and various pieces of gold.³

The valuable objects that were presented in the reports by Dörpfeld and Walter Müller one hundred years ago provide clear evidence that Kakovatos had been a site of some importance in the early Mycenaean period. However, the subsequent discovery and identification of Bronze Age Pylos at Englianos in Messenia detracted scholarly attention from Kakovatos. While the

¹ E-mail: tinadevree@hotmail.com.

² Diameters of tholos tombs according to Pelon 1976; Kamm 2000; Zavdil 2013.

³ Dörpfeld 1907; Dörpfeld 1908; Müller 1909; Dörpfeld 1913.

Tholos	Diameter	Date of Construction
Mycenae, Lion	14.35 m	LH II
Mycenae, Aegisthus	13.96 m	LH IIA
Kakovatos A	12.00–12.12 m	LH I/IIA
Peristeria 1	12.03–12.04 m	LH I (?)/IIA
Mycenae, Epáno Phournos	c. 11 m	LH II
Antheia	c. 10.50 m	LH I (?)/IIA
Kakovatos C	10.15–10.35 m	LH II
Vapheio	10.15–10.35 m	LH IIA
Mycenae, Kato Phournos	10.40 m	LH II
Volos, Kapakli	10 m	LH II
Prosymna, Heraion	9.50 m	LH IIA
Peristeria 2	9.50–10.50 m	LH I/IIA
Pylos IV	9.35 m	MH III/LH I
Thorikos B	9.25 m	LH IIA
Psari 1	9.10 m	LH I/IIA
Kakovatos B	8.90–9.00 m	LH IIA
Analipsis	8.65 m	LH IIA

Tab. 1: The size of the tombs of Kakovatos compared to other early Mycenaean tholos tombs (with a diameter larger than 8.50 m)

existence of amber, blue glass and other exotica at Kakovatos is still regularly mentioned in the pertinent bibliography, the whole group of finds from the three richly furnished tholos tombs has never been fully published in detail. Only in 2010, as part of a wider research project directed by Birgitta Eder on “Kakovatos and Triphyllia in the 2nd Millennium BC”, were the finds from the tholoi completely documented for the first time. They will be published in a forthcoming monograph.⁴ Likewise, there has been no attempt to scrutinise the chronology of the tombs or to re-evaluate the role of Kakovatos within a wider cultural context.

The Re-evaluation of the Chronology of the Kakovatos Tholos Tombs

So far, all three Kakovatos tholos tombs have been dated to LH IIA.⁵ This general assessment was based on the series of large palatial jars, which are considered typical for this period. However, a closer look at the other objects from Tholos A and their parallels supports the assumption that this tomb at least was already in use in LH I (late). Objects such as the ivory and bone buttons with compass-drawn wave-band decoration (‘Carpathian-East Mediterranean wave band decoration’)⁶ have their best and almost only parallels in the Shaft Graves IV and V of Mycenae dating to LH I.⁷ In addition, the recent find of a toggle piece of a horse bridle with this kind of decoration from

⁴ Today the finds are stored in the National Museum in Athens. I am grateful to Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki, former director of the Prehistoric Collection, for the permit to study and record the finds from the Kakovatos tombs in the framework of the Kakovatos project.

⁵ Furumark 1941, 47.

⁶ Bone discs from Kakovatos (NMA 5675): Müller 1909, 282–287, fig. 5; for the whole complex of the ‘Carpathian-East Mediterranean wave band decoration’ see Harding 2005; David 2007 with further references.

⁷ Karo 1930/1933, 45–46, pl. 29 (Grave III, gold foil ornaments); 85–89, pls. 59–60 (Grave IV); 128–132, pls. 62–65 (Grave V). On the chronology of the Shaft Graves of Mycenae, see Dietz 1991, 250; Graziadio 1991, 406.

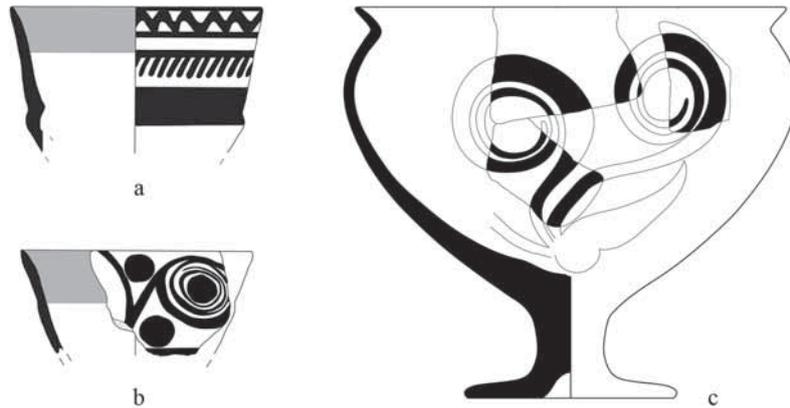


Fig. 1: LH I-II B pottery from the tholos tombs of Kakovatos: a–b. Tholos A; c. Tholos A, B or C. Scale 1: 3 (drawings: Ch. de Vreé, J. Huber)

Mitrou in East Lokris comes from a destruction layer dating to the end of LH I.⁸ Amber spacer beads, especially those with v-shaped perforations, provide additional arguments for an early use of Tomb A: they have their best and nearly only parallels in Shaft Grave O of Circle B and Grave IV of Circle A in Mycenae, dating to LH I, and in Tholos 2 of Peristeria (LH I/IIA).⁹ This suggests that the amber spacer beads from Tomb A of Kakovatos also belong to the early horizon of the Shaft Grave period.

Among the pottery from the tombs, fragments of two Vapheio cups can be dated between LH I and LH IIA. They belong to Coldstream's Type I or II.¹⁰ The first fragment (Fig. 1a) has a broad midrib and a very unusual lustrous painted design of different horizontal bands and has no direct parallels. The decoration is reminiscent of MH patterns, possibly indicating that it belongs to an early, not yet standardised type.¹¹ The second fragment (Fig. 1b) shows a tangent-spiral design and the interior displays many wheel-marks, indicating an unsmoothed surface, elements that are considered to be typical of the early types.¹²

The presence of an amphora of the so-called Standard Tradition dating to LM IB and an early type of palatial jar (NMA 14140) also support a LH I late/IIA early chronology. The oldest palatial jars of FS 14 come from Shaft Grave V of Mycenae,¹³ the Koukounara-Gouvalari Tholos Tombs 1 and 2,¹⁴ Tholos 3 of Peristeria,¹⁵ and Tholos 1 of Tragana-Viglitsa.¹⁶ These amphorae are all slightly smaller than the later FS 15, their bodies are less well balanced (especially their upper part), and their motifs (hatched loops and spiral designs) are an integral part of the LH I style. Sometimes they display one or more rings above the base. These features are never present on the large amphorae of FS 15.¹⁷ Apart from these stylistic criteria, the context of Shaft Grave V dating

⁸ Maran – Van de Moortel 2014, 530–533.

⁹ Generally, on amber spacer beads with v-shaped borings see Hachmann 1957; Harding – Hughes Brock 1974, 155–157 (147–148, 160–161, fig. 4.20–22, on Kakovatos); Harding 1984, 74–79; Maran 2004. For the parallels from Mycenae and Peristeria see below n. 34.

¹⁰ Coldstream – Huxley 1972, 284–285; Dickinson 1974, 115; Coldstream 1978, 393–396.

¹¹ There is a good parallel from Ayios Stephanos, dated stylistically to LH I by Mountjoy 2008, 371, no. 3654, fig. 6.36. I thank Jasmin Huber for pointing out this vase to me.

¹² Rutter – Rutter 1976, 54–55, no. 866, ill. 17; Lolos 1987, 392–396.

¹³ Mycenae, Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave V (NMA 856): Kalogeropoulos 1998, 96–97, no. 1, pl. 26c. Mycenae, Epáno Phournos Tholos (Nauplion Museum 5392, 5393): Wace et al. 1953, 73–75, nos. 2–3, fig. 43.1–3, 5, pl. 25a; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 98–99, nos. 6–7, pl. 36a.

¹⁴ Koukounara-Gouvalari, Tholos 1 (Pylos Museum 54, 57, 58): Kalogeropoulos 1998, 142–143, nos. 1–3, pls. 27b–c, 31c, 44c–d; Koukounara-Gouvalari, Tholos 2 (Pylos Museum 55): Kalogeropoulos 1998, 143–144, no. 4, pl. 43d.

¹⁵ Peristeria, Tholos 3 (Chora Museum): Kalogeropoulos 1998, 149–150, no. 11, pl. 26b.

¹⁶ Tragana-Viglitsa, Tholos 1 (NMA 6091, 6092): Kalogeropoulos 1998, 141, nos. 1–2, pls. 24a–b, 40c–d.

¹⁷ Mountjoy 1986, 11, 19–21.

to LH I contained the already mentioned amphora with these early features and strongly supports the idea of these amphorae as early types.¹⁸ Most of the above tombs are assumed to have been in use already in LH I. In other words, at least Tholos A needs to be considered contemporary with the latest burials in Grave Circle A of Mycenae. Taking the parallels of the finds from Tholos A of Kakovatos into account, the construction and the first interments of this tomb should be dated to late LH I or the very beginning of LH IIA.

All three tombs at Kakovatos were apparently in use during LH IIA, because each of them contained palatial jars of FS 15 or at least one fragment of such a vessel. At least one of the tombs probably continued into LH IIB. The re-examination of the finds from Kakovatos, which are stored in the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, revealed fragments of an Ephyraean Goblet with an argonaut (Fig. 1c). However, there is no further information as to which tomb it came from. Now, the new chronology may be employed for the comparison of contemporary tomb contexts.

Early Mycenaean Grave Assemblages

The only attempt to identify recurring, not to say standardised, grave assemblages that can be used as indicators of social status was made by Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier in 1985 and 1986, when she examined both Grave Circles of Mycenae and the so-called Warrior Tombs of Knossos.¹⁹ By using only these well-documented contexts, Kilian-Dirlmeier was able to show the existence of various ensembles that were distinguished in terms of hierarchy. In order to find out whether these 'rules' can also be applied outside of Mycenae and Knossos or have to be adapted, I have compared the grave goods of 54 (67) Mycenaean tombs found in 89 (117) 'closed' contexts. 'Closed' refers to the last closing date irrespective of the number of burial episodes. These contexts date to the period between MH III and LH II, although tombs of purely MH III date (e.g. in Grave Circle B) have been omitted. The numbers in brackets refer to a chronologically wider grouping, which includes graves of the period LH IIB–IIIA1. The comparison of these numbers illustrates that some early Mycenaean traditions apparently continued into LH IIB–IIIA1 and which grave goods successively disappeared from early Mycenaean funerary ensembles. I have selected these contexts on the assumption that those graves, shaft or pits, either contained the complete set or selected items of the grave goods of the last interments and 'secondary burials'. The chronology and the descriptions of the form, material and number of objects rely on the information given in the pertinent bibliography.

Before I present the results of my analysis, it is important to stress certain problems we encounter when trying to compare Mycenaean tombs inventories.

1. Most graves were used for multiple burials. The continuous practice of secondary burials makes it frequently impossible to isolate primary burials.

2. For this reason, it is often impossible to associate the grave goods with a specific interment, if they are not still attached to the bones. (This is also the case with the burials in the shaft graves of both grave circles of Mycenae.)

3. A major problem consists in the fact that the tholos and chamber tombs in particular were very frequently cleared out or looted, thus overwriting earlier processes of primary and secondary burials.

¹⁸ However, one of the best parallels for NMA 14140 comes from the destruction horizon of House A of Ayia Irini (Cummer – Schofield 1984, 117, pl. 81.1412), which represents either an 'heirloom' or this type was produced until LH IIA.

¹⁹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 159–188. The anthropological analysis of the bones from Grave Circle B proves that the amount and selection of grave goods does not correspond to age or sex: Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 164.

I have tried to deal with these issues in the following way: because it seems impossible to compare individual burials, I have decided to compare closed contexts of similar date with each other. In order to balance the problem of the long period of use, I have paid particular attention to items that proved to be chronologically sensitive, that is, they make their appearance only in LH I and IIA. These objects include the large gold sheet ornaments known from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae, e.g. the crowns, diadems, and flower-shaped ornaments, the amber necklaces with spacer beads, the ivory buttons with compass-drawn wave-band ornaments and swords and daggers with inlaid decoration or relief design, flint arrowheads and characteristic types of pottery such as palatial jars and Vapheio cups.

To diminish the effect of looting I have also stressed the existence of small fragments that appear only superficially insignificant. For example, rivets can be taken to indicate the presence of swords or daggers, while metal fragments may represent vessels or gold foil ornaments. Thus, the number and variety of objects per tomb gains greater visibility.

The first step in distinguishing the tomb contexts was to establish categories according to the combination of certain types of grave goods. Following the earlier studies by Kilian-Dirlmeier (who based her work on fundamentally established principles of burial analysis), I have chosen weapons as the prime criterion of my classification, which is followed by the variety of jewellery and vessels.

This large-scale comparison resulted in five different groups or categories. A gradual loss in the variety of goods can be recognised from one category to the next. While the contexts within one category may still show great variability, the variety is not large enough to place them in a new category, so almost every category also contains subcategories.

It is important to keep in mind that these categories should not be considered as a fixed sort of ranking. The borders between each group or category are blurred due to missing information on the original composition of the context. The size of tombs or the character of some original grave goods such as palatial jars are potential indicators for an originally higher category than the remaining objects might suggest.

Although some tombs/burials might have belonged to a higher category, it is clear that they cannot be downgraded to a lower one, as the presence of certain objects and fragments cannot be ignored. The inventory of all objects present in one context provides information on the minimal status of each context.

I would like to stress that my categories may be considered as a tool that represents a cautious approach to a relational grouping of the tombs.²⁰ Although the entire grave inventory reflects the combined status of the tomb occupants, it may be used to infer the original existence of individual burials of a certain social status, which, however, cannot be determined numerically.

Category 1 comprises eleven burial contexts and two pits that can be divided into two subcategories (Categories 1.1 and 1.2).²¹ Contexts of this category encompass the full range of weapons including swords, daggers, arrows, spearheads and a helmet. They may also contain cheek pieces of horse bridles. Apart from weapons, these contexts include jewellery, applications in a large variety of materials and different shapes (including ivory buttons, inlays of glass, alabaster, lapis lazuli, rock crystal, ivory), and gold foil ornaments in the form of crowns, diadems and leaf-shaped ornaments.

²⁰ Due to lack of space, it is not possible to detail the individual grave contexts with their respective publications here. These data form part of a forthcoming monograph (the funerary contexts mentioned below are selected examples to illustrate the respective categories). In summary, I refer to the following publications, which discuss early Mycenaean tombs and contexts: Pelon 1976; Cavanagh – Mee 1998; Boyd 2002; Zavadil 2013.

²¹ Contexts of *Category 1.1*: Mycenae: Grave Circle A, Shaft Graves IV and V; Grave Circle B, Shaft Grave N. Pylos: Tholos V (the so-called Grave Circle), Pit 3. *Category 1.2*: Mycenae: Grave Circle A, Shaft Graves II and VI; Grave Circle B, Shaft Graves Λ, Α, Γ and Δ. Vapheio: Tholos, stone cist. Routs: Tholos 2, Pit 2 and the burial on the floor. (The order of entries corresponds to the hierarchical order of the graves. This applies to all categories.) If the new Pylos Griffin Warrior Grave belongs to LH IIA, the grave offerings suggest placing this burial in Category 1.2. Larger gold foil ornaments characteristic of Category 1.1 have not been reported so far. This might indicate either Category 1.2 or a different chronology.

Tab. 2: Categories of grave goods according to contexts, dated to MH III-LH II. The numbers in brackets refer to a chronologically wider grouping, i.e. MH III-LH IIB/IIIA1

Category	1-1	1-2	2-1	2-2	2-3	3	4-1	4-2	4-3	5-1	5-2	5-3
Sword	100%	87.5% (89%)	66.7% (75%)	0% (8.3%)	0% (25%)							
Dagger	100%	75% (78%)	33.3% (25%)	66.7% (66.7%)	100% (25%)							
Rivets, pommel, gold ornaments of hilts or scabbards	100%	62.5% (56%)	66.7% (50%)	44.4% (41.7%)	0% (50%)		28.6%					
Spearhead	75%	87.5% (89%)	0% (25%)	0% (8.3%)								
Arrowheads	50%	37.5% (44%)		66.7% (66.7%)		91% (92.3%)	14.3%					
Boars' tusks	100%	12.5% (11%)		11.1% (8.3%)		27.3% (23.1%)						
Cheek pieces of bridle	25%	25% (22%)										
Armour plates	50%			22.2% (16.7%)								
Axe		12.5% (11%)		11.1% (8.3%)								
Masks, diadems or crowns	75%	50% (44%)	100% (75%)				100%					
Leaf-shaped gold ornaments	50%											
Gold beads	75%	12.5% (11%)		11.1% (25%)	0% (25%)	0% (7.7%)	57.1%					
Gold jewellery	25%	12.5% (11%)		22.2% (16.7%)			42.9% (53.3%)	33.3% (53.3%)				
Silver jewellery							28.6%	0% (6.7%)				
Bronze jewellery	25%				0% (25%)			16.7% (6.7%)				
Iron jewellery		12.5% (11%)					14.3%	33.3% (13.3%)	16.7% (11.1%)			
Pins	75%	50% (44%)	66.7% (50%)	11.1% (8.3%)	0% (25%)		57.1%	83.3% (40%)				

Tab. 2 (continued)

Category	1-1	1-2	2-1	2-2	2-3	3	4-1	4-2	4-3	5-1	5-2	5-3
Rings (seals and jewellery)	50%	25% (22%)	0% (25%)	0% (8.3%)		0% (7.7%)	28.6%	50% (40%)				
Ivory combs and jewellery	25%	25% (22%)		22.2% (16.7%)				16.7% (6.7%)				
Amber jewellery	75%	12.5% (22%)		22.2% (25%)	0% (25%)	9.1% (7.7%)	85.7%	16.6% (13.3%)				
Amber collars	50%	12.5% (22%)		8.3% (0%)			14.3%					
Glass jewellery	25%	12.5% (11%)	0% (25%)	22.2% (25%)	0% (25%)	18.2% (23.1%)	42.9%	50% (53.3%)	50% (55.6%)			
Faience jewellery				11.1% (8.3%)			28.6%	0% (26.7%)	0% (11.1%)			
Beads of various precious stones	75%	25% (22%)	0% (25%)	33.3% (25%)	0% (50%)	18.2% (23.1%)	85.7%	50% (46.7%)	50% (44.4%)			
Gold vessels	75%	50% (44%)	0% (25%)				28.6%	0% (13.3%)				
Silver vessels	100%	50% (44%)	0% (25%)	22.2% (16.7%)			42.9%			0% (100%)		
Bronze vessels	100%	75% (67%)	66.6% (75%)	11.1% (16.7%)	0% (25%)	0% (7.7%)	42.9%					
Ivory vessels/pyxides		12.5% (11%)										
Faience/glass vessels	25%	25% (22%)					28.6%					
Alabaster vessels	50%	12.5% (11%)					14.3%					
Stone vessels		12.5% (11%)										
Unique vessels of different materials	50%		0% (25%)			9.1% (7.7%)	14.3%	0% (6.7%)				
Palatial jars	50%		33.3% (25%)	33.3% (25%)				16.7% (6.7%)			8.3% (6.7%)	
Closed vessel, pottery	100%	100% (100%)	33.3% (25%)	33.3% (25%)	100% (50%)	36.4% (46.1%)	71.4%	50% (53.3%)	33.3% (44.4%)	0% (50%)	75% (73.3%)	66.7% (68.8%)
Open vessel, pottery	50%	87.5% (89%)	33.3% (25%)	33.3% (25%)	100% (50%)	36.4% (30.8%)	57.1%	66.6% (33.3%)	33.3% (33.3%)	0% (50%)	75% (66.7%)	85.7% (81.8%)

Tab. 2 (continued)

Category	1-1	1-2	2-1	2-2	2-3	3	4-1	4-2	4-3	5-1	5-2	5-3
Gold foil ornaments	75%	12.5% (11%)		22.2% (16.7%)	0% (25%)		57.1%	0% (13.3%)	11.1% (22.2%)		8.3% (6.7%)	
Gold foil relief ornaments	50%	25% (22%)	33.3% (25%)				28.6%	0% (6.7%)				
Small fragments of gold	25%						28.6%	0% (6.7%)				
Figural gold foil reliefs	50%	12.5% (11%)		22.2% (16.7%)	0% (25%)	9.1% (7.7%)	57.1%	16.7% (40%)			0% (6.7%)	
Silver ornaments			33.3% (25%)	11.1% (8.3%)			14.3%					
Ivory ornaments	50%	12.5% (11%)				9.1% (7.7%)	14.3%	16.7% (6.7%)		0% (50%)	8.3% (6.7%)	
Ivory/bone objects with wave-band ornaments	50%	12.5% (11%)										
Glass ornaments, inlays	25%					0% (7.7%)						
Alabaster ornaments	50%											
Ornaments, inlays made of precious stones	50%											
Scale pans		25% (22%)		11.1% (16.7%)		0% (7.7%)	14.3%	33.3% (13.3%)				
Weights		12.5% (11%)		11.1% (8.3%)								
Diverse gold objects	50%	37.5% (33%)		11.1% (8.3%)				0% (6.7%)				
Seals	25%	37.5% (44%)	0% (25%)	33.3% (41.6%)	0% (25%)	9.1% (15.4%)	28.6%	66.7% (40%)	0% (11.1%)	0% (50%)	16.7% (20%)	
Wire				11.1% (8.3%)			57.1%				8.3% (6.7%)	
Tweezers, Toiletries	50%	37.5% (33%)		11.1% (8.3%)	0% (25%)		14.3%	16.7% (6.7%)	16.7% (11.1%)	0% (50%)	8.3% (6.7%)	
Mirrors	25%	50% (56%)		0% (8.3%)	0% (25%)	0% (15.4%)		16.7% (6.7%)				
Nails	50%	25% (22%)		11.1% (8.3%)			14.3%					

Tab. 2 (continued)

Category	1-1	1-2	2-1	2-2	2-3	3	4-1	4-2	4-3	5-1	5-2	5-3
Bronze knives	100%	87.5% (89%)	66.7% (75%)	44.4% (41.7%)	0% (50%)	27.3% (30.6%)	28.6%	16.7% (6.7%)	16.7% (11.1%)	0% (50%)	41.7% (40%)	
Various bronze objects	50%	37.5% (44%)		11.1% (8.3%)	0% (50%)	18.1% (23.1%)	14.3%	0% (13.3%)	0% (11.1%)			
Various ivory objects	75%	37.5% (33%)					14.3%	0% (13.3%)			8.3% (6.7%)	
Figurines	25%					9.1% (15.4%)	14.3%	0% (13.3%)				
Lamps		12.5% (11%)						0% (6.7%)				
Stone objects	75%	37.5% (33%)	33.3% (25%)	22.2% (16.7%)		18.2% (15.4%)					8.3% (6.7%)	
Faience objects	25%											
Glass objects								0% (6.7%)	16.7% (11.1%)			
Spindle whorls				22.2% (16.7%)	0% (50%)	27.3% (30.8%)	28.6%	37.5% (33.3%)	33.3% (33.3%)		33.3% (40%)	

Spacer beads indicate the presence of multiple string necklaces that can be made of amber, precious stones, glass or faience. These contexts also contain a combination of vessels made of gold, silver and bronze and of exotic character (i.e. of glass, faience, alabaster). Objects such as the amber necklaces with spacer beads or the ivory or bone discs with compass-drawn ornaments also indicate that these contexts belong to the same chronological horizon. The differences between the two subcategories are very small, but still visible. In Category 1.2 some pieces are already missing or the criteria for selecting the objects were slightly different from Category 1.1. For example, 100% of the contexts in Category 1.1 contain swords and daggers, whereas in Category 1.2 these numbers are reduced to 87.5% (89%) and 75% (78%) respectively. A different strategy for selecting the burial gifts applied to spearheads. In Category 1.1 spearheads are present in 75% of the contexts and in Category 1.2 in 87.5% (89%) of the contexts (Tab. 2).

Category 2 consists of 13 (20) contexts; six (eight) of these are burial contexts, the others comprise secondary burials and material assemblages in pits and niches.²² *Category 2* can be divided into three subcategories. In general, all contexts of this category contain weapons, jewellery or vessel inventories that are still almost complete, but lack a few types. For example, cheek pieces of horse bridles are missing from all contexts of *Category 2*, while in *Category 2.1* and *Category 2.3* arrowheads, boars' tusks, pieces of armour and axes are also absent. The larger quantity of swords and the presence of large gold foil ornaments rank *Category 2.1* before *Category 2.2*, which, however, shows a larger variety of weapon types. There are no more vessels made from exotic materials, various stones or faience. Applications made from ivory, precious stones and glass and spacer beads are also missing from *Category 2* and the subsequent categories with single exceptions (dated to LH IIB–IIIA1) proving the rule (Tab. 2).

Category 3 comprises eleven (13) contexts, and four (five) of those are primary burial contexts.²³ A division into subcategories did not prove necessary. With one exception, *Category 3* includes only contexts without swords or daggers or rivets that might indicate their original presence. Concerning weapons, only arrows appear frequently, namely in 91% (92.3%) of those contexts. The inventories of jewellery and vessels are again a little more meagre than in the previous category. The jewellery consists only of simple beads, very rarely of precious metals, and also the variety of precious stones declines. The inventory of vessels contains mainly ceramic vessels. Metal vessels and vessels made from other materials constitute the exception (Tab. 2).

Category 4 is made up of 19 (31) contexts covering three subcategories.²⁴ With one exception, contexts in this category do not contain any weapons or indications of such,²⁵ but inventories of jewellery that are only comparable to and sometimes even richer than those of *Category 1*. 100% of the contexts in *Category 4.1* contain gold foil ornaments such as crowns or diadems and 57.1% contain flower-shaped gold foil ornaments. Some of them also included ivory applications and necklaces with spacer beads of amber. The same phenomenon can be observed for the inventories of vessels and applications. In terms of variety and number, those of *Category 4.1* are only comparable to *Categories 1* and *2.1* (Tab. 2).

²² Contexts of *Category 2.1*: Routsis: Tholos 1, niche. Pylos: Tholos V, Pit 1 and Pit 4. Dendra: Tholos (so-called king). *Category 2.2*: e.g. Dendra: Chamber Tomb 8, the objects under the stone bench. Kazarma: Tholos, Pits II and III. Pylos: Tholos IV, Pit A, and the objects from the stone cist. Nichoria: MME Tholos, Pit 1. Mycenae: Grave Circle B, Shaft Grave B. Kakovatos: Tholos C, pit. *Category 2.3*: e.g. Tiryns: Chamber Tomb VII, northern pit. Nichoria: MME Tholos, Pits 3 and 4. Prosymna: Chamber Tomb 28, Pit 2.

²³ Contexts of *Category 3*: e.g. Mycenae: Granary Shaft Grave. Pylos: Tholos V, Pit 2; Palace of Nestor, Room 97, Shaft Grave. Makrysia: Tholos, grave pit. Koukounara-Gouvalari: Tumulus α , Grave $\alpha 9$, pit.

²⁴ Contexts of *Category 4.1*: Mycenae: Grave Circle A, Shaft Graves I and III; Grave Circle B, Shaft Graves O, Y and E. *Category 4.2*: e.g. Mycenae: Grave Circle B, Shaft Grave M. Koukounara-Phyties: Tholos 2, female burial. Dendra: Chamber Tomb 10, Shaft 1; Tholos, Pits 1, 3 and 4. Volos-Kapakli: Tholos, Skeletal Groups Γ and E. *Category 4.3*: e.g. Dendra: Tholos, Pit 2. Routsis: Tholos 2, Pit 1. Pylos: Chamber Tomb E-8, Pit 1.

²⁵ Shaft Grave O of Grave Circle B probably contained an ivory pommel and Shaft Grave III of Grave Circle A included a gold sheet ornament that might have adorned a blade, rivets and a pommel.

In comparison with Category 4.1 the subcategories (4.2 and 4.3) lack the large gold foil ornaments and, with one exception, metal vessels or vessels made of exotic materials. In Category 4.3 even jewellery becomes rare. Gold beads, rings or bronze pins are missing entirely. Generally, the beads are now of glass, faience or precious stones.

Category 5 includes 23 (39) contexts, subdivided into three subcategories.²⁶ The first subcategory comprises only two contexts and their composition may have been governed by completely different rules than those for burials. The first context is a pit in Chamber Tomb 2 of Dendra that was located close to an altar-like structure and the second is a shaft without any bones in Chamber Tomb 10 of Dendra. Both contexts contained silver vessels and other probably selected items such as a bronze knife and a sealstone and both belong to the LH IIB–IIIA1 horizon.²⁷ The other contexts of Category 5 did not contain any weapons, any jewellery or any metal vessels. The inventories comprise only pottery, and sometimes a few applications and ornaments or other items such as spindle whorls (Tab. 2).

The following conclusions can be drawn from the changing variety of objects in the different categories.

1. The contexts and graves of Category 1 and Category 4.1 surpass all other burial contexts. These categories contain large gold foil ornaments like masks, crowns, diadems or flower-shaped pieces. Only there we find vessels and objects made of precious metals, different types of stone, faience or other exotic materials and applications and also inlays of precious stones and ivory/bone with compass-drawn ornaments. Apart from single exceptions, only graves of these categories contain amber necklaces with spacer beads or cheek pieces of horse harnesses. The lack of weapons as well as the anthropological analysis undertaken on graves of Cat. 4.1²⁸ show that they encompass the solely female graves of the highest social rank, while Cat. 1 most likely contains the male burials or graves with both sexes of the same rank.
2. Following this line of thought, it appears that flower- or leaf-shaped gold foil ornaments belong to female burials. They accompanied those women buried in graves of the Categories 1.1 and 4.1 and thus can be identified as possessions and adornments of women of the highest social status. Large quantities of those ornaments come from Shaft Grave III of Grave Circle A of Mycenae (one female and two probable males are buried here). Such ornaments were found in smaller amounts in Shaft Graves IV and V of Grave Circle A (one woman next to a man) and in the Graves O, E, and Y of Grave Circle B (those graves contained only women).
3. The same rules appear to have governed the presence of earrings. They were found only in Shaft Grave III of Grave Circle A and Pit 1 in Chamber Tomb 10 of Dendra.
4. A criterion that apparently separates Categories 2 and 3 consists in the absence of weapons in Category 3, which also shows a lesser variety of objects than Category 2. Thus, members of this social group either were not entitled or could not afford to use and own a sword.
5. The graves and contexts of Category 5 seem to encompass the lowest hierarchical level that can be detected in the archaeological record. No weapons, jewellery or vessels other

²⁶ Contexts of *Category 5.1*: Dendra: Chamber Tomb 2, pit close to the altar-like structure; Chamber Tomb 10, Shaft 2. *Category 5.2*: e.g. Mycenae: Grave Circle B, Shaft Graves P and K. Volos-Kapakli: Tholos, Skeletal Group Δ. Karpophora/Nichoria-Akones: Built Grave III. Kleidi-Samikon: Tholos, Skeletal Groups Δ and E. *Category 5.3*: e.g. Kleidi-Samikon: Tholos, Skeletal Groups B, Γ, ΣΤ, Ι, ΙΑ, ΙΒ and ΙΔ. Mycenae: Grave Circle B, Shaft Grave II. Volos-Kapakli: Tholos, Skeletal Group Ζ.

²⁷ Without weapons and jewellery, these find contexts may probably represent ritual assemblages.

²⁸ An anthropological analysis of the bones from the following graves was carried out: Mycenae: Grave Circle B, Shaft Graves O, Z, and M; Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave I. Koukounara-Phyties: Tholos 2, pit. See Angel 1973, 379–397. For Shaft Grave III see now Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2010, 159–161, 172, 179, 175. The new data suggest the presence of one female and two most likely male individuals. The female was identified with Stamatakis' Burial M, to which most of the grave goods were assigned. The few pieces indicating weapons (see above n. 25) could be explained as belonging to one or both probably male individuals in Shaft Grave III.

than pottery are present in those graves or pits. Only very rarely do they contain applications and inlays of gold and ivory, more frequent are items such as knives or spindle whorls.

The comparison of 89 (117) closed contexts of the early Mycenaean period therefore illustrates that the principles of the combination of grave goods, established by Kilian-Dirlmeier on the basis of her analysis of the two grave circles of Mycenae, are also applicable to the rest of early Mycenaean tombs. This revealed which elements of the grave furniture belonged only to one group and therefore constituted external signs of status.

Placing the Tholos Tombs of Kakovatos within Early Mycenaean Greece

Following the presentation of these categories, I shall discuss the inventory of the Kakovatos tombs to define their category of rank.²⁹

In terms of weaponry, Tomb A contained fragments of an ornamented blade with a prominent spiral design along the midrib, and the excavation diaries mention additional fragments of swords or daggers that are lost nowadays. There is also a fragment of a spearhead, 43 flint arrowheads, some of which are of the finest workmanship, and twenty boars' tusks from a helmet. We can thus conclude that although the tomb was looted, all types of weapons and armoury were present, even if only in fragments.

An ornamented disc-shaped cheek piece of a horse harness (Fig. 2) with a diameter of 12.1 cm also comes from Tomb A.³⁰ The front side of the cheek plate carries an ornament of bands with small cockleshells lining the rim of the disc and forming a curved diamond-like shape around the four bosses in the centre of the disc. On the reverse of the cheek plate, four spikes can be securely reconstructed. Similar types occur in Shaft Grave IV of Circle A and Shaft Grave Γ of Circle B in Mycenae.³¹ Only a single example appears in a grave that would belong to a Category 3 context, in Pit 5 in Chamber Tomb 7 of Dendra.³² Driving a chariot in battle, on the hunt, or during processions was certainly a privilege reserved to only a few. Accordingly, these cheek pieces only appear regularly in graves of the first category.

The jewellery found in Tomb A includes beads of gold, amethyst, lapis lazuli and almost 600 amber beads. Apart from globular or biconical shapes, there are at least seven spacer beads with complex borings in the form of v-perforations and at least ten ring-shaped pendants and eight multiple or figure-of-eight beads.³³ These numbers allow the reconstruction of three large amber collars of multiple rows, of which at least one must



Fig. 2: Reconstructed disc-shaped cheek piece of horse bridle made of ivory from Tholos A of Kakovatos, NMA 5680. Scale 1: 2 (photo: I. Geske)

²⁹ For the inventory of the tholos tombs of Kakovatos see Müller 1909. The full publication of all finds is part of a forthcoming monograph.

³⁰ NMA 5680: Müller 1909, 289, fig. 11. Disc-shaped cheek pieces in Mycenaean Greece: see Penner 1998, 48–51; Aravantinos 2009.

³¹ Karo 1930/1933, 113, nos. 532–535, pl. 70; Mylonas 1972/1973, 79, pl. 62γ.

³² Persson 1943, 36–37, fig. 36.4; Penner 1998, 48–49, no. 39, pl. 7.2.

³³ NMA 5688, 11580: Müller 1909, 278–282, figs. 3–4, pls. 15, 23–24.

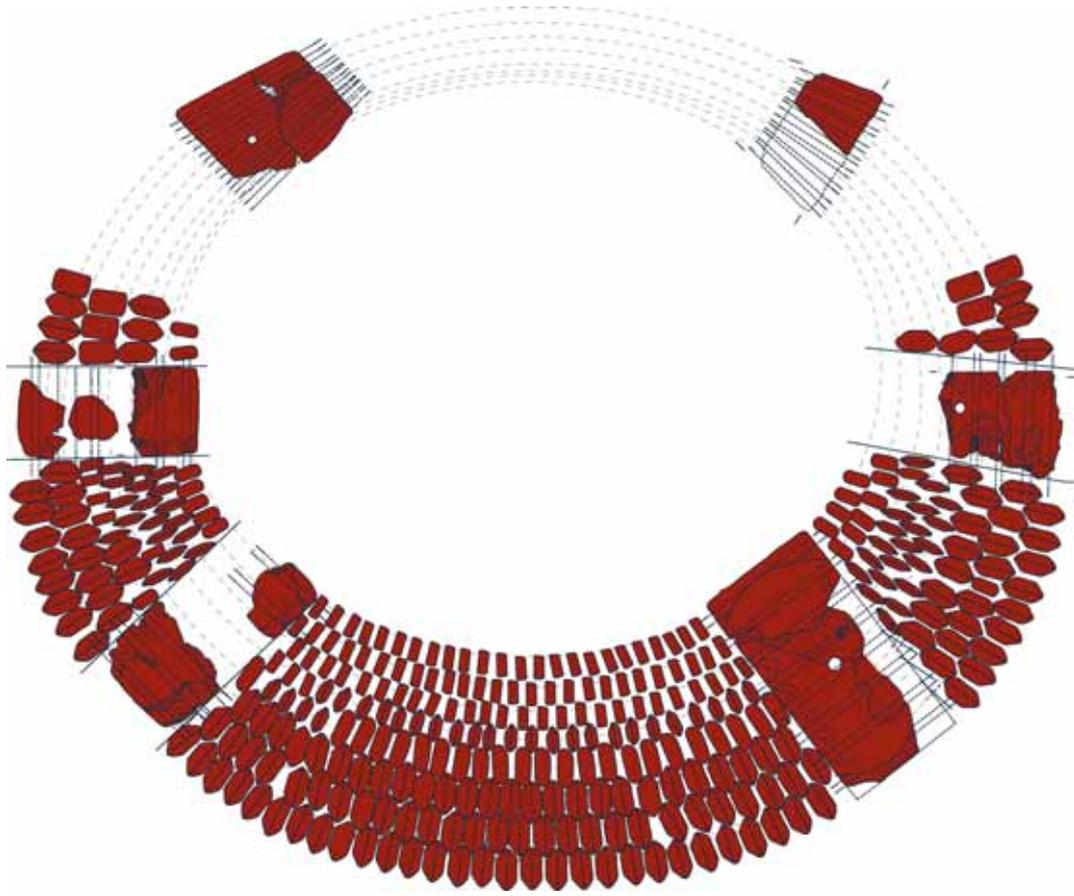


Fig. 3: Reconstruction of Wessex-type collar with amber beads and spacers from Tholos A of Kakovatos (Ch. de Vre )

have been a large collar with spacer plates of the so-called Wessex type (Fig. 3).³⁴ Comparable jewellery belongs to the inventories of Shaft Grave O of Circle B, Shaft Grave IV of Circle A and Tholos 3 of Peristeria.³⁵ In addition, two agate and two glass spacer beads that also belong to the inventory of Tholos A of Kakovatos once would have been part of collars or necklaces of multiple strings of other precious materials.

The turquoise glass pendant in the form of a standing bull³⁶ represents a unique object without any known parallels in Mycenaean Greece. The bull is standing perfectly still and facing the viewer. The surface shows indentations of irregular shape, which were probably once inlaid with materials of different colours to represent the patches in the coat of the animal. Other very rare pieces include the glass pendant of a small female figure,³⁷ which is only half preserved, and fragments of an Oriental star disc pendant of blue glass, which was last described in detail by Dan Barag.³⁸

³⁴ The numerous amber beads derive from a limited area within Tholos A. Therefore, they probably belong together and indicate the presence of at least one Wessex type amber collar. For a different reconstruction requiring significantly fewer beads, see Maran 2013.

³⁵ Mycenae: Grave Circles A and B: Karo 1930/1933, 110, no. 513, pl. 57; Hachmann 1957, 31–32, nos. 9–10, fig. 12.1–8; Mylonas 1972/1973, 206, pl. 186 ; Harding – Hughes-Brock 1974, 147–149, tab. 1; 157, tab. 3; 162–164, fig. 5.18–20; Gerloff 1975, 215–222, 263, nos. 52–53; Gerloff 2010, 629–631, fig. 33.32–36. Peristeria: Marinatos 1966, 95–96, pl. 98 –  (= Marinatos 2014, 202–203, fig. 53); Harding – Hughes-Brock 1974, 148, tab. 1, 155, 164; Korres 2012, 463, fig. 981.

³⁶ NMA 5683: M ller 1909, 278, pl. 12.5.

³⁷ NMA 5683: M ller 1909, 278, pl. 12.6.

³⁸ M ller 1909, 277–278; Barag 1970, 190. The fragments are currently not available for study.

Both pendants have only few known parallels in Mycenaean Greece. A comparable female glass figure was found on the acropolis of Mycenae³⁹ and star disc pendants come from Thorikos in Attica, Daras in Messenia and the acropolis of Mycenae.⁴⁰ These kinds of pendants are related to the Ištar cult in Mesopotamia and are clearly Near Eastern imports.

An iron ring with bezel also comes from Tholos A of Kakovatos.⁴¹ The surface is heavily corroded, and it is impossible to tell whether the bezel originally carried an illustration or was once covered with gold. However, one needs to consider that iron was an extremely valuable material during the Bronze Age. It has never been analysed whether it was composed of different materials. This is also true for the iron ring from the tholos of Vapheio, which comes close in terms of chronology.⁴² Rings made of different metals, including sheets of iron, appear to be especially popular in the Late Bronze Age periods II–III.⁴³



Fig. 4: Fragment of vessel made of gold sheet from Tholos A of Kakovatos, NMA 5663. Scale 3:2 (photo: I. Geske)

Tholos A is also known for its impressive quantity of palatial jars.⁴⁴ In the course of the re-evaluation of the finds from the tomb, we were also able to add at least seven oval-mouthed amphorae to this number. Moreover, the old excavation reports mention fragments of an alabaster vessel and a marble lamp that would raise the number of stone vessels to at least two.⁴⁵

Moreover, fragments of bronze and silver prove that at least one bronze and most likely one silver vessel were once placed in Tomb A.⁴⁶ A very small fragment of gold sheet wrapped around a bronze wire (Fig. 4) might represent the handle of a gold cup or otherwise, although rather less likely, it could have belonged to a triangle of gold foil such as are known from the gold diadems found in the Shaft Graves of Mycenae. The

long sides of the large triangles in particular were strengthened with bronze wire. In addition, there are also fragments of gold foil ornaments in the shape of an owl and rosettes and gold foil relief fragments that characterise tomb assemblages of Category 1.1.⁴⁷

The presence of ivory fragments with relief decoration (Fig. 5) indicate that small boxes or furniture decorated with ivory ornaments or even a gaming board like the exceptional one from Knossos belonged to the inventory of Tomb A. Among the fragments are 35 ribbed ivory strips⁴⁸ of what once must have been a moulding, framing a piece of furniture or a box like the one known from Chamber Tomb 8 in Dendra⁴⁹ or the gaming board found at Knossos.⁵⁰ Other similar pieces

³⁹ Tsountas 1888, 78–79; Barag 1970, 188–191; Cline 1994, 24, 143–144, no. 100, pl. 2.4.

⁴⁰ Star disc pendants: see references in Barag 1970, 189–191, figs. 100–101; Cline 1994, 24, 140; Eder 2011, 108–109, 116, fig. 3; Zavadil 2016.

⁴¹ NMA 5682: Müller 1909, 275–276, pl. 13.35.

⁴² Tsountas 1890, 147; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987, 200.

⁴³ Dendra: Tholos: Persson 1931, 33, 56, fig. 35; cf. Konstantinidi-Syvridi, this volume. This ring is supposed to be made of four layers of different metals: iron, copper, silver and lead. Mycenae: Chamber Tomb 58: CMS I, no. 91; Asine: Chamber Tomb I:1: CMS I, no. 200. See Müller 2003a, 150; Müller 2003b, 477–478; Krzyszkowska 2005, 199–201, 246; Müller 2012, 467.

⁴⁴ Müller 1909, 302–321, pls. 16–24; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 128–135, pls. 23c, 24d, 25c, 28c–d, 29b, 30b–c, 34b–c, 36b, 38b–d, 39c–d, 40b, 42a–b.

⁴⁵ Müller 1909, 293; Excavation Diary 20, 23 and 24 May 1907. For the oval-mouthed amphorae, see also Huber et al., this volume. These alabaster fragments and the marble lamp from Tholos A are currently not available for study.

⁴⁶ NMA 19148 (silver fragments); NMA 5679, 19145 (bronze fragments): Müller 1909, 276.

⁴⁷ NMA 5662: Müller 1909, 271–272, 275, pl. 13.28, 42.

⁴⁸ NMA 5676: Müller 1909, 291.

⁴⁹ Persson 1943, 47–48, pl. 2; Poursat 1977a, 31–32, pl. 2.3.

⁵⁰ Evans 1921, 472–477 with colour plate V.



Fig. 5: Fragments of ribbed ivory moulding from Tholos A of Kakovatos, NMA 5676. Scale 1:2 (photo: I. Geske)

were found in the tholos of Kokla, the tholos of Vapheio, and in the Palace of Pylos.⁵¹ Moreover, various decorated pieces of ivory from Tomb A were most likely parts of lids of pyxides,⁵² and the lapis lazuli and glass ornaments might have formed inlays on furniture, boxes or the like.

As already mentioned, the best parallels for the 47 bone or ivory discs decorated with wave band and compass-drawn circles that belong to the wider group of the ‘Carpathian-East Mediterranean wave band ornaments’ come from Shaft Graves IV and V of Mycenae.⁵³ Only two other similar pieces, but with less elaborate designs were found in the tholos of Volos-Kapakli.⁵⁴ These characteristic motifs are chronologically limited to the Shaft Grave horizon and are frequently associated with weaponry and horse harnesses.

This overview makes clear that the inventory of Tholos A, even in its fragmentary state, fulfils the requirements of a Category 1 context.

Assessing the categories of Tombs B and C proves slightly more difficult, because there is less material preserved from those tombs than from Tholos A.

Tomb B⁵⁵ contained a sword of Type A of 92 cm in length and rivets of at least one additional weapon. There were beads of amethyst, glass, gold and lapis lazuli, a seal of lapis lazuli and fragments of bronze pins. Three palatial jars, a marble lamp, the only known early Mycenaean bowl of dark cobalt-blue glass, and a steatite stone vessel, which is currently not available for study, but was published by Müller, represent the variety of vessels.

Tomb C⁵⁶ was almost empty and contained only rivets of a sword or dagger, seven amethyst beads, a rock crystal inlay and a few ornamental gold beads and gold foil with relief decoration. There was also at least one bronze vessel (Fig. 6) and one palatial jar.

This summary of objects found in Tholos Tombs B and C illustrates that there was weaponry in the form of swords and/or daggers and a variety of vessels of precious metals and materials (glass, marble). The jewellery is less elaborate than that in Tholos A, and, as far as the state of

⁵¹ Kokla: Demakopoulou 1990, 119, fig. 16; Vapheio: Poursat 1977b, 123, pl. 38, 377/1907; Pylos: Room 31: Blegen – Rawson 1966, 155, fig. 285.9–12.

⁵² E.g. NMA 5677: Müller 1909, 288, pl. 14.15.

⁵³ See above n. 6. Karo 1930/1933, 85–89, pls. 59–60 (Grave IV); 128–132, pls. 62–65 (Grave V).

⁵⁴ Avila 1983, 32, fig. 6.3–4; 36, no. 28.

⁵⁵ Müller 1909, 294–299.

⁵⁶ Müller 1909, 299–301.

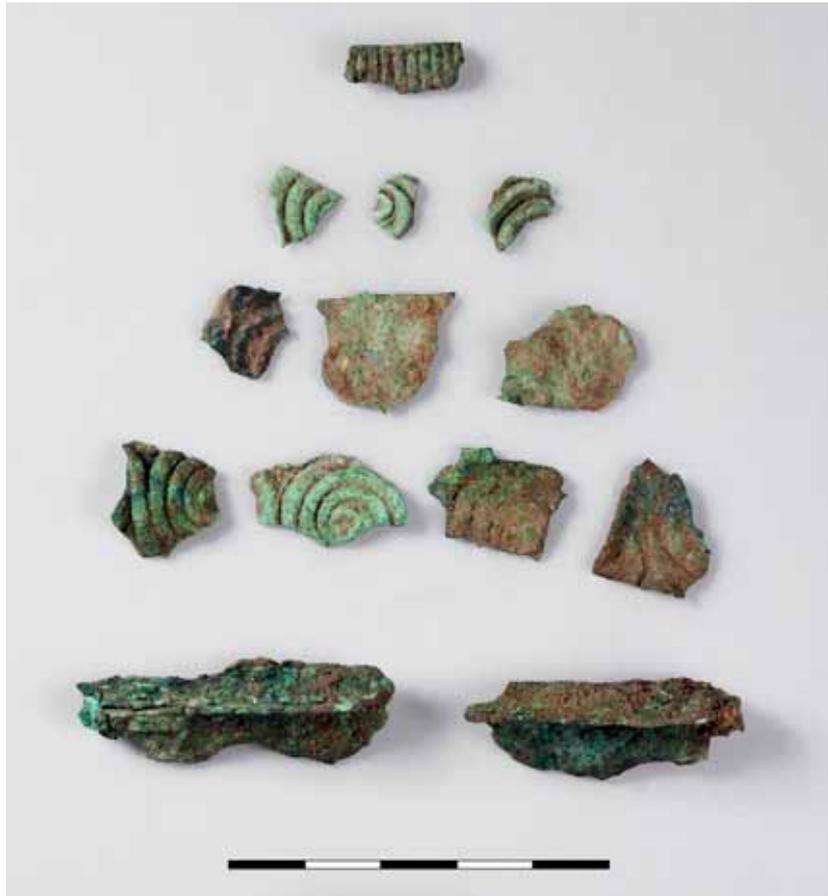


Fig. 6: Fragments of bronze vessel(s) from Tholos C of Kakovatos, NMA 19144–19145. Scale 1:1 (photo: I. Geske)

preservation allows us to tell, the set of weapons cannot be considered complete. We should therefore place Tombs B and C into Category 2, preferably into Category 2.2. These tombs may have originally belonged to a higher category (like Tholos A), and they may be taken as examples for the effects of looting.

As tentative as the proposed categories of grave assemblages might appear, they may prove helpful for defining regular, repetitive combinations of certain types of goods. In fact, unlooted tomb assemblages apparently correspond to these categories. Four tombs in Grave Circle A and five in Grave Circle B of Mycenae as well as the burials in Pit 3 in Tholos V in Pylos belong to the Categories 1.1 and 1.2,⁵⁷ and the same is true for the burial of the ‘Griffin-Warrior’ from Pylos.⁵⁸ Another two graves in Grave Circle A and three in Grave Circle B belong to Category 4.1.⁵⁹ They contain very rich grave assemblages that illustrate that the members of certain groups had access to certain objects such as spacer beads, swords and daggers with ornamented blades, ivory objects with wave-band ornaments and certain exotic or imported objects.

In Categories 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3,⁶⁰ Shaft Grave B in Grave Circle B of Mycenae as well as the burials in Pits 1 and 4 of Tholos V of Pylos represent undisturbed contexts that clearly differ from those contexts in Category 1 or 4.1. The same rules of differentiation apply to the burials in Pit 2 of Tholos V of Pylos and the Granary Shaft Grave of Mycenae that represent well-known

⁵⁷ For contexts of Category 1 see above n. 21.

⁵⁸ Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Davis – Stocker 2018.

⁵⁹ Category 4.1: Graves O, Y and E of Circle B, Shaft Graves I and III of Circle A.

⁶⁰ For contexts of Category 2 see above n. 22.

closed contexts of Category 3⁶¹ and three graves in Grave Circle B that belong to Categories 5.2 and 5.3.⁶² Each category represents different combinations of grave goods and the recurrent patterns of combinations of offerings reflect the existence of certain rules that governed the composition of funeral assemblages according to social ranking. Eventually, the existence of different categories of burial assemblages within one tomb might indicate that this form of differentiation also applied to the members within a group (family?) who were buried together in a tomb.

The coexistence of contemporary graves of different categories at a single site, like for example at Mycenae or Pylos, suggests that this kind of hierarchy of burial assemblages should be translated to the hierarchy of different social groups.

The hierarchy of tombs is also visible on the regional level in Triphylia (Fig. 7). Kakovatos Tholos A proved to belong to Category 1, the highest category of early Mycenaean tombs. Tholos Tombs B and C correspond to Category 2 and seemingly did not meet the level of Tholos A. In the region around Kakovatos there are no further graves belonging to the highest categories. The closest early Mycenaean site is Kleidi-Samikon, where a small tholos contained one grave or group of burials that still belong to Category 3, but also more than eleven such burial groups that belong to Categories 5.2 and 5.3, because these contexts contained neither weapons nor jewellery.⁶³ The tholos of Makryisia, which lies a little further to the north, contained a burial pit of Category 3, because it comprised at least arrows and bronze pins.⁶⁴

Summing up, this attempt to compare 89 (117) closed funerary contexts of the early Mycenaean period suggests that my five categories reflect the existence of commonly accepted rules to express social rank in a wide geographical area. Comparable assemblages indicate a high degree of communication among the various social groups of early Mycenaean Greece. The recurrence of the same type of grave goods in different burial contexts indicates the original presence of certain sets, as individual burials illustrate. Special occasions like high-ranking funerals may have offered opportunities for developing and entertaining a common set of values and normative behaviour.

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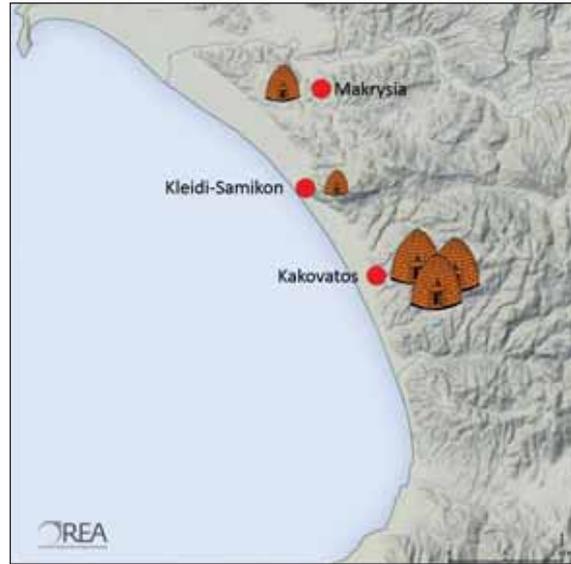


Fig. 7: The tholos tombs of early Mycenaean Triphylia compared in terms of size and grave furniture

⁶¹ For contexts of Category 3 see above n. 23.

⁶² For contexts of Category 5 see above n. 26.

⁶³ Yalouris 1966.

⁶⁴ Themelis 1968/1969.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: LH I–IIB pottery from the tholos tombs of Kakovatos: a–b. Tholos A; c. Tholos A, B or C. Scale 1:3 (drawings: Ch. de Vreé, J. Huber)

Fig. 2: Reconstructed disc-shaped cheek piece of horse bridle made of ivory from Tholos A of Kakovatos, NMA 5680. Scale 1:2 (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0735)

Fig. 3: Reconstruction of Wessex-type collar with amber beads and spacers from Tholos A of Kakovatos (Ch. de Vreé)

Fig. 4: Fragment of vessel made of gold sheet from Tholos A of Kakovatos, NMA 5663. Scale 3:2 (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0658)

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Fig. 6: Fragments of bronze vessel(s) from Tholos C of Kakovatos, NMA 19144-19145. Scale 1:1 (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0722)

Fig. 7: The tholos tombs of early Mycenaean Triphylia compared in terms of size and grave furniture

Tables

Tab. 1: The size of the tombs of Kakovatos compared to other early Mycenaean tholos tombs (with a diameter larger than 8.50 m)

Tab. 2: Categories of grave goods according to contexts, dated to MH III–LH II. The numbers in brackets refer to a chronologically wider grouping, i.e. MH III–LH IIB/IIIA1

Consuming Local and Imported Pots at Kakovatos: Regional and Interregional Connections

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*Hans Mommsen*⁴

Abstract: The building complex at the acropolis plateau and the three adjacent, richly furnished tholos tombs attest to the existence of an elite group at the site of Kakovatos during early Mycenaean times. The tombs that contained, among other precious finds, palatial jars and oval-mouthed amphorae verify the presence of a powerful social group operating there during this transformative period, when major social changes took place throughout the Peloponnese with the emergence of political and social hierarchies.

An integrated project combining archaeological and scientific data is being carried out concerning both the finer and coarser pottery from Kakovatos in order to shed light on issues of pottery production and supply. Petrographic data combined with refring tests and Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) are closely associated with the typological and stylistic analysis of the pottery. The assemblage under study comprises plain and decorated ceramics found at the settlement and the tholos tombs, including the palatial jars and the oval-mouthed amphorae, typical transport containers often associated with elite groups.

The current study constitutes a first attempt at exploring the local, intraregional and interregional dynamics affecting social transformations in this part of the Peloponnese and neighbouring and more distant areas. The preliminary results suggest a rather intricate pattern of supply and consumption and a cosmopolitan lifestyle with local and imported pots combined in different activities, such as drinking but also cooking. Based on the variety of imported pots, it seems that there are wide connections and access to regional and long-distance networks and intensive circulation between northern Triphylia and other parts of the Peloponnese, as well as between the site and distant regions. Two main lines of connections could be distinguished that link Kakovatos with Crete on the one hand and with other regions of the Peloponnese, especially the northeast (i.e. the Argolid), on the other.

Keywords: Kakovatos, Triphylia, palatial jars, oval-mouthed amphorae, Crete, Kythera, NAA, petrography

Introduction

“May you live in interesting times.” This expression, which is said to originate from a Chinese curse, can be applied equally well to the early Mycenaean period. This dynamic period witnessed the transformation of the MH societies into the hierarchical systems of the Mycenaean period with new social elites and the development of intensive interregional networks. It is an opportunity to study these processes in an exemplary way within the micro-region of Triphylia in the western Peloponnese. Thanks to the cooperation with our colleagues Kostas Nikolentzos and Panagiotis Moutzouridis, the study of materials from neighbouring sites will eventually allow us to situate the rise and fall of the early Mycenaean site of Kakovatos in the regional context of Triphylia. The available material from the sites of Kakovatos, Kleidi-Samikon, Epitalion and Ayios Dimitrios (Fig. 1) provides the basis for studying the regional patterns of production, circulation and consumption of pottery in a diachronic perspective. The typological and stylistic study of the pottery is supplemented by a thorough and systematic programme of petrographic and chemical analyses. This paper will focus mainly on the pottery from the tholos tombs of Kakovatos, whose

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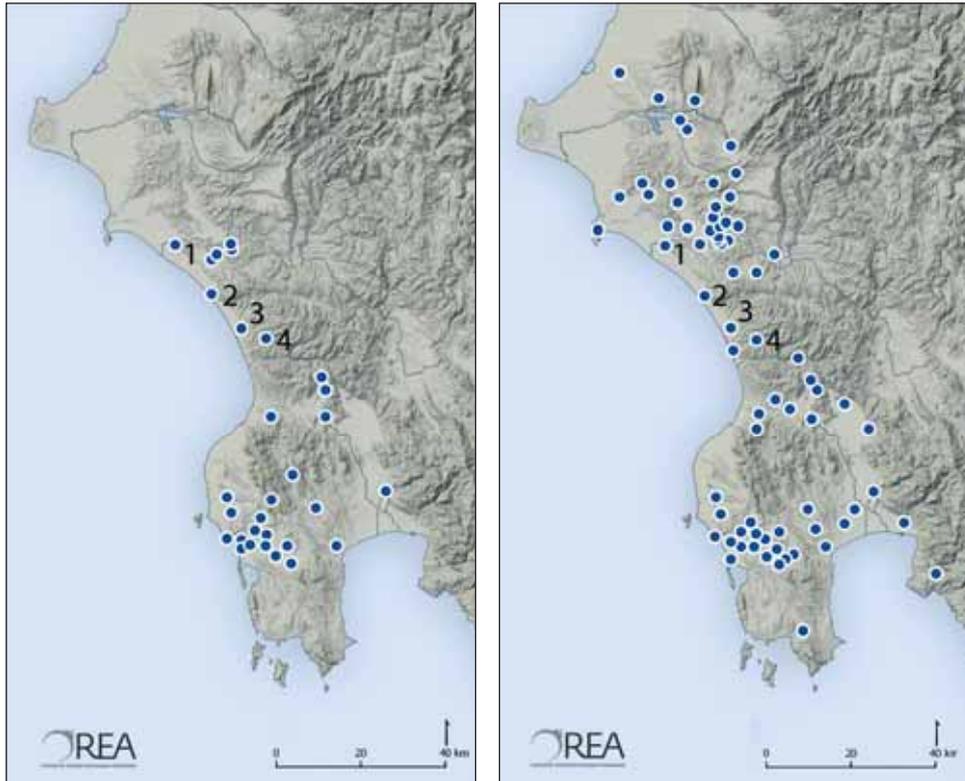


Fig. 1: Distribution of wheelmade Mycenaean lustrous painted pottery: left: LH I–IIA, right: LH IIB–III. Based on RMDP; Nikolentzos 2011; Zavadii 2013. 1. Epitalion (Ayiorytika); 2. Kleidi-Samikon; 3. Kakovatos; 4. Ayios Dimitrios (Lepreon)

owners appear to have been the most prominent group within the region and part of the network of high-ranking social groups within early Mycenaean Greece.⁵ It focuses on the first results of the petrographic analysis of the pottery samples and will provide only a preliminary discussion of the pottery.

The two excavated rooms on the acropolis seem to be associated with storage and craft activities. The pottery assemblage is characterised by coarser fabrics consisting of storage pots, household vessels and cooking pots and finer fabrics for smaller shapes such as drinking vessels. Although the statistical evaluation of the pottery is still in progress, the pottery assemblage indicates the domestic character of the building.⁶

The two major deposits identified at the site belong to LH IIA and LH IIB. The context of the LH IIB destruction layer illustrates that handmade MH-type vessels and Mycenaean pottery were contemporaneously in use. Closed and rather large shapes like amphorae are usually handmade and occasionally matt-painted. At the same time, smaller, mainly wheelmade drinking vessels of Mycenaean-type pottery, decorated with lustrous paint, were in use, a phenomenon that is well known from other early Mycenaean and even later contexts.⁷ The goblet appears as the most

⁵ See the papers of Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou and de Vreé, this volume.

⁶ Eder 2010; Eder 2011a; Eder 2012; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume. Birgitta Eder is preparing the final publication of the pottery, while Jasmin Huber is comparing the evidence from Kakovatos with other Triphylian Late Bronze Age sites (Kleidi-Samikon, Epitalion and Ayios Dimitrios) in order to study the production, circulation and consumption of pottery within this micro-region for her PhD. In addition, Georgia Kordatzaki and Evangelia Kiriatzki (together with Hans Mommsen) are currently preparing the publication of the analytical data of the pottery from the four sites.

⁷ Korakou, East Alley Pit, level VI (LH II): Dickinson 1972, 106; Athens, wells from the south slope of the Acropolis (LH IIB–IIIA1): Mountjoy 1981, 74–79; Keos, Aya Irini, period VII (LH II): Cummer – Schofield 1984, 60,

prominent drinking vessel, and it is possible to follow its local transformation from MH shapes and fabrics into its Mycenaean version.

An earlier deposit dates to LH IIA and illustrates that vessels of clearly MH tradition, e.g. bowls with horizontal grooves and burnished surfaces as well as incised pottery of the so-called Adriatic type, coexisted with a few early Mycenaean fine ware vessels such as Vapheio cups (FS 224).

In many ways, the development of pottery styles in Kakovatos followed trends attested in the southwestern Peloponnese. The distribution of LH I–IIA Mycenaean wheelmade lustrous decorated pottery in the southwestern Peloponnese illustrates how seamlessly the sites of ancient Triphylia connected to those of the same period in Messenia. This is in marked contrast to the region north of the Alpheios River, where Mycenaean pottery does not seem to spread before LH IIB (Fig. 1).⁸

Several stylistic and typological features find their best parallels in Messenia. Two fragments of cups come from the LH IIA layer in Ka 1 on the acropolis (stratigraphic unit, hereafter SU, 218) as well as from the dromos of Tholos A. The profile and decoration identify them as typical LH IIA shallow cups (FS 218), which can be found frequently in early Mycenaean sites (Fig. 2).⁹ However, the interior is – in contrast to the much more conventional shallow cup with inner lip band – painted monochrome, a phenomenon that appears most commonly in Messenia.¹⁰ Monochrome interiors are popular on Cretan drinking vessels, and this mode of decoration could therefore be interpreted as a manifestation of Minoan influence on the mainland.¹¹ The presence of several so-called spinning bowls in the acropolis material also indicates strong connections with Messenia, because they appear restricted to this region.¹² All this leads to the impression that Messenia and Triphylia shared common aspects of their material culture in the early Late Bronze Age.¹³

In the nearby tholos tombs, closed decorated vessels characterise the pottery assemblage, mainly including the well-known lustrous painted palatial jars and the oval-mouthed amphorae.¹⁴ In addition, the very few drinking vessels include shallow cups, Vapheio cups and an Ephyraean goblet. Pottery in the MH tradition is entirely lacking.

The current integrated project aims to characterise the local/broadly local potting tradition. Due to the lack of background knowledge concerning fabric typologies and potting technologies in the western Peloponnese, the new data will shed light on previously unknown aspects of con-

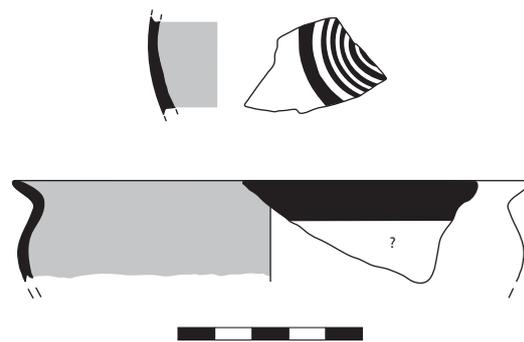


Fig. 2: Shallow cups (FS 218) with framed spiral (FM 46) and monochrome interior (LH IIA) from Kakovatos: from the acropolis (at the top) and the tholos tombs (below) (drawings: Ch. de Vreć, B. Eder, N. Math)

no. 245; Nichoria (LH II): Dickinson 1992, 485; Pefkakia Magoula (LH II): Maran 1992b, 174–176; Tsoungiza, trench EU 10 (LH IIA): Rutter 1993, 83, 87–88. The presence of LH II–IIIA1 matt-painted material at the Menelaion seems likely: Catling 2009, 346–347.

⁸ Eder 2011b, 106–107. The distribution map is based on RMDP; Nikolentzos 2011; Zavadil 2013.

⁹ The discovery of a great number of shallow cup fragments with spiral decoration among the wasters of the Berbati kiln could be taken as evidence for mass-production: Åkerström 1968; Dickinson 1972, 105; RMDP, 23.

¹⁰ Volimidia-Kephalovryson (Chamber Tomb B): Karagiorga 1976, pl. 194γ; Lolos 1987, 207, fig. 384; RMDP, 323 n. 187. Pylos: Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 249.27; RMDP, 323, fig. 108 no. 22.

¹¹ Mountjoy 1990, 249–251; RMDP, 323; Rutter 2003, 200. For Cretan examples see e.g. Chania: Andreadaki-Vlazaki 2011, 61, fig. 11g–i. Mainland: Nichoria: Dickinson 1992, 481; Volimidia-Kephalovryson and Pylos: RMDP, 323. See also Kythera: Coldstream – Huxley 1972, 293; Tournavitou 2011, 125, fig. 7a–f.

¹² Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume.

¹³ Apart from pottery traditions, the distribution of early Mycenaean tholoi in Messenia and Triphylia as well as comparable grave inventories underline that Messenia and Triphylia were part of a *koiné* concerning their material culture: Eder 2011b.

¹⁴ Müller 1909.

sumption and production of pottery in this region. The combined scientific analysis aims to understand choices made by the potters throughout the manufacturing process and their perception of materials and techniques, and, based on the emerging patterns of pottery production, supply and consumption, to shed light on local and regional networks. This paper comprises a preliminary discussion of the rich set of data produced so far.

Methodology and Selection of the Pottery Samples

In order to assign provenance and characterise the local potting tradition(s), petrographic analysis complemented by Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) was closely combined with the macroscopic examination of the pottery and refiring tests. The next stage of research will include extensive geological prospection and sampling to investigate in a comparable way the raw material sources in the wider region.

For the selection of the pottery samples, the shape, decoration and size of the vessels as well as the macroscopically defined fabrics were taken into consideration. The wide variability of the macro-fabrics, as well as the high fragmentation of the sherds and their abrasion posed a challenge for the final selection. In total, 170 sherds were chosen for petrographic analysis from both the acropolis and the tholos tombs. NAA was applied on 33 of these samples, including finer and coarser pots from the acropolis as well as several palatial jars, oval-mouthed amphorae and an Ephyraean goblet from the tholos tombs.

Brief Description of the Geological Setting of the Wider Area under Study

The western part of the Peloponnese and more particularly the wider area under study between the Alpheios River further north and the Neda River south of Kakovatos, is covered by extensive Holocene, Pleistocene and Pliocene loose sediments, as well as hard sedimentary rocks of the Gavrovon-Tripolis and the Olonos-Pindos Zones.¹⁵

More particularly, the wider coastal zone is characterised by sands, sand dunes, alluvial deposits and lagoonal sediments of the Holocene. The Pleistocene and Pliocene sediments, which cover the inland areas, are composed of terra rossa-type sediments, sands and conglomerates, as well as sandstones, marls and clays of marine, lacustrine and fluvial origin. Furthermore, rock formations of the Olonos-Pindos Zone occur consisting of limestone, chert, flysch and, in places, of flysch and limestone of the Gavrovon-Pylos Zone.

Discussion of the Analytical Data

The Local/Broadly Local Pottery

Based on petrographic analysis, the majority of the samples from the acropolis have been clustered in one broad group, including medium, medium-coarse and coarse fabrics. The fabric coarseness is usually associated with the vessel size: the larger the vessel, the coarser its fabric. The inclusions of these fabrics indicate a common association with sedimentary lithologies (mainly chert and mudstone) including very few metamorphic rock fragments. Such mineralogy is compatible with the local and broadly local geology, making the majority of the medium to coarse pottery from Kakovatos probable products of broadly local manufacture.

¹⁵ Hageman 1979; Streif 1980; Streif 1982; Metropoulos et al. 1982; Higgins – Higgins 1996; Tsafou – Chatzicharistou 2007; Kontopoulos – Bouzos 2011; Vassilakis – Verykiou-Papaspyridakou 2011; Fountoulis et al. 2014.

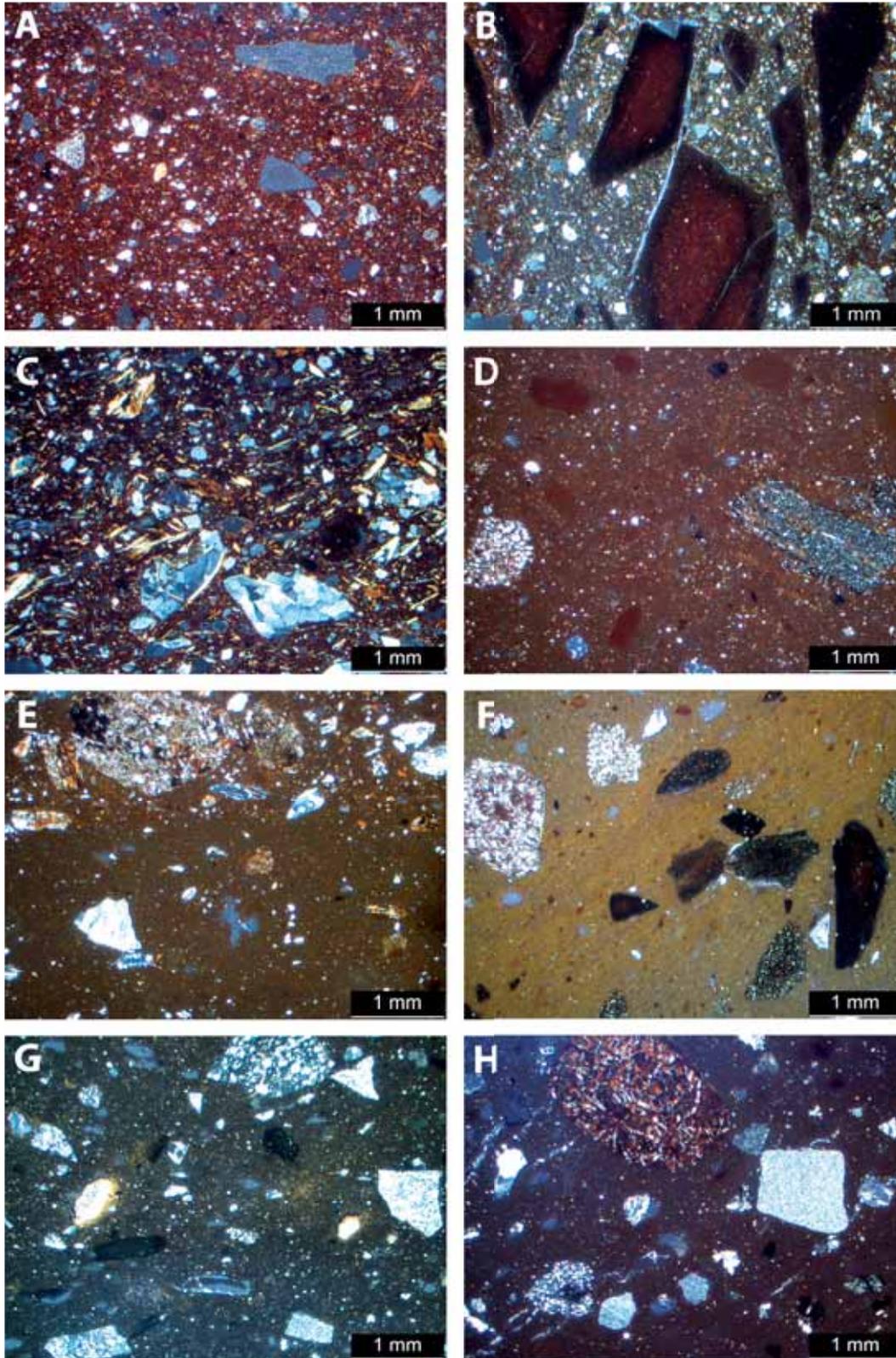


Fig. 3: Photomicrographs of thin sections in XP: 3A. Medium-coarse fabric with abundant chert inclusions associated with goblets and bowls with grooves as well as medium-sized open and closed pots; 3B. Mudstone-tempered fabrics associated with the larger and coarser pots; 3C. Red Micaceous fabric; 3D. Sand-tempered fabric with siltstone and sandstone; 3E. Sand-tempered fabric with metamorphic inclusions; 3F. Mudstone- and chert-tempered fabric; 3G. Mudstone- and chert-tempered fabric; 3H. Sand-tempered fabric with chert, serpentine and igneous rock inclusions (photos: G. Kordatzaki)

At this stage of research the term ‘local’ bears a quite broad meaning, given the lack of comparable work in the wider area and the invariable geology of the western Peloponnese. The medium fabric group includes both red-firing and buff-firing pastes and is characterised by coarse chert inclusions (Fig. 3A). The coarse fabric group is predominantly red-firing and contains coarse mudstone inclusions considered as temper added by the potters (Fig. 3B). A wide spectrum of shapes belongs to the local/broadly local production and includes goblets, Minoan-style conical cups, bowls with grooves and spinning bowls. Moreover, it comprises medium and medium- to large-sized closed vessels, occasionally matt-painted; pithoi and jars; other household vessels, a few of which belong to the ‘Adriatic’ type, as well as cooking vessels including tripod cooking pots.

Both red-firing and buff-firing medium fabrics, reflecting the use of lower and higher calcareous clays, were used in the production of the smaller pots, such as goblets and bowls with grooves of the MH tradition. Mudstone-tempering comprises the predominant clay paste preparation practice for the coarser fabrics used in larger vessels. There is no clear evidence so far for the use of the potter’s wheel in the manufacture of this medium-to-coarse local pottery.

Internal variability was observed within the broadly local fabrics, which might be indicative of more than one production place in the wider region and/or of natural variation within the raw material deposits. Comparative analysis of the pottery from the three sites of Kleidi-Samikon, Epitalion and Ayios Dimitrios, already in progress, will provide substantial grounds for evaluating this preliminary picture and investigating potential networks of exchange in wider Triphylia.

The finer ‘Mycenaean-style’ wheelmade pottery, which includes the Ephyraean goblets, the Vapheio cups and a few medium-sized closed pots, occasionally lustrous-painted, is associated with fine fabric groups as well as a few compositional loners. These fabrics contain carbonates in various frequencies and fine inclusions, usually of quartz and mica, features that do not provide much evidence on the original provenance.

These less diagnostic fabrics are not incompatible with being local but might also have been associated with many other areas, and this assumption needs further investigation and confirmation through chemical analysis. Initial NAA suggests variable origins for these fine fabrics and associations with known compositions linked with the south- and northwestern, as well as the western Peloponnese, while the Ephyraean goblet from one of the tholos tombs could not be assigned to any known reference group.

Imports

Beyond the assumed local products, a significant number of imports from a wide range of places have been identified. In the context of this paper, emphasis will be given to the main categories of imports from the tholos tombs. Apart from these, an unexpectedly high number of pots from the acropolis seem to represent definite or potential imports, too. They comprise vessels of various functions, from drinking cups to pouring vessels as well as transport jars, cooking pots and storage containers. Some of these imports consist of fabrics that, although compatible with the local geology and potting tradition, are associated with various clay matrices and types of mudstone similar to those identified within fabrics of the eastern, central and southwestern Peloponnese, and could originate in these regions.¹⁶ Others show similarities with known off-mainland fabrics and are assumed to originate in Kythera, and potentially in Aigina.¹⁷ One such vessel type associated with the Kytheran Red Micaceous fabric (Fig. 3C) is assignable to a flat-based tripod cook-

¹⁶ Galaty 1999, 49–74; Kiriati 2010a; Whitbread 2011; Kordatzaki et al. 2016.

¹⁷ A few tripod cooking pots found in Kakovatos are associated with the Red Micaceous Kytheran fabric. For the association of this fabric with the Minoanising pottery see Kiriati 2003, 125–126, 127; Kiriati 2010b. A cooking pot associated with an andesitic fabric from Kakovatos shows similarities to well-known Aiginetan fabrics (Kiriati et al. 2011).

ing vessel and reflects the use of a genuine Minoan cooking vessel shape in Kakovatos.¹⁸ These imports from the acropolis as well as the whole fabric typology of the Kakovatos assemblage will be presented thoroughly in future publications and constitute work which is still in preparation.

Oval-mouthed Amphorae (OMA)

One of the most popular Cretan medium- to large-sized jars is the oval-mouthed amphora, whose most distinctive feature is two opposed handles which narrow the rim to an oval form. On Crete, the production of this shape starts with the beginning of the Protopalatial period and this amphora persists until LM I as one of the most common vessel types for the transport and storage of goods.¹⁹ Typically found in settlement contexts, the distribution of different OMA fabrics throughout Crete indicates on the one hand various production locations, and on the other hand the existence of distinct interregional networks.²⁰

The presence of OMA outside Crete points to noticeable relations between this island and other parts of the Aegean. The earliest imported examples of this shape on the mainland were found in Lerna and are supposed to be MM IA imports from western Crete,²¹ but the main corpus of these amphorae was found in early Mycenaean grave contexts, most of them in Messenia,²² the Argolid²³ and in Arkadia.²⁴ By contrast, OMA seem to be quite rare in settlement contexts on the mainland.²⁵

Fragments of at least nine OMA could be distinguished after the examination of the material from the tholos tombs of Kakovatos,²⁶ at the current stage of research the largest number of this vessel type on the mainland. The vast majority of the amphorae are decorated with spirals and bands and the restored profiles indicate piriform to elongated body shapes in most cases.²⁷

Six out of the eight analysed OMA from the Kakovatos tholoi were assigned to sand-tempered fabrics, reflecting a well-known tradition of clay paste preparation associated with Crete and Kythera.²⁸ The clay base of these fabrics is associated with fine calcareous Neogene clays.

¹⁸ For the introduction of the tripod cooking pot on the mainland, see Philippa-Touchais 2000.

¹⁹ Betancourt 1990, 31, nos. 178–179, 215–216; Pratt 2016, 29–31. Finds of plugged OMA underline their function as storage containers: Keos, Ayia Irini, period V: Davis 1986, 60, pl. 37AA; Akrotiri: Marinatos 1974, 32, pl. 72c.

²⁰ Day 1995; Day 1997; Pratt 2016, 30.

²¹ Zerner 1978, 175–176.

²² E. g. Peristeria, Tholos 3 (two amphorae): Marinatos 1967, 117; Myrsinochori-Routsis, Tholos 2 (five amphorae): Korres 1978, 281–282, pls. 182ε, 183α–β; Lolos 1987, 210, figs. 408–409; Koukounara-Gouvalari, Tholos 2 (one amphora): Lolos 1987, 170; Koryphasion, tholos (one amphora): Blegen 1954, 161, pl. 38a. See also: Antoniou 2009, 200–205.

²³ Mycenae: Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave VI: Karo 1930/1933, 166, pl. 175.956; Kalkani, South Bank, Chamber Tomb 518: Wace 1932, 79, 158, pl. 42.5; Epano Phournos, tholos: Wace et al. 1953, 72, 77, no. 12, pl. 28a; Kazarma, tholos: Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105, pl. 83γ.

²⁴ Analipsis, tholos: Rhomaios 1957, 278–279, fig. 7α–β; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 35, pls. 11, 18b–c.

²⁵ The lack of OMA in settlement contexts could be the result of the high degree of fragmentation of the material, which impedes the identification of the characteristic oval mouth. Furthermore, the state of publication of early Mycenaean settlement material has to be taken into consideration. One rim fragment from Ayios Stephanos could probably belong to this shape: Zerner 2008, 257, no. 1678, fig. 5.30. One fully preserved example was found in Nauplion in a potential settlement context, but probably dates to LH IIIA1: Kritzas 1979, 248, pl. 169ε (left). Furthermore, one body sherd with spiral decoration from LH IIB–IIIA1 layers of the Mycenaean building at 8, Polychroniadou Street in Aigion was identified as part of an OMA by Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 317.

²⁶ Müller 1909, 323, pl. 24. The two restored amphorae come from Tholos B and Müller mentions that in Tholos A a high number of sherds of the same vessel type was found.

²⁷ Compare Knossos, ‘House of the Frescoes’ (MM IIIB): Evans 1928, 436, fig. 253a; Archanes (LM I) Sakellarakis – Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 433, fig. 407; Pitsidia (LM IB): Chatzi-Vallianou 2011, 370, no. PIT. XVII-IX.A2; Keos, Ayia Irini (LM I): Cummer – Schofield 1984, 124, no. 1533; Mycenae, Epano Phournos, tholos (SH I–IIA): Wace et al. 1953, pl. 28.

²⁸ Moody 1985, 56; Wilson – Day 1994, 52–53; Whitelaw et al. 1997, 268; Day – Kilikoglou 2001, 118; Kiriati 2003; Day et al. 2006, 41, 44; Broodbank – Kiriati 2007, 253–254; Kiriati 2010b, 690–691; Pentedeka et al. 2010, 7–23; Kordatzaki 2016, 277–279.



Fig. 4: Oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos B, NMA 5689 (photo: I. Geske)



Fig. 5: Oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19333 (photo: J. Huber)

These sand-tempered fabrics include two distinct groups on the basis of the mineralogy of the sand grains. The first one, to which, amongst others, National Archaeological Museum (NMA) 5689²⁹ (Fig. 4) and NMA 19333 (Fig. 5) can be assigned, is characterised by rounded sand grains, mainly consisting of siltstone and sandstone (Fig. 3D). It resembles fabrics that originate in central Crete.³⁰ Based on the comparative analysis undertaken so far, pottery in such a fabric was also identified as imported at Mikri Vigla on the island of Naxos, at Kastri on Kythera and in Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia.³¹

The second mineralogical group, which is represented by NMA 19331 (Fig. 6), is characterised mainly by metamorphic sand grain inclusions, comprising fine-grained quartz-biotite schist, but also sedimentary and occasionally igneous rock grains (Fig. 3E). The inclusions of this fabric are indicative of various sources associated with the ophiolite series outcropping at a number of locations in central and eastern Crete.³² This fabric shows similarities to fabrics most probably originating in south-central Crete.³³ NMA 19331 was also analysed by NAA, but could not be assigned to any known group (Tab. 1). A few of these amphorae show differently

²⁹ Müller 1909, pl. 24.9.

³⁰ Day 1988, 505–506; Boileau – Whitley 2010, 234–235.

³¹ For Minoan imports at Mikri Vigla, Kastri and Ayios Stephanos see Vaughan 1989, 156; Kiriati 2003; Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Whitbread – Jones 2008; Kiriati 2010b.

³² Bonneau 1985; Knithakis et al. 1987.

³³ Day 1988, 157–158; Wilson – Day 1994; Day – Wilson 1998, 355; Day – Kilikoglou 2001, 118–119; Joyner – Day 2001; Day et al. 2006, 41; Belfiore et al. 2007, 635–637; Day 2011.

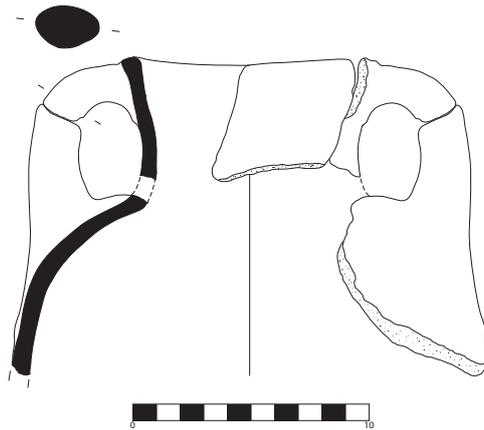


Fig. 6: Oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19331 (drawing: Ch. de Vre )



Fig. 7: Fragments of an oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 21532 (photo: J. Huber)

tempered parts of the same pot, a well-known tradition from Crete, but also from Kythera,³⁴ and the majority seem to be manufactured in the wheel-coiling technique, another feature of Cretan potting traditions.³⁵

Furthermore, one OMA is of possibly non-Cretan and potential mainland origin. More particularly, NMA 21532 (Fig. 7) is associated with a mudstone- and/or chert-tempered fabric group (see below, fabric group that is mainly associated with the palatial jars) and might originate in the mainland. The two-halves building technique of this amphora is a unique feature, which distinguishes it from the other OMA in this assemblage. This vessel indicates the production of this shape on the mainland, as some scholars have already suggested,³⁶ and could be understood, similarly to the use of tripod cooking pots, in the framework of the local adoption of Minoan practices.

³⁴ Day – Wilson 1998, 355; Day – Kilikoglou 2001, 119; Van de Moortel 2001, 104; Moody et al. 2003, 92–93; Day et al. 2006, 40–41, 48; Broodbank – Kiriati 2007, 254, 255; Kiriati 2010b, 691; Lindblom et al. 2015, 226; Kordatzaki 2016, 265.

³⁵ Jeffra 2013.

³⁶ Lolos 1987, 316–317; RMDP, 372; Antoniou 2009, 203–204.



Fig. 8: Fragment of a Koan oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 20878 (photo: J. Huber)

The last OMA is definitely of non-Cretan origin. It is mainly characterised by plagioclase and biotite as well as pumice, volcanic glass and rhyolitic lavas, and less sedimentary and low grade metamorphic grains. These types of volcanic fragments are associated with the central and eastern part of the south Aegean volcanic arc.³⁷ Based on NAA data associations, this fabric is assigned to Kos.³⁸ The composition of this fabric is compatible with the geology of parts of the south-east Aegean and its chemical analysis narrows down even more the potential sources of the raw materials. The handle of NMA 20878 (Fig. 8, Tab. 1) exhibits a sharply incised vertical line, which can be found on Koan OMA and large-sized vessels as well.³⁹ The rim still shows dark-on-light decoration, a feature that is characteristic of the local production at Serraglio on Kos in LM I.⁴⁰ The vast majority of exported Koan vessels were jugs and amphorae, which implies that they were traded for their content.⁴¹ A nearly complete Koan OMA from Tholos 2 at Myrsinochori-Routsis gives the impression that early Mycenaean Messenia benefited from the same interregional networks as the people from Kakovatos.⁴² This, and the amphora from Kakovatos, are the only known examples from the southwestern Peloponnese to date and it seems very likely, as Jack Davis already suggested, that pottery from the Dodecanese reached the Peloponnese via Crete.⁴³

Palatial Jars (PJ)

One of the most representative shapes of early Mycenaean pottery is the palatial jar.⁴⁴ A special feature of this type is the elaborate decoration, which reflects the whole range of early Mycenaean motifs that were taken over from LM IA Crete. Large closed vessels with lustrous painted decoration seem to be still very rare in LH I,⁴⁵ but an early example from Shaft Grave V in Grave Circle A of Mycenae can be dated to this period.⁴⁶ In LH IIA the peak of production of this shape is reached. Most of them were found in tombs, but sporadic finds in settlement contexts lead to the conclusion that their function was not limited to funeral use, as one handle fragment from the Kakovatos acropolis (SU 218/107), probably part of a small PJ, and other examples seem to indicate.⁴⁷

³⁷ For the south Aegean volcanic arc see Higgins – Higgins 1996, 172.

³⁸ For the group Kos A, see Marketou et al. 2006, 25; recently Villing – Mommsen 2017, 13. It seems that Kos constituted an important pottery production place already from the Early Bronze Age onwards and participated in the Aegean pottery exchange network (Marketou 1990; Marthari et al. 1990; Knappett – Nikolakopoulou 2005, 179; Marketou 2009, 89–90; Vitale – Hancock-Vitale 2013, 50; for Koan fabrics associated with the historical period and an overview of the geology of the southeast Aegean, see Whitbread 1995, 53–106).

³⁹ Morricone 1972/1973, 300, fig. 374; 302, fig. 277; 303, fig. 274; Vitale – Morrison 2017, 76, 79.

⁴⁰ Marthari et al. 1990; Momigliano 2007; Vitale 2007, 76–193.

⁴¹ Marthari et al. 1990, 177.

⁴² Davis 2015, 56–57, figs. 1–4. See also Antoniou 2009, 728–729, no. 145; 1010, fig. 264; 1011, fig. 265.

⁴³ Davis 2015.

⁴⁴ As already suggested by Oliver Dickinson and other scholars, we use the term ‘palatial jar’ for the large pattern-painted mainland jars (FS 14–18, 24), as ‘palace style jar’ refers exclusively to Cretan vessels of the later Minoan Palace Style (late LM IB/LM II–IIIA): Dickinson 1972, 108; Niemeier 1985, 3–4; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 88. For the date of the Cretan Palace Style see Niemeier 1985, 170–171.

⁴⁵ Dickinson 1974, 113.

⁴⁶ Karo 1930/1933, pl. 172; Dickinson 1977, 48 n. 22; Dietz 1991, 248–249.

⁴⁷ Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume, fig. 14e. For palatial jars in settlements, see: Menelaion: Catling 2009, 337–338; Nichoria: Dickinson 1992, 482, 484, 526, nos. P3214, P3215, P3240; 534, no. P3541, pls. 9.16, 9.45;

Apparently there is a correlation between the number of jars deposited and the amount of other precious grave goods.⁴⁸ With a minimum of 17 large individuals, including 16 PJ and at least one of Cretan ‘Standard Tradition’, Tholos A from Kakovatos belongs to the same category of high-ranking tombs as the Aegisthus tholos and the Epano Phournos tholos at Mycenae.⁴⁹ The majority of the jars from Kakovatos belong to the larger FS 15 type, as defined by Arne Furumark, but at least one jar is assignable to the FS 14 type.⁵⁰

In general, PJ are a well-studied group in terms of style and typology, but little is known about their places of production. During the last decades, just a few sherds of PJ were chemically analysed, and the results suggest different areas of production: the Argolid,⁵¹ Attica/Athens⁵² and probably the southwestern Peloponnese.⁵³ In order to get an idea about production and consumption of PJ, the current petrographic and chemical analysis of the PJ of Kakovatos is the first systematic provenance study of this vessel type. Eighteen PJ from the site were examined through petrographic analysis while six of them were also analysed through NAA.

Two main types of fabrics were identified through petrographic analysis. The first, including sixteen samples, concerns a cluster of five semi-coarse mudstone- and/or chert-tempered fabric groups (Fig. 3F–G) and several loners. Occasionally, differently tempered parts as well as evidence of wheel-coiling were observed in the same pot. The composition is compatible with sedimentary lithologies consistently including mudstone, chert, occasionally carbonates, and a variety of other minor components commonly occurring in the western and eastern Peloponnese, as well as in parts of the island of Kythera and western Crete.⁵⁴ This fabric group finds parallels in the local Kytheran pottery, but it shows a much wider variability than that internally observed in the Kytheran products of this fabric.⁵⁵ However, certain individuals of the Kakovatos PJ seem to compare well with particular samples of the mudstone- and chert-tempered fabric from Kastri currently under study by Evangelia Kiriati. The possibility that Kythera was the place of origin of at least some of the PJ is a plausible scenario and further research will shed more light on the connections between the island and mainland Greece in early Mycenaean times. Kastri and other Kytheran sites have so far provided inconclusive evidence for PJ, but the local production of this shape cannot be excluded.⁵⁶

A few of the jars have some similarities to fabrics from sites across the Peloponnese and might originate in the mainland and more particularly in different locations of the northeastern Peloponnese.⁵⁷ However, the variation of this fabric group in the Kakovatos assemblage is wider than that observed in the mudstone- and/or chert-tempered fabrics in any of the abovementioned regions.

Pylos: Mountjoy 1984, 217; Lolos 1987, fig. 137 (centre); Kalogeropoulos 1998, 140, no. 4; Zygouries: Blegen 1928, 136–139, fig. 129.3–5; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 128, nos. 1–3; Kiapha Thiti, Acropolis ‘Oberburg’: Maran 1992a, 48, pl. 11. For assumed functions of PJ e.g. as burial jars see Kalogeropoulos 1998, 174–179; Kalogeropoulos 2011; Zavadil 2019.

⁴⁸ De Vreé, this volume.

⁴⁹ Aegisthus tholos: 22 PJ: Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 302. Kalogeropoulos 1998, 101–105; Epano Phournos tholos: ten PJ: Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 295; Wace et al. 1953, 69; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 101–105.

⁵⁰ Furumark 1941, 27.

⁵¹ One sampled fragment from Mycenae: Mountjoy – Ponting 2000, 156, no. 137; 164.

⁵² Two sampled fragments from Phylakopi: Mountjoy – Ponting 2000, 148, no. 2–3; 162; 168.

⁵³ Three sampled fragments from the Menelaion: Jones – Tomlinson 2009, 148, 154, 160.

⁵⁴ Martini 1956; Petrocheilos 1966; Karageorgiou 1970; Kraft 1972; Theodoropoulos 1973; Fytrolakis 1980; Perrier 1980; Streif 1980; Streif 1982; Metropoulos et al. 1982; Higgins – Higgins 1996; Kiriati 2003, 125–127; Ladas et al. 2004; Pavlopoulos et al. 2010; Fountoulis et al. 2014; Melentis 2015.

⁵⁵ Kiriati 2003, 125, 127; Pentedeka et al. 2010, 34–41.

⁵⁶ Tournavitiou 2011, 126–127: fragments of large painted jars were found in the sanctuary of Ayios Georgios sto Vouno, but the illustrated examples belong rather to the ‘Special Palatial Tradition’ than to the mainland palatial class. Indications for this assignment are the use of the ‘Alternating Style’ and the unusual plastic decoration on the rim.

⁵⁷ For mudstone- and/or chert-tempered fabrics elsewhere in the Peloponnese see Galaty 1999, 49–74; Philippa-Touchais 2003; Kilikoglou et al. 2003, 134–135; Whitbread – Jones 2008, CD-101–104, CD-113; Kiriati 2010b; Pentedeka et al. 2010, 34–41; Whitbread 2011. For relevant discussion, see Kiriati – Broodbank, this volume.



Fig. 9: Palatial jars, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19130 (left) and NMA 14165 (right) (photos: I. Geske)



Fig. 10: Palatial jars, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19139 (left) and NMA 19140 (right) (photos: I. Geske)

Moreover, the scenario that some of the PJ associated with this fabric group were produced within Triphylia cannot be excluded. The jars NMA 19130, NMA 14165 and NMA 19139⁵⁸ (Figs. 9, 10 left) are assignable to this fabric. They share ivy leaves as the main motif, albeit executed in different variants.⁵⁹ One more vessel, NMA 19140, decorated with a stone pattern, is also assignable to this group (Fig. 10 right).

⁵⁸ NMA 19130: Müller 1909, 308–309, no. 8; pl. 18; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 130, no. 9. NMA 14165: Müller 1909, 314–315, no. 20; pl. 23; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 129, no. 4. NMA 19139: Müller 1909, 312–313, no. 16; pl. 24.7; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 131, no. 18.

⁵⁹ NMA 19130: skeletal ivy in horizontal tendrils (FM 12:t). NMA 14165: tendrils of filled ivy leaves in vertical zones (FM 12:7). NMA 19139: vertical tendrils of filled ivy leaves (FM 11:3) in combination with papyrus ‘waz’.



Fig. 11: Palatial jars, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19133 (left) and NMA 19132 (right) (photos: I. Geske)

NMA 19133⁶⁰ (Fig. 11 left), also assigned to this group, was for a long time considered to be a Cretan product. Running spirals (FM 46:1) in horizontal order and the arcade motif below cover almost the entire surface. Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier and Konstantinos Kalogeropoulos⁶¹ already proposed classifying NMA 19133 with Philip Betancourt's 'Spirals and Arcading Group' that belongs to the LM IB 'Special Palatial Tradition'.⁶² NMA 19132⁶³ (Fig. 11 right) represents a similar case. The surface of the body is divided into five horizontal zones of ogival canopy (FM 13:2) and, due to this structure, Kalogeropoulos argued for a Cretan provenance of this jar.⁶⁴ The hypothesis for a western Cretan provenance for some of the PJ associated with this fabric group cannot be ruled out since mudstone-tempered fabrics were attested in earlier periods in this part of Crete.⁶⁵ However, based on the low distribution of this type of jars in western Crete documented so far, this assumption cannot be securely supported.

It is worth mentioning that, based on NAA evidence, the potential PJ from the acropolis (SU 218/107) which belongs to the mudstone- and/or chert-tempered fabric group and was identified as a loner due to the occurrence of coarse carbonates was assigned to the western Peloponnese. Three other jars – NMA 19133, NMA 19132 and NMA 19135⁶⁶ (Figs. 11–12) – belonging to this petrographic group were assigned chemically to the northeastern Peloponnese, and more particularly, to two groups of the so-called Mycenae-Berbati cluster (Tab. 1).⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Müller 1909, 306–307, no. 4; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 130, no. 7.

⁶¹ Niemeier 1984, 118 n. 56; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 133.

⁶² Betancourt 1985, 147; Betancourt 2004, 296. See also Egan 2012 for the relation between textile images and the 'Spirals and Arcading Group'.

⁶³ Müller 1909, 305–306, no. 2; pl. 18; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 130, no. 8.

⁶⁴ Kalogeropoulos 1998, 132. More recently he implied that both jars belong to a "LM IB inspired group": Kalogeropoulos 2011, 216.

⁶⁵ For the mudstone-tempered tradition in western Crete, see Moody 1985, 56; Moody et al. 2000; Nodarou 2011; Kiriati 2010b.

⁶⁶ Müller 1909, 307–308, pl. 19.2; Lolos 1987, fig. 484; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 135, no. 19.

⁶⁷ For the Mycenae-Berbati reference group see Mommsen et al. 1988; Mommsen et al. 2002. Three unpublished samples in the Bonn databank of PJ excavated at Kandia also show the pattern MBCn.

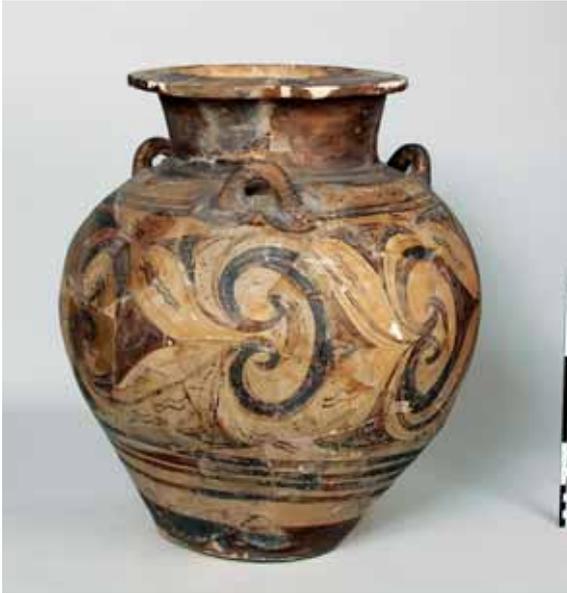


Fig. 12: Palatial jar, Kakovatos, Tholos B, NMA 19135
(photo: I. Geske)

The second type of fabric linked with the Cretan ‘Standard Tradition’ concerns sand-tempered clay pastes with inclusions of chert, altered lavas and serpentine and fewer sandstone/arenite and acid igneous rock fragments, occasionally metamorphosed (Fig. 3H). NMA 20875, which is associated with this pottery fabric, shows different tempering between the body and the attached ridge of the neck. Such fabrics and practices find parallels in the south coast of Crete (south-central and southeast Crete) and this jar most possibly originates from there.⁶⁸ The decoration of NMA 20875⁶⁹ shows typical features of Cretan ‘Standard Tradition’,⁷⁰ which, in contrast to the ‘Special Palatial Tradition’, was considered an east Cretan phenomenon for a long time.⁷¹ This heterogeneous style continues LM IA traditions such as modified LM IA motifs or the use of

additional white paint.⁷² Recent research pointed out that vessels decorated in this manner formed the majority of the painted pottery during the entire LM IB period on Crete.⁷³ In contrast, vessels with ‘Standard Tradition’ decoration are rare outside Crete and all other known examples, with the exception of the Kakovatos vase, were found at sites with a strong Minoan influence such as Miletus⁷⁴ or Ialysos/Trianda on Rhodes.⁷⁵ NAA suggested Boiotia as the potential origin of this fabric. The chemical overlapping of some of the Boiotian and central Cretan fabrics is known, although petrographically these are clearly discriminated.⁷⁶ In consequence, NMA 20875 is considered a Cretan product.

Concluding Remarks

The pottery from the tholos tombs of Kakovatos as well as from the nearby acropolis represents a wide range of regional and interregional connections of this early Mycenaean site. The inhabitants had access to goods of local/broadly local production, but also to a range of others from neighbouring areas and several distant regions of the Aegean, i.e. Crete, Aigina, Kythera and the Dodecanese. This ‘cosmopolitan’ character applies to the acropolis material to some degree, but is well represented by the vessels from the tholos tombs. These consist mainly of imported transport containers from Crete, the southeast Aegean, regions in the western and eastern Peloponnese and

⁶⁸ Wilson – Day 1994; Whitelaw et al. 1997, 268–270; Day – Wilson 1998, 355; Day 2011. Similar fabrics were identified at Kythera and were considered as imports from central Crete already from the EM II period onwards (Broodbank – Kiriati 2007, 254).

⁶⁹ Müller 1909, 315–316, fig. 16.

⁷⁰ Niemeier 1984, 118; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 131–132; Kalogeropoulos 2005, 225.

⁷¹ Kalogeropoulos 2005, 216.

⁷² For characteristic features of ‘Standard Tradition’ (= sub LM IA in earlier publications) see Furumark 1950, 151–154; Silverman 1978; Niemeier 1980; Betancourt 1985, 137–140.

⁷³ E.g. Niemeier 2011, 628; Vokotopoulos 2011, 558; Andreadaki-Vlazaki 2011, 71; Traunmüller 2011, 105.

⁷⁴ Niemeier – Niemeier 1997, 232; Niemeier 1998, 33.

⁷⁵ Furumark 1950, 151–154: “sub LM IA”.

⁷⁶ For the elemental overlapping of particular groups of pottery between Boiotia and Crete, see Jones – Day 2011; for a possible separation see Gilboa et al. 2017.

potentially Kythera. Two main lines of connections could be distinguished that link Kakovatos with Crete on the one hand and with other regions of the Peloponnese, especially the northeast, i.e. the Argolid, on the other.

In particular, the high number of OMA testifies to strong connections with Crete. They were imported mainly from distant centres, since they originate in central Crete, and one amphora from the southeast Aegean may also have arrived via Crete on the mainland. One of the sampled OMA, however, was possibly produced on the mainland. In addition, the adoption of several Minoan features in the production of pottery underlines the strong connections between Crete and Triphylia. This concerns the use and the local production of Minoan domestic shapes like the tripod cooking pots from the acropolis as well as the adoption of Minoan pottery features like monochrome painted interiors on open vessels. The frequent appearance of OMA in Messenia and other parallels between early Mycenaean Triphylia and the southwestern Peloponnese suggest that these two regions shared many elements in their material culture and were obviously part of the same Cretan networks.

In addition, Kakovatos developed special mainland connections. The majority of the PJ might originate in neighbouring centres of the western and eastern Peloponnese or even Kythera. The assumption of a wider regional production (within Triphylia) for some of them is possible. Although a western Cretan origin cannot be precluded for a few of the PJ, the available data cannot convincingly support this possibility. The wide variability observed in the mudstone- and/or chert-tempered elaborated PJ might be indicative of different production areas and potters, who worked within the same tradition and exploited similar but not identical sediments. Assuming that this shape with its extended surface, providing enough space for different combinations of motifs, also served as a 'screen' for a common early Mycenaean semantic system, different regions of production or even local production would indicate an already well-established system of symbols. These specially decorated jars could have been exchanged on different occasions – as potential gifts or trade acquisitions – and they can be understood as indicative for specific affiliations.

This picture is far from being complete and other aspects of technology beyond the clay paste preparation and the mineralogy of the fabrics need to be considered. Technological aspects have to be taken into account in order to investigate not only the provenance and the circulation of these vessels, but also the origin and transfer of technology and mobility of potters.⁷⁷ Local products and imports, the latter coming to the site either directly or via other hubs, seem to co-exist on the acropolis for fulfilling similar functions, such as cooking, storage, drinking and transportation.

In the case of Kakovatos, 'living in interesting times' became manifest in the display of wealth as well as in the links with far reaching networks through a wide range of imported pottery. The precious grave goods and valuable materials from the tholos tombs such as the large number and variety of amber beads, jewellery of lapis lazuli and gold, ivory furniture and bronze weaponry illustrate the complementary side of the same story. This suggests a highly competitive society that can be paralleled in many parts of the early Mycenaean mainland and seems to be a recurrent phenomenon throughout history. The pottery and the other valuable finds from the Kakovatos tombs represent more than the pure value of the goods, they serve as a powerful demonstration of social capital, namely the creation and maintenance of local, regional and interregional networks. Indeed, the intention to compete with other high-ranking social groups required a common habitus, like a shared semantic system that pertained to iconographic motifs as well as symbols of status, notwithstanding some regional variations.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of this phenomenon see Kiriatzi – Broodbank, this volume.

Inv. No.	NMA 20875	NMA 19132	NMA 19133	NMA 19135	NMA 19331	NMA 20878	SU 218/107	KTH7
Sample	Kakov 1-143	Kakov 2-148	Kakov 4-150	Kakov 5-157	Kakov 6-165	Kakov 7-169	Kakov 22-71	Kakov 16-100
As	14.4	15.2	14.5	8.43	12.2	12.	7.35	6.41
Ba	369.	588.	298.	377.	300.	797.	594.	537.
Br	14.1	6.77	30.6	5.90	14.9	24.6	5.20	6.70
Ca%	6.01	4.84	5.97	6.52	6.06	1.76	10.2	1.91
Ce	43.5	70.8	61.8	64.1	42.8	69.4	67.7	72.3
Co	25.0	28.2	29.1	26.6	29.8	11.4	31.1	32.2
Cr	349.	225.	242.	249.	369.	88.8	223.	354.
Cs	3.52	9.29	15.4	13.4	4.06	6.95	5.66	3.59
Eu	0.92	1.12	1.09	1.10	0.90	1.05	1.20	1.26
Fe%	4.31	4.93	4.77	4.88	5.71	3.56	4.67	6.14
Ga	22.9	23.5	18.7	20.3	11.0	36.0	18.2	21.6
Hf	3.21	3.39	3.17	3.77	3.46	5.11	3.39	4.54
K %	1.17	2.38	2.55	2.82	1.76	2.47	1.78	2.11
La	19.4	30.5	29.8	30.6	19.7	34.8	33.5	34.5
Lu	0.32	0.43	0.44	0.45	0.39	0.40	0.41	0.49
Na%	0.88	0.34	0.43	0.44	0.90	1.42	0.22	0.30
Nd	18.5	27.9	29.7	26.0	16.0	24.0	27.1	28.8
Ni	248.	201.	251.	252.	315.	35.8	343.	356.
Rb	49.0	123.	144.	143.	80.3	112.	87.1	107.
Sb	1.15	1.12	1.43	0.99	1.34	1.78	0.69	0.69
Sc	15.6	20.3	20.4	20.2	19.0	12.4	20.1	18.0
Sm	3.82	4.81	4.74	4.87	3.65	4.72	5.29	5.97
Ta	0.65	0.87	0.70	0.84	0.76	1.10	0.80	1.01
Tb	0.57	0.66	0.70	0.58	0.50	0.64	0.67	0.77
Th	6.81	10.6	9.72	9.72	8.13	13.8	11.4	14.5
U	1.42	2.25	2.16	2.16	1.89	2.18	2.09	3.26
W	2.54	3.21	3.28	2.86	2.66	2.44	2.13	2.47
Yb	2.14	2.77	2.57	2.60	2.24	2.67	2.76	3.43
Zn	86.7	103.	83.2	140.	110.	74.8	89.3	123.
Zr	82.1	111.	201.	165.	150.	177.	166.	187.
Group	TanA ^a	MBKR ^b	MBCn ^c	MBCn	single	KosA ^d	ACb5 ^e	single
Origin	Tanagra	NE Peloponnese	NE Peloponnese	NE Peloponnese	–	Kos	Westpeloponnese	–
Fit-Fac.	1.07	1.01	1.04	1.02	–	1.29	1.07	–

Tab. 1: Raw concentrations of elements measured by NAA, University Bonn, in mcg/g (ppm), if not indicated otherwise. The factor Fit-Fac. is the best relative fit factor with respect to the average grouping values, respectively.

^a Mühlenbruch – Mommsen 2011, 286.

^b Mountjoy – Mommsen 2001, 128; Mountjoy – Mommsen 2006, 101.

^c Demakopoulou et al. 2017, 13.

^d Villing – Mommsen 2017, 22.

^e Mommsen et al. 2016, 377.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Distribution of wheelmade Mycenaean lustrous painted pottery: left: LH I–IIA, right: LH IIB–III. Based on RMDP; Nikolentzos 2011; Zavadil 2013. 1. Epitalion (Ayioriyitika); 2. Kleidi-Samikon; 3. Kakovatos; 4. Ayios Dimitrios (Lepreon)

Fig. 2: Shallow cups (FS 218) with framed spiral (FM 46) and monochrome interior (LH IIA) from Kakovatos: from the acropolis (at the top) and the tholos tombs (below) (drawings: Ch. de Vreé, B. Eder, N. Math)

Fig. 3: Photomicrographs of thin sections in XP: 3A. Medium-coarse fabric with abundant chert inclusions associated with goblets and bowls with grooves as well as medium-sized open and closed pots; 3B. Mudstone-tempered fabrics associated with the larger and coarser pots; 3C. Red Micaceous fabric; 3D. Sand-tempered fabric with siltstone and sandstone; 3E. Sand-tempered fabric with metamorphic inclusions; 3F. Mudstone- and chert-tempered fabric; 3G. Mudstone- and chert-tempered fabric; 3H. Sand-tempered fabric with chert, serpentinite and igneous rock inclusions (photos: G. Kordatzaki)

Fig. 4: Oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos B, NMA 5689 (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0756)

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Fig. 6: Oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19331 (drawing: Ch. de Vreé)

Fig. 7: Fragments of an oval-mouthed amphora, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 21532 (photo: J. Huber)

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Fig. 9: Palatial jars, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19130 (left) and NMA 14165 (right) (photos: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0745 and D-DAI-ATH-2014-0751)

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Fig. 11: Palatial jars, Kakovatos, Tholos A, NMA 19133 (left) and NMA 19132 (right) (photos: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0740 and D-DAI-ATH-2014-0744)

Fig. 12: Palatial jar, Kakovatos, Tholos B, NMA 19135 (photo: I. Geske, D-DAI-ATH-2014-0761)

Table

Tab. 1: Raw concentrations of elements measured by NAA, University Bonn, in mcg/g (ppm), if not indicated otherwise. The factor Fit-Fac. is the best relative fit factor with respect to the average grouping values, respectively.

The Archaeological Site of Kleidi-Samikon: An Early Mycenaean Settlement in Northern Triphylia Reconsidered

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Abstract: The archaeological site of ‘Kleidi’ (meaning ‘key’) at Samikon is located between the sandy beach of the Ionian Sea on the Gulf of Kyparissia and the Mount of Lapithos, essentially monitoring the route overland from the northwest to the southwest Peloponnese. Its strategic location has attracted the intensive habitation of the site from the Middle Bronze Age up to the years of Ottoman domination. The Hellenistic fortification of the acropolis of Samikon, just opposite the prehistoric burial and residential contexts, described by Strabo and Pausanias, testifies once again to the importance of this specific area. The present contribution attempts to reconsider the outcome of the old and recent excavations in the area. The first archaeological investigations were carried out by Wilhelm Dörpfeld in the early 20th century, and the authors of this article conducted the latest excavations at the beginning of the 21st century. Although the project for the overall publication of the findings is still at an early stage, our contribution intends to examine the role and the ‘status’ of Samikon within the so-called Mycenaean world and the kingdom of Pylos. Moreover, we would like to clarify the relations and the connections with other adjacent archaeological sites, such as Kakovatos, Epitalion and Makrysia. The discussion of the historical topography, the burial and domestic architecture, the burial customs and the presentation of new finds, will help to create a clearer picture of the habitation of the site.

Keywords: Samikon, Kleidi, Triphylia, burial mound, tholos tomb, settlement

Topography

The archaeological site of Samikon lies 20 km south-southwest of Pyrgos and 9 km north-northwest of Zacharo and belongs to the municipality of Andritsaina-Krestena. It consists of three sites:³

1. An impressive fortified acropolis⁴ dating to the 5th to 3rd century BC, located on the western edge of the Lapithos Mountain.⁵ (Fig. 1)

2. A prehistoric burial complex that lies at the foot of the hills at the site ‘Kleidi’, situated at the southern end of the nowadays drained lagoon of Agoulinitza. The hill group extends west to the coastal plain and forms a narrow pass, where a wooded sand dune separates the Kaiafas Lake⁶ from the southern end of the Agoulinitza Lagoon.⁷

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³ Liangouras 1980, 261–262.

⁴ Papakonstantinou-Charitou 1983, 296–299; Pipili 2004, 92.

⁵ Papakonstantinou-Charitou 1983, 294–306; Kraft et al. 2005, 16. The region of the Lapithos Mountain was a religious centre for the inhabitants of Triphylia and played a role in their effort to gain a clear ‘national/tribal’ identity (cf. Papandreou 1924, 133). On its southern slope there are two caves, the first one was dedicated to the so-called Anigris Nymphs (Ανιγρίδες Νύμφες) and the second to the worship of the Atlantids. West-southwest of the caves and near the seashore a holy grove honoured the lord of the seas, Poseidon.

⁶ Kraft et al. 2005, 13 “Lake Kaiafa is ca. 4 km in length and runs northwest-southeast, parallel to the coastline”. See also Koster et al. 2015, 128.

⁷ Kraft et al. 2005, 1, 16, 20: “Three great sandy strandlines extend for more than 100 km along the coast of Elis in the western Peloponnese, Kyparissia to Katakolon, to Chlemoutsis, to Araxos [...]. Fed by sediments eroding from the uplands of Elis via the deltas of the Peneus, Alpheios, and Nedon rivers and numerous smaller streams,



Fig. 1: View of the Classical acropolis of Samikon (photo: B. Eder)

3. Residential remains on top of the Kleidi hill (Figs. 2–3).

We shall focus on the site of Kleidi, which consists of a low isolated north-south oriented ridge (approx. 25 m above the plain, 300 m long and 50 m of maximum width) forming three little hills, two smaller ones to the south and a larger one to the north.⁸ The name of the site ‘Kleidi’ (key) fits perfectly, as it commands the land route in the western Peloponnese connecting the territories of Achaia, Elis and Messenia. Flooding events,⁹ even during the post-World War II era, turned the Kleidi hills into an ‘island’ increasing their significance in monitoring the route from north to south. This can also explain the human presence at the site throughout the centuries beginning in the prehistoric periods and continuing through historical times (with the Classical acropolis) until the Venetian and Turkish domination (tower of Kazarma) and even the modern era.¹⁰

littoral processes have created a sequence of lagoons, marshes, barrier accretion plains, coastal dune fields, swamps, and deltas.” (p. 1) Agoulinitza Lagoon (c. 13 km long and c. 2 km wide) once extended along the coast from Lake Kaiafas to the Alpheios River. William Leake, who passed along the coast in 1805, provides useful descriptions of the lagoon, which was at that time a fishery of considerable leased value in the Ottoman economy. Cf. Koster et al. 2015, 126.

⁸ Cf. Meyer 1957, 74–79. The hill located to the north lies 32 masl and formed a small plateau on its top: It is 120 m long (orientation north to south) and its width varies from 30 to 40 m (orientation east to west). The other hills are of small dimensions, the height of the southernmost does not exceed 19 masl.

⁹ Kraft et al. 2005, 8, 17, 20.

¹⁰ Liangouras 1980, 261. The strategical significance of the site is also verified by the analytical descriptions of the foreign travellers who visited the area at the beginning of the 19th century. In particular, the English traveller Edward Dodwell describes the presence of a customs service and military fort, which was erected at the top of the hill monitoring the passage from the north to the south of the Peloponnese (Dodwell 1819, 344–345). Georgios Papandreou characterises the area of Kleidi as the ‘Thermopyles’ of the western Peloponnese. Papandreou and Alfred Philippson also mention the existence of the military fort installed on the top of the Kleidi hills during the Ottoman period, but still in operation at the dawn of the 20th century (Papandreou 1924, 133; Meyer 1957, 74; Philippson 1959, 361). Moreover, next to the channel, which connects the Kaiafas Lake and the open sea, the remnants of a tower can be seen, built for military purposes by the Venetians or the Ottomans (Flerianou-Lefa 1984, 721, 723).



Fig. 2: View of the prehistoric site of Kleidi from the east, 2006 (photo: B. Eder)

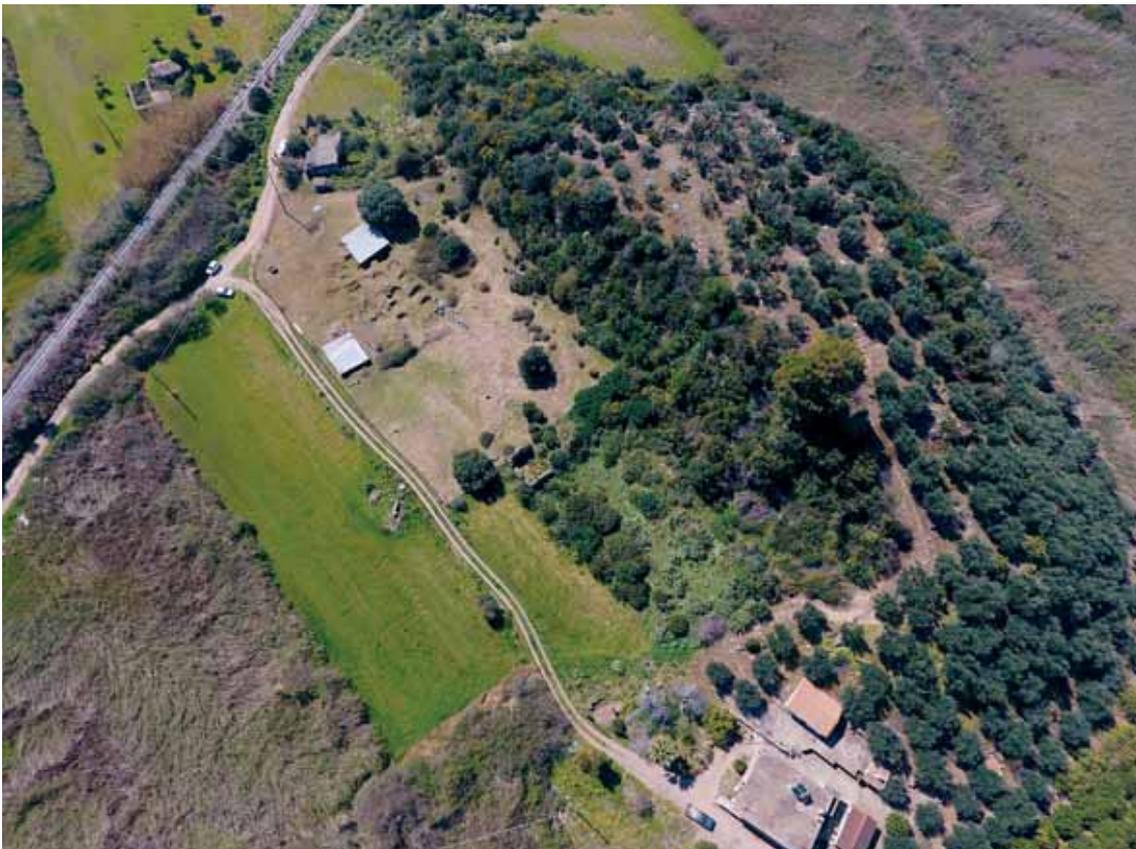


Fig. 3: Kleidi from the air with the settlement plateau and burial site (photo: T. Willershäuser)



Fig. 4: The Cave of the Anigris nymphs at Lake Kaiafa (photo: B. Eder)

Pausanias and Strabo both referred to Samikon.¹¹ The first mentions that the whole Zacharo Plain was called Samikon at that time, and the Anigris River¹² flowed into the sea here. Its mouth was often blocked by sand dunes, creating swamps.¹³ Near the river lay the Cave of the Anigris Nymphs (Fig. 4).¹⁴ Travelling to Olympia, Pausanias also described a fortified town, built on a high ridge of the Lapithos.¹⁵ He mentions neither the Kaiafas Lake¹⁶ nor the larger Lagoon of Agoulinitza.¹⁷

Strabo (8.3.19), who provides us with the etymology of the word Σάμη – high hill near the shoreline – also refers to Samikon, and he emphasises that there was a sanctuary of Poseidon, a holy grove with olive trees serving as the gathering place of all Triphylians.¹⁸ At the time of

¹¹ Paus. 5.2–8; 6.1; Strab. 8,3,12–20.

¹² Nowadays called Mavropotamos (Kraft et al. 2005, 13).

¹³ Lake Kaiafa initially formed a coastal lagoon which has already changed considerably since the ancient times (Kraft et al. 2005, 13).

¹⁴ Cf. Koster et al. 2015, 129.

¹⁵ Paus. 5.6.1: “... χωρίον τε υψηλόν και πόλις Σαμία επ’ αυτού”.

¹⁶ Lake Kaiafa, prior to the past several centuries was an extension of Agoulinitza Lagoon (Kraft et al. 2005, 13).

¹⁷ Kraft et al. 2005, 14. The date of the earliest coastal lagoon in the Kaiafa region is unknown, but it was extant in Classical times.

¹⁸ The region situated between Elis, Arkadia and Messenia was a territory of interest to the Eleans (Papandreou 1924, 64–67). Herodotus (4.145–148) refers to the history of Triphylia and the role of the Minyans, offspring of the Argonauts, who were expelled from the island of Lemnos by the Pelasgians (pre-Greek tribes and inhabitants of Lemnos). The Minyan refugees initially went to Lakonia and afterwards to Triphylia. According to Polybius (4.77.8–11), Triphylia should be considered an area belonging to Arkadia, and it was called Triphylia in honour of Triphylos, the son of Arkas. It is also proposed that the name of the region was adopted because of the coexistence of three tribes. Current research casts doubts on the substantial ethnic significance of the term ‘Triphylios – the inhabitant of Triphylia’, because the political union was founded not earlier than the 4th century BC. It is quite probable that the term Triphylia/Triphylios was employed in constructing the national identity of the inhabitants of the region, who tried to distinguish themselves from the Eleans (Nielsen 1997, 133–134, 141, 145; Zoumbaki 2005, 20, 29). It is also clear that the landscape of Triphylia with fertile valleys and hills is quite different from the flat plains of Elis. This ambiguity in the affiliation of the land is also apparent during the modern era. In 1899, the

Strabo, Samikon was a fortified acropolis without inhabitants under the rule of the town Makistos, and, according to tradition, was identified with the Homeric town of Arene.¹⁹

Excavation History

After his excavation at Kakovatos in 1907, where he believed he had found Pylos in his attempt to verify Homeric topography, Wilhelm Dörpfeld visited Kleidi, where he thought that the Homeric town of Arene was situated.²⁰ He discovered traces of habitation on the two small hills and subsequently officially requested permission to continue the Kakovatos excavation (in 1908) and to begin simultaneously conducting some trial excavations at various sites of Triphylia “from Samikon to Lepreon”.²¹

In the summer of 1908, the German Archaeological Expedition dug some small trenches at Kleidi. At the top of the larger hill, the archaeologists recovered parts of the ‘Cyclopean’ wall (more than 2 m wide) and thinner walls as part of a building complex. The German scholars collected a great quantity of prehistoric pottery, comparable to the pottery found at Kakovatos, Olympia, Lefkas and Pisa and sherds of the early Mycenaean period.²² The results of the excavation, according to the ideology of the era, seemed poor and without significance. Andreas Skias, the supervisor on behalf of the Greek Archaeological Service noted that “the findings were few and they could neither enrich the National Archaeological Museum collection nor could they be exposed” (Fig. 5a).²³ As a result, the German Archaeological Institute abandoned the investigations and left the site.

Unfortunately, the architectural remains became the raw material for the neighbouring villages, as is evident from the reports by the local authorities, and the damage became more severe with the construction of the railway line connecting Pyrgos with Kyparissia (Fig. 5b–c).²⁴ After the Second World War, the destruction of the site continued when the stones of the walls were turned into lime in the nearby kilns (Fig. 6).²⁵

In the middle of the 1950s new archaeological research was conducted by Nikolaos Yalouris. He excavated a burial tumulus with a diameter of 5.50 m located north-northeast of the larger hill.²⁶ Its peribolos was preserved only in an arc of about 2 m,²⁷ but its remains could be traced for most of its original outline. Fourteen graves had either been cut between the ridges of the soft sandstone or built on the surface of the ridges (on different levels also indicating their chronological sequence). The majority of the graves were disturbed and only two were found intact. Yalouris carefully studied the grave goods and dated the monument within the time span 1700–1200 BC

prefecture of Triphylia was founded (with the administrative centre in the town of Kyparissia) and it was abolished in 1909, when the region was incorporated into Messenia. After the First World War, northern Triphylia became part of the Elis prefecture.

¹⁹ Strab. 8,3,12–20.

²⁰ Dörpfeld 1907; Dörpfeld 1908a; Dörpfeld 1908b.

²¹ Application letter stored in the Historical Archive of the Hellenic Archaeological Service (DEAM, box no. 153, 1901–1909 A/α 234, 23/4/1907 and 3–16/4/1908).

²² For an overview of the pottery found by Dörpfeld, see Rambach 2002, 159–160.

²³ Historical Archive of the Hellenic Archaeological Service (DEAM, box no. 153, 1901–1909 A/α 234, 4/6/1908).

²⁴ Historical Archive of the Hellenic Archaeological Service (DEAM, box no. 153, 1901–1909 A/α 234, 19/5/1908).

²⁵ Papakonstantinou 1988, 148 n. 1.

²⁶ Yalouris 1966, 7; Zavadil 1995, 41; Zavadil 2000, 120; Nikolentzos 2011, 55–56. Architecturally it could be considered a burial mound of small dimensions, see Pelon 1976, 101; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, 138. However, Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 29, estimate the average diameter of burial mounds between 8 m and 25 m, and Galanakis 2011, 220, suggests 8–30 m. According to Korres 2011, 586, burial mounds could be constructed anywhere, either on a hill or on flat ground as in the case of Samikon.

²⁷ Up to 0.60 m high and 0.50 m thick, built of stones of medium or large size.



Fig. 6: The limestone quarries with post-war industrial facilities for lime production just east of the Kleidi hills (photo: B. Eder)

(MH III/LH I–LH IIIB).²⁸ It is noteworthy that Petros Kalligas has suggested that the mound of Samikon closely resembles the tumulus at Kokkolata of Kephallenia,²⁹ whereas Georgios Korres has interpreted the monument not as a tumulus but as just another tholos tomb.³⁰

Most of the pottery dates to LH I–II and consists of shapes (Vapheio cups,³¹ squat jugs,³² alabastra) and motifs (hatched loop, running spiral, dotted running spiral, ripple pattern) common to the early Mycenaean repertoire.³³ Moreover, some vessels seem to have similarities with shapes and decorative patterns found in Messenia (e.g. a beaked jug,³⁴ a conical rhyton,³⁵ piriform jars with a motif under the handles differing from the main motif,³⁶ etc.).

²⁸ Few tumuli remained in use until LH IIIB: Merkouri – Kouli 2011, 209 and n. 16, mention the already known data.

²⁹ Kalligas 1977, 116–125, because of the radial location of the burials.

³⁰ During MH and LH the construction of burial mounds concentrated in southwest Greece, and the vast majority of the burial monuments are found south of the Spercheios River (Merkouri – Kouli 2011, 207 with n. 12). See also Korres 1992, 191–199, for the so-called burial mound at Makryisia, excavated by Themelis in 1968. Zavadil 1995, 125, has stressed that the mounds of Samikon, Makryisia and Vayenas (Pylos) can be considered tholos tombs because of their diameter and the thickness of their peribolos.

³¹ Nikolentzos 2011, 145–147.

³² Nikolentzos 2011, 147–148.

³³ Yalouris 1966, 11–35; Lolos 1987, 216–217a; RMDP, 372–378, 381, 383, 385, 387; Nikolentzos 2011, 144–158. Before Yalouris' excavation a jug belonging to the class of Mainland Polychrome pottery was delivered to the Archaeological Service. It is decorated with schematised birds (Yalouris 1966, 11–12, pl. 6a, colour pl. 1; Lolos 1987, 298–300, figs. 490a, 491; Mathioudaki 2011, 39, 63–64, 188, 191, 194, 197; Nikolentzos 2011, 151). Similarities can be found with vessels from Akrotiri (Thera), Phylakopi (Melos) and Grave Circle A (Mycenae).

³⁴ RMDP, 377, no. 22; Nikolentzos 2011, 151. The vessel is painted in the Alternating Style (the motifs are a shield and a sea urchin) and also belongs to the so-called Arcade Group. It is also comparable to a jug from Messenia (RMDP, 321, no. 17). The white-coloured slip suggests that the vase could be an import from Lakonia or Kythera, but a local provenance cannot be excluded.

³⁵ RMDP, 338, 383; Nikolentzos 2011, 262.

³⁶ RMDP, 378; Nikolentzos 2011, 235 n. 1081.

In the early 1980s excavations were resumed, when, during construction works in a nearby field at the eastern foot of the northern hill of Kleidi, four more burial mounds³⁷ and a tholos tomb came to light.³⁸

As already noticed, the tumuli had periboloi of small diameter (e.g. Mound 1: 5.50 m),³⁹ retaining the soil that had been accumulated on them.⁴⁰ Cist graves roofed with large limestone slabs were located within the periboloi. The preliminary and brief report of the excavator notes that a pithos burial had been found and some horseshoe-shaped constructions,⁴¹ similar to those found in Messenia.⁴²

A tholos tomb that was covered by a mound retained by a low peribolos (d. 14.60 m), had a diameter of 5.65 m, surviving in height up to 2.40 m and its wall was 0.60 m thick.⁴³ There was a pebble floor and burial pits (one of them built), for both primary and secondary burials. The stomion and dromos of the tomb remained unexcavated.

According to the grave offerings, the tumulus, excavated by Yalouris, was in use from MH III/LH I until LH IIIB⁴⁴ and the other burial complexes until LH II/LH IIIA2.⁴⁵

The Recent Excavation History

The tumulus excavated by Yalouris has been almost completely destroyed and only traces of it are still visible. The prehistoric cemetery excavated in the early 1980s has received some kind of temporary protection measures, in order to preserve the tumuli and the tholos tomb. On the top of the hill a large quantity of pottery, particularly fragments of MH and LH vessels can be found on the surface.

In October 2007, the Ephorate of Elis undertook a small scale excavation on the hilltop.⁴⁶ The trenches were dug on the large plateau (60 m length to 20 m width) and were located on the west part of the hill overlying the prehistoric cemetery. The problems that the research had to face were the great soil erosion due to the weather conditions and the intensive cultivation combined with the lack of time the excavators had for the completion of their research.

³⁷ Tumuli rarely appear in clusters. For exceptions to this rule, see Merkouri – Kouli 2011, 204. Cf. above n. 26 for the location of tumuli.

³⁸ Papakonstantinou 1988; Papakonstantinou 1989a; Papakonstantinou 1989b; Boyd 2002, 186–189.

³⁹ See above n. 26. Korres 2011, 586–587, offers a typology of burial mounds. His types 1 and 2 show a retaining wall enclosing burial pithoi in varying order and cists in exemplary cases.

⁴⁰ Papakonstantinou 1988: *Mound 1*: It consists of a stone peribolos, diameter about 5.50 m, built of large stones with two circular tombs in its interior.

Mound 2: Inside, four cist graves roofed with big stone slabs were radially arranged. According to the excavator, the largest cist tomb shows some peculiar features at its edges, which were addressed as ‘altars’. Papadimitriou 2001, 43, does not consider them as altars but as kinds of pillars at the entrance of the tomb.

Mound 3: At the centre of the monument, a cist grave had been built, which was covered by three limestone slabs. According to the excavator, it is the largest cist recovered in Kleidi, resembling the central horseshoe-shaped construction as known from the burial mound of Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis in Messenia. At the periphery of the mound there was a pithos burial, therefore it is possible that the mound was initially used for pithos burials.

Mound 4: The excavation was not completed.

⁴¹ Papadimitriou 2001, 43–45, 170–171.

⁴² At Routsis (Messenia) inhumations in cist graves and burial pithoi coexisted (Korres 2011, 587).

⁴³ Papakonstantinou 1988, 148; Boyd 2002, 186–188; Galanakis 2011, 220 and n. 10, follows the theory of G. S. Korres that the tholoi were in fact inserted in the centre of the MH tumuli or built on the debris of previous settlements. See Korres 2011, 590.

⁴⁴ Boyd 2002, 187, RMDP, 387.

⁴⁵ Boyd 2002, 187.

⁴⁶ Moutzouridis – Nikolentzos 2014, 437–438, figs. 69–70.

Architectural Remains

Three trenches were dug (4 × 4 m) on a north-south axis. Clear architectural remains were traced only in Trench 2, as the two other trenches presented a thoroughly disturbed stratigraphy – up to 1 m depth – comprising a quantity of unworked stones without any interconnection (Fig. 7a–b).

In the western part of Trench 2 a wall (TX1) with north-south orientation came to light. It can be followed along the side of the trench at a minimum length of 4 m and at a maximum width of 0.37 m. A second wall (TX2) with east-west orientation, vertical to and running under TX1 has a maximum length of 0.58 m (until joining TX1) and width of 0.56 m. Most of TX1 consisted of just a single row of stones, but in some parts two rows of stones were uncovered. TX2 has maintained two rows of stones, which led us to the conclusion that this architectural phase was destroyed and the whole superstructure was removed in order to build the more recent phase, gaining building material for its construction. The two walls are constructed from undressed stones, and in comparison, TX2 seems to have been built in a more elaborate and sophisticated way (Fig. 7c, e).

Finds

The three trenches revealed a large amount of pottery and a few stone and bronze finds. The majority of the pottery comprises coarse and semi-coarse wares of daily use, as one would expect from a residential complex.⁴⁷ Closed pots and storage jars are prominent, being supplemented by drinking and eating vessels. Concerning the fine wares, we have sherds dating from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine period, but the majority belong to the end of the Middle Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age.

From the study of both the architectural remains and finds, two phases can easily be distinguished in Trench 2. At the lower stratum (just above the natural bedrock) part of a beaten earth floor/level of use was found, where two MH kantharoi⁴⁸ were discovered in situ (Fig. 7d). The first one lacks part of the body and rim, is slipped and burnished in the colour of the light brown clay.⁴⁹ It has an everted lip, carinated body and vertical handles (Fig. 8a–b). The second kantharos,⁵⁰ lacking the handles and part of the rim, is similar to the first one, however without the sharp carination of the body (Fig. 8c–d). These two kantharoi date the lower stratum to the end of the MH period,⁵¹ and represent popular MH III shapes that are found e.g. in the Argolid and Messenia.⁵²

Moreover, we would like to present in brief some characteristic pottery fragments that provide the chronological range of this settlement:

1. Fragment of a bowl with matt-painted linear decoration (Fig. 9a):⁵³ Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. Dimensions 0.049 × 0.074 m. Date: MH II–III.

⁴⁷ Dickinson et al. 1992, 477; Dabney – Wright 2013, 356.

⁴⁸ Cf. Buck 1964, 284–285.

⁴⁹ Πα/6, Trench 2A, 16-10-2007, layer 9, group 9. Height (including the handle): 0.086 m, d. base: 0.028 m.

⁵⁰ Πα/7, Trench 2A, 16-10-2007, layer 9, group 9. Height: 0.061 m, d. base: 0.026 m.

⁵¹ According to their flat base, the vessels could be dated to MH IIIA (Dietz 1991, 150).

⁵² This kind of shape seems to appear since the very beginning of MH (cf. Walter – Felten 1981, 127, fig. 117). For comparable vessels see also: Blegen 1921, 15, fig. 18; Walter – Felten 1981, 131, fig. 125; Rutter 1990, 431; Dietz 1991, 58, 87 (149–154 for an overview of the evolution of the kantharos shape during the end of MH and the beginning of LH); Howell 1992, 59, 104, no. P2466(κ), fig. 3.41, mentions that the kantharos shape “was by no means as popular at Nichoria as it was in NE Peloponnese”; Gauß – Smetana 2007, 63, fig. 7:12a/1–2. Rutter 1990, 435, speaks of “conservatism” in the evolution of the kantharos shape; see also Zerner 2008, 191.

⁵³ Cf. Howell 1992, 75, 107, nos. P2535–2536, fig. 3.48, pl. 3.28. According to Howell 1992, 74, this kind of pattern developed from the large chevrons used already in MH I. Cf. also Dietz 1991, 159, fig. 49, for a relevant pattern on a miniature cup from Argos, dated to MH IIIB.



a



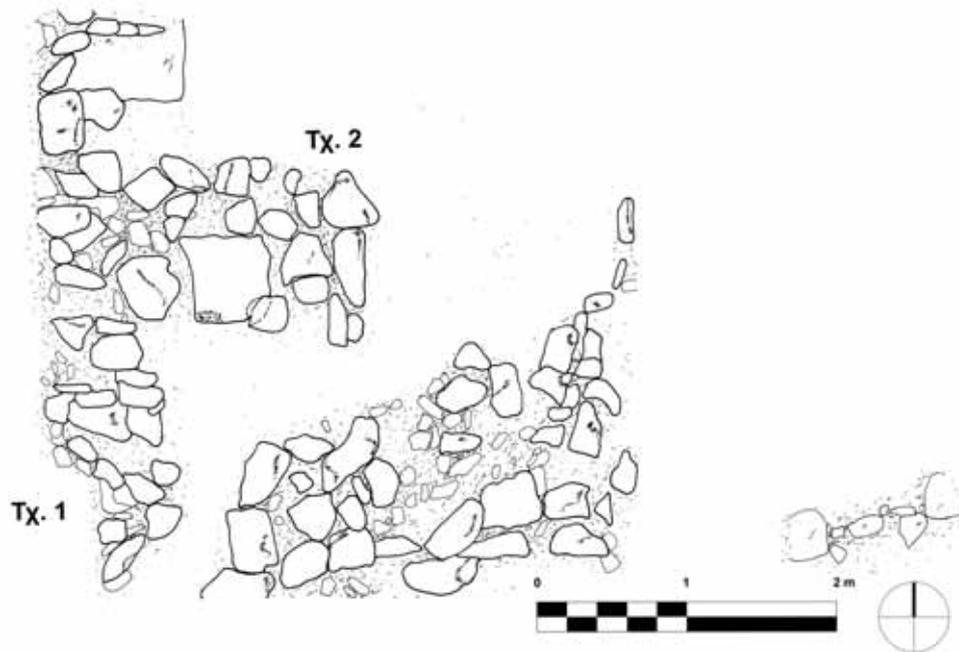
b



c



d

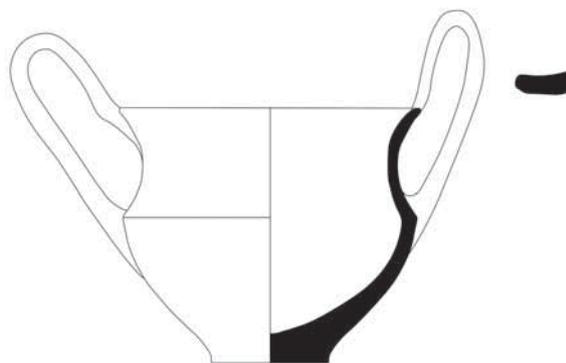


e

Fig. 7: a. View of Trench 1; b. View of Trench 3; c. View of Trench 2 with walls TX1 and TX2; d. Trench 2 with kantharoi found in situ; e. Plan of Trench 2. Scale 1:50



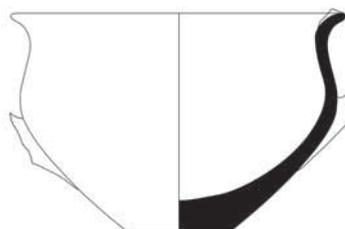
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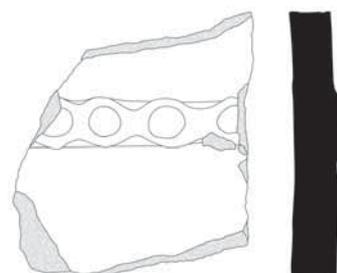
Fig. 8: a-b. Kantharos 1; c-d. Kantharos 2. Scale 1:2



a



b



c

Fig. 9: a. Rim fragment of a matt-painted bowl; b. Body fragments with incised decoration; c. Pithos fragment with plastic band decorated with finger impressions. Scale 1:3



Fig. 10: a–b. Fragments of two Vapheio cups with ripple pattern; c. Base of a shallow cup. Scale 1:3

2. Sherds with incised linear decoration, the so-called Adriatic ware of MH and early LH chronology, and fragments of pithoi decorated with finger-impressed plastic bands (Fig. 9b–c).⁵⁴
3. Sherds of Vapheio cups (FS 224)⁵⁵ with a pronounced midrib and flat base, decorated with a ripple pattern (FM 78) and a band at the rim. This decorative pattern can be found in archaeological contexts throughout the Mycenaean world testifying to a kind of cultural homogeneity (Fig. 10a–b):⁵⁶ Πα/2, Trench 2A, 10-10-2007, layer 6, group 6. H. 0.044 m. Date: LH II(A).
4. Base of a shallow cup (FS 218) decorated with framed spirals (FM 46) (Fig. 10c). The profile and decoration are characteristic of the LH IIA shallow cup with framed spiral that occurs frequently in early Mycenaean sites. Many cup fragments associated with the wasters of the Berbati kiln (Argolid) suggest mass production of this type,⁵⁷ which can be found on the Greek mainland and beyond:⁵⁸ Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. H. 0.036 m. Date: LH IIA.
5. Fragment of an Ephyraean goblet (FS 254) decorated with a rosette under the handle (Fig. 11a–b): Trench 3, 16-10-2007, layer 4, group 1. Max. h. 0.046 m, d. c. 0.15 m. Date: LH IIB.
6. Cup (FS 211) with vertical, almost parallel wavy lines.⁵⁹ This kind of decoration seems to be rare in the southern Peloponnese and probably represents a variation of the so-called ripple pattern (Fig. 11c–d): Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. H. 0.059 m, d. base 0.044 m. Date: LH II.⁶⁰
7. Numerous fragments of goblets and kylikes, plain, monochrome or with banded decoration (Fig. 11e–f). Date: LH II–III.
8. Sherd of an alabastron with an illustration of a curved palm (FM 14.10) (Fig. 12a): Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. Dimensions 0.022 × 0.036 m. Date: LH IIIA1.
9. Sherd of an open vessel (krater) decorated with the stylised version of an argonaut (Fig. 12b): Trench 3, 8-10-2007, layer 2, group 1. Max. h. 0.13 m. Date: LH IIIA.
10. Sherd of an open vessel (stemmed bowl or krater) decorated with a version of the tricurved arch (FM 62) (Fig. 12c–d):⁶¹ Trench 2β, 12-10-2007, layer 7, group 7. Max. h. 0.077 m. Date: LH IIIA2.

⁵⁴ Parallels from Nichoria: Howell 1992, 65, 69, 115, nos. P2699(κ)–P2701(κ), fig. 3.65; Dickinson et al. 1992, 480, 522, nos. P3050, P3056, figs. 9.1–2, for pithoi with plastic bands with finger impressions that are a familiar feature in MH and LH settlement contexts; Howell 1992, 64, 68, fig. 3.60, for pottery with incised decoration.

⁵⁵ Hiller 1975, 16–18; Mountjoy 1986, 15–16 (LH I), 33–34 (LH IIA); Lolos 1987, 240–260.

⁵⁶ Ripple pattern: cf. e.g. Hiller 1975, 16, 69, pl. 3, nos. 30–34; Dietz 1980, 112; Lolos 1987, 426–430; Dickinson et al. 1992, 475, 482; Mountjoy 2008, 326, fig. 6.15; 351, fig. 6.28. The motif is popular during LH I–II.

⁵⁷ Dickinson 1972, 105; RMDP, 23.

⁵⁸ E.g. Hiller 1975, pl. 5, nos. 82–83 (Aigina); RMDP, 203, 205, fig. 62, no. 12 (Korakou); 322–323, fig. 108, no. 22 (Pylos); 376–377, fig. 130, no. 24 (Elis/Makryisia); 890, 900 (Melos); 1083, fig. 442, no. 3 (Kos/Serraglio).

⁵⁹ Hiller 1975, 18–20.

⁶⁰ Cf. Hiller 1975, 18, 71, pl. 5, no. 64; RMDP, 203–204, fig. 62, no. 9. The motif is more popular in the northeast of the Peloponnese and the Central Greek mainland.

⁶¹ For the motif cf. RMDP, 271–272, fig. 90, no. 119; Mountjoy 2008, 305, no. 3039; 306, no. 3043, figs. 6.3, 6.4.



Fig. 11: a–b. Ephyraean goblet; c–d. Shallow cup; e–f. Various types of goblets and kylikes. Scale 1:3

11. Upper part of an alabastron decorated with stacked zigzag and banding consisting of fine line groups flanked by wide bands (Fig. 12e–f).⁶² This motif becomes popular in Messenia and Elis, where it appears between the handles of squat alabastra and small piriform jars.⁶³ According to Penelope Mountjoy, this motif derives from the Minoan repertoire,⁶⁴ but it could be a variation of the abstract foliate band.⁶⁵ Vessels with such decoration also

⁶² Cf. RMDP, 385–387, fig. 134, nos. 55–57 (LH IIIB).

⁶³ Nikolentzos 2011, 237 and 238, for the decoration with stacked zigzag of small piriform jars; 241–242, for the decoration of squat alabastra. The motif is found on the shoulder of ten squat alabastra and it appeared (in Elis) already since LH IIIA2.

⁶⁴ RMDP, 334–335. For the motif see also Nikolentzos 2011, 237, 241–242.

⁶⁵ The southwest Peloponnese had strong connections with Crete. Dickinson (Dickinson et al. 1992, 469–473) notes a kind of ‘Minoanising’ pottery only at Nichoria during the transitional period of MH III–LH I. However, the Minoan influence seems more obvious in LH II (Davis – Stocker 2016, 636).

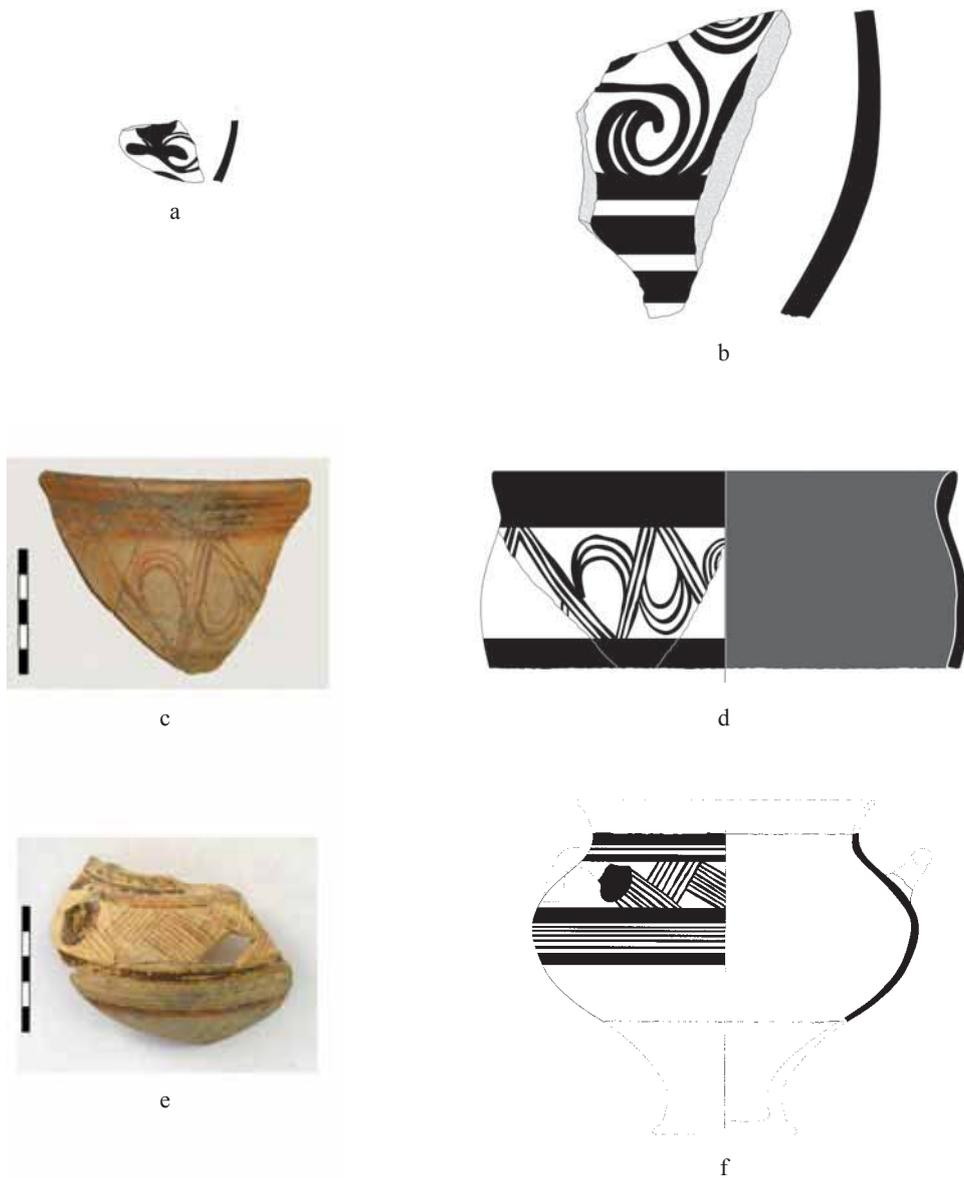


Fig. 12: a. Fragment of an alabastron with palm motif; b. Fragment of a krater with stylised argonaut; c–d. Fragment of an open vessel with a variant of tricurved arch; e–f. Alabastron or piriform jar. Scale 1:3

originated from Achaia and can be found along the Corinthian Gulf. Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. H. 0.068 m. Date: LH IIIA2–IIIB.

12. Part of a flask (FS 190), consisting of the lip, the upper part of the neck and the two vertical handles (Fig. 13a). The shape does not seem to be very common in Mycenaean times, but is found relatively frequently in Elis and Messenia:⁶⁶ Trench 2, 5-10-2007, layer 4, group 4. Max. h. 0.035 m, d. 0.025 m. Date: LH IIIA2–IIIB.
13. Part of a stirrup jar consisting of the false neck, decorated with a circle, and the two vertical strap handles, solidly painted, with the exception of a triangle (Fig. 13b). The aforemen-

⁶⁶ Mountjoy 2008, 361, no. 3575, fig. 6.32; Nikolentzos 2011, 250–251.



Fig. 13: a. Rim fragment of flask; b. Fragment of stirrup jar. Scale 1:3

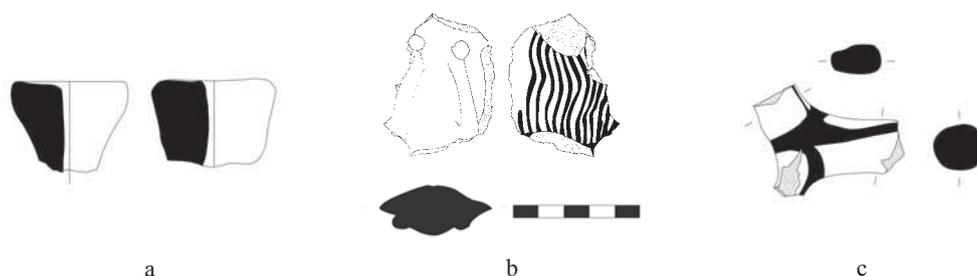


Fig. 14: a. Spindle whorls; b. Anthropomorphic figurine; c. Zoomorphic figurine. Scale 1:3

tioned properties are typical for stirrup jars dated to LH IIIA2 and early IIIB.⁶⁷ Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. Max. h. 0.03 m, d. 0.021 m.

14. Another sherd, probably from a straight-sided alabastron or cup, was decorated with a scale pattern (FM 70) and its bottom base with concentric circles: Trench 3, 18-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. H. 0.047 m. LH IIIA2/B.
15. Clay spindle whorls offer evidence for textile production (Fig. 14a).⁶⁸
16. Obsidian was imported from the island of Melos.⁶⁹
17. A female figurine decorated with vertical wavy lines (on the back). The plastic modelling of the arms and breasts may be taken to indicate an idol of the 'transitional type' after Elizabeth French.⁷⁰ The motif is comparable to an idol from Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia⁷¹ (Fig. 14b): Trench 3, 16-10-2007, layer 4, group 4. Max. h. 0.054 m. Date: LH IIIA–B.
18. Fragment of a zoomorphic figurine with linear decoration (Fig. 14c):⁷² Trench 3, 17-10-2007, layer 5, group 1. Max. l. 0.055 m, max. h. 0.042 m. Date: LH IIIA–B.

⁶⁷ Nikolentzos 2011, 269.

⁶⁸ Carington Smith 1992, 675; French – Janko 2008, 448.

⁶⁹ Blitzer 1992, 720.

⁷⁰ French 1971, 123–124, pl. 17.

⁷¹ French – Janko 2008, 453, 455, no. 7090, fig. 10.4; see also Eder 2016, 177, on the production of figurines in specialised pottery workshops with references to the pertinent bibliography.

⁷² Cf. French 1971, 155–156; Weber-Hiden 1990, 55. For the decoration, see also Weber-Hiden 1990, 58, pl. 41. These figurines date to LH IIIB, but their production continues into LH IIIC.

Conclusions

Reconsidering the aforementioned data, the following questions emerge concerning the nature and the character of the habitation at Samikon:

Which role did Samikon play within the so-called Mycenaean world? Which position did an archaeological site that featured mounds, a tholos and residential remains occupy in the Mycenaean political structure?

What kinds of relations developed with other neighbouring sites, such as Kakovatos (to the south) or Epitalion (to the north)? What was the social status of its inhabitants? What kind of relationship did Samikon have with the adjacent region of palatial Messenia, taking into consideration that the distance between Samikon and Peristeria (a very important and wealthy archaeological site that flourished during MH III–LH II) is just about 30 km.

Let us recapitulate the already known data:

1. The site is located in an excellent position of great strategic significance monitoring the route from north to south on the western coast of the Peloponnese. However, based on the details of palaeogeographic and geological data as well as the descriptions of ancient travellers, it can be assumed that Samikon did not have a sufficient area providing adequate arable land for agriculture. On the contrary, the site lies between lakes, lagoons, filthy and unhealthy swamps.

The inhabitants could cultivate the fertile plain of Zacharo, although this area was somewhat distant from the hills of Kleidi. However, a general picture of mainland Greece in the Bronze Age suggests that the common small sites were integrated into a local network of habitation of 5–15 km radius (naturally the palatial centres were the exception).⁷³

2. The burial architecture of Kleidi-Samikon seems quite interesting, combining various grave types. Based exclusively on the preliminary reports and the conclusions of the excavators, burial mounds⁷⁴ and a tholos tomb coexisted. Regarding the tumuli, the inhumations took place in pits or cist graves, types of graves that were neither especially labour-intensive nor required specific knowledge of sophisticated construction techniques. However, the burial mounds were also imposing monuments, a kind of public declaration and display.⁷⁵ We can imagine these monuments dominating the surrounding area, lining and defining the territorial boundaries and enhancing the social and ethnic ties among the members of the small community or families.⁷⁶

In contrast, tholos tombs testify to the existence of local elites in these regions. Such imposing burial monuments demanded effort, a specialised labour force, time and expenses for their construction, so they were focal points for the display of power and wealth of LH I–II high-ranking families or individuals.⁷⁷

Large areas of the so-called Mycenaean world such as Achaia, Elis, Arkadia, Corinthia, Aitolia, Phokis, Lokris, and Euboia have revealed neither actual palatial buildings nor clear indications of administrative activities.⁷⁸ In the case of Kleidi-Samikon the construction of the aforementioned burial monuments indicates the existence of some kind of social or administrative hierarchy and the interest of the inhabitants in displaying their power and sovereignty over a specific area.

⁷³ Arena 2015, 21, 25. Based on Colin Renfrew's Early State Module Theory the territory of a Mycenaean state entity can be estimated as 1300 km² and a radius of 22 km.

⁷⁴ According to the study of the excavated burial mounds, these monuments are located close to rivers, a settlement or a nearby acropolis (Merkouri – Kouli 2011, 207).

⁷⁵ See also Galanakis 2011, 220.

⁷⁶ Merkouri – Kouli 2011, 204.

⁷⁷ Arena 2015, 4. According to Arena 2015, 13, the construction of tholos tombs in Achaia indicates the existence of elites, particularly in western Achaia.

⁷⁸ Arena 2015, 3.

3. The offerings of the early Mycenaean period are substantially limited to pottery, and only one or two vases accompany each inhumation. The majority of vessels consist of alabastra, squat jugs and cups. The decoration follows the typical Mycenaean repertoire, and the imported items seem to be quite few. This picture becomes even clearer when the finds from Kleidi-Samikon are compared with those from the adjacent site of Kakovatos, where monumental tholoi tombs were constructed,⁷⁹ and weapons, jewellery made of gold or precious stones, great quantities of amber beads and spacers, numerous palatial jars, stone or glass vases, ivory items etc. were deposited as grave offerings.⁸⁰ Even the residential remains at the top of the Kleidi hillock seem to be poor considering that the excavated walls were just 60 cm wide, whereas in Kakovatos the thickness of the main building's walls exceeded 1 m, verifying the existence of a large building with at least one upper storey.
- The relatively few LH IIIA–B pottery finds (such as a conical rhyton, piriform jars, etc.) demonstrate close relations with the adjacent region of Messenia and testify to the continued habitation of the area, even after the abandonment of the tholos tomb at Samikon and the desertion of Kakovatos.
4. The case of Kleidi-Samikon presents close resemblances, regarding its period 'of life' with the settlement of Epitalion. It can be suggested that during the early Mycenaean period settlements in North Triphylia were placed close to the coastline with a distance of 10–12 km between them, where they could monitor the land routes (compare also Lepreon, Kakovatos, Epitalion).⁸¹

Based on the aforementioned arguments, it can be suggested that Kleidi-Samikon was a kind of fortress or military facility integrated into a system of small settlements, located near the sea-shore, and it had the role of guarding (as in modern times) the land route and imposing the power of the local rulers on this relatively small area. Initially, this military checkpoint was under the political influence/rule of Kakovatos, where, according to the noteworthy finds, the administrative centre of northern Triphylia was situated (a kind of peripheral 'petty kingdom' such as Peristeria, Antheia, Routsis, etc.).⁸² At Kleidi-Samikon the tholos tomb might have belonged to an officer's/commander's family and the burial mounds to the ordinary people and inhabitants of the region. This hypothesis may explain the obvious differences between the two sites (Kleidi-Samikon and Kakovatos), concerning the burial and residential architecture as well as the findings. During LH III times, when the administrative centre of Kakovatos was abandoned because of the emergence and growth of the centralised bureaucratic Messenian state,⁸³ Kleidi-Samikon became a remote administrative station of Messenia.⁸⁴ It was deserted when the collapse⁸⁵ of the Mycenaean palatial system of Pylos occurred.⁸⁶

The final publication of the excavation data, the detailed study of the pottery, involving also chemical and petrographic analysis, and the examination of Kleidi-Samikon in relation to the adjacent Mycenaean sites may allow us to verify these speculations and to find convincing answers to the aforementioned questions.

⁷⁹ Following the habitation pattern that can be traced in Messenia, cf. Wright 2006, 11.

⁸⁰ Cf. de Vreë, this volume. Eder 2016, 176, about the materialisation of ideology and social power. An important aspect is given by the fact that these raw materials could not be produced locally.

⁸¹ For a brief presentation of these sites, see also Nikolentzos 2011, 324–325, 328.

⁸² Shelmerdine 2001, 349; Sgouritsa 2005, 518; Cavanagh 2010, 636; Nikolentzos 2011, 332.

⁸³ Eder 2007, 36.

⁸⁴ Nikolentzos 2011, 334–338; for the close relations between Messenia and Elis, during the Late Bronze Age, see also Nikolentzos 2014.

⁸⁵ Dickinson 2006, 24–57.

⁸⁶ Eder 2006, 550, on the consequences of the collapse of the palatial centres. On the contrary, Elis seems to flourish during LH IIIC, after the destruction of the palatial world (Eder 2006, 556–557). Birgitta Eder refers to the extended cemetery of Ayia Triada (northeast Elis) and stresses the continuity of the burial practices and rites until Geometric times.

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Illustrations

Photography of pottery: K. Nikolentzos, P. Moutzouridis

Drawings of pottery: G. Katsoudas

Fig. 1: View of the Classical acropolis of Samikon (photo: B. Eder)

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Fig. 12: a. Fragment of an alabastron with palm motif; b. Fragment of a krater with stylised argonaut; c–d. Fragment of an open vessel with a variant of tricurved arch; e–f. Alabastron or piriform jar. Scale 1:3

Fig. 13: a. Rim fragment of flask; b. Fragment of stirrup jar. Scale 1:3

Fig. 14: a. Spindle whorls; b. Anthropomorphic figurine; c. Zoomorphic figurine. Scale 1:3

Of Micro-, Meso- and Macro-Regions: Regional Space in the Middle and Early Late Bronze Age Ionian Islands

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Abstract: Recent landscape archaeological research on the island of Zakynthos has resulted in the identification of a number of sites with pottery from the Middle Helladic and the early Mycenaean periods. In this article we will look at these archaeological materials and at the geographical location of the sites. Zakynthos will then be compared with other parts of western Greece and beyond, in order to identify similarities and differences in material strategies in the landscape. The analysis will result in a discussion on the intensity of interactions in regions of different scale, in which Zakynthos participated.

Keywords: Zakynthos, Bronze Age, Mycenaean archaeology, archaeological survey, Ionian Islands

Introduction

Already in 1934, Sylvia Benton and Hilda Lorimer identified early Mycenaean habitation on the island of Zakynthos.⁵ Since then, only very few additional finds from the Middle Bronze Age or early Mycenaean periods have been published. In 1999, Christina Souyoudzoglou-Haywood stated that there are no MH finds on the island, but she does mention two LH II vessels from a tomb at Keri.⁶ The idea that sites and finds from the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period are virtually absent on Zakynthos can now be corrected by the results of the intensive landscape archaeological research on the island, which took place from 2005 to 2015. The goal of this contribution is to evaluate the presence of Middle Bronze Age and LH I–II material on Zakynthos and place this in the wider context of the Ionian Islands and beyond. In order to do so, a comparison will be made of sites of this period on Zakynthos with sites from the same periods in adjacent areas and further away (see catalogue in the appendix).

Regions

The term ‘region’ is very popular in archaeology. Think of ‘regional survey’, ‘regional analysis’ or ‘regional exchange’. Exactly what is meant by region, however, is often not very clear. The most common use of the word appears to denote something else than ‘national’, or ‘international’, i.e. supra-regional. And the boundaries with what is considered to be ‘local’ are particularly fuzzy.⁷ In

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⁵ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5.

⁶ Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122.

⁷ On the concept of region in archaeology, see Duff 2000, 74; Kantner 2008, 41; Kowaleski 2008, 226.

order to begin to operationalise the concept of region, the notion of micro-ecology is important, introduced by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell as the basis of Mediterranean historical geography.⁸ Regions based on such micro-ecologies, i.e. ‘micro-regions’, can be conceived of as areas where the natural constraints evoke specific and similar human strategies. In other words, micro-regions are spatially defined areas with distinctive social practices resulting from interactions with the landscape. These spaces are not constant, but their size and boundaries may vary over time because of changes in ecology and, especially, in social practices. Thus defined, micro-regions are strongly linked to social identities of people, which originate in the sharing of social and material practices in a specific landscape. Therefore, in order to identify such micro-regions archaeologically, we should look not just for landscapes with specific natural geographies, but, especially, for corresponding social and material practices.

When the spatial sharing of social and material strategies in the landscape constitutes the basis for regions, it is possible to explore this on different scales. As distances increase, social interaction can be expected to be less intensive. Because the spatial sharing of social and material practices is an important measure of identity, regional identities will vary in larger areas of interaction.⁹ Archaeologically, we should be able to distinguish between micro-, meso- and macro-regions according to the degree of correspondence in material and social practice in the landscape. Of course, it is not possible to mark clear boundaries between these subcategories, and, in any case, they would change over time. In this article, we will include a very limited number of archaeological parameters to define such regions: the presence of certain classes of archaeological materials, the landscape settings of sites and the presence of specific burial customs, notably tumuli. The degree of similarity between areas in these aspects and the geographical scale on which similarities can be traced will result in a distinction between micro-, meso- or macro-regions in which Zakynthos participated during the later Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period.

The Zakynthos Archaeology Project

Since 2005, landscape archaeological research has been conducted on the island of Zakynthos, with the aim of relating the distribution of archaeological materials to the island’s geography.¹⁰ The core of the project is a comparison between three geographically different areas with regards to the presence of archaeology in the landscape (Fig. 1). Due to the extremely dynamic nature of the landscape at Zakynthos,¹¹ the archaeological record is, unfortunately, very fragmented. Archaeological classifications can therefore often be made in very general terms only.

Much of the prehistoric pottery that has been found during the fieldwork is coarse with a dark-grey to black core and orange to red surfaces, comparable to the Balkan ‘Red Ware’ or Epirote K II–K III pottery.¹² This material is notoriously difficult to date and we refer to it as ‘general prehistoric pottery’.¹³ Such prehistoric pottery is fairly ubiquitous and is widely distributed in all three research areas. Archaeological finds that can specifically be assigned to the Middle Bronze Age and the earlier phases of the Late Bronze Age are much less abundant. In the southern part of the island, MH–LH II finds occur on six sites (Tab. 1). In our Research Area B in the interior

⁸ Horden – Purcell 2000, 77–80.

⁹ On the topic of scale in archaeology, see Mathieu-Scott, 2004; Lock – Molyneaux 2006, and, especially, Molloy 2016.

¹⁰ The project is carried out by the Netherlands Institute at Athens in cooperation with the responsible Greek Ephorates of Antiquities. For an overview and full bibliography of the project, see the project’s website: <<https://www.uva.nl/en/discipline/archaeology/research/zakynthos/the-zakynthos-archaeology-project-2006-2010.html?cb>> (last access 6 Feb. 2021). Fieldwork has finished and final publication is in preparation.

¹¹ Lagios et al. 2007; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a.

¹² Hammond 1967, 299–302; Tartaron 2004, 71–84.

¹³ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a, 444.

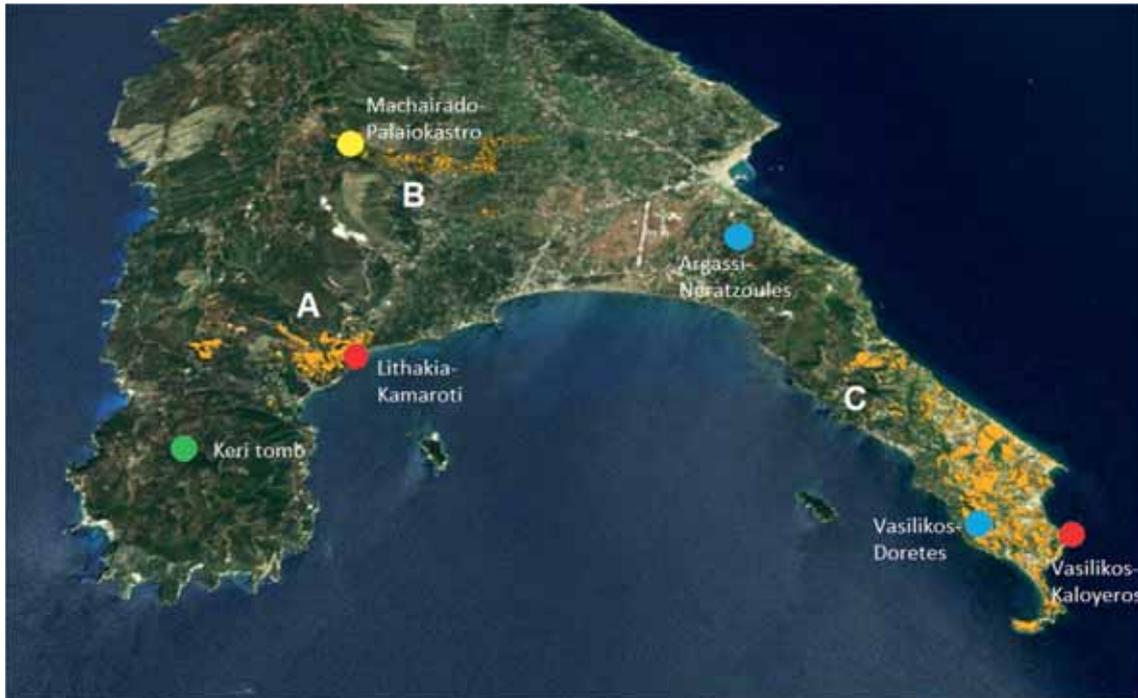


Fig. 1: Southern and central Zakynthos with sites mentioned in the text. The research areas covered by surface survey are indicated in orange and assigned A, B and C

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Vasilikos-Kaloyeros	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Cape in Sea
Vasilikos-Doretas	Preh, MH, LH	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Argassi-Neratzoules	Preh, MH	Settlement?	Hilltop near coast
Keri	LH IIA	Funerary	Slope near coast
Planos	LH IIB	Funerary	
Lithakia-Kamaroti	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Hilltop and slope near coast

Tab. 1: Sites on Zakynthos with materials from the MH and early Mycenaean periods (Preh = general prehistoric pottery; MH = material of Middle Helladic tradition; LH = Late Helladic pottery). See also the catalogue in the appendix

of the island, such material has not been found. However, this area has yielded general prehistoric pottery. It is possible, or even likely, that some of the general prehistoric pottery is actually from the periods that interest us here.

The Peninsula of Vasilikos

In 1934, Benton and Lorimer carried out excavations at the site of Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, a site situated on a cape at the southern edge of the peninsula of Vasilikos, part of our Research Area C.¹⁴ These excavations have never been properly published, but Benton and Lorimer reported Mycenaean architecture and “fragments of more than twenty small cups of L.M. I and L.M. II types.”¹⁵ William Taylour gave a description of Vapheio cups shown to him by Benton, probably of LH I–II

¹⁴ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5. See also Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012, 65–66.

¹⁵ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5.

date.¹⁶ Even though Benton and Lorimer stated that the floors of the houses contained LH III pottery, the site has since then been known as one of the very few early Mycenaean settlement sites on the Ionian Islands.¹⁷ In 2005, 2006 and 2010, we visited the site and conducted a surface survey.¹⁸ It is clear that the cape has suffered much from erosion and building activities. Many of the finds that we made at Kaloyeros were, in fact, from the beach at the bottom of the cape, or from soil dumps near building trenches. In addition to the surface survey, we managed to clear away the vegetation in the area of Benton and Lorimer's excavation trenches, exposing a wall with associated prehistoric finds. In all likelihood, this is the ruined wall referred to by Benton in her survey report, near which she had excavated.¹⁹

The archaeological material on and around the cape ranges from the Early Bronze Age to Roman Imperial times, indicating continuous use for several millennia. Against the background of coarse pottery that can be labelled as general prehistoric, there are only very few finds which certainly belong to the Middle Bronze Age or the early Mycenaean period. There is the flaring rim of a bowl or krater (Fig. 2a), which appears to be a local production of Minyan-type pottery. Moreover, there are some wall fragments of similar fabric with linear decoration. In addition, there is a high-swung vertical handle with impressed decoration, which may be MH in date.²⁰ What has not been found at the site during our survey is pottery that can clearly be dated to LH I or LH II, such as the Vapheio cups that were described by Taylour. There is ample Mycenaean pottery at the site from later periods, but the earliest recognisable material dates from LH IIB–IIIA1 onwards. On the basis of our research, then, we are not able to corroborate the existence of an early Mycenaean settlement at Vasilikos-Kaloyeros. However, Benton and Lorimer's reports and the presence of general prehistoric material as well as the few MH fragments discussed here, make it likely that Kaloyeros was inhabited during that time.

Not far away from Kaloyeros, about 2 km inland, the survey teams have discovered a concentration of materials at the location of Vasilikos-Doretos.²¹ Doretos is situated on top of a ridge, high in the hills, with majestic views of the coasts on either side of the peninsula. Concentrations of prehistoric materials were found scattered across two plateaus on the ridge and on the eastern and southeastern slopes of the hill. As everywhere on Zakynthos, the material is very fragmentary and much of it cannot be classified any more specifically than generally prehistoric. The latest material recognised is a LH IIIB kylix, suggesting that the site was frequented until the Mycenaean Palatial period.

Pottery that can clearly be assigned to LH I–II has not been found at Doretos. However, there is some grey pottery of Minyan type and technology, from which the rim of a possible small jar is illustrated here (Fig. 2b). Moreover, there are fragments in a local fabric with linear, matt-painted decoration. In addition, we have found various high-looped strap handles and a possible example of a wishbone handle. Altogether, this inland hilltop site of Doretos shows a much wider repertoire of Middle Bronze Age/early Mycenaean finds than the coastal site of Kaloyeros.

The situation at Vasilikos-Doretos is paralleled at a site referred to as Argassi-Neratzoules, which we explored in 2006 on the basis of the analysis of old aerial photographs.²² Neratzoules is situated to the north of our Research Area C, north of the Skopos Mountain.²³ Just like Vasilikos-Doretos, it is a hilltop site with excellent views of the nearby coasts. At various spots, we

¹⁶ Taylour 1958, 186–187. He remarks only that the pottery he was shown by Benton was from Zante, without specifying Kaloyeros.

¹⁷ Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 193–194; Hope Simpson 1981, 155–156.

¹⁸ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2006, 69–71; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2007, 36; Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012, 67–70.

¹⁹ Benton 1931/1932, 215.

²⁰ The handle is comparable to a jug handle from the MH III settlement at Asine, see Frödin – Persson 1938, 293–295, fig. 203.2.

²¹ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 43–46.

²² Stoker 2010, 36 and fig. 4.4–6.

²³ Aerial photographs indicated that bulldozing had recently taken place in the area. We visited the site in the presence of Andreas Sotiriou and collected pottery in a non-systematic manner.

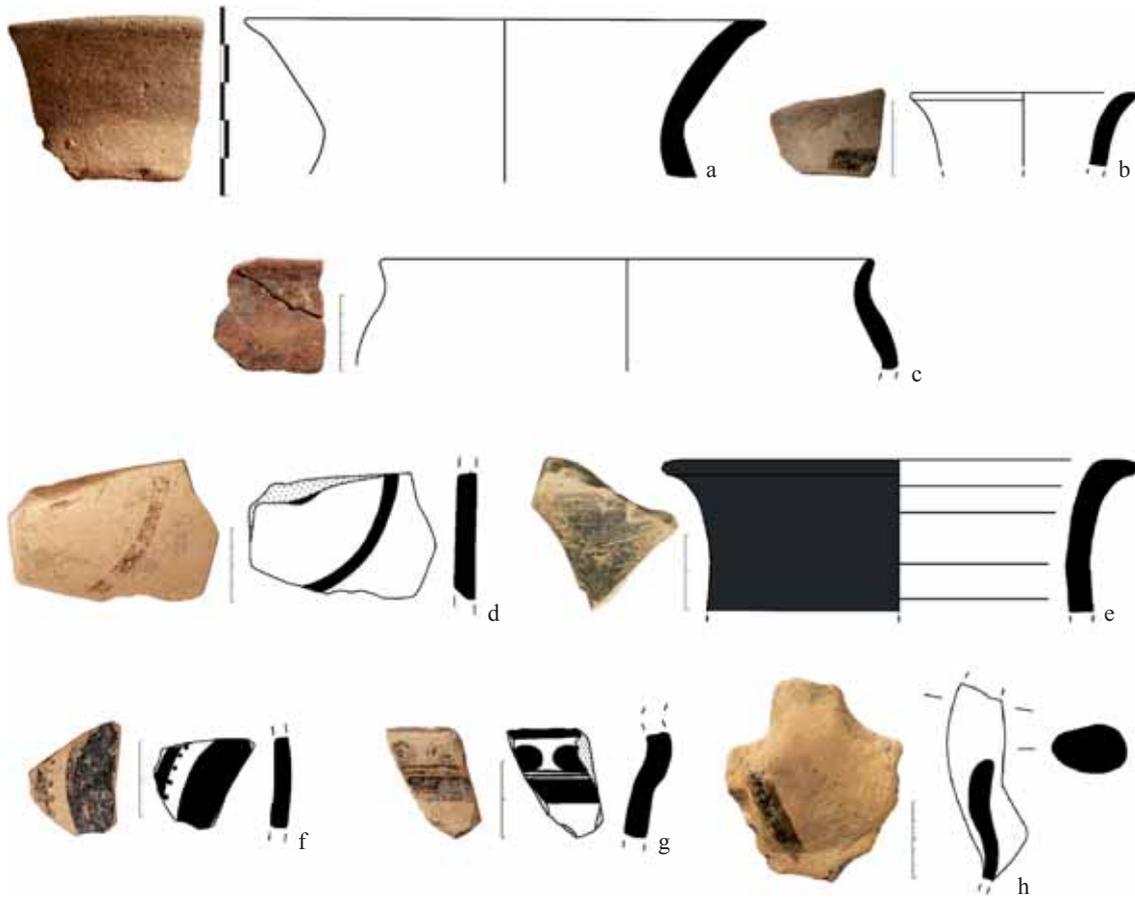


Fig. 2: a. Ceramic fragment of the rim of a bowl or krater from Vasilikos-Kaloyeros (ZaS05_3.17.001); b. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Vasilikos-Doretas (ZAP10_2203.34); c. Rim fragment of a coarse ware jar from Argassi-Neratzoules (ZAP06_0063.1.17); d. Matt-painted wall fragment of a closed vessel from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZaS05_251.4); e. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_5004.1.10); f. Fragment of a decorated closed vessel found on the surface at Lithakia-Kamaroti; g. Wall fragment of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_6007.3A); h. Fragment of a dipper from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_8004.3.78) (photos: A. Dekker, drawings: O. Hoogzaad, O. Metaxas, N. Pieters, L. Opgenhaffen)

encountered concentrations of prehistoric materials, of which only a selection was collected. Much of the material, which, of course, is very fragmentary, cannot be more closely dated than generally prehistoric. However, there are several grey-coloured fragments of Minyan type and technology. Also, there is a matt-painted fragment and the rim of a coarse MH jar (Fig. 2c).²⁴ In contrast to Doretas, there is no evidence at Neratzoules for any Mycenaean material, whether it be early Mycenaean or LH III.

The two hilltop sites of Vasilikos-Doretas and Argassi-Neratzoules correspond in their location and in the presence of materials in the Middle Bronze Age tradition. In addition, pottery in LH I-II style is absent at both sites. The landscape setting and the pottery repertoire is different from the coastal site at Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, which has yielded early Mycenaean pottery in addition to (a few) MH finds.

²⁴ Cf. a jar from Nichoria: Howell 1992, fig. 3.77, nos. P2840–2841.

Lithakia-Kamaroti

The site of Lithakia-Kamaroti is situated in our Research Area A (Fig. 1), not far from the natural harbour of Limni Keriou. It is a Mycenaean settlement site that we discovered during the pilot survey of 2005 and investigated systematically in 2009.²⁵ The find distribution shows three main concentrations. The most extensive find concentration covers the top of a low hill near the coast. Two other find concentrations have been identified near the bottom of the hill, to the southeast and to the north respectively. In 2012, we were able to carry out excavations in a limited number of test trenches near the top of the hill.²⁶ The excavations have yielded the remains of a building of LH IIB–IIC date. However, the surface material and a pottery dump also showed human presence at the site in earlier phases of the Mycenaean period. The site was also used in later times, notably in the Classical or Hellenistic periods.

As always on Zakynthos, the pottery is very fragmentary and difficult to classify. However, it is clear that in addition to material that can be classified as ‘general prehistoric’, the survey and the excavations have yielded pottery that belongs to Middle Helladic traditions, such as black-burnished wares, various wheel-fashioned coarse wares, grey-coloured fragments of Minyan type and technology and a few matt-painted fragments (Fig. 2d).²⁷ Characteristic is the flaring rim of a jar in a local dark-grey fabric of Minyan type (Fig. 2e).²⁸ Also, there are many fragments of early Mycenaean vessels. One small fragment of a closed vessel, which was found during the survey, can be associated with a hard-baked fabric with lustrous paint that probably shows an ogival canopy (FM 13) (Fig. 2f). It can be dated to LH IIA.²⁹ There are several fragments of Vapheio cups, some of them with a pronounced mid-rib (Fig. 2g). The repertoire of LH I–II vessels at Lithakia-Kamaroti is actually quite wide, including many goblets (FS 254) and even a fragment of the spout of a bridge-spouted jug (FS 103).

The funerary evidence at Zakynthos provides very little additional information on the Middle Helladic or early Mycenaean period. Near the town of Keri, some 8 km to the southwest of Lithakia-Kamaroti, a small built tomb was excavated in 1967 (Fig. 1).³⁰ Eyewitnesses stated that the chamber contained the remains of two individuals in a crouched position. There were not many burial gifts in the chamber, but two pots have been preserved: an alabastron with spirals and stone pattern and a squat jug with running spirals. Both have been dated to LH IIA.³¹ There is very little other evidence of this period on Zakynthos.³² What is clear, however, is that tumuli such as those on Lefkas or at various places in Achaia and Elis are lacking on Zakynthos.³³

Micro-regions on Zakynthos

The surveys on the island show that prehistoric pottery is not abundant in general, but that it is fairly widely distributed in all three research areas of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project.³⁴ However, material that can clearly be assigned to the MH or early Mycenaean tradition has not been recognised at sites other than those mentioned above. Such material is also not clearly present at the prominent

²⁵ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2006, 68; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2010b, 75–79.

²⁶ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014b.

²⁷ Cf. Zerner 2008, 258, nos. 1691–1692, fig. 5.31. I thank Birgitta Eder for the reference.

²⁸ Cf. similar vessels from Nichoria: Howell 1992, fig. 3.50.

²⁹ Mountjoy 1986, 27, fig. 24.1.

³⁰ Agallopoulou 1977, 212.

³¹ RMDP, 480–481, fig. 176 no. 1–2. See, however, Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 121, who assigns a LH IIB–IIIA1 date. Considering the stone patterns (FM 76) on the alabastron, we think a LH IIA date most likely.

³² A tholos tomb excavated in 1974 at Planos reportedly contained LH IIB pottery; see Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122. A small tholos tomb at Vasilikos explored by the Zakynthos Archaeology Project held Mycenaean pottery, which, unfortunately, cannot be dated. See Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 48–49.

³³ Cf. Müller 1989; Merkouri – Kouli 2011; Oikonomidis et al. 2011.

³⁴ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a, 444.

site of Machairado-Palaiokastro, in Research Area B, in the interior of the island.³⁵ Palaiokastro does have general prehistoric pottery and some LH III pottery, which suggests that there may also have been human activities during the Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean period.

The settlements on Zakynthos with clearly recognisable material from the Middle Bronze Age/early Mycenaean period have yielded a rather confusing picture. In fact, we have three different situations.

1. In the interior of the island there are sites with pottery of general prehistoric character but without any distinctive Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean types (yellow in Fig. 1).
2. At Vasilikos, pottery recognisable as Middle Bronze Age is present, concentrated on a few steep hilltop sites away from the coast but with an overview of maritime and land routes; early Mycenaean material is scarce (blue in Fig. 1).
3. Lithakia-Kamaroti, and most likely also Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, are examples of coastal sites which have MH-type and early Mycenaean materials (red in Fig. 1).

These three different situations could, perhaps, be interpreted in terms of chronology. However, the general prehistoric pottery covers a very long period and material in the MH tradition continued to be produced and used in the Mycenaean period.³⁶ It is therefore possible that these three situations occurred simultaneously. Indeed, with the exception of Argassi-Neratzoules, all sites also have probable Early Bronze Age pottery and Mycenaean palatial pottery, and this makes it very likely that they were contemporaneously in use in the MH and LH I–II periods. Therefore, it is better to understand these three types of sites as different modes in social and material practices in the landscape.

The Other Ionian Islands

In order to be able to identify on a meso-scale regions in which Zakynthos participated during the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean periods, we should look at similar material and social strategies in the landscape in regions close to Zakynthos. It is logical to look first to the other Ionian Islands, in particular Kephallenia and Ithaka, but also Lefkas and Meganisi. Tab. 2 lists sites with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean remains on these islands, indicating their geographical situation and the type of material found.

The majority of the settlement sites on these Ionian Islands with Middle Bronze Age material are situated somewhat away from the coast, either on hill slopes, or on ridges and hilltops. Often there is a view of the coast. With regard to the landscape setting and the presence of distinctive MH pottery, they correspond to Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules on Zakynthos. As far as the burial record is concerned, these islands differ considerably from Zakynthos in terms of burial practices, because Lefkas and Kephallenia (Oikopeda) feature burial mounds.

Also in contrast to Zakynthos, Kephallenia lacks early Mycenaean material. The earliest Mycenaean finds date to LH IIB–IIIA1 and come from the tumulus at Oikopeda on the peninsula of Paliki.³⁷ This may be different on Ithaka, where a few fragments at the settlement of Tris Langades near Stavros have been tentatively dated to LH IIB.³⁸ But here too, the bulk of the material is LH IIIA1. Tris Langades on Ithaka is interesting in the sense that it is situated not far away from the coast and does have much pottery in the MH tradition: several rims in local versions of Grey and Yellow Minyan pottery, some matt-painted pottery and a carinated kantharos.³⁹ Since the LH IIIA1 pottery occurred in the same layers as these pottery types of MH tradition, it is likely that the absence of LH I and LH II pottery is not so much due to a hiatus in occupation, but to the fact that this material was not present.

³⁵ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2009, 49–52; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2010a, 68–72.

³⁶ See e.g. Dietz 1991, 300–303.

³⁷ Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43, 47–48, 61.

³⁸ Benton – Waterhouse 1973, 4, fig. 3.20; 6, fig. 4.44; 12, fig. 6.131; Dickinson 1977, 94–95.

³⁹ Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 101–102.

Island	Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Lefkas	Skaros	Preh, MH	Settlement	Foothill
	Skaros: Family Grave S	Preh, MH II–III	Funerary	Foothill
	Nidri: Family Grave F	Preh, MH III	Funerary	Plain near coast
	Evgiros	Preh, LH IIIA1		Cave
Kephallenia	Korneli	Preh, MH	Settlement	Lower slopes of inland site
	Peratata	Preh, MH		Cave
	Krani	Preh, MH?	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
	Koulourata-Kako Langadi	Preh, MH		Cave
	Kokkolata Junction	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hilltop in plain
	Kokkolata- Kouroupata	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hillslope in plain
	Kokkolata- Kangelisses	Preh, MH–LH	Funerary	Plateau in plain
	Paliki-Oikopeda	LH II–IIIA1	Funerary	Hillslope in hills
Ithaka	Pelikata	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hilltop inland
	Stavros	Preh, MH	Settlement	Ridge near coast
	Polis Cave	Preh, MH	Settlement	Cave
	Tris Langades	Preh, MH, LH IIB–IIIA1	Settlement	Slope near coast

Tab. 2: Sites in the central Ionian Islands with MH and early Mycenaean remains (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Summing up, it can be said that in terms of material practices in the landscape, we can see clear similarities between the second mode of material practice that we distinguished on Zakynthos (Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules) and the other Ionian Islands. However, with regards to the presence of Mycenaean materials at coastal sites and the presence of tumuli as a burial practice, there are also clear differences between Zakynthos and the other Ionian Islands.

Elis and Western Achaia

The second region to compare Zakynthos with in terms of similarities in landscape and materials is the nearby coast of western Achaia and Elis on the Peloponnese. Tab. 3 lists sites with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean remains in these areas, indicating the type of material found and the geographical situation of the site.

Bearing in mind that the geography of this area has changed significantly due to erosion and sedimentation,⁴⁰ it is nevertheless interesting to look at the location of the few settlements with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean material. They are all situated on the slopes and summits of hills and in the case of Chlemoutsi,⁴¹ Patras-Pagona and Kleidi-Samikon, the hills are in the immediate vicinity of the coast. Patras-Pagona has yielded a mixture of MH IIIA and LH I pottery.⁴² Several of the published finds from this site provide parallels for material from Litha-

⁴⁰ Fouache 2006, 156–159.

⁴¹ Servais 1964, 22–25.

⁴² Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 122.

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Portes	LH I–IIA	Funerary	Inland plain
Chalandritsa-Agriapidies	LH I–II	Funerary	
Makrysia-Prophitis Ilias	MH III, LH I	Funerary	
Chlemoutsis	Preh, MH II/III	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Kleidi-Samikon	Preh, MH II/III, LH I–II	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Kleidi-Samikon	LH I–LH II	Funerary	Slope of hill near coast
Kallithea-Laganidia	LH IIA and later	Funerary	
Kakovatos	Preh, LH I–IIA	Funerary	Slope near coast
Patras-Pagona	Preh, MH III–LH I	Settlement	Slope near coast
Katarraktis-Ayios Athanasios	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	On slope inland
Katarraktis-Drakotrypa	Preh, MH	Settlement	On slope inland
Thea-Rhodista	MH III–LH I	Funerary	

Tab. 3: Sites with MH and/or early Mycenaean materials in western Achaia and Elis (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

kia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos. An example is a dipper,⁴³ of which several fragments were found at Kamaroti as well (Fig. 2h). Several sites in Elis and western Achaia therefore seem to be comparable at best with the third mode of settlement on Zakynthos, that of Lithakia-Kamaroti. However, the sites in the area of Katarraktis that are situated in the hills away from the coast and have mostly pottery in the general prehistoric or MH tradition may better be compared to Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules.

Different from Zakynthos is the fact that the majority of the sites with material from these periods in Elis and western Achaia are funerary sites (Tab. 3). Among these are at least two sites with tumuli: Portes and Chalandritsa-Agriapidies. More numerous are tholos tombs with early Mycenaean pottery, such as those at Kakovatos.⁴⁴ The LH I material that is present in the tholoi at Kakovatos in fact predates the LH IIA material from Keri at Zakynthos.

In terms of material practices in the landscape during this period, Elis and western Achaia show similar complexity to Zakynthos. A major difference to Zakynthos consists in the presence of tumuli. However, with regard to settlements, it should be noted that sites comparable to all three modes that we distinguished in Zakynthos also occur in Elis/western Achaia.

Messenia

A third region Zakynthos can be compared to is Messenia (Tab. 4). In contrast to Zakynthos, all sites with MH II–III pottery in Messenia have also yielded LH I–II materials.⁴⁵ In terms of material, these sites can be compared very well with Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos, which has also yielded MH and LH I–II materials. In fact, some of the best parallels for the pottery from Kamaroti are from Messenia. Consider, for example the LH IIA fragment with a probable ogival canopy (Fig. 2f), which closely resembles a similar sherd from Peristeria.⁴⁶

However, the landscape situation of the Messenian sites is altogether different from Lithakia-Kamaroti: most sites are situated on hills and ridges, somewhat away from the coast, resembling the situation of Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules. Another clear difference between

⁴³ Cf. Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2001, 33, pl. 2.2δ.

⁴⁴ Müller 1909, 269–328; Lolos 1987, 213–215; cf. de Vreé, this volume; Huber et al., this volume.

⁴⁵ Zavadil 2010.

⁴⁶ Lolos 1987, fig. 439 upper right.

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Malthi	MH–LH II	Settlement	Hilltop, river valley, inland
Philiatra-Stomion	Preh, MH II	Settlement	Hillslope, river valley, inland
Iklaina	Preh, MH, LH II	Settlement	Hilltop away from coast
Peristeria	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Hill slope, river valley, inland
Pylos (Epano Englianos)	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Hill top inland
Nichoria	MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Top of ridge, near the coast
Volimidia	MH III–LH I	Funerary	Inland plain
Tragana-Voroulia	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Slope of ridge, inland
Koukounara-Katarrachaki	MH–LH	Settlement	Hilltop in river valley, inland

Tab. 4: Sites with MH and early Mycenaean materials in western Messenia (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Messenia and Zakynthos is the prominent role of tumuli in the burial record of this period in Messenia.⁴⁷ Several of the tumuli appear to have been used from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age onwards.

In terms of social and material strategies in the landscape of Messenia, we cannot make the same distinctions as on Zakynthos and Elis/western Achaia. The relatively abundant early Mycenaean pottery in Messenia is also present at more remote inland sites, whereas on Zakynthos it occurs only on sites near the coast.

Macro-Regions: Aitolo-Akarnania, Epirus, Corfu, Albania and Southeastern Italy

When we zoom out to the level of macro-regions, it is more difficult to recognise material strategies in the landscape that can be compared to those on Zakynthos (Tab. 5). Along the Aitolian coast of the Corinthian Gulf are a few sites, such as Ayia Triada and Chania-Gavrolimni, which are situated on low hills near the coast and have yielded MH and early Mycenaean pottery.⁴⁸ These sites could be compared to Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos. However, it should be noted that more to the north, in Epirus, southern Albania and on Corfu, early Mycenaean materials have not been found.⁴⁹ There are many sites in this area with local handmade pottery and with local pottery of MH inspiration, mostly situated on slopes and hilltops, near river valleys and fertile plains.⁵⁰ They may be compared to Machairado-Palaiokastro on Zakynthos, which, likewise, has yielded a wide repertoire of local handmade pottery in a tradition that encompasses a wide geographical area.⁵¹

Considering the absence of early Mycenaean pottery in Epirus and Albania, the quantity of LH I–II finds in southeastern Italy is actually surprising.⁵² In addition to Mycenaean pottery with lustrous decoration, there are also vessels of MH inspiration. The imported pottery is easily distinguished from the local handmade impasto, which forms the great majority of material on all these sites. In respect of the topographical situation, it has to be noted that all settlement sites with early Mycenaean finds are situated on promontories on the coast. They could, perhaps, best be compared to Lithakia-Kamaroti.

⁴⁷ Boyd 2002, 36–46; Zavadil 2010, 158–159.

⁴⁸ For Ayia Triada (Chalkis Aitolias), see Dietz – Moschos 2006; for Chania-Gavrolimni, see Saranti 2004, 229.

⁴⁹ Wardle 1977, 156; Tartaron 2004, 154. An exception may be the Vapheio cup from a tomb in Pazhok, Albania, see Sueref 1989, 67.

⁵⁰ Tartaron 2004, 33–70.

⁵¹ Van Wijngaarden – Pieters 2017.

⁵² Jones et al. 2014, 16–18.

Island/Area	Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Aitolio-Akarnania	Chalkis Aitolias-Ayia Triada	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Low hilltop in plain near coast
	Chania-Gavrolimni	MH III–LH I	Settlement	
	Ayios Ilias	MH	Settlement	
	Thermon	LH IIA	Settlement	
Corfu	Kephali	Preh, MBA–LBA	Settlement	Cape in sea
	Ermones	Preh, MBA–LBA	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Epirus and Albania	Ephyra	MBA	Settlement	Ridge near coast
	Koulia-Grove	MBA	Settlement	Hill near lagoon
	Vouvopotamos	MBA	Settlement	Slope inland
	Xirolophos	MBA	Settlement	Hill near lagoon
Southeastern Italy (Apulia)	Manacorra	MBA, LH I–II	Cave	Cave near coast
	Molinella	LH II	Settlement	Plain near coast
	Giovinazzo, Via Marco Polo	MBA, LH I	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Giovinazzo-San Silvestro	MBA, LH I–II	Funerary	Plain away from coast
	Punta Le Terrare	LH II	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Rocavecchia	MBA, LH II	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Porto Perone	MBA, LH I–II	Settlement	Promontory in sea

Tab. 5: Sites with MBA – LH I–II materials in Aitolio-Akarnania, Corfu, Epirus, Albania and southeastern Italy (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Discussion

The basic assumption of this article was that similarities in social and material practices in the landscape point to regions where people interacted through the exchange of goods, people, knowledge, ideas and information. On different scales, the intensity of these interactions would lead to different degrees in the sharing of material culture and different practices in the landscape. In this article, these social and material practices have been explored through a very limited number of dimensions, notably the presence of specific types of ceramics, the landscape situation of sites and the occurrence of specific funerary monuments, notably tumuli.

On Zakynthos itself, the material strategies in the landscape during the MH and early Mycenaean period are not uniform. Prehistoric pottery in general is widely present in all parts of the island, but distinctive MH pottery occurs on hilltop sites somewhat away from the coasts, while a combination of MH and early Mycenaean pottery is found at coastal sites. These three modalities on the island itself overlap spatially, as is clear from the close proximity of Vasilikos-Kaloyeros and Vasilikos-Doretas. Moreover, the presence of similar types of prehistoric coarse ware pottery on the island suggest interaction among the inhabitants of these sites. Despite the differences among these sites, it seems best to consider the island itself a micro-region of interaction.

On Zakynthos, distinctive MH pottery is present on hilltop sites, somewhat away from the coast. A similar pattern of material strategies in the landscape can be seen on the Ionian Islands, in western Achaia and Elis. Nevertheless, there are also clear differences among the material record of this period on Zakynthos and these areas, in particular with regard to the presence of distinctive burial customs involving tumuli. These are absent on Zakynthos, but do occur on the Ionian Islands, western Achaia and Elis. Another important difference between Zakynthos and the other Ionian Islands is the absence of sites with early Mycenaean material on Kephallenia, Ithaka and Lefkas. In contrast, early Mycenaean material is present in western Achaia and Elis,

and, as on Zakynthos, it occurs exclusively at coastal sites. In terms of material strategies in the landscape during this period, the similarities are strongest between Zakynthos and western Achaia and Elis and we may consider this a separate region. Considering the strong similarities in materials and landscape setting and the small distances involved, we would consider calling this a micro-region.⁵³ It appears to overlap with a larger region of interaction on the meso-scale that also includes the Ionian Islands, as is indicated by the pottery of MH type.

The presence of early Mycenaean pottery exclusively at coastal sites on Zakynthos and in western Achaia and Elis is not seen in Messenia, where this type of material also occurs together with pottery of MH tradition at inland sites. Another difference is the presence of tumuli in Messenia in the burial record of this period. Interestingly, the Zakynthian early Mycenaean pottery has good parallels with regard to typo-morphology in Messenia, which suggests that exchanges of materials and information took place between Zakynthos and Messenia. However, because the material practices in the landscape are so different, we would consider the interactions between Messenia and Zakynthos as a region on a macro-scale.

The wide distribution of locally made coarse ware pottery on Zakynthos of types that are prevalent in western Greece, the southern Balkans and the Adriatic from the Early Bronze Age onwards, indicates that Zakynthos participated in the extensive networks existing in this area and in which knowledge about pottery manufacture and use was exchanged.⁵⁴ The existence of extensive sites such as Machairado-Palaiokastro, with much of this material, suggests that interactions in this macro-region continued during the MH and early Mycenaean periods. Distinctive MH and early Mycenaean pottery may have become part of the interactions in this macro-region as well. In southeastern Italy, these types of pottery have been found exclusively on coastal sites, which may well be compared to sites such as Vasilikos-Kaloyeros and Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos.

Conclusion

Whether apparent similarities and differences in material practices in the landscape are to be labelled as micro-, meso- or macro-regions in a spatially limited area is a matter of scale and definition and will always be somewhat tentative. The attempt made here to interpret the material culture of Zakynthos from the MH and early Mycenaean periods in these scalar terms, has produced some clear results. First, we have shown that the island was inhabited during these periods. Considering the difficulties in recognising MH–LH II material, especially when dealing with surface finds, we may postulate that habitation was actually more intense than currently visible. Second, the differences in material culture and landscape settings of sites from these periods on Zakynthos suggest different modes of intra-island interactions. Finally, it has become clear that Zakynthos participated in exchanges of materials and information with other areas in western Greece and beyond. The intensity of these interactions was strongest with western Achaia and Elis, and progressively less so with the other Ionian Islands, with Messenia, northwestern Greece and the Adriatic.

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⁵³ The distinction between micro- and meso-scale is difficult to objectify. The same is the case for the distinction between meso- and macro-scale.

⁵⁴ See also Van Wijngaarden – Pieters 2017.

Appendix: Catalogue of Sites Mentioned in the Text

The bibliography is not exhaustive, but presents general literature that should provide full referencing.

Area	Site	Chronology	Bibliography
Zakynthos	Vasilikos-Kaloyeros	MBA–LH I–II	Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012.
	Vasilikos-Doretos	MBA–LH	Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 43–46.
	Argassi-Neratzoules	MBA	
	Keri	LH IIA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 121.
	Planos	LH IIB	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122.
	Lithakia-Kamaroti	MBA, LBA	Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014b.
Lefkas	Skaros	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18.
	Skaros: Family Grave S	MBA II–III	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18.
	Nidri: Family Grave F	Late MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18–19.
	Evgiros	LH IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 17.
Kephallenia	Korneli	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 44.
	Peratata	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43.
	Krani	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 38.
	Koulourata-Kako Langadi	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 45.
	Kokkolata Junction	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 40–41.
	Kokkolata-Kouroupata	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 40.
	Kokkolata-Kangelisses	MBA(–LBA)	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 39.
	Paliki-Oikopeda	LH II–IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43.
Ithaka	Pelikata	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93.
	Stavros	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93.
	Polis Cave	MBA	Deoudi 2008.
	Tris Langades	MBA–LH IIB–IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93–94.
Western Achaia/ Elis	Portes	LH I–IIA	Moschos 2000.
	Chalandritsa-Agriapidies	LH I–II	Kyparisses 1932, 85.
	Makryisia-Prophitis Ilias	MH III/LH I	Boyd 2002, 191.
	Chlemoutsi	MH II/III	Servais 1964.
	Kleidi-Samikon	MH II/III, LH I–II	Boyd 2002, 186–188; Nikolentzos – Moutzouridis, this volume.
	Kallithea-Laganidia	LH IIA and later	Papadopoulos 2000.
	Kakovatos	LH I–IIB	Müller 1909, 269–328; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume; de Vreé, this volume; Huber et al., this volume.
	Patras-Pagona	MH III–LH I	Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2001.
	Katarraktis-Ayios Athanasios	MH, LH I–II	Zapheiroopoulos 1965, 172.
	Katarraktis-Drakotrypa	MH	Giannopoulos 2008, 47.
Thea-Rhodista	MH III–LH I	Giannopoulos 2008, 49.	

Messenia	Malthi	MH–LH II	Valmin 1938.
	Philiatra-Stomion	MH II	Zavadil 2010, 158.
	Iklaina	Preh, MH, LH II	Cosmopoulos, this volume.
	Peristeria	MH III–LH I	Lolos 1987, 211.
	Pylos (Epano Englianos)	MH, LH I–II	Davis – Stocker 2010, 101–106; Karapanagiotou et al., this volume; Vitale et al., this volume.
	Nichoria	MH, LH I–II	McDonald – Wilkie 1992.
	Volimidia	MH III–LH I	Boyd 2002, 138–146; Vlachopoulos, this volume.
	Tragana-Voroulia	MH III–LH I	Lolos 1987, 60–90.
Koukounara-Katarrachaki	MH–LH	Arapojanni et al. 2002, 173–174.	
Aitolo-Akarnania	Chalkis Aitolias-Ayia Triada	MH III–LH I	Dietz – Moschos 2006, 48–55.
	Chania-Gavrolimni	MH III–LH I	Saranti 2004.
	Ayios Ilias	MH	Dietz – Moschos 2006, 55.
	Thermon	LH IIA	Wardle 1972, 47–92.
Corfu	Kephali	Preh, MBA– LBA	Metallinou 2010.
	Ermones	Preh, MBA– LBA	Metallinou 2010.
Epirus and Albania	Ephyra	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 43.
	Koulia-Grove	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 49.
	Vouvopotamos	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 54.
	Xirolophos	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 57.
Southeastern Italy (Apulia)	Manacorra	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 23.
	Molinella	LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 23.
	Giovinazzo, Via Marco Polo	MBA, LH I	Jones et al. 2014, 26–27.
	Giovinazzo-San Silvestro	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 27.
	Punta Le Terrare	LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 28–29.
	Rocavecchia	MBA, LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 29.
	Porto Perone	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 31–32.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Southern and central Zakynthos with sites mentioned in the text. The research areas covered by surface survey are indicated in orange and assigned A, B and C

Fig. 2: a. Ceramic fragment of the rim of a bowl or krater from Vasilikos-Kaloyeros (ZaS05_3.17.001) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: N. Pieters); b. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Vasilikos-Doretos (ZAP10_2203.34) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Hoogzaad); c. Rim fragment of a coarse ware jar from Argassi-Neratzoules (ZAP06_0063.1.17) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); d. Matt-painted wall fragment of a closed vessel from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZaS05_251.4) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); e. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_5004.1.10) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: L. Opgenhaffen); f. Fragment of a decorated closed vessel found on the surface at Lithakia-Kamaroti (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); g. Wall fragment of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_6007.3A) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); h. Fragment of a dipper from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_8004.3.78) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas)

Tables

Tab. 1: Sites on Zakynthos with materials from the MH and early Mycenaean periods (Preh = general prehistoric pottery; MH = material of Middle Helladic tradition; LH = Late Helladic pottery). See also the catalogue in the appendix

Tab. 2: Sites in the central Ionian Islands with MH and early Mycenaean remains (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 3: Sites with MH and/or early Mycenaean materials in western Achaia and Elis (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 4: Sites with MH and early Mycenaean materials in western Messenia (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 5: Sites with MBA – LH I–II materials in Aitolo-Akarnania, Corfu, Epirus, Albania and southeastern Italy (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

MESSE

SENIA

Archaeological Investigations and Research Associated with the Construction of the New Roof at the Palace of Nestor

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Abstract: Construction of a new roof over the Main Building of the Palace of Nestor necessitated preliminary archaeological excavation in 2012–2013. The research was conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia with support from the University of Cincinnati. It was possible to explore the early history of the site for the first time since the 1960s. Here we describe two ESPA projects for the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the site, together with the highlights of our archaeological research that are particularly relevant to the early Mycenaean period.

Keywords: Palace of Nestor, infrastructure, Mycenaean, ESPA, Messenia

During the period from 2011 to 2015 the Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia (the former 38th EPKA) and the Directorate of Studies and Conduct of Technical Works in Museums and Cultural Buildings of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports carried out two major ESPA projects at the Palace of Nestor.

Until 2013, the Main Building of the palace complex was protected by a metal shelter, built by the Greek Archaeological Service in 1961 and designed by the late Charalambos Bouras (Fig. 1). The old corrugated steel roof and its 47 dexion columns were in very poor condition. The new steel roof, dedicated on 12 June 2016 is supported by only 16 solid steel columns, eight on each of its long sides.

The completion of the project had positive results for the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the Palace of Nestor.⁵ The construction of the new shelter is a milestone in the history of the site since it protects the entire Main Building of the palatial complex. During the replacement of the old shelter, all necessary archaeological research was conducted and documented. For the enhanced protection of the monument, its sensitive parts were encased within wooden boxes, its interior spaces were filled with special aggregates, and the entire Main Building was finally covered with a single, wooden floor. The new shelter with its suspended walkways allows visitors to explore the palace from above and to comprehend its innovative architectural design (Fig. 2).

New infrastructure also provides the visitors with information, refreshments, and sanitation facilities, while paying special attention to people with disabilities. Moreover, for the first time, new interactive digital applications help visitors to experience the Mycenaean past of Messenia in a unique way.

These improvements to the archaeological site ensure that the palace complex will remain protected, while maintaining its authenticity as a monument of world cultural heritage in a landscape of incomparable beauty. Now more comprehensible to visitors than ever before, the site is a highly valued element in programmes of sustainable development in Messenia.

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⁵ For details about the project, see Karapanagiotou 2016, 182; Karapanagiotou 2018, 229; Militsi-Kehaya – Kosmopoulos 2019; Karapanagiotou – Kosmopoulos 2020.



Fig. 1: Old shelter over the Palace of Nestor, looking west (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia)



Fig. 2: New shelter over the central corridor of the Palace of Nestor, June 2016, looking northwest (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



Fig. 3: Shallow concrete footer of the old shelter, looking southeast (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Each of the 16 steel columns for the new roof had to be set in bedrock at a depth of 15 m (as opposed to the original dexion columns, which were set in concrete just beneath the surface) (Fig. 3). Because of this, cultural deposits needed to be excavated and removed from surface to bedrock in the location of each column. Trenches initially 1.5×1.5 m in size were sometimes expanded in order to provide additional cultural context for finds. Those along the northeastern side of the palace were suffixed with the letter 'Z', those along the southwestern side with the letter 'B'.

Excavations for the roof were conducted from October 2012 through December 2013 by archaeologists representing the Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia, under the direction of Dimosthenis Kosmopoulos, and under the supervision of Acting Ephor of Antiquities Anna-Vassiliki Karapanagiotou (Fig. 4). A team from the University of Cincinnati, under the direction of Sharon Stocker, provided support and is currently collaborating with the Ephorate in the presentation of the results of the excavation.

In most instances Carl Blegen had already removed cultural deposits from the final phase of the palace in the areas examined for the roof. As a consequence, excavations were able to shed most light on the earlier history of the site. In general, cultural deposits were found to be deepest to the northeast and northwest of the Main Building of the palace, but, even in areas where deposits were shallower (e.g. beneath Court 88), important new information was gained.

In the remainder of this paper, we discuss a few highlights of the excavations most relevant to the early Mycenaean period, and also provide a context for the presentations of pottery and wall paintings that are to follow in subsequent chapters.

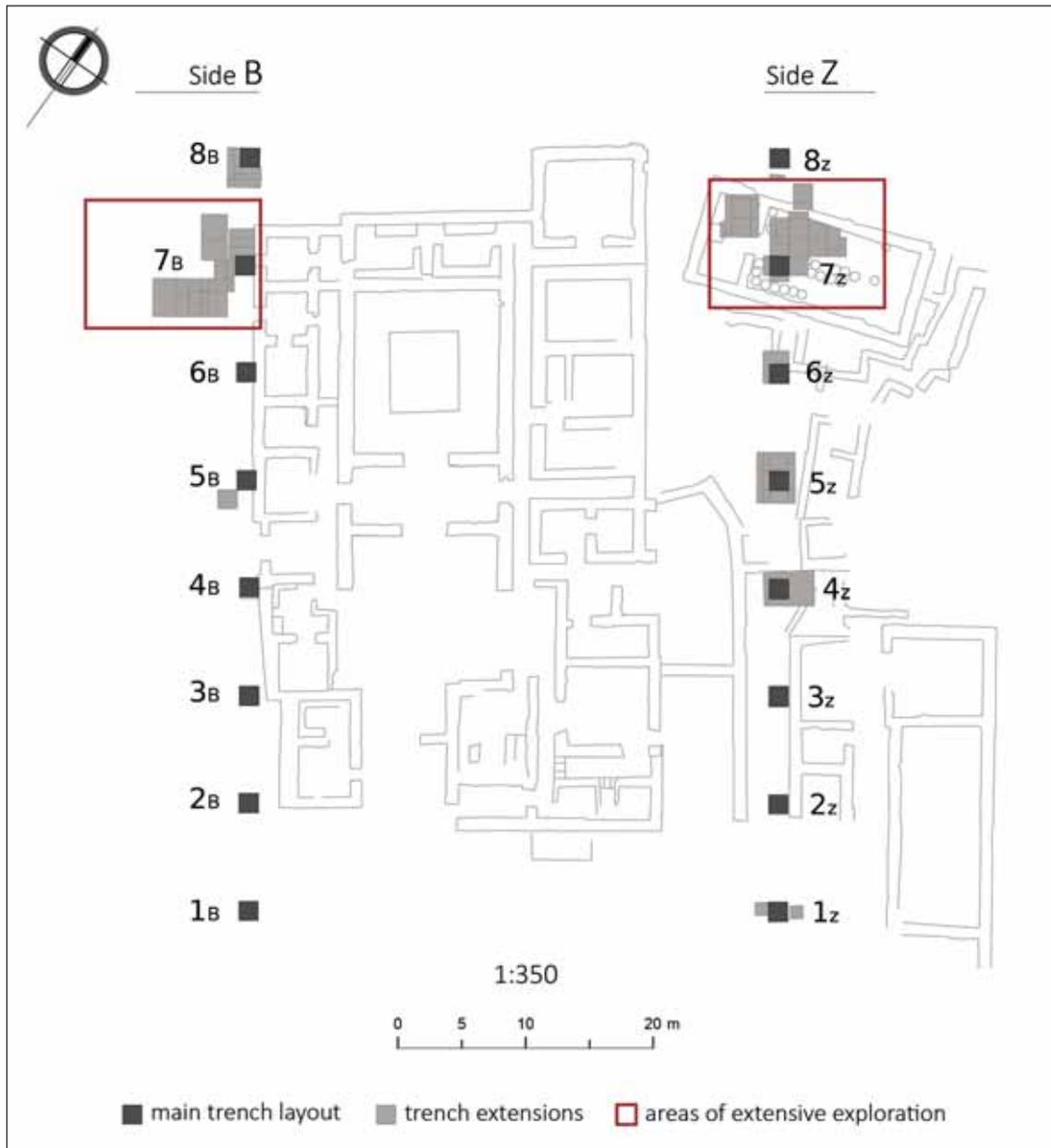


Fig. 4: Trench plan of excavations conducted in advance of the construction of the new roof, 2012–2013 (D. Nenova; Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Areas Southwest of the Main Building (Area B)

The earliest material discovered in Area B dates to the final phase of the MH period, the latest to LH IIIB/IIIC Early. In some places LH IIIA/IIIB pottery was even found on bedrock, presumably resulting from a levelling operation when Courts 58, 59, 63, and 88 were paved (Fig. 5).

Trench 2B in Court 59, however, reached MH III and LH I levels at its lowest elevations (Fig. 6). In LH IIIA a large drain, partly constructed of reused cut limestone blocks, had been set into the MH III and LH I levels. Reused blocks and slabs were employed to cover an area to the north of the drain, and MH III and LH I deposits were 'sealed' under this paving. In addition to pottery, the deposits contained fragments of painted wall plaster.

Court 63 had been part of Court 88 prior to the construction of a two-room structure of the Early Iron Age (Rooms 89 and 90). Trench 5B was excavated under this court, near the exterior wall of the Main Building. Under the pavement of the court was a segment of a wall, approximately parallel to the exterior wall of the Main Building and probably dating to LH IIIA. At a slightly lower elevation, nearer the Main Building, a basin, cut into a large sandstone block, was lined with lime plaster; a channel in the bedrock was meant to lead liquid into it. The complex dates no later than LH IIB, as do painted fragments of plaster found in the associated level amidst pieces of mudbrick.

Court 88 is a large rectangular space between the Main Building and the Southwest Building. It is wider at the northwest than at the southeast, from the anta base of Hall 64 to the court's 'boundary wall', so-called by Blegen, at the northwest. The entire court was covered with a pavement of lime plaster several centimetres thick that stretched from the Main Building to the Southwest Building.

In Trench 6B, two layers of plaster covered Court 88, one on top of the other. Both the lower and the upper floors appear to date to a time late in the life of the palace. A deposit of LH I date was found lower in the trench. Associated with it were remains of a collapsed wall, roughly parallel to the later wall of the Main Building. A U-shaped feature of degraded sandstone was associated with the collapsed wall and, around it, mudbrick, pieces of sandstone, and ash were



Fig. 5: Aerial view of Area B, looking southeast (courtesy of the Minnesota Archaeological Researches in the Western Peloponnese Project and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens)



Fig. 6: Trench 2B: drain and paved area, looking southwest (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



Fig. 7: Trench 7B and adjacent area under Court 88: plaster floors and wall with ashlar blocks. LH I–II, looking south (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

sandwiched together, along with shell and plaster. Levels that lay directly on the bedrock are of MH III/LH I date.

Near Trench 7B, it was possible to explore an area c. 35 m² in the northeastern part of Court 88 in places where the plaster paving of the court was missing or severely damaged. The depth of the deposit under the pavement of Court 88 was in no case deeper than 40 cm (Fig. 7).

The earliest deposits in this area date to the MH III/LH I transition, the earliest constructions to LH I/II.

A poorly preserved wall with ashlar blocks belonged to a building of early Mycenaean date. The wall was uncovered over a length of c. 4 m, from near the southwestern wall of the Main Building to the northeastern wall of the Southwest Building. It is c. 90 cm thick, its inner face built of much smaller stones.

A rubble wall, c. 80 cm thick, runs perpendicular to the ashlar wall and a room to the southwest of it was paved with plaster; the edges of the floor lapped up against both the wall with ashlar blocks and the wall perpendicular to it. Pottery from beneath the floor was LH I/II. A shallow bedding trench was discovered against the outer face of the wall with ashlar blocks. The latest pottery dates to LH IIA.

Areas Northeast of the Main Building (Area Z)

Excavations northeast of the Main Building in Area Z were also productive. In addition to fragments of wall paintings recovered when parts of the plaster paving of Ramp 91 were removed, stratified deposits from as early as the MH period were found elsewhere. For example, in the area of Trench 7Z a complex sequence of superimposed walls was documented. These remains offer just a taste of the deep stratigraphy still preserved and largely accessible along the northern brow of the acropolis. Here the bedrock lies nearly three metres beneath the present surface, and strata range in date from the beginning of MH III through early Mycenaean periods (Fig. 8).

Around the time of the transition between the MH period and the Late Bronze Age the acropolis was here fortified by a strong wall that ran along its brow, as Blegen already observed was the case in the early Mycenaean period (Fig. 9).⁶

Still earlier remains were found outside the fortification wall, to the northwest in 8Z. There a wall rested on bedrock. The pottery retained behind it to the southeast dates it to a middle phase of the MH period.

Finally, from 5Z a particularly rich deposit of pottery and animal bones will help to define more clearly the Messenian ceramic chronology of the early Mycenaean period (Fig. 10). There, northeast of Room 42, fallen ashlar blocks from the façade of the final palace were lifted to reveal a destruction level that seems to date to LH IIIA. Beneath that stratum a large deposit of LH I and LH II pottery had been used deliberately to fill a pit or crevice in the bedrock c. 2 m deep and 3 m in diameter. The character of finds suggests that they constitute the remains of feasting.

In summary, it is worth considering some of the things that the roof excavations have added to our knowledge of the Prepalatial site.

1. We have stratigraphical support for the important typological sequence of monumental building proposed by Michael Nelson.⁷ There can now be no doubt that cut-stone masonry of a Minoan ashlar style was in use at Pylos from the start of the LH period.
2. Perhaps even more interesting is the discovery that cut-stone blocks were already available for reuse in LH IIA – a conclusion that is of special interest in light of the reuse of cut stone in the foundations of the grave of the Griffin Warrior.⁸

⁶ See Blegen et al. 1973, 4–18.

⁷ Nelson 2017.

⁸ Davis – Stocker 2016, 630.

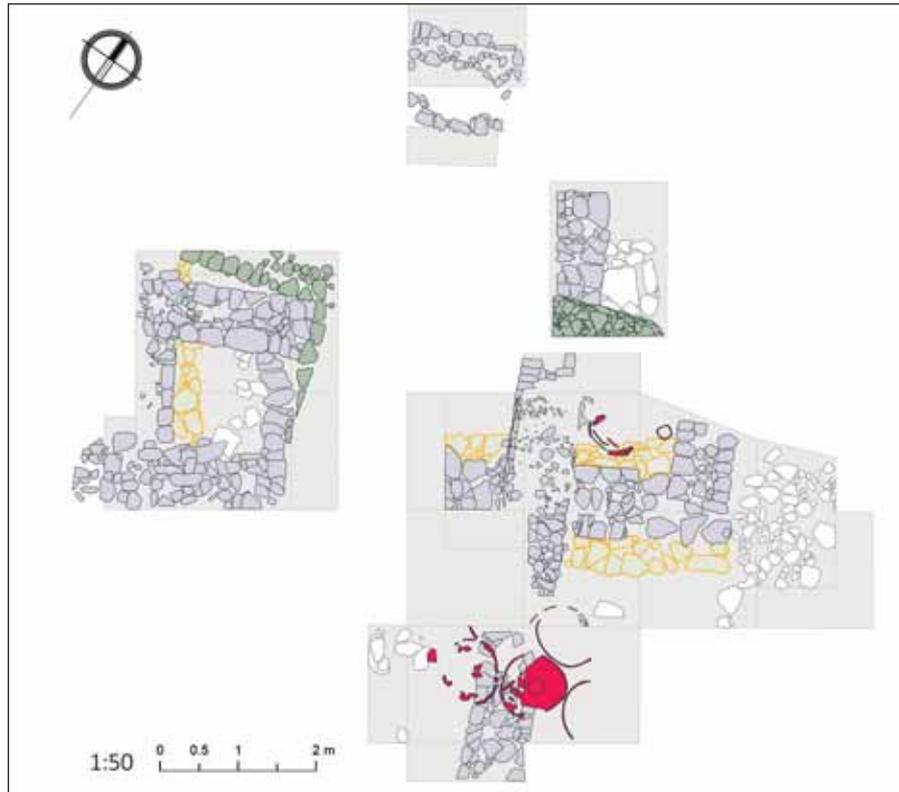


Fig. 8: Trench 7Z and Trench 8Z: Early Mycenaean walls (D. Nenova; Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

3. It is now clear for the first time that at least some buildings on the acropolis were already decorated with painted plaster in the MHIII/LH I–II period.
4. The discovery of a section of the early Mycenaean fortification wall supports Blegen's conclusion that the early Mycenaean acropolis was indeed fortified.
5. The feasting debris in Trench 5Z constitutes the earliest such deposit yet identified at Pylos.
6. Although Blegen did find stratified pre-Mycenaean deposits on the acropolis, the pottery retained from them is highly selective of what was excavated. We now have a chance to define these phases much more precisely.

Acknowledgements: The works described in this paper were conducted in the course of two European development projects:

1. Protection and Enhancement of the Archaeological Site of the Palace of Nestor on the Ano Englianos hill, Chora, Messenia (budget € 450,000).
2. Construction of a New Protective Shelter at the Palace of Nestor, Ano Englianos, Messenia (budget € 2,068,400), included in the priority axis '08-Sustainable Development and Quality of Life in Peloponnese' of the Regional Operational Programme 'Western Greece, Peloponnese and Ionian Islands 2007–2013', co-funded by the Hellenic Republic and the European Regional Development Fund.

Anna-Vassiliki Karapanagiotou directed excavations of the trenches for the new shelter and oversaw administration and support for the entire project. We thank Evangelia Militsi-Kehaya and Xenia Arapogianni for their support. We also thank Nicoletta Valakou and Elena Kountouri, successive heads of the directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, and Lina Mendoni and Maria Vlaziaki, successive General Secretaries of the Ministry of Culture.



Fig. 9: Early Mycenaean fortification wall near Trench 7Z, looking north (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



Fig. 10: Trench 5Z: LH I-II pit, looking northeast (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Old shelter over the Palace of Nestor, looking west (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia)

Fig. 2: New shelter over the central corridor of the Palace of Nestor, June 2016, looking northwest (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 3: Shallow concrete footer of the old shelter, looking southeast (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

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Fig. 9: Early Mycenaean fortification wall near Trench 7Z, looking north (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 10: Trench 5Z: LH I–II pit, looking northeast (Ephorate of Antiquities of Messenia/Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Early Mycenaean Wall Paintings from the Palace of Nestor

*Emily Catherine Egan*¹

Abstract: Excavations at Pylos by Carl Blegen and Marion Rawson produced a vast corpus of wall painting fragments belonging to the final phase of decoration at the so-called Palace of Nestor. The simultaneous discovery of deposits of painted plaster in extramural dumps and intramural construction debris, however, indicated the existence of earlier decorative programmes at the site. The date of such prior programmes has long been a subject of debate. We can now begin to resolve this issue using new information provided by the recent shelter excavations at Pylos, which brought to light painted plaster fragments in deposits of early Mycenaean date. These fragments, which feature monochrome as well as abstract and figural decoration, help to refine our understanding of the early stylistic, iconographic, and technological development of wall painting on the Greek mainland. This paper presents an overview of the newly uncovered early material and offers preliminary observations about its character in comparison with concurrent developments elsewhere in prehistoric Greece.

Keywords: Palace of Nestor, Pylos, wall painting, early Mycenaean, bird

Introduction

In the mid-twentieth century, Carl Blegen and Marion Rawson unearthed at the Palace of Nestor at Pylos a corpus of Bronze Age wall painting fragments that remains the largest excavated on the Greek mainland. Many of these fragments, recovered either in situ on the palace walls or in collapse debris, belonged to murals that decorated the edifice at the time of its destruction at the end of LH IIIB. Painting fragments were also found underlying floors, encased within rubble walls, and buried in dump deposits located around the palace's perimeter. In such contexts, these additional fragments provided clear evidence for *earlier* mural programmes at the site.

In her seminal study of the Pylos wall paintings published in 1969, Mabel Lang identified these discarded and reused fragments as victims of architectural and/or decorative renovations, which she primarily assigned to a late period in the site's history.² The fragments from the largest dump,³ located on the slope northwest of the palace, she proposed, were deposited as the result of renovations not more than a generation before the palace's demise. As evidence, Lang cited similarities in subject matter and technique between the dumped fragments and those found in the palace, as well as the character of the associated pottery, which she described as being "in every way similar to that found in the palace at the time of the destruction."⁴ The only painting fragments specifically assigned by Lang to a pre-LH IIIB phase were three pieces discarded to the southwest of the palace that she suggested came from a dump disturbed by LH IIIB foundations.⁵ Since 1969, other pieces have been singled out as early, including a fragment of a papyrus net pattern⁶ found northeast of

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² Lang 1969, 5–6, 217.

³ Lang 1969, 6, 217. She estimated some 2000–3000 painting fragments were recovered from the Northwest Slope Plaster Dump.

⁴ Lang 1969, 6.

⁵ Lang 1969, 6. The fragments identified by Lang are: 32 H sw ('Helmeted Heads'); 33 H sw ('Miniature Female Head'); and 15 N sw ('Anemones').

⁶ Lang's fragment 18 M ne ('Papyrus Net-Pattern') has recently been studied by Shaw (2010), who inferred a relatively early date based on the fragment's dump context as well as the appearance on its surface of a string-snapped

the palace, and the so-called Pylos ‘Bull Leaper,’ found in a pit below floor level in the palace Wine Magazine, for which a LH IIIA date has been proposed.⁷

Overview of the New Corpus and Fragments from LH IIIA Deposits

Today, it is possible to make more concrete observations about some of this older material, as well as to comment more generally on the long-term history of wall painting at Pylos, which may have begun as early as the late Middle Helladic period. Evidence for these new conclusions is provided by wall painting fragments recovered during the recent excavations for the new palace shelter (completed in 2016), which, as noted by my colleagues,⁸ cut through deep, well-stratified deposits not explored by Blegen and Rawson. In total, the new excavations unearthed roughly 4000 new fragments of painted plaster, which are currently undergoing study. A brief overview of this new material is provided below, focusing on fragments that were found in what have been preliminarily identified as MH III, LH I, and LH II deposits.

Before reaching the earlier phases, it should be emphasised that the majority of the new early fragments from Pylos come from LH IIIA deposits. Among these new fragments, the iconography ranges from the familiar to the unexpected. Commonplace motifs include the tooth ornament, ‘Easter-egg’ stones, and variegated rockwork including the example shown in Fig. 1 with an ancient, imprecise repair. Fragments that are more exceptional include two examples found in Trenches 17Z and 7Z, located in the area of the palace Wine Magazine.⁹ The first fragment (Fig. 2) depicts a yellow undulating area from which spring paired arcs of Egyptian blue¹⁰ dots across a white ground, while the other (Fig. 3) features a small white and tan bird, likely a duck, in mid-flight on a light blue ground beneath a tooth ornament border. The bird, measuring only 3.5 cm from beak to tail, is rendered in miniature scale. The light blue background, found on many new fragments, is equally characteristic of discarded paintings found by Blegen and Rawson, including the well-known ‘White Goddess,’ from the Northwest Slope Dump, and the ‘Archer’, discovered outside Room 32.¹¹ Indeed, the use of light blue grounds may be considered a general feature of early painting at Pylos, which favoured yellow, brown, red, and purple grounds in its final decorative programme. The last preference is best illustrated by the recently reconstructed ‘Naval Scene’ from Hall 64, which may be an updated version of an outmoded ship scene with blue ground, pieces of which were found discarded in and around the palace.¹²

Both of the new LH IIIA painting fragments also possess Cycladic features. The dotted ground of the fragment in Fig. 2 is reminiscent of the rippling sea depicted in the background of the LC I ‘Flying Fish Fresco’ from Phylakopi,¹³ while the colouring and shape of the bird on the fragment in Fig. 3 finds parallels in birds from Akrotiri, including the ducks in the life-size ‘Reed Fresco’ from Xeste 3,¹⁴ and the geese in the miniature ‘Landscape Fresco’ from the West House.¹⁵

artist’s grid, a tool employed by Minoan artisans. For further discussion of the use of the artist’s grid at Pylos, see Egan 2015 and Egan 2016.

⁷ A LH IIIA date was tentatively assigned to this fragment (36 H 105) by Immerwahr 1990, 196, and echoed by Younger 1995, 531. Lang 1969, 77, also identified the fragment as early, noting: “The close similarity with the Taureador Fresco at Knossos in both subject and technique makes it likely that this is one of the earliest frescoes thus found at Pylos,” but she does not specify a pre-LH IIIB date.

⁸ See Karapanagiotou et al., this volume, and Vitale et al., this volume.

⁹ For the precise locations of these and other trenches, see the excavation map in Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

¹⁰ Infrared photography was used to test for the use of Egyptian blue pigment. Tests on this and other Pylos fragments (see below) were undertaken in 2014 by Jennifer and Arthur Stephens.

¹¹ Discussion of the ‘White Goddess’ (49 H nws) can be found in Lang 1969, 83–85. A detailed analysis of the Pylos ‘Archer’, which was discovered but not published by Blegen and Rawson, is provided in Brecolouaki et al. 2008.

¹² For discussion of the Hall 64 ‘Naval Scene’ and earlier ‘Blue-Ground Ship’ see Brecolouaki et al. 2015b. For the original identification of the ‘blue-ground’ fragments (19 M ne) as belonging to a ship see Shaw 2001.

¹³ Morgan 2007, 381–383, pls. 44–46.

¹⁴ Vlachopoulos 2000; Vlachopoulos 2008, 493, fig. 41.23–24.

¹⁵ Morgan 1988, 63–65.



Fig. 1: Variegated rockwork with ancient repair, PNR fragment 18Z-015-P005 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

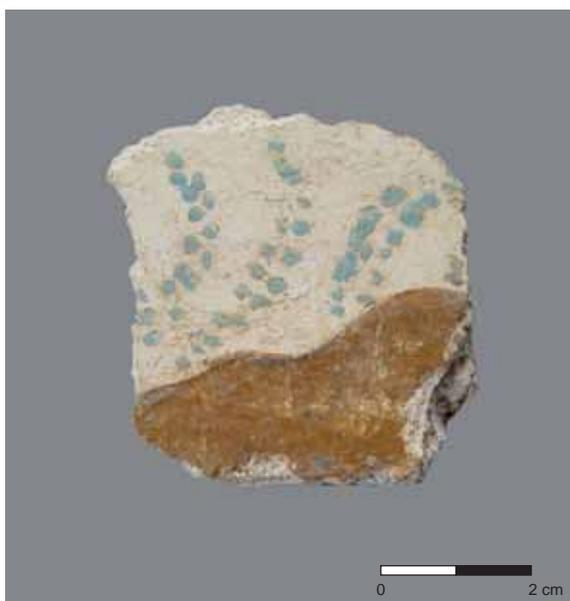


Fig. 2: Arcs of dots, PNR fragment 17Z-014-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



Fig. 3: Flying 'duck', PNR fragments 07Z-019-P001 and 07Z-021-P004 (joined) (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

A connection with Akrotiri is especially interesting given the existence of other iconographic affinities between paintings at this site and those from Pylos. Parallels are evident, for example, between the ships in the West House miniature 'Flotilla Fresco' and those reconstructed in the Hall 64 'Naval Scene.'¹⁶ Correspondences are also apparent between the reeds and red dragonflies depicted in the Xeste 3 'Reed Fresco' and on a mural fragment incorporated into a chunk of fallen floor plaster found in Pylos Room 39.¹⁷

¹⁶ Brecoulaki et al. 2015b.

¹⁷ Lang 1969, 5, 204; Vlachopoulos 2000. A shared iconography between the two paintings was observed by Vlachopoulos some years ago during a visit to the storerooms of the Chora Museum, and the fragment is currently being studied for publication by Hariclia Brecoulaki and the author.



Fig. 4: 'Pinwheel', PNR fragment group 05Z-044-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



Fig. 5: Stone pattern, PNR fragment 05Z-021-P002 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fragments from LH II Deposits

In significant LH II (A and B) deposits, wall painting fragments were recovered from Trenches 5Z, 52Z, and 53Z. These fragments, currently numbering 108 in total, are largely monochrome and bichrome (with light blue, yellow, red, black, and/or white paint), and some examples preserve parts of representational motifs. The most remarkable pieces come from the LH IIB contexts discussed by Vitale, Stocker, and Malapani in this volume. The first fragment group (Fig. 4), features part of a 'pinwheel' motif executed in Egyptian blue, with black edging, on a white ground. The larger design, which for the moment remains elusive, is likely geometric rather than figural, while the thin, slightly curved profile of the fragment group may suggest that it belonged to the rim of a table of offerings rather than a wall painting. The second fragment (Fig. 5) depicts wavy red lines and circles on a mottled cream and grey ground that may represent part of a stone pattern damaged by exposure to fire.

The third and fourth fragments feature figural elements. One fragment may depict part of the upper body and raised arm of a purple-grey argonaut, a common theme on paintings found inside the Palace of Nestor as well as in the surrounding dumps.¹⁸ The second fragment, shown in Fig. 6, the decoration of which is far better preserved, depicts what is likely the upper portion of a large papyrus-lotus blossom with parallel bands of yellow, Egyptian blue, and white paint crossed by thin black wavy lines and a pointed blue petal or sepal. Along the upper edge of the blossom is a wave pattern applied in a thick white impasto – a technique frequently utilised at Pylos.¹⁹ While the papyrus-lotus motif is familiar from other Aegean murals, appearing, for example, in the LH IIB 'S-spiral' borders from Tiryns²⁰ and Thebes,²¹ the addition of the white wave is unique to the Pylian example. If not simply decorative, it may allude to the watery environment of the two represented plants.

Fragments from MH III and LH I Deposits

Earlier still, a small handful of wall painting fragments from MH III and LH I deposits were unearthed in Trenches 2B and 19Z. These fragments (including four from pure MH III deposits, 20 from pure LH I deposits, and 23 from mixed MH III/LH I deposits), retain very few recogni-

¹⁸ For discussion of the use of the argonaut motif in Pylian wall painting, see Egan – Brecoulaki 2015.

¹⁹ See, for example, the use of white 'impasto' on the body of the Pylos 'Archer' (Brecoulaki et al. 2008, 386).

²⁰ Rodenwaldt 1912, 47–51, pl. 7.

²¹ Aravantinos – Fappas 2015, 337, fig. 16.

sable iconographic details. It is notable, however, that within this early corpus two fragments from MH III²² and one from LH I²³ preserve light blue surfaces without an undercoat of grey. This layering technique, which first appears in LC I paintings from Ayia Irini on Keos, becomes widely used for the production of Egyptian blue grounds at many mainland sites, including Pylos and Orchomenos, by the late Mycenaean period.²⁴ Among the newly uncovered fragments from Pylos, the use of the layered technique appears on a fragment found in a LH IIIA1 deposit in Trench 17Z.²⁵

From this earliest material, the only recognizable iconographic motif appears on a fragment from a mixed MH III/LH I deposit in Trench 2B, shown in Fig. 7, which preserves part of a ring rosette. The inner and outer borders of the rosette's blue ring are incised, and tiny traces of two black stamen terminals are visible along its interior edge. In the area of the white centre, part of a red dot rosette is preserved. A preliminary reconstruction of the complete rosette is shown in Fig. 8. Typically, this motif appears as a repeating element in border friezes, and is known on the mainland from LH IIIB contexts at Thebes,²⁶ Glas,²⁷ and Tiryns.²⁸ It appears earlier, however, on Crete in Final Palatial period wall paintings, for example as a border element for the LM IIIA2 'Great Procession' and 'Woman and an Altar' friezes at Ayia Triada²⁹ and at Knossos, as part of the chest ornamentation on one of the LM II/IIIA 'Wingless Griffins' from the Throne Room.³⁰ The motif also appears in Neopalatial Minoan paintings, including a fragmentary MM IIIB 'Shrine Façade' recovered from the lower cists in West Magazine XIII at Knossos.³¹ Given the



Fig. 6: 'Papyrus-lotus', PNR fragment 53Z-016-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

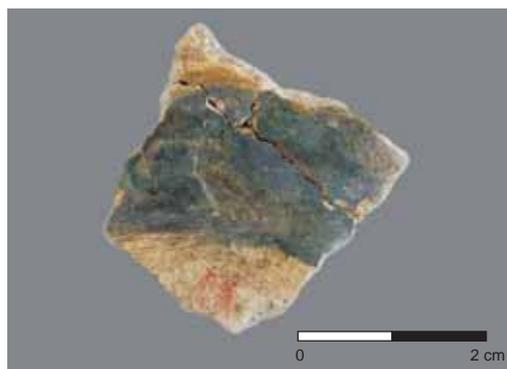


Fig. 7: Ring rosette, PNR fragment 02B-36-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

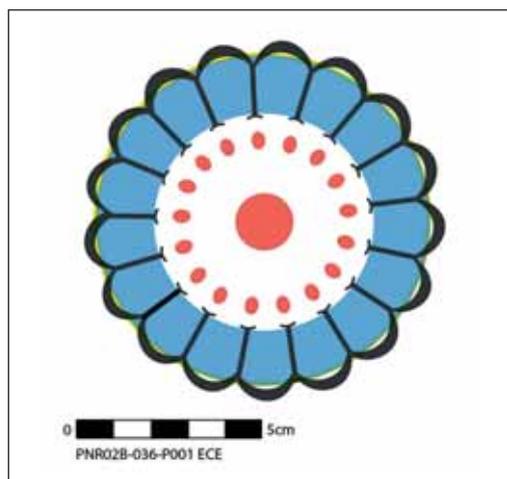


Fig. 8: Preliminary reconstruction based on PNR fragment 02B-36-P001 (drawing by the author; Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

²² Fragments PNR02B-041-P001 and PNR02B-42-P001.

²³ Fragment PNR55Z-024-P001.

²⁴ For the use of a grey undercoat beneath blue pigment in murals from Keos and Orchomenos, see Brysbaert 2008, 126, who refers to the coating as a 'black intonaco.' For discussion of the use of a grey undercoat in Pylian LH paintings see Brecoulaki et al. 2008, 381.

²⁵ Fragment PNR17Z-014-P002.

²⁶ Aravantinos – Fappas 2015, 337–339, fig. 16.

²⁷ Boulotis 2015, 385–389, figs. 14–16.

²⁸ Rodenwaldt 1912, pl. 8.

²⁹ Privitera 2015, 73–74, figs. 2–3.

³⁰ Evans 1935, 910–911, fig. 884, pl. 32.

³¹ Cameron – Hood 1967, pl. 5, fig. 1. For a confirmation of Evans' MM IIIB dating, see Hood 2005, 65. Immerwahr 1990, 173, Kn No. 18, suggests a date of MM IIIB or later based on Cameron's proposal of LH II.

MH III/LH I context of the Pylos fragment, we can now suggest that the ring rosette appeared in mainland painting much earlier than the late Mycenaean period, and that it perhaps came first from Crete to Messenia before spreading to Boiotia and the Argolid.

The Bigger Picture

Based on the evidence presented above, it is clear that the Pylian wall painting tradition began well before LH IIIB. It is also clear that it began before LH IIIA, a period for which other mainland painting programmes are already attested, for example, at Thebes.³² Prior to LH IIIA, however, the evidence has been tremendously thin – restricted to two LH IIA fragments with floral decoration from the East Lobby at Mycenae, recently re-dated by French and Shelton.³³ At the very least, the new fragments from stratified LH II deposits at Pylos now indicate that wall painting was practised outside of the Argolid at this time.

Even more remarkable, however, is the presence at Pylos of fragments in good MH III and LH I deposits, which confirm that the tradition of wall painting *predated* LH IIA on the mainland and suggest that its origins may have been contemporary with (rather than subsequent to) the rise of Neopalatial painting on Crete and the Cycladic islands. That these earliest paintings appear at Pylos and borrow from the Minoan iconographic repertoire is perhaps unsurprising given the site's well-known adoption of Cretan motifs in the thirteenth century BC.³⁴ That such a cultural link could have been forged centuries earlier, however, is more unexpected, and promises, with continued investigation, to shed light on the development of the Mycenaean canon and to elucidate more clearly the relationship between Crete, the islands, and mainland Greece in the mid-second millennium BC.

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³² Reusch 1956, 41–47, discussing the site's LH IIIA 'Frauenfries'.

³³ French – Shelton 2005, 176–177. While early wall paintings have been reported from Tiryns (Müller 1930, 178; Kilian 1987, 213) and Nichoria (McDonald – Wilkie 1992, 764; Jones 2005, 210), their dates remain unsubstantiated. For the Tiryns fragments, see also the discussion in Chapin 2014, 40–41.

³⁴ A well-known example is the wingless griffin motif, which appears in the throne rooms of the palaces at Knossos and Pylos. See discussion in Lang 1969, 27, 101.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Variegated rockwork with ancient repair, PNR fragment 18Z-015-P005 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 2: Arcs of dots, PNR fragment 17Z-014-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 3: Flying ‘duck’, PNR fragments 07Z-019-P001 and 07Z-021-P004 (joined) (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 4: ‘Pinwheel’, PNR fragment group 05Z-044-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 5: Stone pattern, PNR fragment 05Z-021-P002 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 6: ‘Papyrus-lotus’, PNR fragment 53Z-016-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 7: Ring rosette, PNR fragment 02B-36-P001 (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 8: Preliminary reconstruction based on PNR fragment 02B-36-P001 (drawing by the author; Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

A Late Helladic IIB Pottery Deposit from the Ano Englianos Ridge at Pylos in Western Messenia

*Salvatore Vitale*¹ – *Sharon R. Stocker*² – *Evangelia Malapani*³

Abstract: This paper presents the results of the preliminary study of a recently excavated LH IIB pottery assemblage from the Ano Englianos ridge at Pylos in western Messenia. The deposit comes from Trench 5Z and its six extensions, situated northeast of Carl Blegen's Main Building, and was uncovered during the archaeological investigations associated with the construction of the new roof over the Palace of Nestor. The material fills a gap in the local sequence and reveals significant information on pottery consumption trends at Pylos during the crucial transition from the early to the late formative stage of Mycenaean palatial society. Specifically, our analysis suggests that the ceramics from the 5Z deposit may represent the remains from feasting activities, which occurred during a late stage of LH IIB, and highlights the importance of Messenian and Minoan cultural traditions in the gradual formation process of Mycenaean Pylos. If corroborated through future research, these conclusions raise the possibility that LH IIB may have been a key phase for the elaboration and performance of those feasting practices, which constitute a distinctive feature of the Pylian social space during the final Mycenaean Palatial period.

Keywords: Mycenaean Pylos, cultural formation processes, feasting activities, ceramic analysis, relative chronology

This paper presents the results of the preliminary study of a recently excavated LH IIB pottery deposit from the Ano Englianos ridge at Pylos in western Messenia. This context was uncovered during the archaeological investigations associated with the construction of the new roof over the Palace of Nestor.⁴ More specifically, the assemblage comes from Trench 5Z and its six extensions (Fig. 1), located only a few metres northeast of Rooms 33 and 34 of the so-called Main Building unearthed during Carl Blegen's excavations at the site.⁵

The formation processes of the cultural deposits from Trench 5Z are currently still under study and, for this reason, only a few basic data can be provided here. The LH IIB assemblage that constitutes the focus of this contribution is the latest component of a LH IIB horizon, which is stratified below LH IIIA1 levels and above fills dating to LH I and LH IIA. These LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits are ceramically pure, except for two intrusive sherds from the uppermost levels in Extension 3 (53Z; Fig. 1). These fragments date to the post-Bronze Age period and at the moment the reason for their presence remains unclear.

The LH IIB deposit discussed here may represent the filling of a pit or a natural depression. This context is of key importance for our understanding of local ceramic developments for two reasons. First, these materials fill a gap in the local sequence, as LH IIB pottery from Pylos was previously known mostly from tombs.⁶ Second, the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z reveals a significant amount of new information on pottery consumption trends and cultural trajectories in the area of Pylos at the crucial transition from the early to the late formative stage of Mycenaean palatial society.⁷

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⁴ See Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

⁵ Blegen – Rawson 1966, 43–235. For the exact location, see Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

⁶ Blegen et al. 1973, 175, 196, 201, 205, figs. 234.16, 249.1, 250.8, 260.12; RMDP, 308, 324, fig. 108.

⁷ See Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Davis – Stocker 2018.

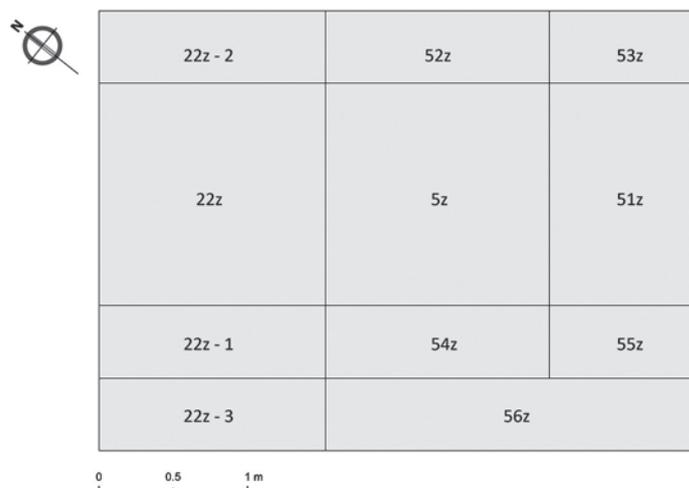


Fig. 1: Excavation grid showing the location of Trench 5Z and all extensions, 51Z to 56Z (D. Nenova, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

The presentation of the evidence is subdivided into three sections, which focus on the following subjects: (a) classification and technology; (b) function and typology; and (c) discussion and concluding remarks. The quantitative information provided in the following sections includes a representative sample of the whole assemblage, namely the finds from Extension 3, which currently offers the clearest stratigraphic sequence. These data reflect similar trends to those that characterise the entire deposit.

S. V. – S. R. S. – E. M.

Classification and Technology

Based on macroscopic analysis, the vast majority of the early Late Bronze Age materials from Trench 5Z were produced locally (over 98% in the representative sample from Extension 3). This element provides a great opportunity to assess the ceramic assemblage of Pylos in terms of fabric groups, decorative treatments, class distribution, and manufacturing techniques.

In terms of fabrics, the materials from the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z have been broken down into two broad groups, respectively termed ‘fine’ and ‘coarse’. Fine vessels are characterised by the occurrence of non-plastic inclusions no larger than 2 mm, a ‘fine’ to ‘medium’ density of non-plastic inclusions in the paste (1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix), and a well- to moderately sorted texture (Fig. 2.1–11). On the other hand, coarse vessels are typified by non-plastic inclusions larger than 2 mm, a ‘medium’ to ‘very coarse’ density of non-plastic inclusions in the paste (7–50% ratio of inclusions to matrix), and a moderately to poorly sorted texture (Fig. 2.12–14). Both groups are usually soft to medium in terms of hardness.⁸

When fabrics and decorative treatments are combined, the pottery from the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z can be subdivided into three broad groups (Tab. 1): Fine Painted, Fine Plain, and Coarse Plain ceramics. The terms ‘painted’ and ‘plain’ correspond to a large extent to the definitions provided by Oliver Dickinson for the LH I–II materials from Nichoria.⁹ The only difference is that, in addition to unpainted pottery, in our system the word ‘plain’ also designates

⁸ For a description of the methodology for fabric analysis, see Moody et al. 2003; Vitale et al. 2017, 255–260, chapter by J. E. Morrison and S. Vitale. Future macroscopic fabric analysis at Pylos will certainly result in further subdivisions of these two broad groups. This is especially true for coarse pottery, which appears to contain a wide range of subgroups.

⁹ Dickinson 1992, 472.

	Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	26	2.0%
Fine Plain	967	74.8%
Coarse Plain	300	23.2%
Total	1293	100.0%

Tab. 1: Distribution of pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	26	2.6%
Fine Plain	967	97.4%
Total	993	100.0%

Tab. 2: Distribution of fine pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
Matt-Painted	Vessel Count	1	4	8
	%	3.8%	22.2%	44.5%
Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated	Vessel Count	24	9	6
	%	92.3%	50.0%	33.3%
Minoanising Painted	Vessel Count	–	4	4
	%	–	22.2%	22.2%
Minoan Painted Imports	Vessel Count	1	1	–
	%	3.8%	5.6%	–
Total	Vessel Count	26	18	18
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Levels 13–20; ** Levels 21–23; *** Levels 24–25

Tab. 3: Distribution of Fine Painted pottery classes in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

those vessels, the exterior surface of which was originally entirely covered by a thin wash layer. These specimens, which roughly match Dickinson's "washy coated" category, are not particularly common and are extremely difficult to separate from one of our two main subgroups of plain pottery (see below) because of the poor preservation of vessel surfaces. For these reasons, dividing 'washy coated' from plain pottery would be, in our case, not only arbitrary for the assessment of individual sherds, but also misleading from a statistical viewpoint.

Fine Painted ceramics are uncommon in the 5Z deposit. In the sample from Extension 3, they represent 2.0% of the entire assemblage and 2.6% of the fine pottery fraction (Tabs. 1–2). Within Fine Painted ceramics, Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery is the most prominent component, while other classes, such as matt-painted pottery and imported Minoan pottery appear on a limited scale (Tab. 3).

Within the Fine Plain pottery group, the most common classes are Fine Pale (FP; Fig. 2.3–7) and Fine Dark (FD; Fig. 2.8–11) ceramics (Tabs. 4–6). Besides unpainted vessels, FD ceramics also include specimens that would have been labelled as "washy coated" by Dickinson at Nichoria (see above; Fig. 2.9–11). In addition to the colour distinction, which reflects differences in both fabrics and firing conditions, FP and FD ceramics are characterised by several other discrepancies (Tab. 5).

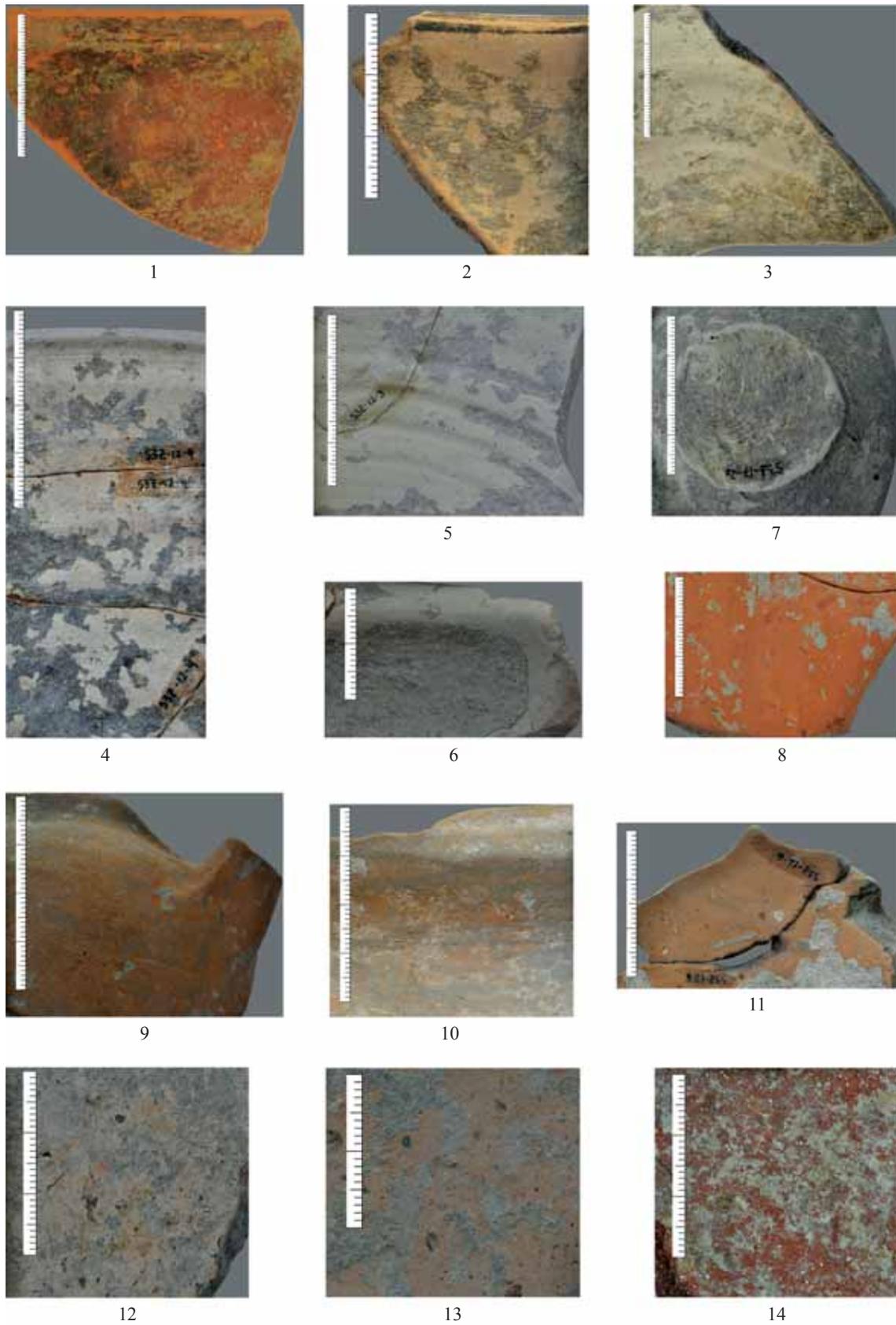


Fig. 2: Fabric and manufacturing details of the vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fine Pale	FP	Fine Plain
Fine Dark	FD	
Yellow Minyan	YM	
Yellow Slipped	YS	
Dark Burnished	DB	
Coarse Unburnished	CUB	Coarse Plain
Coarse Burnished	CB	
Coarse Red Micaceous (Possible Kytheran Imports)	CRM	

Tab. 4: Abbreviations for Fine Plain and Coarse Plain pottery classes from Pylos

	Colour Range (From Lighter to Darker Ends)		Size of Non-Plastic Inclusions	Density of Non-Plastic Inclusions	Texture	Hardness	Forming Technique Preferences	Typological Range
FP	Pink to Very Pale Brown	7.5YR 7.5/3 to 10YR 7.5/4	Fine ≤ 2 mm	Fine to Medium: 1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix	Well	Soft to Medium (usually harder than FD)	Coil-built and Wheel Fashioned + Wheel-Turned	Minoan + Mycenaean
	Pale Yellow to Light Grey	2.5Y 8/3 to 5Y 7.5/2		But mostly Medium-Fine: 2–5% ratio of inclusions to matrix				
FD	Light Red to Reddish Yellow	2.5YR 6.5/8 to 5YR 6.5/8 (but more orange)	Fine ≤ 2 mm	Fine to Medium: 1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix	Well to Moderate	Soft to Medium (usually softer than FP)	Fully Handmade + Coil-built and Wheel Fashioned + Wheel-Turned	Local + Minoan + Mycenaean
	Reddish Yellow/Strong Brown to Grey	7.5YR 5.5/6 to Gley 1 5.5/N						

Tab. 5: Diagnostic features of FP and FD pottery classes from Pylos

FP ceramics have a better texture and are harder than FD ceramics. The majority of FP vessels are coil-built and wheel-fashioned or wheel-turned (Fig. 2.3–7), while FD vessels (Fig. 2.8–11) can be fully handmade, coil-built and wheel-fashioned, or wheel-turned.¹⁰ Finally, FP pottery

¹⁰ For the terminology, see Courty – Roux 1995; Choleva 2012. However, for vessels showing evidence of wheel marks but no obvious traces of hand-building techniques, the authors prefer the more neutral term ‘wheel-turned’ to the term ‘wheel-thrown’. Traces of hand-building techniques may be intentionally removed by the potter. For this reason, based solely on macroscopic analysis, it is not possible to establish with certainty if the dearth of these technological marks implies that a given vase was actually ‘wheel-thrown’ or ‘coil-built and wheel-fashioned,’ although the latter possibility seems more likely.

prominently if not exclusively includes shapes of Minoan and Mycenaean origin,¹¹ while FD pottery includes shapes of Minoan and Mycenaean origin, as well as shapes that are connected with MH local traditions. A link with pre-Mycenaean local traditions also characterises the other two Fine Plain classes represented in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z, i.e. Yellow Minyan (YM) and Yellow Slipped (YS) ceramics. In contrast with FD pottery, however, YM and YS ceramics are attested in very limited quantities (Tabs. 4, 6).¹²

Within the Coarse Plain pottery group (Tabs. 4, 7), three classes were defined: Coarse Unburnished (CUB; Fig. 2.12–13), Coarse Burnished (CB), and Coarse Red Micaceous (CRM; Fig. 2.14). CUB pottery is significantly more widespread than CB pottery. The numbers presented in this study, however, are biased by the poor preservation of vessel surfaces, a factor that significantly affects the proportions and contributes to the overrepresentation of the former over the latter. CRM pottery is an imported class (Fig. 2.14), possibly from the island of Kythera, and it is attested in a limited quantity.¹³

A comparison with the lower levels of Trench 5Z indicates that the LH IIB assemblage described above is characterised by four significant changes from the previous phases (Tabs. 3, 8–9). First, during LH I and LH IIA, Fine Painted pottery is respectively roughly five and three times more common than in LH IIB. Second, there is a consistent decrease in FD ceramics from LH I to LH IIB and a rapid growth of FP ceramics from LH IIA to LH IIB. Third, while matt-painted and Minoanising painted vessels were a significant component of the local assemblage during LH I and LH IIA, they either disappear or become residual at Pylos during LH IIB. Fourth, the gradual decrease in these two decorated classes is accompanied by a consistent increase in Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery.

The presence of Minoanising painted and matt-painted vessels during LH I and LH IIA can be considered as a continuation of earlier components of the Pylian pottery assemblage into the early Late Bronze Age period, as both classes are represented in MH contexts at the site.¹⁴ Obviously, while the former reflects Cretan cultural influence, the latter is connected to broader mainland potting traditions. In terms of forming technique, the shift from matt-painted to Mycenaean lustrous decorated pottery as the most common decorated ceramic class (Tab. 3) has similar implications as that from FD to FP in the Fine Plain fraction. In fact, while matt-painted pottery is, in the majority of cases, fully handmade, Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery is mostly coil-built and wheel-fashioned or wheel-turned (Fig. 2.1–2).

S. V.

¹¹ FP pottery is the dominant class in the Pylian assemblage during the final phases of the Palace of Nestor and describes the thousands of tableware vessels stored in ‘Pantries’ 18–22 (Blegen – Rawson 1966, 119–134, 350–418). The materials from these rooms have recently been re-studied by Julie Hruby, based on an ‘indigenous’ or ‘emic’ typological approach (Hruby 2006; Hruby 2010; Hruby 2011; Hruby 2013; Hruby 2014). Hruby’s approach has great benefits for understanding the function of the assemblage from the Pantries in the wider context of Pylian ancient society. Her methodology, however, requires a large, mostly contemporaneous, and well-preserved body of materials, possibly supplemented by the evidence provided by written sources (see Hruby 2010, 197–198). These ideal contextual conditions, unfortunately, do not apply to the materials from Trench 5Z and for this reason a more traditional ‘etic’ approach is utilised in the present study.

¹² For pre-Mycenaean pottery traditions in the broader area of the Palace of Nestor see Stocker 2003, 360–401, figs. 15–26; Davis – Stocker 2010, 103–104; Stocker – Davis 2014, 242–243; Davis – Stocker 2015.

¹³ Kiriati 2010 (with previous bibliography). Possible Kytheran imports manufactured in fabrics similar to that of CRM vessels have been reported from many southern Peloponnesian sites, such as Nichoria, the Menelaion, Ayios Stephanos, and Ayios Vasileios (Rutter – Rutter 1976, 58, no. 972, fig. 32; Dickinson 1992, 480, 525–527, nos. P3177, P3224, P3274, figs. 9.5, 9.7, 9.10; Zerner 2008, 206–208; Catling 2009, 438–439, no. AB81, fig. 259; Kardamaki 2017, 103–104, figs. 4.36, 7.116–118).

¹⁴ Davis – Stocker 2010; Stocker – Davis 2014, 242–243; Davis – Stocker 2016, 636.

Function and Typology

The largest component of the LH IIB ceramic assemblage from Trench 5Z consists of fine tableware (Tab. 10). Within this category, eating/drinking/mixing vessels represent 85.8% of recognised shapes from Extension 3 (Tab. 11). This exceptionally high number is partially due to the significant proportion of unidentifiable sherds caused by the poor preservation of vessel surfaces (Tab. 12). Nevertheless, it demonstrates that eating/drinking/mixing vessels were a prominent component of the original assemblage.

The most common eating/drinking shape is the goblet (Tabs. 13–14). Fine Painted goblets can be patterned (FS 254; Fig. 3.1–3), linear (FS 263/270; Fig. 3.4), or monochrome (FS 263/270; Fig. 2.1; Fig. 3.5). Attested motifs include rock pattern (FM 32; Fig. 3.1–2) and ogival canopy (FM 13; Fig. 3.3). The so-called Ephyraean goblet is absent. This fact is not surprising, as this type is currently not attested at Pylos and is generally uncommon in the southern Peloponnese, where it occurs on a low scale at Kakovatos, Iklaina, Nichoria, and the Menelaion and is altogether missing at Ayios Stephanos and Ayios Vasileios.¹⁵ The majority of Fine Plain goblets (Tab. 14) are manufactured in the FP class (Fig. 3.6–9) and consist of rim-handled and high-swung-handled specimens that compare well with Mycenaean standard types (FS 263/270). These vessels occur in a wide range of dimensions, including oversized specimens (Fig. 3.7), which were presumably used for the shared consumption of alcoholic substances and/or for mixing purposes as small kraters. FD goblets are also well-represented. Some specimens are similar to Mycenaean standard types (FS 263/270; Fig. 3.10–12). One of the FD goblets from Extension 3, on the other hand, has the handle attached on the shoulder, rather than on the rim (FS 268; Fig. 3.13). This type has parallels at Nichoria, Malthi, and Iklaina and thus may reflect Messenian preferences.¹⁶

Another common drinking vessel in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is the conical cup (Tab. 14; FS 204), a shape with a long history on Minoan Crete (Fig. 4.1–7).¹⁷ The conical cups from Trench 5Z occur in a variety of subtypes and dimensions, which also include oversized specimens. Of the 59 conical cups identified in the materials from Extension 3, 57 are manufactured in the FP class, while only two are classified as FD (Tab. 14).

Although significantly less common than goblets and conical cups, the occurrence of one-handled kylikes with a rounded (Fig. 4.8) or carinated (FS 267; Fig. 4.9) bowl and two-handled conical bowls is also worth mentioning (Tab. 14). One-handled kylikes are uncommon before LH IIIA1 and thus represent the most advanced feature of the LH IIB assemblage from Trench 5Z in terms of both function and style.¹⁸ The two-handled conical bowl is a Pylian shape. The body profile resembles that of Mycenaean basins, but the size is intermediate between that of

¹⁵ For Kakovatos, see the papers of Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, de Vreé and Huber et al., this volume. For Iklaina, see Cosmopoulos 2018, 34, pl. 65. For Nichoria, see Dickinson 1992, 482–484, 526, nos. P3235–P3236; 528, no. P3326; 532–533, nos. P3482, P3512, P3536, figs. 9.11, 9.23, pls. 9.17, 9.19, 9.40, 9.43, 9.48. For the Menelaion, see Catling 2009, 96, 102–103, 109, 121, 123, 127, 130, 133, 159, 167, 209, 344, nos. II11, VII15–16, AB7–9, 12, 14, 16, 41, NS38–39, 41, 43, NW4, PD4, I7, PH17, ST40, WE5, WN39, WS35, figs. 107, 122, 124, 135, 161, 165, 173, 178, 183, 206, 220, 254–255. For Ayios Stephanos, see RMDP, 261. For Ayios Vasileios, see Kardamaki 2017, 108; Vasilogamvrou et al., this volume.

¹⁶ Valmin 1938, 310, 312, pls. 18.26, 19.63; Dickinson 1992, 478, 486, 528, nos. P3303, P3341; 530, nos. P3394–P3395, P3398; 532, nos. P3471, P3487, figs. 9.9, 9.12, 9.15, 9.19, 9.22; Cosmopoulos 2018, 23, 47, 50, 55, 57, 61, P2967, P3242, P3319, P3359, P3662, P3698, P3789, P4637, figs. 10, 20–21, 24–25, 28. Shoulder-handled goblets appear in Arne Furumark's classification as FS 268. Furumark's list, however, only includes specimens from Malthi in Messenia.

¹⁷ Gillis 1990; Wiener 2011 (with previous bibliography).

¹⁸ The authors would like to thank Jeremy B. Rutter for drawing their attention to the potential chronological significance of this shape. Based on the materials from the so-called Group G at Tsoungiza, Rutter has established that one-handled carinated kylikes (FS 267) can be used to distinguish between an earlier and a later stage of the LH IIB ceramic phase (Rutter 2020, 713–714). The evidence from the 5Z deposit at Pylos suggests that one-handled kylikes with a rounded body may be utilised for the same purpose. On carinated kylikes (FS 267), see also Thomas 2011b.

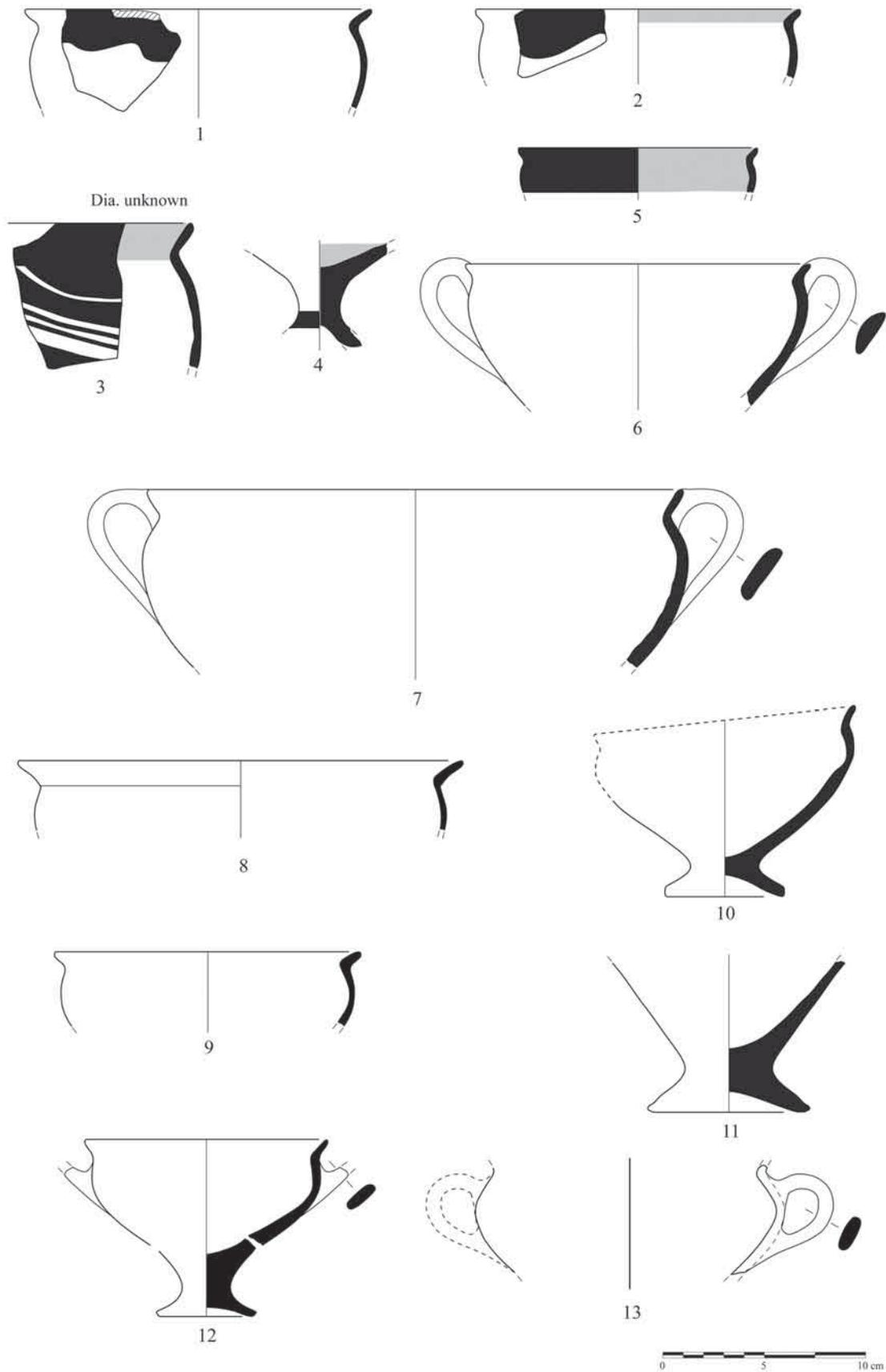


Fig. 3: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

	Vessel Count	%
FP	556	57.5%
FD	401	41.4%
YM	3	0.3%
YS	6	0.6%
Unidentified	1	0.1%
Total	967	100.0%

Tab. 6: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Vessel Count	%
CUB	281	93.7%
CB	18	6.0%
CRM (Possible Kytheran Imports)	1	0.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Tab. 7: Distribution of Coarse Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
Fine Painted	Vessel Count	26	18	18
	%	2.6%	9.7%	11.5%
Fine Plain	Vessel Count	967	167	138
	%	97.4%	90.3%	88.5%
Total	Vessel Count	993	185	156
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Levels 13–20; ** Levels 21–23; *** Levels 24–25

Tab. 8: Distribution of Fine Painted and Fine Plain pottery groups in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

Mycenaean basins and that of Mycenaean shallow angular bowls (FS 295). Two-handled conical bowls become more frequent at Pylos after LH IIB and are well represented in the LH IIIC Early destruction deposit from the Palace of Nestor.¹⁹ Other Fine Plain drinking/eating vessels from the representative sample in Extension 3 include a saucer (FS 237), two miscellaneous cups/goblets, and 15 goblets/one-handled kylikes (FS 263/267/270). A few additional Fine Plain fragments from dippers (FS 236), basins (Fig. 4.10), and miscellaneous closed shapes may have been used respectively for ladling, mixing, and serving purposes. Finally, the function of the Fine Plain fragments assigned to miscellaneous open shapes remains uncertain.

The second largest functional component of the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is represented by CUB and CB cooking pottery (Tab. 10). Identified shapes consist of cooking jugs/amphorae (FS 65/66), tripods (FS 320; Fig. 4.11–12), and miscellaneous jars (Tab. 15). Tripod cooking pots include specimens with an in-curving upper body that may represent a Messenian preference, as they also occur at Nichoria and Iklaina.²⁰

¹⁹ See Blegen – Rawson 1966, 355, Shape 1 (smaller end of the possible size range), figs. 349–350.

²⁰ See Dickinson 1992, 488; Martin 1992, 494, nos. P3637–P3638, fig. 9.35; Gulizio – Shelmerdine 2017, 34–36, figs. 4.8–10.

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
FP	Vessel Count	556	46	–
	%	57.5%	27.5%	–
FD	Vessel Count	401	121	126
	%	41.4%	72.5%	91.3%
YM	Vessel Count	3	–	6
	%	0.3%	–	4.3%
YS	Vessel Count	6	–	–
	%	0.6%	–	–
DB	Vessel Count	–	–	2
	%	–	–	1.4%
Minoanising Plain	Vessel Count	–	–	1
	%	–	–	0.7%
Misc. Imports	Vessel Count	–	–	3
	%	–	–	2.2%
Unidentified	Vessel Count	1	–	–
	%	0.1%	–	–
Total	Vessel Count	967	167	138
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Levels 13–20; ** Levels 21–23; *** Levels 24–25

Tab. 9: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

	Table-ware	Cooking	Storage	Utilitarian	Storage/Utilitarian	Ritual/Cultic	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	25	–	1	–	–	–	26	2.0%
Fine Plain	961	–	1	3	–	2	967	74.8%
Coarse Plain	0	211	22	2	65	–	300	23.2%
Total of Vessel Count	986	211	24	5	65	2	1293	100.0%
%	76.3%	16.3%	1.9%	0.4%	5.0%	0.2%	100.0%	

Tab. 10: Distribution of functional categories in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

The remaining portion of CUB, CB, and CRM ceramics from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z can be assigned to storage, utilitarian, and storage/utilitarian vessels (Tabs. 7, 10, 16). Among the materials from Extension 3, identified storage shapes include pithoi (Fig. 4.13), while utilitarian vessels include a single CUB bowl. Storage/utilitarian vessels include all CUB, CB, and CRM non-cooking pottery fragments that could not be safely assigned to the storage or utilitarian function. Finally, a quantitatively small, but interesting component of the LH IIB assemblage from Trench 5Z consists of ritual/cultic vessels (Tab. 10), which usually appear in the form of diminutive goblets (Fig. 4.14). These goblets are the direct predecessors of the many miniature kylikes with high-swung handles (cf. FS 273) discovered by Blegen in the destruction layers of the Palace of Nestor.²¹ In addition to pottery, other ritual/cultic objects from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z include fragments from painted offering tables.²²

²¹ Blegen – Rawson 1966, 366, Shape 26, figs. 359–360. On the ritual/cultic function of diminutive kylikes, see Dabney et al. 2004, 203, 210–211; Stocker – Davis 2004, 190–191. On the ritual/cultic function of diminutive vessels in general see Vitale 2008, 231–232, pl. 41, tab. 2; Vitale 2012a, 411, pl. 95c; Vitale 2012b, 1149–1150, fig. 4, tab. 1.

²² See Egan, this volume.

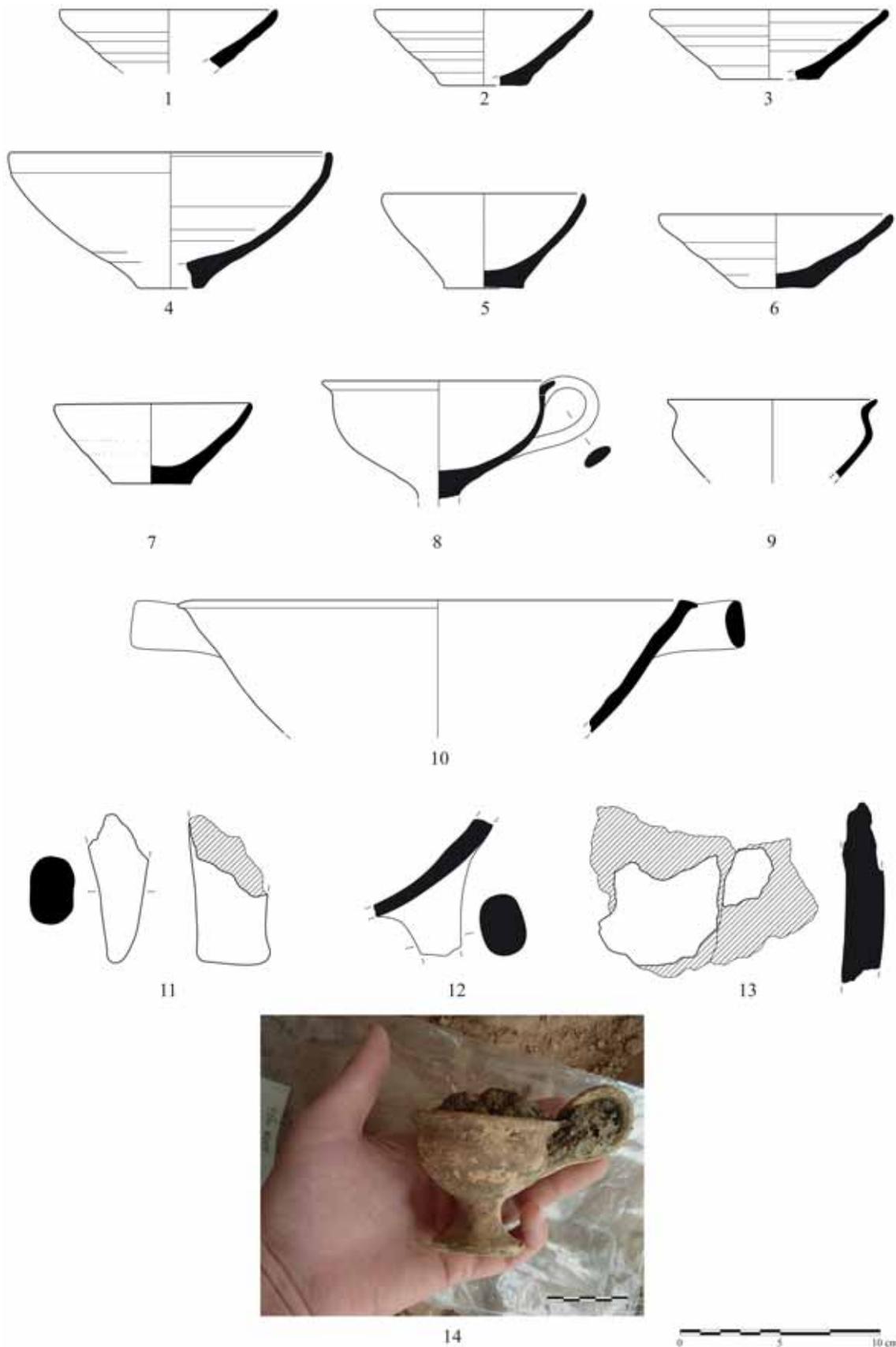


Fig. 4: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (1–13: T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati; 14: courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

	Eating/Drinking/Mixing	Ladling	Serving (Misc. Closed Shapes)	Specific Function Uncertain (Misc. Open Shapes)	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	13	–	5	6	24*	10.3%
Fine Plain	187	2	10	10	209*	89.7%
Total of Vessel Count	200	2	15	16	233*	100.0%
%	85.8%	0.9%	6.4%	6.9%	100.0%	

* Unidentified shapes are excluded from these counts

Tab. 11: Distribution of functional subcategories in Fine Painted and Fine Plain tableware ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Identified	Unidentified	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	24	2	26	2.6%
Fine Plain	209	758	967	97.4%
Total of Vessel Count	233	760	993	100.0%
%	23.5%	76.5%	100.0%	

Tab. 12: Distribution of identified and unidentified shapes in Fine Painted and Fine Plain ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Cup/Goblet	Goblet FS 254	Goblet FS 263/270	Goblet FS 263	Miscellaneous Goblets	Two-Handled Conical Bowl	Misc. Open Shapes	Misc. Closed Shapes	Total of Vessel Count	%
Ogival Canopy (FM 13)	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4.2%
Rock Pattern (FM 32)	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	12.5%
Unidentified	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	4.2%
Linear	1	–	1	1	–	–	2	2	7	29.2%
Monochrome	2	–	2	–	1	1	4	2	12	50.0%
Total of Vessel Count	3	4	3	1	1	1	6	5	24	100.0%
%	12.5%	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	20.8%	100.0%	
		37.6%								
Monochrome Interior	2	–	3	1	1	1	4	–	12	50.0%

* One unidentified tableware shape is excluded from these counts

Tab. 13: Correlation between Fine Painted tableware shapes and decorative motifs in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Cooking Jug/Amphora FS 65/6	Tripod Cooking Pot FS 320	Misc. Cooking Jars	Total of Vessel Count	%
Rims	–	2	–	2	0.9%
Handles	2	–	9	11	5.2%
Bases	–	–	3	3	1.4%
Legs	–	2	–	2	0.9%
Body Sherds	–	–	193	193	91.5%
Total	2	4	205	211	100.0%
%	0.9%	1.9%	97.2%	100.0%	
CUB	2	4	191	197	93.4%
CB	–	–	14	14	6.6%
Total of Vessel Count	2	4	205	211	100.0%

Tab. 15: Distribution of Coarse Plain cooking pottery shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Pithos	Utilitarian Bowl	Misc. Storage/ Utilitarian Pots	Total of Vessel Count	%
Rims	1	–	–	1	1.1%
Handles	–	–	1	1	1.1%
Bases	1	–	1	2	2.3%
Body Sherds	20	1	63	84	95.5%
Total	22	1	65	88	100.0%
%	25.0%	1.1%	73.9%	100.0%	
CUB	20	1	63	84	95.5%
CB	2	–	2	4	4.5%
Total of Vessel Count	22	1	65	88	100.0%

* One unidentified CRM utilitarian shape is excluded from these counts

Tab. 16: Distribution of Coarse Plain storage, utilitarian, and storage/utilitarian shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from extension 3, Levels 13–20)

This brief typological and functional analysis allows a first chronological and contextual evaluation of the 5Z deposit within the broader context of Greek mainland regional and supra-regional cultural trajectories. As far as chronology is concerned, the occurrence of one-handled kylikes with a rounded or carinated body (Fig. 4.8–9) suggests that the deposit from Trench 5Z should be assigned to a late stage of LH IIB. More specifically, the pottery from Trench 5Z likely post-dates relevant materials from Nichoria (latest LH II deposits), Asine (Stratum 3 in Room F), and Korakou (Levels V–VII of the East Alley stratification), where this shape is absent.²³ The same advanced stage of LH IIB as that represented in Trench 5Z at Pylos may be identified at the Mene-laion (Post Hole Deposit in Grid H25 and construction phases of Mansion 1 and Aetos Building B), Tiryns (Lower Town, House D1), Tsoungiza (Group G), Ayia Irini (end of Period VIIc), and possibly Ayios Vasileios (Trench I18α/β, final use of Floor 5, construction of Walls 42 and 71, and construction of Floor 4).²⁴

As far as context is concerned, the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is characterised by three main functional features. These include the prominence of fine tableware eating and drinking vessels, the presence of oversized specimens for shared consumption of food and drink, and the occurrence of ritual/cultic vases. Two additional elements, concerning decorative treatments and shape distribution, can also shed light on the function of the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z. The first one is the extraordinarily high proportion of plain and simply decorated vessels (Tabs. 1, 8, 13), with linear and monochrome painting making up almost 80% of the Fine Painted sample from Extension 3 (Tab. 13). The second element is the relatively narrow range of shapes represented (Tabs. 13–16).

Taken together, the abovementioned characteristics of the 5Z deposit match five of the six criteria considered indicative of feasting assemblages according to Mary Dabney, Paul Halstead, and Patrick M. Thomas.²⁵ The connection with communal eating and drinking activities is also supported by the presence of mendable vessels.²⁶ This feature may suggest that some of the pottery from the LH IIB deposit was discarded in a single filling event of the pit or natural depression located in Trench 5Z, shortly after a feasting episode.

S. V.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The full publication of the material from Trench 5Z will certainly provide additional information about this context and contribute to a refined comprehension of its overall significance. Nevertheless, the data presented in this paper already have some important implications for our understanding of pottery developments and cultural trajectories at Pylos during the early Late Bronze Age period.

The LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is characterised by the simultaneous occurrence of shapes connected to Mycenaean, Messenian, and Minoan potting traditions. These components are not equally distributed within the assemblage, but all played an important part in the elaboration of

²³ Dickinson 1972, 106–112, pls. 32–34; Frizell 1980, 60, 65, nos. 233–253, figs. 11–12, pl. 4; Dickinson 1992, 469–473, 480–488, 525–534, figs. 9.7–9.23.

²⁴ Gercke et al. 1975, 18–26, nos. 43–51, fig. 7, pls. 24–29; Hershenson 1998, 163–164; Catling 2009, 27–32, 120–122, 204–207, nos. N23, 25, PH18–38, figs. 125, 161–162, pl. 81d–e; Schofield 2011, 82, 95–96, 163–165, 168, 185–187, nos. 1074–1095, 2515–2533, 2536–2540, pls. 58, 82–83; Kardamaki 2017, 84–104, figs. 2–5, 6.72–82. This subdivision conforms to the second and third subphases of LH IIB recognised by Rutter during the study of relevant materials from Tsoungiza (see Rutter 2020, 712–716), but includes several additions to Rutter's original list of sites.

²⁵ Dabney et al. 2004, 203. See also Thomas 2011a. The only feasting criterion not matched by the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z is a high proportion of closed shapes, including vessels for food preparation. In the sample from Extension 3, cooking pottery represents 16.3% of the total assemblage, a figure that corresponds to the normal incidence of this class in standard Mycenaean settlement deposits (see Thomas 2005, 457–460, tab. 2; Thomas 2011a, 183–186, tab. 2; Vitale 2013, 124, tab. 2).

²⁶ Dabney et al. 2004, 204–205.

the local identity. The representative sample from Extension 3 indicates that the Mycenaean element was largely prevalent in the ceramic record. This fact is particularly evident in the drinking/eating vessel repertoire, as demonstrated by the prominence of patterned, linear, and monochrome goblets (FS 254/263/270) in the Fine Painted fraction and the combined widespread incidence of FP goblets (FS 263/270) and one-handled kylikes (FS 267) in the Fine Plain fraction (Tabs. 3, 13–14). The Mycenaean repertoire of Pylos exhibits some interesting peculiarities, such as the occurrence of FP two-handled conical bowls and the absence of the Ephyraean goblet (FS 254). The former may reflect site-specific trends, while the latter may follow regional preferences with parallels at other major sites in the southern Peloponnese.

A comparison between the LH IIB deposit and the earlier levels from Trench 5Z indicates that the prominence of the Mycenaean cultural component was not a sudden phenomenon, but rather the result of a linear process, which characterised pottery developments at Pylos during the early Late Bronze Age period. Besides the growth of the Mycenaean element, this trend implied a gradual decrease in the classes connected to MH local potting traditions, the majority of which either disappeared or became residual during LH IIB. The only exception to this tendency is represented by FD pottery, which still constituted an important component of the assemblage of Pylos during this phase (41.4% in the representative sample from Extension 3).

In addition to FD pottery, the continuation in limited quantities of pre-Mycenaean Messenian potting traditions during LH IIB is also demonstrated by the presence of specific vessel types, such as the shoulder-handled goblet (FS 268) and the tripod with in-curving upper body (FS 320) that have good parallels at Malthi, Nichoria, and Iklaina.

The presence of conical cups and Minoan imported pottery in the deposit from Trench 5Z demonstrates the occurrence of elements of Cretan origin in the pottery assemblage at Pylos during the final stages of LH IIB. Although these features are not prominent in the ceramic record, the importance of the Minoan component in the gradual formation processes of Mycenaean Pylos should not be overlooked.²⁷ In addition to the impact of Minoan and Minoanising pottery productions, throughout the early Late Bronze Age period, Cretan features played a significant role in the site's architecture and precious objects of possible Cretan manufacture formed an important part of the material assemblage of Pylos.²⁸

Previous studies have suggested that the formation of a Mycenaean culture is “the result of a process, whereby specific regional traditions achieved supra-regional prominence and were gradually elevated to a status as the dominant styles” by the political elite.²⁹ The evidence from the 5Z deposit may indicate that at Pylos the process of Mycenaeanisation of the local ceramic assemblage came to fruition during the final stages of LH IIB through the cultural synthesis of a diverse range of potting traditions.

Feasting has been regarded as a decisive factor for the development, display, and endorsement of Mycenaean cultural practices in the social arenas of early Late Bronze Age Greece.³⁰ In this respect, the possibility that the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z derives from communal eating and drinking activities is fascinating. This hypothesis, currently based on the typological and functional characteristics of the ceramic assemblage, awaits further support from other components of the study of this context, such as the results of microbotanical residue analysis of vessels and the examination of zooarchaeological remains.

It is widely accepted that the authorities in control of the LH IIIB–LH IIIC Early Mycenaean Palace of Nestor sponsored large-scale feasting events on a regular basis and feasting has been understood as a major political institution in the Pylian kingdom.³¹ These ceremonies had different

²⁷ See Rutter 2005, 22–28; Davis 2010, 682–683.

²⁸ Davis – Stocker 2015; Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Nelson 2017, 349–366; Davis – Stocker 2018.

²⁹ Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

³⁰ Wright 2004, 136.

³¹ Graham 1967; Säflund 1980; McCallum 1987; Isaakidou et al. 2002; Bendall 2004; Stocker – Davis 2004; Halstead – Isaakidou 2004; Wright 2004; Hruby 2006; Hruby 2008; Lis 2008a; Lis 2008b.

levels of social inclusion and exclusion of guests, which were promoted through the use and manipulation of natural landscapes and built spaces. If corroborated through future research, the feasting function of the 5Z deposit raises the possibility that LH IIB may have been not only the formative stage of the ceramic repertoire of Mycenaean Pylos, but also a key phase for the elaboration and performance of those feasting practices, which constitute a distinctive feature of the Pylian social space during the Palatial period.

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Outside and Inside: Mortuary Rituals in Early Mycenaean Pylos

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Abstract: During late MH III/LH I the mortuary landscape of the area around Pylos changed dramatically with the construction of tholos tombs close to the site of the later palace. These early tholos tombs were followed by the construction of chamber tombs, also in close proximity to the palace.

In this paper, I explore how the addition to the landscape of prominent and visible mortuary areas changed and shaped people's perception of time and memory, their behaviour, and their creation and interpretation of their social positions and roles. I show that the mortuary arena at the end of MH III was perceived as an untapped social resource with great potential for communicating identity, creating a strong social order, and introducing a new ideology based around the family line. I argue that the creation of the tombs broke with the older ideology and funds of power and stressed the lineal family's connection with the past, present and future.

Keywords: Pylos, landscape, memory, identity, ideology

Introduction

This paper builds on widely known premises in archaeological literature: that humans change their landscapes and environment for functional reasons; that tombs are frequently arenas of competition; and that funerals and burial areas are key components of social strategies. I explore in this paper the further issues of how such changes in architecture, space, and social practices affect identity or how people perceive themselves or others, and how and why changes in space and practice have such a significant and lasting impact on a society. During late MH III/LH I the social space around Pylos changed dramatically because of the construction of tholos tombs close to the site of the later palace (Fig. 1). These early tholos tombs were followed by the construction of chamber tombs, also near the later palace. By focusing on the connection between the use of social space and the creation and manipulation of social memory, I draw attention to how these new formal burial spaces were key in the formation of a new socio-political ideology within the related community, in the alteration of expressions of identity, and in the establishment of new funds of power.

Although earlier burials are known in Messenia,² none have been found in close proximity to Ano Englianos, the site of the later palace at Pylos. The tholos and chamber tombs, therefore, manifested the first formal and maintained disposal sites for the dead in the area and constitute a major change in the use of space. For the first time, the public social space was filled with a mortuary component that contrasted sharply with the earlier spatial emphasis on the living. This change in space through the construction of monumental tombs signifies a break with the old ideology, which ethnographic parallels suggest was probably reliant on large group and community kinships ties, as Sofia Voutsaki has suggested in the Argolid based on the lack of wealth differentiation in MH I–II tombs.³ Furthermore, the sudden appearance of monumental structures often indicates that the social structure was in a state of upheaval, as Michael Parker Pearson,

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² Boyd 2002.

³ Voutsaki 2001.

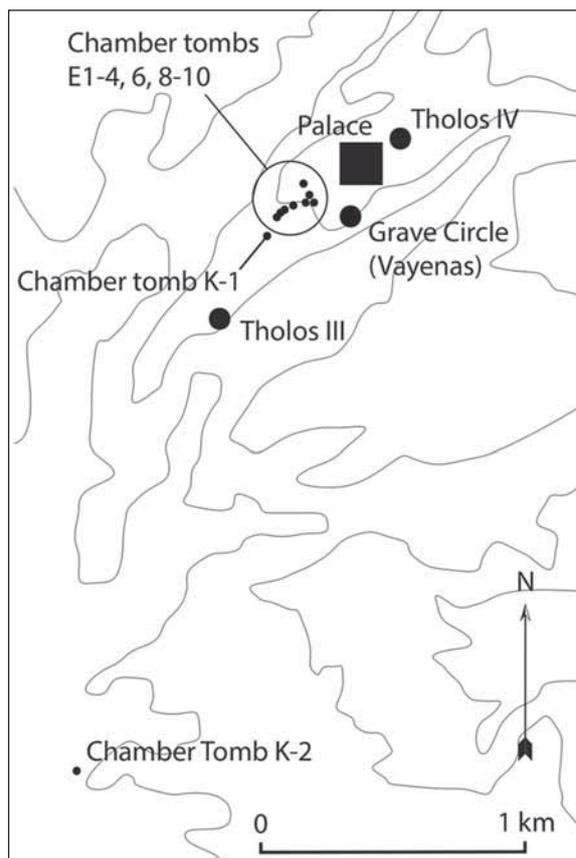


Fig. 1: Tombs excavated by Blegen around Pylos (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati; adapted by D. Nakassis)

Richard Bradley, and Bettina Arnold have all convincingly argued.⁴ The investment in the construction of the tombs and the objects placed in them, the continued use of the tombs, and the construction of new tombs materialised a significant shift in the way the members of the community using the tombs saw their society and communicated their commitment to that shift to themselves and others. The tombs, the transfer of the dead from the settlement to the tombs, and the rituals carried out at the tombs served as communicators and advertisers of a new ideology: one that I suggest was focused on individual family lines,⁵ inheritance, and access to non-local resources.

This paper begins with an exploration of some issues of social change related to social space before focusing on the evidence in the tombs excavated by Carl Blegen around the Palace of Nestor through an examination of their construction dates, the burials, and the objects placed in them during MH III/LH I–II.⁶ This paper also presents some of the problems inherent to these tombs: the small sample size, the difficulties of dating the small finds in the tombs, and the difficulty of connecting objects to human remains.

Social Space and the Manipulation of Memory

The term social space here denotes areas that are created when people manipulate their environment, either natural or human made, to express their social relations and reconfigure and negotiate their social identities. I combine Pierre Bourdieu's view that social space was guided by cultural and social capital with Henri Lefebvre's approach to physical space as an arena where power relations are played out. Bourdieu focused on space as multifaceted and integral to one's experience and explained how classes were created by the enactment of relationships among individuals in defined spaces.⁷ He argued that space was social where, through repeating patterns of action and manipulation of space, people adjust their experience of reality and are defined by their relative position within the space.⁸ The creation of social space with all the complex relations to economic, social, cultural, and economic capital means that it leads to people rarely questioning their

⁴ Parker Pearson 1982; Bradley 1990, 39–40; Arnold 2001.

⁵ For other and more detailed discussion of the shift to family group burials in Late Bronze Age Greece see Mee – Cavanagh 1984; Cavanagh – Mee 1998; Wright 2008.

⁶ The scope of this paper is limited to the tombs excavated by Blegen and does not include the tombs that were recently excavated near Tholos IV: the tomb of the Griffin Warrior, Tholos VI, and Tholos VII. For the preliminary discussions of these tombs and related bibliography see <<http://www.griffinwarrior.org>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020). The preliminary dating of these tombs, the wealth placed in them, and their location suggest that they fit the model suggested in this paper.

⁷ Bourdieu 1985, 723, 726–727.

⁸ Bourdieu 1985, 724.

positions in society.⁹ Bourdieu masterfully demonstrated that space is a key component in the creation of identity and in ‘knowing one’s place’ in society. Bourdieu’s work dovetails well with that of Lefebvre, who focused on the power play in relationships and how these relationships were presented in physical spaces and argued that space was not just physical but socially produced.¹⁰

Consideration of the unique character of the mortuary sphere is the final component in the framework for this paper. Change in a space involving formal and maintained burial areas not only demarcated the landscape, but also altered the community’s view of time.¹¹ The preservation of the memory of the dead in the presence of the tombs created a commemoration of the past in the present and planned for a memorialisation of that memory in the future.¹² The construction of these tombs changed the mindset of future generations who would return to these tombs and recall their past family members – some as individuals, but mostly as members of a distinct group: their family. Although each individual has personal memories, shared memory is a social and collective phenomenon that helps shape a group’s view of itself and its members.¹³

The act of burying the dead formally created memories;¹⁴ memory, moreover, is not a passive act. Studies of memory show that memory is a highly cultivated and manipulated process;¹⁵ there has to be a will to remember.¹⁶ Drawing on Maurice Halbwachs’ and Paul Connerton’s work, several scholars have shown how memories are cultivated and are constantly produced, altered, and forgotten; they are a selective collection of elements from the past that are brought into the present.¹⁷ Individuals and communities choose which aspects of the past to stress and in so doing silence other elements of the past.¹⁸ The repetition of an action or the retelling of a story or the re-enactment of a myth are key to the maintenance and construction of memories,¹⁹ while the needs of the present dictate the shape and distribution of the memory.²⁰ Indeed, Yannis Hamilakis and Jo Labayani have further argued that there is a political economy of memory and that it is a common strategy of power.²¹

The rituals conducted in mortuary arenas communicate to different groups and on multiple levels: among the mourners, family members, other members of the immediate community, and between the related community and others in the region.²² Prime elements of this communication include grief, identity, and competition. The creation of an area where people can place their dead and mourn them produces a venue in the society where grieving and expressions of weakness and instability are permissible and supported. This acceptance of emotion is one of the key sensory reasons why the mortuary sphere is an excellent place for creating strong bonds and solidarity. For both stable and unstable societies the death of a prominent member is a chance for the community as a whole to communicate its strengths and its networks to the larger region. Such displays of grandeur and power are key in the competition between community groups and between the different elements of a community and also downplay any weakness in the community caused by the

⁹ Bourdieu 1985, 727–728. See also Bourdieu 1989 for an elaboration of subjectivism (people’s experience) and objectivism (causes and creations outside of the individual agent).

¹⁰ Lefebvre 1991. For discussions and examples of these theories in archaeology, see Meskell – Preucel 2004 and Ashmore 2002.

¹¹ Maines et al. 1983. For a discussion of the creation of different classifications of time, see Shanks – Tilley 1987, 126–136.

¹² For similar arguments elsewhere, see Chesson 2001a, 1, and Joyce 2001, 12.

¹³ Van Dyke – Alcock 2003, 2. See also Mizoguchi 1993.

¹⁴ For a discussion on the creation of memories, see Jansen 2007.

¹⁵ Assmann 1995; Taussig 1999; Starzmann – Roby 2016.

¹⁶ Nora 1989, 19.

¹⁷ Lowenthal 1985, 210; Connerton 1989; Starzmann – Roby 2016, 4.

¹⁸ Trouillot 1995, 118; Shackel 2000; Shackel 2003a; Shackel 2003b; Küchler 2002; Holtorf – Williams 2006; Mills – Walker 2008; Starzmann – Roby 2016, 3. For a discussion on types of forgetting see Hamilakis 2010.

¹⁹ Connerton 1989, 61.

²⁰ Maines et al. 1983; Zelizer 1995; Van Dyke – Alcock 2003, 3.

²¹ Hamilakis – Labayani 2008, 12.

²² Barrett 1994; Rainville 1999.

death.²³ Thus multiple levels of competition are enacted in the mortuary arena between individuals or groups within a community and from the community outwards to others.

In light of this combined theoretical framework that combines studies of space, memory, and ritual, I propose that the construction of this new social space and that the activities carried out there physically created, expressed, and reinforced the Pylian community's changing identities and expression of themselves.

Archaeological Evidence from the Tombs

The following sections summarise when the tombs were constructed and used, how the dead were buried, and the types of objects being placed in the tombs.

Problems Inherent in these Tombs

The difficulties of dating burials in tombs that have multiple uses over long periods of time are well known. The objects frequently have a long period of use and are found in contexts that span multiple periods. The removal of objects from the tombs, which Blegen characterised as looting, as at Tholos III and IV, further complicates reconstructing the activity in the tombs.²⁴ Faced with these difficulties, I dated the tombs' use based on the date of the earliest whole pot or complete profile found in the tomb. While pots do not equal people, pots do indicate activity or investment in the practices at the tombs and therefore I argue that the more pots there are in a tomb, the more use it had. This use may equate either with individual burials or with multiple things being placed with a burial. Although in some cases bodies and objects cannot be connected, it is clear that in some periods more objects were being put in the tombs and that the level of investment in the mortuary arena varied in different periods. Despite the elusiveness of precise dating of the objects and burials in the tombs, the data are sufficient to support general statements about the practices at the tombs and their relationship to the associated society.

Dating the Tombs

Three tombs, Tholos IV, Vayenas, and E-9 were used in LH I.²⁵ Two of these, Tholos IV and Vayenas, may have been founded during the transition between MH III to LH I.

MH–LH I

Tholos IV

Dating the construction and therefore initial investment in Tholos IV is very problematic. The tomb was clearly looted, based on the brokenness of the pottery and of the bones.²⁶ Moreover, only four pots dating to MH III–LH II were recognisable. Jack Davis' and Sharon Stocker's recent restudy of the Tholos IV ceramics confirmed an abundance of sherds spanning MH–LH IIIA1 but most dated to MH–LH II. The small finds, which include ivory, jewellery, sealstones and seal rings, boars' tusks, and arrowheads, are only slightly more datable. These objects date to LH I–II based on stylistic comparison with other pieces and on the contexts of similar objects

²³ Kus 2010, 168; DeMarrais 2014, 157.

²⁴ Blegen et al. 1973, 77, 107, 108. For a more nuanced discussion of the removal of artefacts from the tombs see Boyd 2002, 149, 151.

²⁵ Blegen et al. 1973, 95–134, 134–176, 201–207.

²⁶ Schepartz – Murphy 2008.

found elsewhere. Unfortunately, most of the comparanda for these objects also come from mixed contexts that date to LH I–II (e.g. NMA 7981).²⁷ A few single items like seals (NMA 7983 and NMA 7986), the griffin bead/seal and gold owls, however, can be dated more precisely to LH II, but the rest cannot.²⁸ The presence of such wealth in LH II, however, illustrates that wealth was still being invested in the burials during that period. The deposition of boars' tusks and arrowheads in the tombs points to the cultivation of a warrior and/or hunter image for the dead and, by association, for their families.

Vayenas

Most of the objects in Vayenas date to the early Mycenaean period, but it is difficult to assign them to individual burials or ascertain how many burials there were in either LH I or LH II. At least 30 burials were dated from MH III/LH I to LH II in the tomb. The skeletal remains included young and old adults and both males and females, but no children. Although the contexts in Vayenas were significantly better preserved than in Tholos IV, it is difficult to pinpoint the construction date and start of the tomb's use. It appears that the tomb was first used either at the transition between MH III and LH I or during LH I. My analysis shows that there was significantly more LH II pottery in the tomb than LH I, indicating that there was continued investment in the burial of the dead in LH II.

The three burial areas in Vayenas that can be dated to LH I, one in Pit 1 in the west and two in Pit 3 in the east, demonstrate that the burial assemblages shared several components: the deposition of skeletal remains in pithoi; the inclusion of weapons with the burials; and the placement of pottery and jewellery with the dead. Several other deposits of LH I pottery were found in the southern area of Pit 3 and the south central area of the tomb with disarticulated and disturbed skeletal remains. These seem to be areas that were used to store bones that had been cleared from their original burial location. Two of the identified burial areas contained bronze cauldrons. The cauldrons and swords are similar to those found in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae and support an early date of MH III–LH I for these burials. Substantial remains of three large jars that may also date to LH I were found throughout Vayenas and may be the remains of burial jars. Along with the predominantly locally made pottery, some Minoan pottery dating to LM I was found in the tomb. These constitute the earliest ceramic imports in the tomb. The objects placed with the dead at Vayenas show that wealth was invested in the burial and suggest that display of wealth was emphasised both through the funeral and the inevitable procession of the dead from the settlement to the grave, during which these large vessels could be seen publicly. As in Tholos IV, the inclusions of weapons and boars' tusks indicate a desire to communicate warrior and hunting activities in the burial.

E-9

During LH I the first of the nearby chamber tombs, E-9, may have been constructed and used. The remains of several disturbed skeletons were found in two of the three pits that had been dug into the chamber floor. The earliest pottery in the tomb, a LH I goblet (CM 2847), was found on the sloping north edge of Pit 1 suggesting that this might be the location of the earliest burials. This single LH I pot was found with several later pots and could be an heirloom included with a later burial.²⁹ The lack of non-ceramics in the tomb contrasts strongly with contemporary burials in Vayenas. The manner in which the dead were buried is also different from Vayenas; the dead seem to have been laid out on the floor or in the pits with a few pieces of pottery and no small finds. There was no visible emphasis on display or warrior ideology.³⁰

²⁷ Blegen et al. 1973, 124; CMS I, no. 288.

²⁸ Blegen et al. 1973, 124; CMS I, no. 290; Blegen et al. 1973, 113; CMS I, no. 293.

²⁹ For an example of the complex use of contemporary tombs see Boyd 2015 in his discussion of tombs at Mycenae.

³⁰ Murphy 2016a.

LH II

The number of tombs increased in LH II with one new chamber tomb in the Tsakalis area, E-8, and the possible construction of Tholos III.³¹ Vayenas continued in use during LH II and E-9 either continued in use or was constructed during this period. This is a period of intense use in E-8, E-9, and Vayenas, but of extremely limited use, if any, in Tholos III.

Vayenas

In Vayenas, one LH IIA burial was found in an undisturbed context in Pit 1 (northeast). This pithoid jar (CM 1586),³² which had been repaired with bronze rivets before deposition in the tomb, contained remains of two adults of indeterminate sex and some bronze fragments. A LH IIB ring-handled cup (CM 1582, pot 31),³³ which was found immediately north of this pithoid jar, may push the date of this burial closer to LH IIB rather than LH IIA.

Most of the LH IIB pots in the tomb seem to have been discovered in disturbed contexts in the northwest area of Pit 1 (Pit 3),³⁴ between Pit 1 (Pit 3) and the northern area of the tomb, and in the southeastern corner of the tomb.³⁵ Since most of the pottery in the disturbed northern part of the tombs dates to LH II, it is plausible that the other artefacts and the skeletal remains located in this area of the tombs also date to this period. The artefacts in this area included bronze knives and daggers, scale pans and a balance, a stone hone, and beads of glass, carnelian, amber, and Egyptian blue.³⁶ The number of pithos fragments in this area suggests that these may have been jar burials. A seal (NMA 8532),³⁷ which has been dated stylistically to LH II, was also found in proximity to the LH II pottery.

The LH II material in Vayenas reveals that the burial practices in this period did not differ much from LH I. The burials were still placed in pithoi/jars with objects of significant wealth. Although knives and daggers were associated with this period, the large swords that were evident earlier are not associated with LH II burials. The hunting component of the identity, however, continued to be reinforced through the scenes on the sealstones that depict detailed hunting scenes. Furthermore, alabastra were first deposited in the tombs in LH IIB; these may evince a more formalised use of perfume in the burial rites. The remains of a Cypriot base ring grey ware vessel (PT.V.C.0007) and fragments from two Cypriot juglets (PT.V.C.0039, PT.V.C.0057)³⁸ may also date to LH II based on their proximity to the LH II pottery; these point to the continued placement of imported pottery in the tomb.

E-9

LH II pottery was found both in Pit 1 and in Pit 2. Pit 2 also contains ceramics dating to LH IIB–LH IIIA1, suggesting that it was the location of these later burials. The only non-ceramics in the pit were two female figurines (CM 2906 and CM 2907) in Pit 2, which date to LH IIIA at the earliest.³⁹ The bones in the pits were stored together and consisted of two adults (possibly one male and one female) and one young adult. These may have been remains that had been cleared to make room for later burials. It is unclear if these pits were the original burial locations. The lack

³¹ Blegen et al. 1973, 192–201, 73–94.

³² Blegen et al. 1973, 166.

³³ Blegen et al. 1973, 166.

³⁴ Blegen refers to this pit by two names: Pit 1 and Pit 3.

³⁵ Blegen et al. 1973, figs. 327–328.

³⁶ Blegen et al. 1973, 156–175.

³⁷ Blegen et al. 1973, 169; CMS I, no. 294.

³⁸ These and the following objects with similar catalogue numbers are artefacts that I identified in my re-study of the tombs. The artefacts are catalogued as PT for Pylos Tombs followed by the tomb indication, e.g., T-3 for Tholos III, E-6 for Tsakalis Chamber Tomb E-6; followed by either C for ceramic or SF for small find; and ending in a number.

³⁹ Blegen et al. 1973, 206–207; Tzonou-Herbst 2002.

of pithoi and small finds suggest that the dead were either put in the pits or cleared into the pits with very few objects. The deposition pattern from LH I thus continued in LH II in E-9, with the new addition of alabastra.

Tholos III

The disturbed state of Tholos III makes dating its use very challenging. Elizabeth Blegen commented several times about the broken state of the pottery, which is confirmed by the recognition of the reconstructed pots post-excavation in the pottery shed rather than in the field.⁴⁰ All of the pottery in the tomb was found in mixed deposits ranging in date from MH to LH III. Blegen was unable to provide any context beyond the chamber for the 20 pots that were reconstructed at the excavation. Most of the reconstructed pots date to LH III, although most of the sherds cannot be dated more closely than LH I–II. The earliest mendable pot from the tomb, an alabastron with a Minoanising decoration (NMA 9139), dates to LH IIA.⁴¹ This indicates that LH IIA was the first period of use.

Despite the shattered condition of the bones and artefacts in this tomb, some observations can still be made. The quantity of pithos fragments in the tomb suggests that, as in Vayenas, in Tholos III also the dead were buried in pithoi/jars. In contrast to Vayenas, which contained cauldrons and swords, Tholos III lacked any large-scale objects of wealth. The lack of such objects is more probably a result of them being removed from the tomb at a later date than of an original absence of comparable objects. The large number of luxury and imported small finds that escaped the looters, as in Tholos IV, suggest that a significant quantity of wealth had originally been placed in the tomb. Most of the comparanda for these objects date to LH I–II and cannot provide a date more precise than the early Mycenaean period for the deposition. Ceramic imports include a Minoanising pot and at least three Cypriot vessels including a LC II milk bowl (PT.T-3.C.0243) and a spouted cup/bowl (PT.T-3.C.0362). Some boars' tusk fragments were found dispersed throughout the tomb; they may date to this early period of the tomb's use and denote an elite hunting ideology similar to that seen in Vayenas and Tholos IV. Lynne Schepartz and Sari Miller Antonio identified a minimum of twelve individuals in Tholos III; only two of these were subadults. One was found in the central pit that had been dug into the floor of the tombs. Based on its location in the tomb and the pithoi fragments and boars' tusks that were found there, it is possible that this burial dates to the early Mycenaean period.

E-8

LH IIA marks the first use of Chamber Tomb E-8. A minimum of eleven burials date to LH II, including male and female adults and one subadult. The remains were found in a niched area of the tomb, in pits, and on the floor. Much of the LH II pottery was found in disturbed levels. Since William Taylour was able to discern an orientation to the remains in the pit, it is likely that these pits were initially used as burial places and then for the clearance of earlier burials. The earliest pottery, dated to LH IIA, was found in a niched area on the east side of the Chamber Burial O. Nearby, Burial I was laid out in an extended position with several LH IIA and LH IIB pots and some beads nearby. Over twenty glass beads and one rose quartz bead (PT.E-8.SF.2901a, PT.E-8.SF.2901b, PT.E-8.SF.2901e) were also found here.⁴² At least two more disturbed burials, K and L, were discovered on the floor, and possibly also related to LH IIA pottery. Five other burials (which William Donovan identified as M, N, P) had been buried in two pits dug into the chamber floor with bronze, beads, and pottery mostly dating to LH IIA, LH IIB, and some to LH IIIA1. At a slightly higher level in the chamber, six burial areas containing nine individuals, A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, and J, lay at various locations in the tomb. These skeletons appear to have been cleared to

⁴⁰ Blegen et al. 1973, 77–78, 81.

⁴¹ Blegen et al. 1973, 94.

⁴² Blegen et al. 1973, 197, 200.

make room for one another and for the latest group of burials in the tomb. Based on the pottery closest to the skeletons and at the same level, Burial H may possibly date to LH IIA, Burial I to LH IIB, and Burials C and E to LH IIB–IIIA1. A bronze dagger (CM 2912), a knife (CM 2913), and some brilliant orange red pigment that might be the remains of a cloth were found near Burial C.⁴³ Single spindle whorls were associated with some of the burials while others had beads of glass and stone near them.

The better-preserved burials in E-8 reveal that the bodies were laid out in a supine position but with no uniform orientation and that the earlier burials were cleared aside to make room for the later ones. Pottery appears to have been placed with all bodies without differentiation according to gender or age. Although a few bodies had some additional objects such as glass and stone beads, spindle whorls, a bronze knife, and a dagger placed with them, nevertheless, few objects of value or small finds were deposited in the tomb. The small finds in the tombs also seem to have been indiscriminate of gender or age as the subadult had twenty glass beads and one rose quartz near it.

The inclusion of a subadult in this grave, as in Tholos III, suggests a shift in the local practices that draws attention to inheritance. A female burial was found with a feeding bottle (CM 2899), which is the earliest example of these bottles in the tombs.⁴⁴ If these bottles were used to feed children it would be an independent line of evidence suggesting that children were becoming more important during this time period of LH II and into LH IIIA.

In sum, during LH II the number of tombs increased with the continued use of Vayenas and either the first or continued use of E-9 and the construction of E-8 and possibly Tholos III. The burials in Vayenas continued much the same as before in pithos/jar burials with objects of wealth, but it is noticeable that there are no swords with these burials. This may suggest a slight modification in the warrior ideology to focus even more on hunting. Most of the objects of wealth are similar to those deposited before – beads of glass, carnelian and amber, bronzes, and ivory.⁴⁵ The burials in the chamber tombs were strikingly different: the remains were placed in pits or on the floor in an extended position with some pottery but very few other artefacts. The inclusion of objects of value such as glass beads with the subadult points to a new importance of inheritance.

There was an early emphasis on weaponry and wealth in the tholos tombs, and the bodies were placed in large storage jars. The distribution of wealth in the tombs shows that people seem to have been buried with valuable objects regardless of gender. However, it is also clear from the distribution that the wealth was not equally distributed among the individual burials. In Vayenas, during LH I, one or two people were buried with cauldrons and weapons along with pots and small finds; three or four people were buried with weapons; but some people were also buried with only a few pots and maybe some of the small finds. Similarly, not everyone in the chamber tombs was buried with same amount of investment. The absence of subadults in Vayenas and Tholos IV combined with the different quantities of prestige goods buried with the dead suggests that while the family was stressing its status and access to luxury goods, it was also drawing attention to people who were of an age to have acquired status rather than having it solely from inheritance. It was this combination of family line and achieved status that signalled that they deserved to be at the top of the hierarchy. This situation changed in LH II in E-8 and possibly in Tholos III when children were first included and were buried with prestige artefacts that they themselves could not have acquired through achievement, thus emphasising the importance of children and of the inheritance of status.

⁴³ Blegen et al. 1973, 197.

⁴⁴ Blegen et al. 1973, 200.

⁴⁵ There are also at least three Cypriot pots from this period.

Ano Englianios

Much was changing in Pylos during the early Mycenaean period. The earliest large structures were first built on Ano Englianios at the site of the later palace, and the area of the site and surrounding town grew significantly in size. John Bennet and Cynthia Shelmerdine reported that the area in the immediate vicinity of the palace grew from 5.8ha in MH, to 7.08ha in LH I–II (the early Mycenaean phase).⁴⁶ During this period of growth the Lower Town spread from the southwest to the southeast and east of the hilltop. The spread of the Lower Town during LH I–II may explain why Tholos III was built a kilometre away from the palace, as Davis and his collaborators suggested.⁴⁷ By LH II, Pylos was the largest site in its region and had outgrown the other sites that had been of comparable size in the earlier periods, such as Beylerbey and Ordines identified by the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project.⁴⁸

The evidence from the tombs and that on Ano Englianios demonstrates that the social organisation of Pylos during LH I fits well with that of a chiefdom, which Timothy Earle defined as an “intermediate society that is between an egalitarian society and state”.⁴⁹ This broad, minimalist definition of a chiefdom bypasses many of the elements of other definitions that many scholars have eschewed, such as population size, geographic spread, and separation of chief and commoner.⁵⁰ During LH I, the monumental architecture on the Ano Englianios ridge suggests a growing hierarchy invested with the power to organise labour, while the investment in the mortuary arena through the construction of the tombs and the deposition of significant wealth therein indicates a break with the older order, a shift to separate into family groups, and an emphasis on achieved status. In LH II, however, the inclusion of the first children in the tombs evinces the institutionalisation of hereditary status. Hereditary status remains a key difference between chiefdoms and egalitarian societies.⁵¹ The substance of the objects placed with the dead show that this status was reliant on both local and long-distance networks⁵² and an emphasis on individual lineages, which are all common elements in chiefdoms. Indeed the strong emphasis on the accumulation of wealth and its deposition in the tombs rather than its distribution in society is also a striking component of chiefdoms.⁵³ The investment in more permanent structures for burial and the institutionalisation of rituals lends an impression of stability to the chiefdom, which is in actuality quite unstable and threatened by other would-be chiefs and outside forces.⁵⁴

It is plausible that the internal threat in this early period of social development at Pylos was represented by the subelites who built the chamber tombs. The overlap in use of the chamber tombs and tholos tombs in LH I and LH II suggests that they are the materialisation of competition within the hierarchy.⁵⁵ While this represents vertical social competition, there was also most probably horizontal social competition between the people using the two tomb types. The owners of the chamber tombs took elements of the coded elite behaviour from the tholos tombs and used them to their own ends and in their own way; they formally buried their dead in maintained disposal areas with objects that signify wealth. As Arnold has shown in her discussion of Celtic

⁴⁶ Davis et al. 1997, 430; Bennet – Shelmerdine 2001, 135.

⁴⁷ Davis et al. 1997, 430. See Davis et al. 1997, fig. 12, for ceramic densities around the palace.

⁴⁸ Bennet 2007.

⁴⁹ Earle 1977, 32. For further discussion on developments at Pylos incorporating mortuary evidence, see Murphy 2014; Murphy 2016a; Murphy 2016b.

⁵⁰ For discussion of chiefdoms see Carneiro 1981; Earle 1987; Earle 1991a, 1; Earle 1991b, xi; Feinman 1998, 97. For discussion of MH III–LH II as chiefdoms, see Kilian 1988; Voutsaki 1995; for the transition to statehood at Mycenae see Wright 1995.

⁵¹ Kennett et al. 2009. See Rousseau 1990 on hereditary stratification.

⁵² For a discussion of wealth and prestige in Early Mycenaean tombs see Petrakis 2010 and Whitaker 2011 as well as papers in Murphy 2020.

⁵³ Earle 1977.

⁵⁴ Earle 1991a, 4.

⁵⁵ Murphy 2014.

elites, secondary elites often create some parallel activity or representation to stress their simultaneous dissent from the paramount elite's ideology but also their compliance with it.⁵⁶

It would appear that during the early Mycenaean period in Pylian society there was a desire to emphasise family lines, the unity of the family through time, the complex relationship of connection and separation of the family from others, and connections with outside networks. In contrast, the earlier funerary practices that have left no known finds were actively forgotten. The creation of memory, the manipulation of memory, and the structuring of memory all happened in the tombs and the social space around them. The memorialisation of the dead through the tombs connects the present and prospective future elite to the past.⁵⁷ The evidence from the tombs shows additional repetition in the ways in which people were buried, in what they were buried with, and in the rituals carried out in the tombs; there was an effort made to replicate these burial rituals, and events and performances were actively remembered and recalled.⁵⁸ The early expression of warrior identity in the tombs drew attention to the military strength of the chiefdom. This was apparently supplanted by an emphasis on wealth in general rather than objects specifically connected to war, and an emphasis on the elite recreation of hunting. The inclusion of the alabastra in LH II, if indeed these were used for perfumed unguents as is widely believed, anticipates the exotic goods that would in future be crafted at the later palace.⁵⁹

It is clear from the low number of tombs that have been found that not everyone in the associated community was buried, or at least not buried in a formal area with a strong archaeological footprint. Based on the finds in the tombs and the labour needed for their construction, it is plausible that those who used the tombs were of a higher status or at least qualified to attempt to contend for an elevation in their social status. The tombs, therefore, embedded a claim of status in the landscape and socially elevated those connected to them. The funeral processions from the settlement to the cemetery, regardless of their level of formality, further adjusted social space and connected the dead and those involved in the funeral to a larger area of space than just the cemetery. The procession spatially connected the dead and the living to both the cemetery and the settlement and thus created a symbolic reminder of the inter-reliance between them. The proximity of the tholos tombs to the settlement evokes the past and reminds the viewer of the dead buried therein and draws attention to the ancestral family line of the rulers and the longevity and strength of their family line.⁶⁰

During LH I–II several sites in the region had tholos and chamber tombs associated with them – all of which probably served the same social function as the tombs in Pylos.⁶¹ The decline in the status of the other communities as Pylos continued to grow is not surprising. Study of chiefdoms in America has demonstrated that even the most impressive chiefdoms only last between 50–150 years before being subsumed by a more powerful centre.⁶² The decrease in use in the tholos tombs closest to the palace at Pylos suggests that after the early Mycenaean period, the social space around the mortuary arena lost its position as a major fund of power and was most probably replaced by the feasts and the production and management of luxury goods that is evidenced in Pylos during the later Palatial periods.⁶³

⁵⁶ Arnold 2001.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the ancestors at Pylos see Murphy 2014; Murphy 2016a. For a discussion of memory at other sites see Malafouris 2016; Papadimitriou 2016; Papadimitriou 2019 and other papers in Borgna et al. 2019.

⁵⁸ See Connerton 1989, 74. Starzmann – Roby 2016, 3, demonstrated that memories are socially contingent on what is expected and needed by the society.

⁵⁹ Murphy 2013; Murphy 2014.

⁶⁰ Lillios 1999.

⁶¹ See Pelon 1976 for a list of these tombs. See also Boyd 2002 and Zavadil 2013.

⁶² Brain 1978; Anderson 1999; Cobb 2003, 77.

⁶³ See Murphy 2019.

Conclusions

The mortuary arena at the end of MH III was in many respects an untapped social resource that had great potential for communicating identity, creating a strong social order, and introducing a new ideology. The initial use of the tombs at Pylos and the massive investment in them and their burials created a dramatic break with the old order and created a space in which a new reality could be created, formulated, and articulated. By creating this social space through the building and use of these tombs, their users claimed a connection to a group beyond their immediate living community and kin, with complex levels of communication. At one level, the tombs highlight the individual family line and its separation from others; at another, they emphasise connection with the community, while the connection with external practices and access to imports connects them to a wider world. While the placement of the first tomb was an innovative act, the placement of the second tomb already formed part of an ideological discourse conducted in the spatial environment. The commissioners of the second tomb were acquiescing through their construction of a tomb to the authority of the strategic power of the mortuary arena. They were supporting the notion that by burying their dead in this manner and in this place they could gain an identity and communicate with other members of the community and region. The creation and maintenance of this new social space conveyed a reliance on the interconnection between hereditary family lines and access to valuable non-local objects. The burial of the dead is a relatively short-lived event; the mortuary space, however, functions as a mnemonic device for the new ideology that was based around family lines and their connection to the wider network through the exotic goods deposited in the tombs. The social network embodied in the tombs was chronologically both horizontal and vertical: it connected a family line diachronically with the past, present, and anticipated future and with a synchronic network beyond the immediate kin, community, and region through the inclusion of imports with the burials.

Thus, not only did these new constructions change the way people interacted with their environment, but they altered the way they perceived themselves and changed the focus of what they remembered. They were now families with a visible family line connecting the present, the past, and the future. These new tombs created a break with the old order and they established new social strategies shaping a new social structure. These new strategies relied on memory manipulation and its relation to the family and social space combined with access to imports and resources to create a society dependent on different funds of power and prestige from that which had preceded it.

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Illustration

Fig. 1: Tombs excavated by Blegen around Pylos (courtesy of The Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati; adapted by D. Nakassis)

The Early Mycenaeans of Pylos: The Evidence from the Chamber Tomb Cemetery at Volimidia

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Abstract: When Spyridon Marinatos excavated the LH I–II chamber tomb cemetery at Volimidia, among other sites in the region of Pylos (1955–1965), Messenia started to emerge as a prosperous and dynamic region of the early Mycenaean world that contributed essentially to the formation of the elite sites of the Mycenaean Peloponnese.

The cemetery of Volimidia was founded in the transitional MH III/LH I period, and its rock-cut chambers stand among the earliest examples of this type of tomb, probably as a result of successful local experimentation at the time of the foundation of the first tholos tombs in the region.

Despite the fact that the considerable quantity of LH I–II vases from Volimidia were not found in association with the burials they accompanied due to the continuous use of the cemetery until LH IIIC Early, these ceramics constitute the best-preserved assemblage of early Mycenaean pottery from the Pylos region. Their preliminary study points to a local production, consistent with the LH I–II repertoire of northern Triphylia (Elis), but also combining Argive, Lakonian, Kytheran and Cretan elements, which echo the cultural blend thanks to which the hegemonic ‘estates’ of Pylos thrived.

Keywords: Volimidia, Marinatos, Messenia, Pylos, Englianos, Triphylia, chamber tomb cemetery, burial, Late Helladic I–II pottery, Chora Museum

History of Research and Topography

The site of Chora in southern Triphylia is abounding in olive groves and vineyards and lies in the foothills of the Aigaleon, the long mountain range that cuts off the Pylos region from the Pamisos River valley, 4 km away from the palace of Englianos. Spyridon Marinatos, opting not to be involved in the excavations of the palace that Carl Blegen was about to start in 1952,² chose instead to turn his attention to the cemeteries around the palace and the potential discovery of new settlements. He had obviously understood the significance of an exploration that would reveal the historic imprint of the area and the types of settlements in the palatial territory of Englianos,³ “across the region that once was the ‘land of the Pylians’”.⁴

The area of Volimidia extends to the north of the town of Chora, between its outermost houses and Kephlovryso (or Kephalaria), from where the until recently abundantly flowing water was

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² Marinatos 1955, 473: “The interrupted since 1939 excavations of Pylos became possible to be resumed only in 1952 through a Greek-American collaboration. Professor Carl Blegen continued with the unearthing of the Englianos palace with great results. In place of the late K. Kourouniotis, the author undertook the Greek sector, funded by the Archaeological Society. Mr. Blegen very kindly suggested that I should undertake the excavation of part of the palace. I however thought it would be more advisable to leave the entire palace to the dexterity of its excavator, and rather focus on the research of the necropoles around the palace and potentially the discovery of new towns”.

³ Marinatos (1960, 245; 1962, 113, 116–117) identified the area of Volimidia with *Pylos the old* or *Palaipylos*, a city for which Strabo (8.4.2) states that it was situated at the foot of the Aigaleon Mountain. John Chadwick (1976, 91) identified the site with *pa-ki-ja-ne*, a centre of religious activity, directly dependent on the palace of Englianos, which is attested in the tablets of the palace, a view adopted by Bennet 1999, 145–146, and Hope Simpson 2014, 56, 58–59, site 41 tab. 2, tab. 5, map 2. This identification, however, has not gained universal acceptance, cf. already Marinatos 1962, 116. See Kountouri 2002, 3, 470, 474–475.

⁴ Marinatos 1962, 112.

used for the irrigation of the fertile land.⁵ The area took its name from the dense clusters of tombs, cut in the soft argillaceous-calcareous rocks of the region, the chambers of which were often ‘sinking’ (collapsing), the Greek word for ‘to sink’ being ‘βουλιάζω’.

The chamber tombs of Volimidia – “ogival-roofed circular chambers, as if they were tholos tombs”⁶ – were arranged in clusters, four of which had been intensively excavated by Marinatos in the years 1952 to 1965. A total of 31 tombs was investigated in those years and, since then, in excavations of a smaller scale, another four single chambers have come to light.⁷ The four clusters of the Volimidia tombs were divided by the local Chora-Kephalovryso earthen road that was asphalted in 1965.

Right from the first year of research (1952), the necropolis that Marinatos excavated raised expectations for fresh knowledge on the territory of the Englianos palace because of the short distance between the two locations, but also because of the natural advantages of the site. Marinatos excavated “many clusters of remarkable tombs, which belonged to a large city”, estimating that the city in question was probably “Homeric Pylos”, to which Homer had already referred as lying away from the shore, information that is stated with certainty by Strabo, who describes it as an inland city, affirming that “at the foot of Mt Aigaleo was a city”.⁸ Indeed, the flat area of Volimidia gives way to the first slopes of this mountain.⁹

Traces of the “thriving settlement” to which the tombs belong were looked for by Marinatos in the farmland of the region, producing “illuminating” results only in the Patriarcheas farmland,¹⁰ 100 m south of the Angelopoulos cluster of tombs (excavated in 1953). The test-trench opened there revealed a 1 m-thick LH III stratum with walls, and underneath it a pure LH I stratum, also 1 m thick, with no walls in it, “where cups of the Vapheio type are again abundant”, and finds were so densely arranged as to give the “impression of an *apothetis*”.¹¹

The pottery from the Patriarcheas test-pit has been preliminarily studied by Yannis Lolos, who reached the conclusion that it came from a LH I–IIA and LH IIA mixed deposit.¹² LH I Vapheio cups with spirals, ripple pattern and foliate bands form the bulk of the material.¹³ The LH I–IIA horizon in the Patriarcheas field may not be particularly indicative of a settlement in the immediate vicinity of the clusters of tombs, but the ceramic evidence from it nevertheless points to the same period of use as that of the tombs.¹⁴

In 1964, following the excavation of several tombs at Volimidia, “one of the biggest, possibly the biggest, Mycenaean necropolis”, Marinatos supported the view that either “a major Mycenaean settlement was lying in its vicinity”, or it had been the cemetery of the surrounding hamlets, “because all of the nearby living people chose this site, due to the advantage of its soft, but at the same time durable bedrock”.¹⁵ He also considered the existence of a system of peripheral towns around the cemetery or of a neighbouring core settlement as equally probable.¹⁶

⁵ Marinatos 1955, 473.

⁶ Marinatos 1962, 113.

⁷ Marinatos excavated tombs in the years 1952–1954, 1960 (Marinatos 1962) and 1964 until 1965. Iakovidis 1966, 98–111; Lolos 1987, 196–207; Kountouri 2006, 165–166, with relevant bibliography. More recently, research projects were carried out by the Greek Archaeological Service in two tombs at Kephalovryso (Karagiorga 1976), a third in the L. Rigas plot in 1990 (Arapoyianni 1995), and a fourth one in 1991 in the Athanasopoulos plot, in the vicinity of the Tsoulea-Voria cluster, by Georgios S. Korres.

⁸ The Odyssey indicates an inland location of Pylos, “although, in the poet’s time, sources were already obscure” (Marinatos 1955, 495–496).

⁹ Marinatos 1955, 496.

¹⁰ Marinatos 1956, 248–249.

¹¹ Marinatos 1956, 249, fig. 10.

¹² Lolos 1987, 25, 27, figs. 8–23.

¹³ Lolos 1987, 23–27, figs. 8–14; Antoniou 2009, 56–58, figs. 466–468.

¹⁴ The LH I–IIA *apothetis* (votive pit) – theoretically – could have also belonged to the cemetery, but the overlying LH III walls point rather to the existence of a settlement at this place.

¹⁵ Marinatos 1966b, 78.

¹⁶ At Chora (Kato Rouga), however, Marinatos again located “at the opposite end of the town” the “new necropolis of Ayios Elias”, of which five tombs are known with certainty (Tomb M-1 and the dromos of M-2 have been excavated

As a matter of fact, traces of a second Mycenaean settlement were located in later years at the site of Megambelia, 1 km east of Chora.¹⁷ Probably not linked with the cemetery of Volimidia, this evidence nonetheless substantiates a pattern of dense habitation around the Englianos Hills, where the palatial centre developed.

Surface surveys in recent years did not change the picture much,¹⁸ and the idea remains valid that around the palace a network of settlements structured ‘in hamlets’ (‘κατὰ κώμας’) had formed, for which the farming character and subsistence economy of the region provided favourable conditions.¹⁹

Tomb Architecture and Burial Customs

With regard to the burial practices in the necropolis of Volimidia, from the LH I to the LH III period it was the norm to bury the first dead on the floor in an extended position. When gradually the tomb filled and room for new burials became sparse, skeletons were deposited in the periphery of the tomb, in small pits (βόθροι/λάκκοι) or niches (κόγχες) opened in the bedrock for this purpose. “This is the reason that quite often the pits contain vases of the LH I period, which were almost never found placed on the floor, where only LH III pottery, right through to its last phase, is to be found”.²⁰

Already in the early stages of research (1952, 1953), Marinatos noted that “only a few funerary offerings accompanied the skeletons, in any case there is no indication of lavish funerary offerings”,²¹ “because the tombs had been stripped of them, due to their long-term use”.²² Indeed, “offerings were carefully removed in the course of succeeding interments”²³ and only “those which were of no value for the living” were left behind.²⁴ He, moreover, made the point that “the form of the tombs appears to be the most important aspect of all”,²⁵ attributing particular significance to their early date as well as to their structural integrity. For a more detailed documentation of the chambers, Marinatos invited Spyros Iakovidis to the excavation, who “with his customary accuracy and sense of aesthetics”²⁶ fully mapped them.²⁷

“The Pylian funerary architects were able to cut into the rock very beautiful tombs and shape them into the canonical geometric form, which was much more strenuously and expensively applied in stone in the case of tholos tombs”. According to Marinatos, the protruding rounded or discoid boss at the top, 10–15 cm in diameter, and a few centimetres deep, might have facilitated the rotation of the pointer, which, in the form of a wooden right-angled triangle, would have

in the Maniatis field). This necropolis, situated not far away from Volimidia, has not been further investigated since, although “its importance lies in that it is later than Volimidia, assigned, on the basis of the up to now presented evidence, to the final period of the Mycenaean civilisation” (Marinatos 1957, 305–306). The site is also known as Ayios Ioannis, see Hope Simpson 2014, Site 41A.

¹⁷ Korres 1981, 725; Kountouri 2002, 9.

¹⁸ Davis et al. 1997; Cosmopoulos 2016, 93–102, 203–213, figs. 53, 59, 114–116.

¹⁹ Vlachopoulos, forthcoming. This picture, after all, is also compatible with the conservative character of the necropolis during the main period of its function (LH IIIA–B), as Kountouri 2002, 468 (LH IIIA), 474–475 (LH IIIB), 482–483, has shown, stressing the lack of weapons, tools, jewellery and other objects of high art in the tombs.

²⁰ Marinatos 1956, 246.

²¹ Marinatos 1955, 495.

²² Marinatos 1956, 238.

²³ Marinatos 1956, 247–248.

²⁴ Marinatos 1956, 242.

²⁵ Marinatos 1955, 494.

²⁶ Marinatos 1957, 299.

²⁷ Marinatos 2014, IX–XI. Selected plans of the tombs that had been excavated and mapped in 1952–1954 were presented by Iakovidis a few years later (Iakovidis 1966), and fully published and edited by the same in a special volume of the Archaeological Society (Marinatos 2014).

assisted in designing the contour of the chamber,²⁸ a view that Marinatos himself revised,²⁹ when he realised that the boss at the top “does not coincide with the geometric centre of the tomb”.³⁰ Iakovidis, more convincingly, suggested that “the peculiarities of the Volimidia tombs constitute an intentional imitation of the shape and the approximate dimensions of the stone-built tholos tombs, where these features reflect structural needs and building methods”,³¹ and he maintained that these cavities are directly related to the key-stone at the top of the built tholos tombs.³² Marinatos, on the other hand, had supported the early date of the chamber tombs with the argument that “there are no tholos tombs of an earlier date than the LH I chamber ones of Pylos”, and therefore “the circular or ‘vaulted’ shape was invented or applied first for the rock-cut tombs and subsequently reproduced in stone, in places where the bedrock was not suitable for safe rock-cut structures”.³³

The issue of the early date of the chamber tombs as opposed to the tholoi of the Pylos region has not been clarified at all, since the two main tomb types of the early Late Bronze Age in the region appear to have followed parallel but distinct trajectories.³⁴ This issue was not determined only by the raw material itself (suitability of soft bedrock or sufficiency of stones), but also by the desire of the community to opt for one or the other type of tomb for its deceased members. The key difference between the two types has to do with the form and potential use of the tombs. On the one hand, a chamber tomb cemetery is an extensive necropolis comprising a number of similar burial chambers for collective burials, and is quite clearly related to a sizeable settlement. The tholos tombs on the other hand appear isolated or in pairs and judging from the large input of human labour required for their construction and that the maximum available space was just sufficient for the dead of a single family or lineage, apparently belonged to prominent members of the society, rulers or regional grandees.

The Layout of the Tomb Clusters

The cemetery of Volimidia was excavated in the years 1952–1954, 1960, 1964, 1965, and four clusters of chamber tombs were unearthed within a small distance from one another.³⁵ The clusters of Marinatos’ excavation were named after the owners of the relevant plot: the Angelopoulou cluster with ten tombs, the Koroniou cluster with six tombs, the Tsoulea/Voria cluster with seven tombs, the Kephalyvryso cluster with seven tombs, and the Mastorakis field with one tomb (Fig. 1). However, geophysical prospection conducted at a later stage by Georgios S. Korres has shown that these groups of tombs are not distinct from one another, but together form an extensive single cemetery.³⁶ Unfortunately, this research remains unpublished and no data on the original density of the chamber tombs has been presented so far.

The excavation of the Angelopoulou Chamber Tombs 4–9 revealed that these were hewn into the bedrock (with the chamber in the east and the dromos in the west) in accordance with the principle of exact axis alignment,³⁷ a feature that implies the existence of a road that would have provided access to the cluster under discussion. From this point onwards, the gently sloping

²⁸ Marinatos 1955, 494.

²⁹ Marinatos 1956, 241–242.

³⁰ Marinatos 2014, 36, plan 10.

³¹ Marinatos 2014, 25 n. 2.

³² Iakovidis 1966, 108–111.

³³ Marinatos 1955, 494.

³⁴ The earliest tholos tomb in the Pylia, that of Koryphasion-Osmanaga, dates to MH III/LH I (Iakovidis 1966, 110–111; Lolos 1987, 492–494; Zavadil 2013, 54, 110–112) and is as early or earlier than the first chamber tombs of Volimidia.

³⁵ Marinatos 2014, 2, plan 2.

³⁶ Kountouri 2002, 3 n. 12. See also Zavadil 2013, 203.

³⁷ Marinatos 1956, 240, fig. 1; Marinatos 2014, 35, fig. 2.

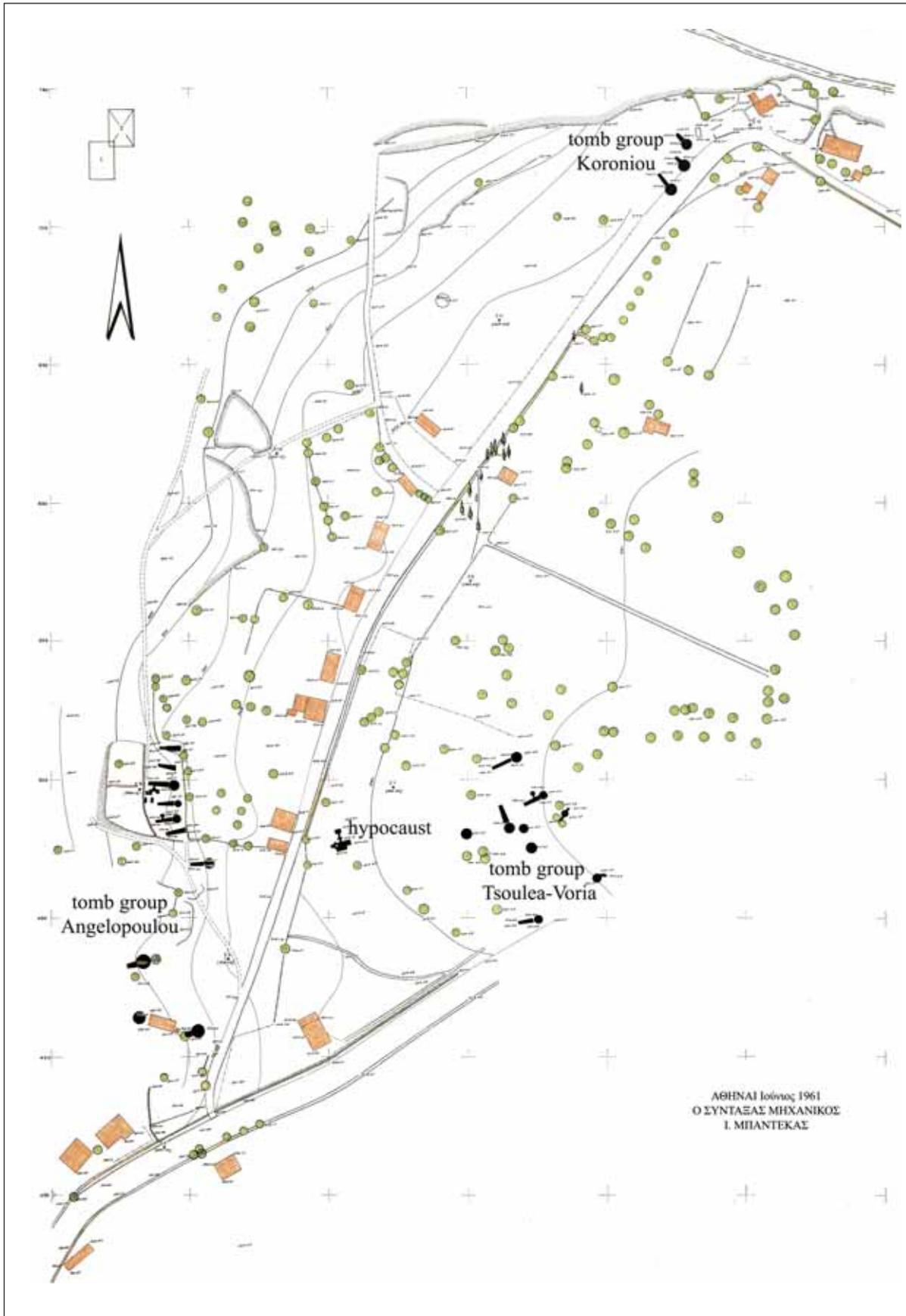


Fig. 1: Plan of the Volimidia chamber tomb cemetery, 1961 (Archive of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

ground leads down to a shadowy torrent, commanding an uninterrupted view westwards.³⁸ A similar layout, but with the dromoi facing northwest, can be observed with the Koroniou cluster in the vicinity of Kephlovryso that underlines the same planning intention and probably shows the existence of a road there as well. In contrast to these two clusters, the layout of the chambers in the Tsoulea/Voria group appears to be coincidental.

In the evaluation of the data from the LH I–II periods at Volimidia, further below, we monitor the chronological and topographic development of the clusters. With the data of the early Mycenaean phases we attempt to define the extent of the first necropolis and trace the chronological and functional relationship of LH I–II funerary vases with the smaller number of MH type or MH tradition, with which they co-occur.³⁹ Since the typology of some vases from the Volimidia tombs can be traced back to a Middle Helladic tradition, there is an apparent need for a comprehensive review of the pottery in the MH tradition in the Pylos region that is mainly based on the relevant excavation contexts. A study of this range will not only bring forward valuable synchronisms between the ceramic production of MH tradition and Mycenaean style, but it will also substantiate the longevity of the Middle Helladic background.

Koroniou Cluster

The cluster includes six tombs and covers the northernmost area of the cemetery. It is the remotest one, lying 200 m northeast of the Angelopoulou and 200–230 m north of the Kephlovryso cluster.⁴⁰

The first reported early Mycenaean sherds (assigned to LH I by Marinatos) from Volimidia are those found in Koroniou Tomb 1 (K-1),⁴¹ which could not be located in the Chora Museum (CM) during the study season. Sherds “of a slightly earlier” than LH III date are mentioned in relation to the very poorly furnished Tomb K-2.⁴²

The “beautiful” Tomb K-3 is of substantial size: it has a 5.30 m-long dromos; its chamber is 5.30 m in diameter and 2.50 m in height, the upper 10 cm corresponding to a protruding rounded boss.⁴³ On the tomb floor there were small shallow pits, semi-circular or elliptical in shape, into which “the bones were placed, occasionally along with some funerary offerings of previous burials, whenever these were moved to make room for new ones”.⁴⁴ The pits were cut into bedrock around the periphery of the chamber, often taking the form of a niche. Tomb K-3 had seven such niches and pits, which contained bones and skulls of older burials in a bad state of preservation as well as a handful of funerary offerings.

In one of the pits two vases were found, the squat jugs CM 43 and CM 44 (FS 87)⁴⁵ in secondary deposition, a co-occurrence possibly reflecting their use as a set of drinking vases that had initially

³⁸ Marinatos 2014, pls. I–II.

³⁹ The MH pottery of the Pylos has been the subject of Aphroditi Chasiakou’s unpublished doctoral dissertation (Chasiakou 2003). On the ‘crucial’ importance of the MH vases and sherds in the Volimidia tombs, see Chasiakou 2003, εισαγωγή (introduction), 21.

⁴⁰ Boyd 2002, 138.

⁴¹ Marinatos 1955, 474; Marinatos 1956, 238. See Marinatos 2014, 5, plan 1.

⁴² Marinatos 1955, 475.

⁴³ Marinatos 1955, 475–481; Marinatos 2014, 8, plan 2; Kountouri 2002, 28–29. The quality of manufacture may be related to the early date of the tomb, which had been partially excavated in 1929 and had yielded “at least three intact vases” and “a statuette of white clay”.

⁴⁴ Marinatos 1955, 477–478.

⁴⁵ Lolos 1987, 199, figs. 338–339; Antoniou 2009 does not examine type FS 87. With Pit 1 Antoniou 2009, 275–280, 664, figs. 1–2, associates the hemispherical bowl CM 52 and identifies it with type FS 111 of LH I. The same vase, according to Kountouri 2002, 28–29, 230–231, belongs to the chamber floor deposit and is assigned by her to type FS 219–220 of LH IIIA1.

accompanied one of the first dead buried in the chamber.⁴⁶ In terms of typology, the two jugs differ only slightly from each other and date to LH I. The two vases appear to be locally made and share the same manufacturing principles and ‘syntax’ of decoration, the main motif being spirals (FM 46), which on the squat jug CM 43 (Fig. 2.1–2) encircle a foliate band (FM 64). The fact that this combination of motifs finds an exact parallel in a LH I jug from Grave Circle A of Mycenae⁴⁷ is quite helpful. Tangent spirals with blobs (as on CM 44: Fig. 2.3–4) are a very common motif of LH I,⁴⁸ especially in Messenia⁴⁹ and southern Elis (Kakovatos, Samikon),⁵⁰ echoing the numerous direct contacts that developed very early between the Pylos and northern Triphylia.⁵¹

In another pit, a group of six flint arrowheads was unearthed, while a second group of five arrowheads was found somewhere else on the floor, raising the total of “never-used” arrowheads to eleven. Near the second group a core of brown flint was located, suitable for the extraction of arrowheads.⁵²

Three pits aligned east-west were dug into the chamber floor (one of them covered with slabs) that had all remained undisturbed. The pit at the back of the chamber contained two skeletons.⁵³

Between the knees of the overlying skeleton, which was placed head-to-west, but “not in their original position”, the fragments of two vases were located. When put together they turned out to be a “noticeable cup”,⁵⁴ which is the spectacularly decorated LH IIA goblet CM 46, and a “hand-made” and “contemporaneous to the former”, which is the feeding bottle CM 51, a vase in MH tradition.⁵⁵ Marinatos, however, did not reject the possibility that the two vases had initially belonged to the deceased lying at the bottom of the pit, whom he identified as a “young adolescent”.⁵⁶

The wide-mouthed spouted vase that we conventionally call a feeding bottle (our example, undecorated, 0.19 m high, and equipped with a long spout and a basket handle) is a mainland type that occurs in the Pylos region in LH I (Voroulia)⁵⁷ and later contexts.⁵⁸ At Volimidia it is also encountered in Kephallouvrissa Tomb 7.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the goblet CM 46 (FS 262) (Fig. 2.5–6) corresponds to a typical LH IIA shape known throughout the Peloponnese and mainland Greece,⁶⁰ the motif of the double axe with wavy double stem⁶¹ (FM 35) supports this date.⁶² Moreover, the Volimidia goblet served as a container, not as a ‘goblet-rhyton’⁶³ with a hole at the

⁴⁶ Pairing of vases is an interesting topic in connection with the manner of their use and drinking rituals during the early LH period in the Aegean (i.e. at Akrotiri, Thera), see Nordquist 1999 and Platon, forthcoming. For pairs of stirrup jars of later periods, see Vlachopoulos 2006.

⁴⁷ RMDP, 82, fig. 10.9. For the foliate band in LH I, see RMDP, 53, fig. 82.2 (Lakonia); 307, fig. 104 (Messenia).

⁴⁸ RMDP, 69, fig. 9a; 80–82, fig. 10.1–2, 5, 8–9 (Argolid); 202, fig. 62.3 (Corinthia); 253–254, fig. 82.4, 8–9, 12 (Lakonia); 500, fig. 178.1, 7–8; 867, fig. 353.3 (Keos); 894, fig. 363.6–8 (Melos); 965, fig. 394.2 (Thera).

⁴⁹ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a; 315, fig. 105.5, 7.

⁵⁰ RMDP, 372, fig. 128.3, 7.

⁵¹ RMDP, 369; Nikolentzos 2011, 24, 334–336, 341–342; Eder 2011, 105–110.

⁵² Marinatos 1955, 479, fig. 4 (top left).

⁵³ Marinatos 1955, 480, fig. 5.

⁵⁴ Marinatos 1955, 480, fig. 6, “cup of LH I or earliest LH II, around 1500 BC”.

⁵⁵ For the shape in MH pottery, see Cosmopoulos 2014, 229, fig. 175.

⁵⁶ Marinatos 1955, 481–442, figs. 7–8.

⁵⁷ Lolos 1987, 355–356, fig. 86b; Chasiakou 2003, Εισαγωγή (introduction), 19, σύνθεση δεδομένων κεραμεικής (pottery data synthesis), 21, type 04, 575–578, 1284–1288, 1418–1419.

⁵⁸ Blegen et al. 1973, 196–198, fig. 249.7–9.

⁵⁹ Marinatos 1967, pl. 119c.

⁶⁰ Peloponnese: RMDP, 96, fig. 16.65–68 (Argolid); 206, fig. 63.19 (Corinthia); 258, fig. 84.34–35 (Lakonia); 323, fig. 108.25 (Pylos); 509, fig. 180.40–41 (Attica). On other regions, see RMDP, 1999, 1228.

⁶¹ RMDP, 87, fig. 12.24–26; 94, fig. 15.55 (Argolid); 258, fig. 84.28 (Kythera); 502–503, fig. 178.10, 12; 507, fig. 180.35 (Attica); 651, fig. 247.4 (Boiotia); 867, fig. 357.39 (Keos); 894, fig. 363.13; 900, fig. 365.40 (Melos). The motif, however, may also date back to LH I; RMDP, 83, fig. 11.17 (Argolid). For the LH I double axe with single straight stem, see RMDP, 254, fig. 82.13 (Kythera); 867, fig. 353.4 (Keos).

⁶² Cf. Rutter 1993, 60–62, fig. 5.1–2 (LH IIA, Tsoungiza). Double axes featuring in panels filled with dotted lines find a parallel in a LH IIA rhyton from Thermon (RMDP, 799, fig. 1319.3).

⁶³ Lolos 1987, 199, fig. 340; Antoniou 2009, 287–290, cat. no. 23, fig. 37, with thorough discussion of the LM IB prototypes of the shape. See RMDP, 323.

bottom as parallels from Crete and the Cyclades would show.⁶⁴ The macroscopic examination of the vase shows that it is an import from Kythera,⁶⁵ where in the LM IB stratum of Kastri a fragment from the base of a similar goblet has been found, also without hole.⁶⁶

The co-occurrence of the handmade plain feeding bottle of MH type with the LH IIA goblet in the pit of Tomb K-3 attests to the contemporaneity of vases of MH tradition with early Mycenaean painted pottery in Messenia rather than indicating a potential selective survival of MH vases as heirlooms of funerary use. The synchronism of MH ceramic wares with the early Mycenaean pottery in the Pylos region has already been borne out by the closed LH I assemblages from Voroulia near Tragana, from Nichoria and from the East House in Peristeria,⁶⁷ as well as from the funerary assemblages of northern Triphylia,⁶⁸ and it is ascertained even further by the early assemblages of funerary offerings from Volimidia, as will become evident in the present article.

Apart from establishing a chronological and ‘cultural’ synchronism, the co-occurrence of the handmade Helladic spouted vessel with the Kytheran luxury vase provides, quite early in the sequence, illuminating evidence on the functional and customary combination of the “stamnos-jar for wine” (as the feeding bottle has been beautifully described by Marinatos) with a vessel suitable for the consumption of liquids in feasts.⁶⁹ The holes for the attachment of (lead?) clamps on the vertical walls of the goblet, opposite the handle, demonstrate a successful ancient mending but do not restore the functionality of the goblet as a drinking vessel.⁷⁰

Also dated to the LH IIA period is the Vapheio cup CM 45 (Fig. 2.7–8) with its markedly conical upper and the narrow-cylindrical lower profile that was decorated with a stylised foliate band (FM 64). According to the typological classification of the material from Kastri on Kythera⁷¹ it belongs to Type III of these shapes.⁷² It is considered to be the mainland version of this popular Minoan shape, which was widely adopted in LH I.⁷³ The exact findspot of the Vapheio cup CM 45 within the chamber is not known, its presence nevertheless constitutes evidence for at least a third funerary ‘episode’ in the course of the early history of the tomb.

In summary, the two jugs in the pit suggest LH I as the earliest period of use of Tomb K-3, when it was cut into the rock as well. The following archaeologically visible phase is LH IIA that is represented by two vases (feeding bottle and goblet) from a pit in the floor and the isolated Vapheio cup. Moreover, the dating of the earliest period of the tomb’s use matches the typology of the flint and obsidian arrowheads, which were found in another pit as well as on the floor of the chamber.⁷⁴

Tomb K-4 is very little documented.⁷⁵ On the ground plan we see that it has a stepped dromos, two large niches in the periphery of the chamber, while on the chamber floor there is one elongated

⁶⁴ Antoniou 2009, 288–289.

⁶⁵ An archaeometric project for the study of the Volimidia pottery has been envisaged in collaboration with Evangelia Kiriati (Fitch Laboratory, BSA Athens).

⁶⁶ Coldstream – Huxley 1972, pl. 44.109. Birgitta Eder (pers. comm.) also identified the cut-away jug CM 137 (A-8) as an import from Kythera. See Kountouri 2002, 18, 444, pl. 76.

⁶⁷ Lolos 1987, 329. For Voroulia, see Chasiakou 2003, Βορούλια (Voroulia), 4–8, 123–131, 569–662.

⁶⁸ Nikolentzos 2011, 143–144.

⁶⁹ For the shape of the so-called feeding-bottle and the particularly dense distribution of its large-sized versions in the Pylos region throughout the Mycenaean period, see Vlachopoulos 2012, 111–112.

⁷⁰ Evidence of metal clamps for mending pottery appears since the Neolithic period on the body of all kinds of vases, with a particularly increased rate of occurrence on luxury or display vases of the Mycenaean period. For this topic, see Vlachopoulos 1999, 76.

⁷¹ RMDP, 248, 253–254. See Lolos 1987, 249–260.

⁷² Rutter 1993, 65, fig. 6.15 (LH IIA, Tsoungiza). See, RMDP, 206, fig. 63.14 (Korakou, exact parallel in decoration); 70, 95, fig. 15.60; 323, fig. 108.24; 509, fig. 180.39; 877, fig. 357.43–44; Nikolentzos 2011, 145–146, pl. 67. The type also dates to LH IIB (RMDP, 656, fig. 349.40–41; 701, fig. 269.17; 748, fig. 288.9; 801, fig. 319.13), see Lolos 1987, 199, 539–540, fig. 341 (phase 3 of Messenian LH I).

⁷³ Dickinson 1974, 115; Nikolentzos 2011, 145–146.

⁷⁴ For these (principally) LH II obsidian and flint arrowheads from the tumuli at Vrana, Marathon, see Matzanas 2010, 34–36, pl. 9; Matzanas 2016. Similar arrowheads were found in Tomb K-5 (Marinatos 1956, 238).

⁷⁵ Marinatos 1956, 238; Marinatos 2014, 28–31, plan 7.



Fig. 2: Vases 1-8: Tomb K-3; 9-10: Tomb K-4; 11-12: Tomb K-6; 13-17: Tomb A-1

pit and another one with an in situ burial. Tomb K-4 is not mentioned by Eleni Kountouri⁷⁶ and contained no intact LH I–II vases. It belongs to the K-1, 3, 4, 5 group of tombs with their funerary offerings being “few in number and of common types, because the tombs had been denuded of offerings, due to their long-term use”. “All of these tombs are circular in shape, the dead are placed in an extended position on the floor or in a pit dug into the floor, while the bones of the earlier burials are to be found in small pits or niches cut into the rock around the periphery of the chamber”.⁷⁷

In the storeroom of the Chora Museum two vases were located. The conical cup (without inv. no.) (Pit 6 [?]) (Fig. 2.9) and a cup with raised handle (without inv. no.) (Pit 1) (Fig. 2.10) both dated earlier than LH III. The conical cup belongs to the earlier type of such cups at Volimidia (see below CM 2998). The shallow loop-handled unpainted cup may be an early version (LH IIA) of the dipper (FS 236)⁷⁸ or of the LH IIA–B ring-handled cup (FS 237).

The jug with raised handle CM 61⁷⁹ of MH tradition (from “the inner cave”) and the LH I–IIA Vapheio cup (Type II) CM 57 (from Pit 8) (Fig. 2.11–12) establish the early use of Tomb K-6, with 14 niches and pits in it. The latter is decorated with alternating tangent spirals and dotted blobs,⁸⁰ a motif mainly known from LH I⁸¹ that favours the dating of the vase to this period.

The intact assemblage of bronze and stone tools found in Pit 5⁸² of Tomb K-6 demonstrates that the chambers were not exhaustively looted and that the burials were initially accompanied by valuable funerary offerings as well.

The Koroniou cluster of six tombs, was therefore set up in LH I, with at least two tombs containing secondary burial depositions of the LH I and LH IIA periods and another two preserving traces of early use.

Angelopoulou Cluster

Approximately 200 m from the Koroniou cluster of tombs, the Angelopoulou cluster came to light, comprising ten tombs (A-1, A-2, A-4–11),⁸³ while north of it lies the Mastoraki property.⁸⁴ The Angelopoulou, Voria and Kephlovryso tomb clusters extend over a more or less undivided area of the cemetery, measuring 250 m east-west by 100 m north-south.

Marinatos chose to excavate Tomb A-1 “for its size and beautiful appearance”, although it was thoroughly disturbed.⁸⁵ The chamber measured 6.10 × 5.90 m, reaching a maximum of 2.20 m in height with steeply rising curvature. It is the biggest tomb of the Volimidia cemetery. Its fill deposit contained 2–3 LH I sherds, and many LH II–III pottery fragments. A handful of vases (alabastra and piriform jars) were found intact or almost intact, “one of which, a three-handled piriform jar, is illustrated”⁸⁶ (CM 300). Among the finds there were also six flint and obsidian arrowheads, all with broken tips, two steatite spindle whorls and a cylindrical agate bead,⁸⁷ making up an assemblage that was not often encountered at Volimidia, where, in general, small finds

⁷⁶ Kountouri 2002.

⁷⁷ Marinatos 1956, 238.

⁷⁸ RMDP, 652, fig. 248.16 (LH IIA, Orchomenos).

⁷⁹ A. Chasiakou, pers. comm.

⁸⁰ RMDP, 253–254, fig. 82.8–11; 307, fig. 104d–e; 315, fig. 105.7; 894, fig. 363.7–10; 1081, fig. 442.1 (LH I); 94, fig. 15.59; 206 fig. 63.15; 877, fig. 357.41–42, 45 (LH IIA); Lolos 1987, fig. 342.

⁸¹ RMDP, 80–82, fig. 10.2, 8 (Argolid); 202, fig. 62.3 (Corinthia); 252, fig. 82.3 (Lakonia).

⁸² Kilian-Dirlmeier 2009, 384, no. 12; Marinatos 2014, 33, fig. 1.

⁸³ Lolos 1987, 196; Boyd 2002, 140.

⁸⁴ Boyd 2002, 138.

⁸⁵ Marinatos 1955, 483–486; Marinatos 2014, 13, pl. 3; see Kountouri 2002, 14–15.

⁸⁶ Marinatos 1955, 483, fig. 9 right.

⁸⁷ Marinatos 1955, 483–484, fig. 4 (lower row and left in the middle).

are sparse, especially in secondary depositions. Of two pits in the floor, the one on the left contained a female burial with a bone pin on her chest, which was broken at its tip.⁸⁸

Tomb A-1 yielded at least five LH II vases, besides the LH IIB three-handled piriform jar CM 300 that was not available for study.⁸⁹ However, due to thorough disturbance no taphonomic data are available and it is therefore impossible to extract any valid information on the potential correlations among the finds.

These vases are the squat alabastron CM 295 (FS 83) decorated with curve-stemmed ivy⁹⁰ (Fig. 2.13–14), the squat alabastron with horizontal banding (without inv. no.) (Fig. 2.15), the upper half of a squat jug (FS 87) or narrow-necked jug (FS 118) CM 296 with ivy decoration (Fig. 2.16), the fragmentary Vapheio cup (without inv. no.) (Fig. 2.17) and the jug with cutaway neck CM 298 (FS 135)⁹¹ (Fig. 3.18–19).

The piriform jar CM 300 was not on display in the showcases of the Chora Museum, nor was it located in the storeroom of the museum. The miniature piriform jar (FS 28, 33)⁹² is 6.7 cm high, decorated in naturalistic combination with ivy (FM 12) and rock pattern (FM 32) (Fig. 3.20). The best parallel is a similar jar from Pylos (LH IIB).⁹³

The presence of the vase types of the alabastron (FS 83), small jug (FS 87 or FS 118), jug with cutaway neck (FS 135) and piriform jar (FS 28) confirms the LH IIB use of the tomb, something that is further attested by the repetition of ivy (FM 12) on all four vases.⁹⁴ The beautiful jug with cutaway neck CM 298 (Fig. 3.18–19) finds a good parallel in the slightly earlier phase (LH IIA) of the Englianos tombs, where the Minoan prototype of this locally made vase is present.⁹⁵ The dense rippling and the pronounced midrib of a Vapheio cup (without inv. no.) indicate that this vase most probably complies with Type III of LH IIA.⁹⁶ On the basis of these arguments, the pottery provides evidence that the chamber was hewn into the bedrock in this period.

Tomb A-4 is “large and beautiful”⁹⁷ (d. 5 m), but was found completely disturbed. It contained the LH I Vapheio cup CM 326 (FS 224)⁹⁸ (Fig. 3.21–22) and the LH IIA squat jug CM 329 (FS 87)⁹⁹ (Fig. 3.23) that were found in Niches 7 and 6, respectively.¹⁰⁰ The Vapheio cup CM 326 is a typical example of the LH I Type I with an exact parallel in terms of shape and decoration (FM 46 tangent spiral) from Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia.¹⁰¹ The squat jug CM 329, decorated with hatched loops (FM 63), is as typical for LH IIA (northern Triphylia,¹⁰² Lakonia,¹⁰³ the Argolid,¹⁰⁴ and Melos¹⁰⁵) as the stylised miniature crocus (FM 10) hanging from the neck band.¹⁰⁶

⁸⁸ Not located in the Chora Museum.

⁸⁹ See above, n. 86; Kountouri 2002, 14, describes the FS 28 “three-handled piriform jar with decoration of wavy curve-stemmed ivy with palm”, of LH IIB. Due to the confusion of labels in the relevant showcase of the Chora Museum, RMDP, 324, refers to this vase as deriving from the Voria-Tsoulea 1 cluster.

⁹⁰ Marinatos 1955, 491, fig. 9 left.

⁹¹ According to Kountouri 2002, 403, pl. 1, the vase dates to LH IIIA1.

⁹² RMDP, 208, fig. 64.38 (LH IIB, Corinthia); 259, fig. 85.41 (LH IIB, Lakonia); 261, fig. 85.53 (LH IIIA1, Lakonia).

⁹³ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.27.

⁹⁴ RMDP, 98, fig. 17.76, 78 (FS 83); 101, fig. 18.86; 209, fig. 65.45 (FS 87); 209, fig. 65.50 (FS 135).

⁹⁵ RMDP, 318–321, fig. 106.16.

⁹⁶ RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

⁹⁷ Marinatos 1956, 240, 242; Marinatos 2014, 37, plan 11.

⁹⁸ Lolos 1987, 200, 250, 408, fig. 629e; RMDP, 315 n. 106.

⁹⁹ Lolos 1987, 200, figs. 345, 669.2; RMDP, 318 n. 164.

¹⁰⁰ Kountouri 2002, 15–16; Antoniou 2009, 52–53, 667, figs. 13–14.

¹⁰¹ RMDP, 254, fig. 82.5. For the motif, see RMDP, 69, fig. 9c. On Type I see Antoniou 2009, 588–589, 597–598.

¹⁰² RMDP, 377, fig. 130.19–20. The largest assemblage of such vases comes from Samikon, where the examples range from the MH undecorated version up to the most common decorated type with hatched loops, Yalouris 1966, nos. 10–28, pls. 9–11, 12β–γ.

¹⁰³ RMDP, 255, fig. 83.18–20.

¹⁰⁴ RMDP, 89, fig. 13.35.

¹⁰⁵ RMDP, 896, fig. 364.16.

¹⁰⁶ RMDP, 83, fig. 11.20 (LH I); 748, fig. 288.4–5; 801, fig. 319.8–9; 872, fig. 355.21 (LH IIA).

The fact that vases dated to LH I and LH IIA occur in the tomb demonstrates its continuous use, while the placement of the two vases in two different niches may imply that they were initially associated with distinct primary burial assemblages.

Tomb A-5 contained “a relative abundance of Geometric vases, a bronze double axe, some bronze objects and a few fragments of amber”.¹⁰⁷ Vases of an early period are the plain two-handled goblet CM 370¹⁰⁸ of MH tradition (Fig. 3.24–25) and the LH IIA alabastron CM 367 (FS 89) decorated with dotted pattern (FM 76)¹⁰⁹ (Fig. 3.26–27), which has parallels from the Pylos region.¹¹⁰ The bronze double axe¹¹¹ and the amber objects¹¹² (with a particularly strong presence in the southwestern Peloponnese in LH I–IIA), in some respects are indicative of an early date and compatible with the corresponding ceramic funerary goods.

Tomb A-7¹¹³ features several niches (some double and one three-lobed) cut into the bedrock and densely laid out around the chamber. Two out of the three examined vases date to LH I, namely the Vapheio cup CM 168¹¹⁴ (Niche 10a) (Fig. 3.28) and the globular squat jug CM 172¹¹⁵ (Niche 5) (Fig. 3.29–30). The Vapheio cup CM 169 (Niche 9) was not available for study.¹¹⁶

The Vapheio cup CM 168 belongs to Type II and is part of the mainland LH I production as the frieze of antithetical arcs between linked bars indicates.¹¹⁷ The squat jug CM 172 (FS 87) combines a floral motif (FM 9: lily) with blobs, providing a typical and good example of LH I.¹¹⁸ If, as seems likely, the distribution pattern was one early vase per niche, then it is probable that each niche was allocated to a single secondary burial deposition. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that the vases of A-7¹¹⁹ are contemporaneous and could have been placed in the same niche if the secondary burial depositions were conducted in a disorderly manner.

Three more LH IIA vases come from Tomb A-7. CM 159 is most probably a squat jug (FS 87) (LH IIA). Its decoration is worn and much of the vase’s lower body is missing. The density of the hatched leaf-shaped loops (FM 63) around the shoulder point to the motif of hatched leaves growing from vertical stems,¹²⁰ but such a motif does not appear on small vases. It is then likely that this is an idiosyncratic version of individual hatched loops¹²¹ (see CM 329 from Tomb A-4, also with ivy).

The unpainted loop-handled cup CM 171 (Fig. 3.31) is a coarse version of the ring-handled cup (FS 237) (LH IIA–B, see CM 38 from T-5), which in LH IIIA1–2 is classified as FS 238.¹²² The unpainted goblet CM 174 (Fig. 3.32) is typologically unique at Volimidia because of its

¹⁰⁷ Marinatos 1956, 243.

¹⁰⁸ Examined by Chasiakou 2003, Part Γ2, 186–188, 1423 (Voroulia).

¹⁰⁹ RMDP, 89, fig. 13.36 (Argolid); 203, fig. 62.6 (Corinthia); 651, fig. 247.11 (Boiotia).

¹¹⁰ Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 234.21 (Englianos). For the rock pattern, see RMDP, 324, fig. 108.31 (LH IIB).

¹¹¹ The oldest bronze double axes on the mainland were found in the MH I tumuli at Kastroulia of Thouria (Rambach 2007, 145, fig. 23).

¹¹² Maran 2013.

¹¹³ Marinatos 1956, 245 (the tomb is not described); Marinatos 2014, 44, plan 14.

¹¹⁴ Lolos 1987, 200, figs. 347, 633e.

¹¹⁵ Lolos 1987, 201, fig. 346; Kountouri 2002, 17–18; Antoniou 2009, figs. 15–16 (the jug is mistakenly referred to as CM 173).

¹¹⁶ The Vapheio cup CM 169 is undecorated and represents an interesting shape with a small handle, rim with slight carination, high upper body, markedly raised midrib and thin base. Fabric red, height 0.105 m (data from the Chora Museum inventory).

¹¹⁷ RMDP, 69, fig. 9f (Argolid); 306–307, fig. 104f (Messenia).

¹¹⁸ Lolos 1987, fig. 346; RMDP, 307, 314 (Messenia); 373, fig. 128.6–7 (northern Triphylia); 500, fig. 178.8–9 (Attica).

¹¹⁹ The skeletal remains from the tombs were meant to be part of a study programme by S. Marinatos’ team, but the project was never completed. The niches, on the other hand, contained just a small amount of mixed skeletal material, probably not sufficient to supply evidence on the number of the deceased and other aspects of the primary burials.

¹²⁰ Kakovatos, Tholos Tomb A (Lolos 1987, figs. 474, 476; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.1).

¹²¹ Lolos 1987, figs. 506b, 508b, 509b–c, 510; RMDP, 375–377, fig. 130.19–20 (Samikon).

¹²² RMDP, 127, fig. 28.203; Kountouri 2002, 241–242.



Fig. 3: Vases 18–20: Tomb A-1; 21–23: Tomb A-4; 24–27: Tomb A-5; 28–34: Tomb A-7; 35–37: Tomb A-8

vertical rim. In the dromos fill the LH IIB three-handled squat alabastron CM 151 (FS 82) was found (Fig. 3.33–34).

Tomb A-8 was undisturbed, with seven niches at the periphery of the chamber.¹²³ A total of 25 vases were spread across the floor surface. The early pottery of the tomb includes¹²⁴ seven vases from the chamber and one from the dromos that, taken together, comprise the largest number of LH I–II vases ever found in a tomb at Volimidia: the straight-sided cup CM 124, the Vapheio cup CM 125 (Niche 2), the Vapheio cup CM 126 (Niche 4), the piriform jar CM 117, the askos CM 127, the two-handled alabastron CM 110, the three-handled alabastron CM 2597 and two-handled kylix CM 129 (dromos fill).

The cup CM 124 is decorated with fine dense rippling (Fig. 3.35–36).¹²⁵ Straight-sided cups are not included in Arne Furumark's shape repertoire and are assigned to LH I,¹²⁶ a period in which rippling is indeed particularly popular across the Pylia.¹²⁷

The Vapheio cups CM 125 (Fig. 3.37) and CM 126 (Fig. 4.38–39) belong to Type II and are decorated with tangent spirals with symmetrically placed blobs (FM 46).¹²⁸ These two vases form an identical 'pair',¹²⁹ albeit differing in terms of fabric and dimensions, and were found in different niches of the tomb. They belong to LH I and reproduce the most common type of decoration of such vases in the area,¹³⁰ with an exact parallel from Kephlovryso Tomb A (Keph-A)¹³¹ (CM 2999, see below).

The decoration on the two-handled piriform jar CM 117 (FS 27) of LH I date is quite similar (Fig. 4.40–41).¹³² The vase is a unique specimen of this kind from Messenia.¹³³

The ellipsoidal askos CM 127 is ascribed to FS 195 with its monochrome circles/loops and oblique lines recalling LH I examples (Fig. 4.42–43).¹³⁴ According to Penelope Mountjoy the solid circles in fact reflect LM IA ceramic prototypes and this illustrates the relations of Messenia with Crete in this period.¹³⁵

The two-handled alabastron CM 110 (Fig. 4.44–45) displays simple running spirals (FM 46) on the shoulder. It falls under the earlier two-handled FS 80 type with a good LH IIA parallel in Lakonia.¹³⁶ The small running spirals also point to a LH IIA date.¹³⁷

The alabastron CM 2597 (FM 32) with curvilinear rock pattern and wheel on the underside of the base (Fig. 4.46), but with rudimentary neck and baggy body, can be dated either to LH IIB or LH IIIA1–2.¹³⁸ However, a LH IIB date is more probable as on later examples the wheel painted on the underside was replaced by circles.

¹²³ Marinatos 1957, 345; Marinatos 2014, 46, plan 16, where the niches are numbered.

¹²⁴ Kountouri 2002, 18, mentions that the tomb contained three LH I vases and one of the LH II period (Lolos 1987, 201–202, figs. 343e, 344, 643a, 343f).

¹²⁵ Lolos mentions that it was found on the floor, not in a niche, a feature that, in conjunction with its shape, points to LH IIA: Lolos 1987, 201–202, 237–238, figs. 343f, 628g (LH I/IIA or LH IIA); however, LH IIA vases also occur in niches at Volimidia.

¹²⁶ RMDP, 316, 374, fig. 128.10 (Samikon); 1226. See also RMDP, 254, fig. 82.13 (Lakonia); 867, fig. 353.4 (Keos), and Lolos 1987, 233–239; Antoniou 2009, 587–588.

¹²⁷ RMDP, 306, 316, 323, fig. 108.24. On the Minoan prototype, see Betancourt 1985, 105, fig. 81, pl. 13C.

¹²⁸ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a. This type is particularly common on Thera, RMDP, 965, fig. 394.2.

¹²⁹ Lolos 1987, 201.

¹³⁰ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a; 315 n. 110.

¹³¹ Karagiorga 1976, 257, pl. 193δ.

¹³² This type has a limited distribution, RMDP, 80, fig. 10.2 (Argolid); 500, fig. 178.1 (Attica). A close parallel (FS 80) was found in Samikon: RMDP, 372, fig. 128.3.

¹³³ RMDP, 312.

¹³⁴ RMDP, 83 fig. 11.14 (Lerna); 314, fig. 105.4 (Pylos). See Lolos 1987, 327–328.

¹³⁵ RMDP, 314, fig. 105.4. The askos from Grave Circle B of Mycenae is Minoan (Mylonas 1972/1973, 154, pl. 133ε).

¹³⁶ RMDP, 255, fig. 83.15; 1217. See RMDP, 87, fig. 12.29 (Argolid).

¹³⁷ RMDP, 375, fig. 129.12 (Samikon); 318, fig. 106.14 (Pylos); 503, fig. 178.14 (Attica).

¹³⁸ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.30 (LH IIB); 325, fig. 109.35 (LH IIIA1); 334, fig. 113.64 (LH IIIA2). For a LH IIA example with curvilinear wheel see RMDP, 698, fig. 268.1 (Euboea).

The fact that each Vapheio cup was found in a different niche with secondary depositions leads to the same conclusion as has already been reached in the case of Tomb A-7. This implies that it is not unlikely that even with secondary burial deposits, each of the earlier burials were ‘honoured’ by the allocation of separate niches. A second conclusion refers to the identical decoration on three LH I vases in the grave, a feature that implies the popularity of certain pottery types and local, probably neighbouring, workshops. A final remark should be made regarding the diversity of the four LH I shapes in Tomb A-7, consisting of two Vapheio cup types and of two closed vases (piriform jar and askos). Such variety of shapes is unparalleled among the LH I chambers of Volimidia.

The unpainted two-handled kylix CM 129 (Fig. 4.47) found in the dromos fill represents a type between the goblet (FS 255) and the early kylix (FS 264) and dates to LH IIIA1.¹³⁹

The sealstone CM 2414¹⁴⁰ is suggestive of the richness (as well as the integrity) of Tomb A-7. It depicts a lion and an aquatic bird and is the work of an important LM I artist, the so-called ‘Jasper Lion Master’. It was found in Niche 1, while there is no recorded information on other finds from the same context.

In Tomb A-9, again three niches at the periphery of the chamber contained three LH I vases.¹⁴¹ The two-handled piriform jar CM 145 (FS 27) was preserved intact in Niche 1 (Fig. 4.48). It is the second case of a piriform jar in the Angelopoulou cluster, its shape being more elegant than that of piriform jar CM 117 from Tomb A-8. It dates to the LH IIA period, and the two rows of running spirals are also encountered on vases from Samikon.¹⁴² The vertical handles, as opposed to the loop-shaped ones of the Samikon vases, could be taken as an indication that the vase from Tomb A-9 was locally produced at a site near to Volimidia.

The LH I squat jug CM 144 (FS 87) was found in Niche 3 (Fig. 4.49). The stylised foliate band (FM 64) is a LH I motif, which is especially popular in Messenia,¹⁴³ Elis (Samikon)¹⁴⁴ and elsewhere.¹⁴⁵

The Vapheio cup CM 147 (Fig. 4.50) turned up in Niche 6. With a markedly raised midrib in the lower part of the body and with groups of lines in perpendicular and horizontal arrangement, which represent a rather uncommon type of decoration,¹⁴⁶ the cup is assigned to Type II¹⁴⁷ and dates to LH I.

The ratio one niche/one vase could further substantiate the concept that, by bringing into the niche one of the characteristic funerary offerings accompanying each one of the dead, niches may have served as an individual, and possibly symbolic, simulation for any secondary burial deposited in them.

The Angelopoulou cluster is hewn into the bedrock in the most “orderly planned” manner within the cemetery, with the chambers placed right next to each other and the dromoi uniformly aligned to the west. Out of the ten tombs in the Angelopoulou cluster, six contained, mainly in niches, remains of early Mycenaean burials (LH I–II), which appear to correspond to an equal number of primary burials that underwent secondary deposition from LH III onwards in response to the ongoing use of the already filled chambers.

The limited number of vases of MH tradition in the Angelopoulou cluster and the good representation of the LH I period with eleven vases in relation to the LH II period (five LH IIA and six LH IIB vases respectively) is in agreement with the spatial and chronological distance that

¹³⁹ RMDP, 331, fig. 111.53 (Pylos); 994, fig. 402.15 (Rhodes).

¹⁴⁰ CMS V.1, 241, no. 304; Aruz 2008, 167, fig. 330.

¹⁴¹ Marinatos 1956, 245 (the tomb is not described); Marinatos 2014, 43–47, plan 14.

¹⁴² Yalouris 1966, 24, pls. 14στ, 15α; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.12.

¹⁴³ RMDP, 307, fig. 104g–i.

¹⁴⁴ Yalouris 1966, 18, pl. 12α (small jug).

¹⁴⁵ RMDP, 69, fig. 9g–j; 80, fig. 10.3; 83, fig. 11.18 (Argolid); 253, fig. 82.2 (Lakonia); 894, fig. 363.9 (Melos).

¹⁴⁶ Lolos 1987, 252, fig. 349; RMDP, 315.

¹⁴⁷ RMDP, 253, fig. 82.5–12.



Fig. 4: Vases 38–47: Tomb A-8; 48–50: Tomb A-9; 51–52: Tomb T-1a; 53–54: Tomb T-5

separates it from the Kephlovryso cluster, which formed the nucleus and starting point of the cemetery in the advanced MH period.

Tsoulea/Voria Cluster

These tombs are situated c. 100 m to the east of the Angelopoulou cluster.¹⁴⁸ The cluster consists of seven tombs (T-1 has two chambers), which were cut into the rock in irregular order with their dromoi aligned differently.

Along with the cutting of the chambers into the rock, it was not uncommon in the early phases of the Mycenaean period to hollow out a second tomb with its entrance aligned perpendicularly to the wall of the dromos of the main chamber tomb.¹⁴⁹ This is the case with the (looted) Tomb Tsoulea/Voria 1a (T-1a), the early date of which is established by the occurrence of “a LH II alabastron”, which forms the only find from this small tomb.¹⁵⁰ However, its rather rough construction, “in contrast to the elaborate and quite often admirable style of rock-cutting in the remaining tombs” indicates that the early chambers were not of more careful work.¹⁵¹

The main Tomb T-1, the cutting of which evidently preceded that of the small Tomb T-1a, was found intact, but nonetheless, “traces earlier than the LH III period are scanty”¹⁵² and include the LH I unpainted cup CM 64 with loop handle (Pit 4) and the LH IIIA alabastron CM 76 (FS 85), which was found in the chamber (Fig. 4.52).¹⁵³

The cup CM 64 (Fig. 4.51) is a hybrid form of the FS 211 cup (see CM 790 from Keph-2), combining the unpainted LH I version (see CM 2940) of the shape with the raised handle seen on the LH IIA one-handed goblet (FS 262) (see CM 46, CM 2989). Its closest parallel at Volimidia is the unpainted cup CM 2993 (from Tomb Keph-B) of MH tradition, with a similar handle. Both vases date to the LH I period.

Vases of the LH II period were also found in the interesting Tomb T-5, which also contained the LH IIIC strainer hydria CM 20 and other vases of this period.¹⁵⁴ The earliest vases of the tomb are: the beaked jug CM 274, the bridge-spouted jug CM 275, the ring-handled cup CM 38 and the alabastron CM 37. The beaked jug CM 274 was found on the floor, the jug CM 275 in a “recess of the floor” and the alabastron CM 37 above Pit 1.

The elegant LH IIA beaked jug CM 274 (Fig. 4.53–54) combines (in respect to body and handle type) features of the jug with cutaway neck (FS 132) and of the beaked jug (FS 141). It is a typical LH IIA vase, which is popular in the Pylos region and probably of local manufacture,¹⁵⁵ displaying clear traits of Minoan influence from the part of the LM IB pottery of the Special Palatial Tradition.¹⁵⁶ Its decoration displays a beautifully executed ogival canopy (FM 13) echoing elements of the similarly Minoanising Arcade Group.¹⁵⁷

The semi-coarse painted bridge-spouted jug CM 275 (Fig. 5.55–56) is a unique shape in Volimidia. The vessel does not correspond to the LH IIA Type FS 103 of fine-ware bridge-spouted

¹⁴⁸ Marinatos 1966a, 200.

¹⁴⁹ Marinatos 1955, 487–491; Marinatos 2014, 18, plan 5.

¹⁵⁰ Marinatos 1955, 491, fig. 9 (left). However, this vase is the alabastron CM 295 from Tomb A-1, as is ascertained by the relevant entry in the museum inventory, as well as by the handwritten indication on the vase.

¹⁵¹ However, size is not a criterion for an early date either. Tomb T-7, 5.25 m in diameter, albeit one of the largest in the cemetery, had limited use, spanning only the LH IIIA–B period (Marinatos 1966b, 79–81).

¹⁵² Marinatos 1955, 490, figs. 12, 13.

¹⁵³ RMDP, 334, fig. 113.64 (see CM 2958).

¹⁵⁴ Marinatos 1957, 303, fig. 2; Korres 1993, 239, 241 fig. 2; Kountouri 2002, 22–23; Marinatos 2014, 56, plan 19; 58, fig. 11. For a special study of the strainer hydria CM 20 and the LH IIIC horizon of Tomb T-5, see Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

¹⁵⁵ RMDP, 318–320, fig. 106.16 (FS 132); 321, fig. 106.17 (FS 141).

¹⁵⁶ Betancourt 1985, pl. 21A.

¹⁵⁷ RMDP, 258, fig. 84.34–35. See Betancourt 1985, pl. 22A–B.

jugs of Minoan tradition,¹⁵⁸ which shape is also rare in Messenia.¹⁵⁹ LH IIA/B bridge-spouted jugs have a narrow neck, while the Volimidia vase is wide-mouthed, resembling the FS 158 bridge-spouted feeding bottle of LH IIA/B.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the jug CM 275 is made of a noticeably orange fabric and is possibly imported, although it cannot be attributed to a luxurious pottery production. In any case, it stands out as a hybrid shape, with Minoan elements, from the rich typological variety of LM IA/B jugs¹⁶¹ (thumb impression on the lower end of the handle,¹⁶² plastic fold on the rim).

The alabastron CM 37 (Fig. 5.60–61) belongs to the FS 63 straight-sided type of LH IIA with the motif of a hatched loop (FM 63) on the shoulder. It is painted on the underside of the base and has good parallels from the Englianos tombs.¹⁶³

The elegant ring-handled cup (FS 237) dates to LH IIB,¹⁶⁴ notwithstanding the fact that this shape, which is always decorated with ivy and other plant motifs, appears for the first time in LH IIA¹⁶⁵ as part of the trend to imitate motifs from Crete.¹⁶⁶ In the four-spiked plant motif on the interior of the cup CM 38 (Fig. 5.57–59) we recognise the motif of the ivy leaf, and possibly, too, that of the earliest papyrus flower (FM 11).¹⁶⁷ It has a good parallel from Makryisia (Elis), with twirling ivy stems. It dates to LH IIA and represents, in terms of shape, elements of an early date.¹⁶⁸ The oblique, left-facing flowers that cover the exterior of CM 38 may be stylised crocuses (FM 10) or lilies (FM 8).¹⁶⁹

Halfway between the Angelopoulou and Koroniou clusters lies Tomb Mastoraki 1 (Mas-1), which was found completely looted.¹⁷⁰ On the floor there were three pits and two niches. Among the objects left behind¹⁷¹ were “a few small vases”, including the squat alabastron CM 406 from Pit 1, another one CM 405¹⁷² (Fig. 5.62–63), and the two-handled goblet CM 410 (Fig. 5.64).

The alabastron CM 405 is a typical example of the FS 82.15 shape with the rock pattern (FM 32) of the LH IIB period,¹⁷³ common in Messenia.¹⁷⁴ The unpainted two-handled goblet CM 410 is either from the same period (FS 254) or from LH IIIA1 (FS 255).¹⁷⁵

Kephalovryso Cluster

It is situated 150–200m further east than the Voria cluster, along the east side of the local road to Kephalovryso,¹⁷⁶ which forms a dividing line between the two clusters.¹⁷⁷ The Kephalovryso cluster comprises one ‘shaft grave’ and nine chamber tombs.

¹⁵⁸ RMDP, 90, fig. 14.41.

¹⁵⁹ For a complete jug from Chalkias, see Antoniou 2009, 302, fig. 454, plans 18, 179. See RMDP, 318.

¹⁶⁰ RMDP, 92, fig. 15.50 (LH IIA); 514, fig. 182.69 (LH IIB).

¹⁶¹ Betancourt 1985, 123–124, fig. 94D, pls. 17A–B, G; 18G.

¹⁶² RMDP, 872–873, fig. 356.25 (Keos, LH IIA).

¹⁶³ Blegen et al. 1973, figs. 234.10, 21; 250.6; RMDP, 318, fig. 106.15. For a parallel from Lakonia, see RMDP, 256, fig. 83.21.

¹⁶⁴ RMDP, 324.

¹⁶⁵ RMDP, 95, fig. 15.61 (LH IIA); 101–103, fig. 19.91 (LH IIB).

¹⁶⁶ RMDP, 70–71.

¹⁶⁷ See the LH IIA Vapheio cup from Samikon: Yalouris 1966, pl. 14e; RMDP, 377, fig. 130.25 (LH IIA).

¹⁶⁸ Lolos 1987, figs. 578–581; RMDP, 378.

¹⁶⁹ See RMDP, 83, fig. 11.20 (LH I); 212, fig. 66.73 (LH IIB); 656–657, fig. 249.42–43 (LH IIB).

¹⁷⁰ Marinatos 1957, 305; Marinatos 2014, 60, plan 20.

¹⁷¹ Tongue-like dagger, beads made of glass paste and carnelian.

¹⁷² According to Kountouri 2002, 29, the two alabastra are of the LH IIB period and were found on the floor.

¹⁷³ RMDP, 98, fig. 17.73 (shape); fig. 17.74 (motif).

¹⁷⁴ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.30. For decoration on underside of the base, see RMDP 324, fig. 108.28–30.

¹⁷⁵ RMDP, 835, fig. 334.40–42; 880, fig. 359.57–60 (LH IIB); 113, fig. 23.135; 332, fig. 111.53; 1227 (LH IIIA1). On the globular LH IIA type FS 263, see Rutter 1993, 66, fig. 7.23–24 (Tsoungiza).

¹⁷⁶ Marinatos 1966b, 79–81.

¹⁷⁷ Boyd 2002, 138.



Fig. 5: Vases 55–61: Tomb T-5; 62–64: Tomb Mas-1

The most important funerary monument in it is the MH ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1¹⁷⁸ that determines the first chronological horizon when tombs were set up in the area of Volimidia. It also demonstrates that the mature MH stage (MM III) of its construction is earlier than and different from that of the first LH I chamber tombs at Volimidia, when vase shapes and decorative styles of MH tradition and early Mycenaean type were contemporaneously in use.¹⁷⁹

At a short distance to the southeast of Keph-1, Marinatos refers to an elongated pit as ‘shaft grave’ and to a circular pit to the southeast.¹⁸⁰ Albeit imperfect, this piece of evidence – with the validity of Marinatos’ field observations – conveys the picture of the ‘nuclear’ concentration of the MH graves and probably associated funerary activities in the area of Kephlovryso, from where the organised cemetery of chamber tombs of the LH I period developed. This manifests a conscious choice for continuity and ancestral reference as the strikingly early pottery of these tombs suggests in comparison to the neighbouring clusters.

A total of seven chamber tombs was excavated by Marinatos (and, later on, another two by Theodora Karagiorga: Keph-A, Keph-B¹⁸¹), but the location of quite a few chambers, in contact with or underneath the paved road, prevents the complete reconstruction of the cluster.¹⁸²

An overall topographic plan of the cluster, which was excavated in 1964 and 1965, was never produced. The only topographic plan of the Volimidia cemetery is that from 1961 (Fig. 1). Tomb Keph-5 was situated a few metres north of the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1,¹⁸³ adjoining the chamber of Keph-7.¹⁸⁴ Next to (the northwest corner of) tomb Keph-1 was Keph-6.¹⁸⁵

In Keph-2, an interesting group of LH I–IIA vases had been deposited.¹⁸⁶ Underneath a skeleton in an extended position was a “pit or two pit-like cavities, where, albeit not in association with a skeleton, only LH I–II vases were found”.¹⁸⁷ Marinatos illustrates the spouted cup CM 775¹⁸⁸ and two cups with tortoise-shell rippling (CM 788, CM 790).¹⁸⁹ The same pit, however, contained yet another cup (CM 789) as well as a stemmed one (CM 791). Eight niches were arranged around the periphery of the chamber, and the first one to the right contained the “Keftiu cup” CM 792.¹⁹⁰ Six of the niches “contain many bones, which were left to be cleaned away by Prof. E. Breitingner”. On the floor, among groups of LH IIIA–B vases, a small-sized undecorated spouted jug with straight spout¹⁹¹ was uncovered, a type known from LM IA prototypes,¹⁹² but, in this case, as Kountouri has pointed out, it is in fact a painted LH IIIA1–early IIIA2 vase.¹⁹³ The dromos niche contained a LH IIIA child burial. In the chamber a cattle sacrifice had taken place in the historical period.

The five ripple-decorated cups CM 775, CM 788, CM 789, CM 790, CM 791 from the same pit are associated with remains from the relocation of older burials in the chamber. However, if we

¹⁷⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 79, 86–89, fig. 1, pls. 82–83, 89–90, 91α; Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116; Lolos 1987, 203, figs. 350, 353, 356; Boyd 2002, 139; Zavadil 2013, 93–94, 334–337. For pottery of the tomb, see Lolos 1987, chapter 3 *passim*, figs. 357–366; Chasiakou 2003, Β’ Μέρος (2nd Part), B.I.10, 58–62, 837–847, 1690–1720.

¹⁷⁹ RMDP, 303.

¹⁸⁰ Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116α.

¹⁸¹ Karagiorga 1976, 256–258; Lolos 1987, 207.

¹⁸² In 1965, “the road from Chora to Kephlovryso is paved with asphalt” extending alongside the road tombs (Marinatos 1967, 102). “The largest of them all in the cluster” is Tomb Keph-4 (Marinatos 1967, 103, fig. 1). See Lolos 1987, 203–207; Boyd 2002, 139–140.

¹⁸³ Marinatos 1967, 104.

¹⁸⁴ Marinatos 1967, 105, fig. 2.

¹⁸⁵ Marinatos 1967, 106, fig. 3; Lolos 1987, fig. 353; Boyd 2002, 139.

¹⁸⁶ Marinatos 1966b, 83–85; Lolos 1987, 204; Boyd 2002, 139.

¹⁸⁷ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pls. 91δ, 93β–δ.

¹⁸⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 91δ.

¹⁸⁹ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 93β. The plate illustrates the cups CM 790 (left) and CM 788 (right).

¹⁹⁰ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 93α.

¹⁹¹ Marinatos 1966b, 84, pl. 91γ. The vase, according to Lolos 1987, 204, 301–302, fig. 371, dates to LH I–IIA and is a unique specimen of its kind on the mainland.

¹⁹² Betancourt 1985, 133, pl. 17F–G.

¹⁹³ Kountouri 2002, 26 n. 71.

consider what we know from the Angelopoulou cluster, it would not seem unlikely that this group of vases derived from a single relocation. No matter how it was formed, this, in terms of context, sealed group is exceptionally helpful for the study of the early Late Bronze Age material from the Pylos region. It is easily identified as the earliest LH I assemblage in the cemetery of Volimidia. Of particular interest also is the absence of vases of MH tradition in this tomb.

The elegant spouted cup CM 775 (FS 211) (Fig. 6.65–67) has a hemispherical body,¹⁹⁴ is decorated with a widely-spaced ripple pattern (FM 78), and is plain on the inside. The shape is popular in Messenia, but its protruding spout is not encountered anywhere else in the region, bearing a close resemblance to Minoan prototypes.¹⁹⁵ That shape imitates metal prototypes in all its features. The carination of the rim, the shaping of the wide spout imitating a hammered metal sheet, the handle with metal midrib and the ripple decoration that recalls the fluted surface of hammered vessels indicate the successful reproduction of a metal shape in clay.¹⁹⁶ The group of ripple decorated vases from the same pit substantiates the conclusion that ripple decoration appears on shapes indebted to metal prototypes (Vapheio cups, straight-sided cups and cups), and evidently emulates the gleam of the folds hammered into the gold sheet of the corresponding shapes.

The cup FS 211 is a Minoan (LM IA) shape,¹⁹⁷ its distribution reaching as far as the Cyclades and Kythera, and it was introduced on the mainland in the last phase of the MH period.¹⁹⁸ The earliest one in the Volimidia assemblage is the cup from ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and from Lolos’ point of view represents a Minoan import.¹⁹⁹ According to the same scholar, “the ‘ripple cups’ from Kephlovryso T. 2 [...] may on good grounds be attributed to the opening phase of the local LH I period. This stage, foretelling, it would appear, the full emergence of the Messenian LH I pottery style, seems to be marked by an increase in the number of Minoan or Minoanising imports into Messenia and by the first attempts by the local potters to reproduce some characteristic LM IA vase-types”.²⁰⁰

The two cups CM 788 and CM 791²⁰¹ of the FS 212 type of stemmed cups also belong to the earliest examples of the shape on the mainland that imitate Minoan prototypes.²⁰² The cups CM 788 (Fig. 6.68), CM 789 (Fig. 6.69–70), CM 790 (Fig. 6.71–72) and CM 791 (Fig. 6.73–74) are monochrome painted on the inside, a Minoan trait that reaches the hinterland together with the imitations of Cretan prototypes.²⁰³

The contribution of Kythera and of the Lakonian shores (Ayios Stephanos) in this process of ‘Minoanisation’ has been sufficiently demonstrated. What is currently being examined, however, is the parallel involvement of the coastal region of the Argolid (Lerna).²⁰⁴ In any case, the assemblage of ripple-decorated cups from Volimidia, as well as other contemporaneous examples from

¹⁹⁴ RMDP, 314–315, fig. 105.5. See also RMDP, 253, fig. 82.3–3 (Lakonia); 502, fig. 178.10 (Attica).

¹⁹⁵ Antoniou 2009, 589, 591, 595. The type is not commented upon by RMDP, 314–315.

¹⁹⁶ Such cups made of silver form part of the Tôd Treasure (Amenemhat II reign, 1919–1885 BC), see Pierrat-Bonnefois 2008. For metal Vapheio or Keftiu cups, which served as prototypes for their counterparts in clay, see Thomas 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Betancourt 1985, 105, fig. 77, pl. 13E (MM III); 131, fig. 99B, E (LM IA).

¹⁹⁸ Lolos 1987, 261–262, with bibliography; RMDP, 83, fig. 11.16–18 (Argolid); 965, fig. 394.1 (Thera); 1225.

¹⁹⁹ Lolos 1987, 262, figs. 360c, 635a.

²⁰⁰ Lolos 1987, 266, 517, 533–534.

²⁰¹ Lolos 1987, 264–265. In general, the stemmed cup rarely occurs before LH IIA, see RMDP, 83, fig. 11.19 (Argolid).

²⁰² Antoniou 2009, 589; Girella 2010, 869. “An early-looking ripple-decorated example from Grave Gamma in Circle B [...] is very likely to be LM IA” (Lolos 1987, 264–265, with discussion). See Mylonas 1972/1973, 67, pls. 52e, 231; Betancourt 1985, 113–114, fig. 87, pl. 15C–E. For more recent evidence on the production of the new motif of tortoise-shell ripple during MM III, see Hatzaki 2015; Betancourt et al. 2016.

²⁰³ Lolos 1987, 262. See Betancourt 1985, 131, fig. 99B (LM IA).

²⁰⁴ Lolos 1987, 265–266; Dickinson 1992, 110–111; RMDP, 19–20, 68, 247–248; Kiriati 2010, 690–693. See also Korres 1993 (Messenia); Dickinson 2014 (Lakonia).

the Pylos region (Nichoria, Routsis),²⁰⁵ would perhaps leave open the possibility of a more active and direct participation of Messenia in this process.

Assigned to the immediately succeeding stage of LH I²⁰⁶ is the Vapheio cup CM 792²⁰⁷ of Type II, which is decorated with metopal spirals (FM 46)²⁰⁸ (a variation of the same motif appears on the Vapheio cup CM 326 from Tomb A-4). A fragment from a similar cup with the same motif (but with a differently aligned set of obliquely linked bars), may belong to a second vase from the same deposit in the niche.

Tomb Keph-2, then, contained important vases of LH I (early and mature phase), and possibly of LH IIA, which display an array of Minoan elements as well as their quite interesting Helladic versions.

The intact Tomb Keph-3 is of particular interest with regard to the LH I–II period.²⁰⁹ The early squat jug CM 805 (λεβητοκούθιον) was lying over the head of a young female, who was buried in a deep pit approximately in the middle of the chamber, corroborating the practice of burials with only one funerary offering that we have suggested in the case of the niches of the Angelopoulou cluster.²¹⁰ Two more shallow pits were found empty. Around the periphery of the chamber there were eight niches filled with bones and skulls. One niche contained two knives, another one a small amphoroid jar with vestigial lugs and a small jug with cutaway neck, whetstones and tools. Yet another niche included a small two-handled closed jar, 0.10 m in height. Niche 8 produced two stone arrowheads. The squat jug and the vases from the niches date to LH I–II, the remaining vases to LH IIIA.²¹¹

The small amphoroid vase CM 803 and the jug with cutaway neck CM 801 were found in Pit 1, together with whetstones and tools, a probably redeposited group of funerary offerings from one and the same burial. The vases are undecorated. The jug with cutaway neck is a common shape of the latest MH/early LH I and LH I times, well documented in the Pylos region, where the shape appears either plain or matt-painted.²¹² The amphoroid vase with flask-like body, wide conical neck and two loop handles down the neck is, according to Lolos' view, idiosyncratic with MH elements.²¹³ Neither vase can be later than LH I.

The small jar CM 804 is a wide-necked stamnos with curved strap handles, ovoid body, cylindrical neck and flat rim as well as two holes at opposite ends under the rim.²¹⁴ The holes were opened before the firing of the vase and were meant for fitting a dowel through them, probably facilitating the application of a lid. The vase dates to the latest MH/early LH I times.

The squat jug CM 805 (Fig. 6.75–76), which accompanied the burial in the pit, is a LH IIA vase,²¹⁵ quite identical with the jug CM 329 (from A-4). The hooked spirals hanging from the neckband and the one standing left of the handle form a common subsidiary theme of this decoration.²¹⁶

Keph-4 had the largest chamber in the Kephlovryso cluster. It is 3.80 m in diameter, with one pit (Pit 1) in the floor of the chamber and two pits (Pits 2, 3) at the periphery.²¹⁷ Above Pit 1, the beaked jug CM 2926, decorated with horizontal bands and a zig-zag band (Fig. 6.77) was found,

²⁰⁵ Lolos 1987, 265–266, 426–430, fig. 392.

²⁰⁶ On the three 'stages' of the Messenian LH IA (according to Y. Lolos' classification), see Lolos 1987, 533–540.

²⁰⁷ Lolos 1987, 204, 408, fig. 370.

²⁰⁸ RMDP, 307, fig. 104c.

²⁰⁹ Marinatos 1966b, 81–83, pl. 94α–δ.

²¹⁰ A plain squat jug was the only funerary offering for the burial of Grave B in the Samikon Tumulus (Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β).

²¹¹ Marinatos 1966b, 82; Lolos 1987, 204–205; Kountouri 2002, 26–27.

²¹² Lolos 1987, 205, 358–359, fig. 372a. For parallels see Lolos 1987, figs. 70, 86a, 192, 206.

²¹³ Lolos 1987, 205, 365, fig. 372b.

²¹⁴ Lolos 1987, 205, 369–370, fig. 373.

²¹⁵ Lolos 1987, 205, fig. 374.

²¹⁶ RMDP, 87, fig. 12.29 (Argolid); 375, fig. 129.13 (Samikon).

²¹⁷ Marinatos 1966b, 83; Marinatos 1967, 102–104, fig. 1, pl. 115α; Kountouri 2002, 27, associates the feeding bottle CM 2931 with this tomb, but this vase in fact originates from Keph-7.



Fig. 6: Vases 65–74: Tomb Keph-2; 75–76: Tomb Keph-3; 77: Tomb Keph-4

while a second plain one (CM 2927) is reported from the tomb without reference to its specific find spot. Pit 2 produced the one-handed cup CM 2929 of MH tradition.

Beaked jugs feature among the most popular pouring vessels of the Bronze Age, uninterruptedly produced from the 3rd millennium BC onwards. In Messenia, the shape is attested in the MH period forming the prototype of the LH I beaked jug,²¹⁸ which subsequently developed into its LH IIA fine-ware ‘Minoanising’ version (see CM 274 from T-5). The two specimens from Keph-4 date to LH I, a period when both painted and plain versions of the beaked jug occur.

Keph-5 had an unusually elliptical chamber, its maximum length being 3.20 m and its width 1.40 m. It contained a large number of skulls and four vases, “all of them, though, of early Mycenaean local craftsmanship”.²¹⁹ One skull is associated with two whetstones, five boar’s tusks and a stone axe.²²⁰ It is not recorded whether some of the vases were found in the two niches and the one pit of the chamber. A straight-sided cup, a jug and two squat jugs form the vase assemblage from the tomb.

The straight-sided cup CM 2933 (Fig. 7.78) is monochrome painted on the interior and bears rudimentary band decoration on the body and the back of the handle.²²¹ The type appears to be the oldest one at Volimidia, with MH–LH I parallels from Tourkokivoura in Karpophora (one of these parallels is also monochrome painted on the interior and was probably imported).²²² Indicative of a similar degree of antiquity is the straight-sided cup and the two-handed amphora of MH tradition, which accompanied a burial in the tumulus of Samikon (Elis).²²³

The jug CM 2936²²⁴ (Fig. 7.79), with rudimentary band decoration on the upper parts of the vase and on the belly, conforms clearly to the Helladic character of MH matt-painted jugs.

The most interesting vases of the tomb are plain squat jugs CM 2934 (Fig. 7.80) and CM 2935 (Fig. 7.81), the former wide-mouthed, the latter rather narrow-necked. A shape of non-Minoan origin, the squat jug (FS 87) is the second most popular shape in the southwestern Peloponnese after the Vapheio cup.²²⁵ These “two very early-looking squat jugs of reddish clay”²²⁶ are plain, belonging to the group of undecorated (and sometimes handmade) examples in the Pylos region and in Triphylia.²²⁷

According to Lolos the four vases of Keph-5 are “certainly no later than LH I”,²²⁸ and, despite the fact that there are no data available on the taphonomy, it seems that Keph-5 is the next oldest chamber tomb at Volimidia after Keph-7, both tombs being slightly later than the late MH ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1.

The most revealing tomb of the early periods of the cemetery is Keph-6,²²⁹ which almost adjoined the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 situated a few metres to the north of Keph-5. The tomb is analogous to Keph-5 with a similar spade-shaped dromos aligned to the south, while its chamber is semi-circular, 3.20 m in diameter.²³⁰

²¹⁸ For the shape and its evolution from MH to LH I, see Lolos 1987, 358; Kountouri 2002, 134–135.

²¹⁹ Marinatos 1967, 104, fig. 2, pl. 120β; Lolos 1987, 205, figs. 375a–d, 376.

²²⁰ Marinatos 1967, 104–105, pls. 144β, 118, 119α. The boar’s tusks bear neither holes nor signs of having been processed in a manner suggesting connection with a boar’s tusk helmet. This funerary offering, though, is important even as a hunting trophy.

²²¹ For the shape, see CM 124 (Tomb A-8).

²²² Lolos 1987, 236, figs. 196–197, 628a–b. See also Girella 2010, 863.

²²³ Yalouris 1966, 10, pls. 5γ–δ, 14α, 20δ (Tomb ΙΔ’).

²²⁴ Lolos 1987, 205, 360–361, figs. 375b, 376a.

²²⁵ Lolos 1987, 274–285, figs. 637–638 (plain and matt-painted), 639–642 (decorated).

²²⁶ Lolos 1987, 205, 275, figs. 375a, c; 637g–h.

²²⁷ Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β; Lolos 1987, 274, 278–282.

²²⁸ Lolos 1987, 279, 361.

²²⁹ Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116β; Lolos 1987, 206, figs. 353–354; Boyd 2002, 139.

²³⁰ The short spade-shaped dromos of the Volimidia chamber tombs under discussion does not seem to be an indicator of an early date, but, in all probability, is the result of adaptation to the terrain, or a manufacturer’s choice. See Zavdil 2013, 98–101; Papadimitriou 2015, 85, 101, 105, 109.



Fig. 7: Vases 78–81: Tomb Keph-4; 82–90: Tomb Keph-6; 91: Tomb Keph-7; various sherds 92–93; arrowheads 94: Tomb Keph-A

Between the stones stacked in front of the tomb entrance (in fact, above them) a sacrifice had taken place. Among the animal bones and the burnt stones of the pile were fragments of a small number of vases “almost all of them mugs”, as well as a medium-sized “skyphos-krater of local imperfect craftsmanship and firing”, “all vases clearly evoking a MH tradition”.²³¹ The ‘skyphos-krater’ from the rough stone packing of the entrance is the plain two-handled goblet CM 2943,²³² 0.12 m in height, a vase “certainly no later than LH IIA (LH I?)”,²³³ with parallels in Messenia in LH I or mixed LH I–II contexts. Its co-occurrence “almost always with mugs” (probably Vapheio cups?) implies drinking practices as part of the customary sealing of the tomb. The evidence for the offering of a sacrifice in front of the entrance adds to an otherwise small number of relevant references to chamber tombs of the LH I period.²³⁴

The chamber did not contain undisturbed burials, only a few bones and skulls were preserved. All the small vases from the tomb, which featured two pits and three niches, are early Mycenaean.²³⁵

In Pit 2 lay the bronze pin CM 2937, the squat jug CM 2938 as well as the plain one-handled cup CM 2940, an interesting assemblage of LH I–IIA. The pin is 0.112 m in length, has a conical head, a knob and perforation. “Such pins appear only in late Mycenaean tombs, but here their occurrence is attested in a proto-Mycenaean environment”.²³⁶

On the east side of the floor of the chamber the following vases were found: the LH I rounded cup CM 2941,²³⁷ two painted vases of MH tradition, that is, the jug with cutaway neck and raised handle CM 2944 and the askos CM 2939, as well as, on its west side, the unpainted LH I squat jug CM 2942. It is interesting to note that the chamber of Keph-6 contained vases of the LH I–II period, which are contemporaneous to those of Pit 2, while also in the chamber two painted vases of MH tradition had been deposited, along with a luxuriously decorated cup and a plain Mycenaean one. This picture then captures all three ceramic traditions found in the early Mycenaean culture of the Pylos region.

The LH I rounded cup CM 2941 (FS 211) (Fig. 7.84–85) is one of the few cups with pictorial decoration featuring the crocus motif (FM 10) and has good parallels in the Pylos region,²³⁸ in Triphylia (Samikon)²³⁹ and the Argolid.²⁴⁰ The plain version of the shape includes the rounded cup CM 2940 (Fig. 7.83).

The LH IIA squat jug CM 2938²⁴¹ (FS 87) (Fig. 7.82) has been discussed together with the squat jugs CM 43 and CM 44 (Tomb K-3) and the other decorated examples from Volimidia. Close parallels from Samikon and Makryisia stress the strong local preference for the shape along the coastal zone of the southwestern Peloponnese.²⁴² The shape of the plain squat jug CM 2942 (Fig. 7.90) has been examined in the context of the jugs CM 2934, CM 2935 from Keph5. A particular feature of the present vase is its rudimentary disc base, which causes problems of stability. Perhaps these vases were not for everyday use and used only as funerary offerings.²⁴³

The jug with cutaway neck and raised handle CM 2944 (Fig. 7.86–87) of noticeably yellow clay that strongly recalls the MH Yellow Minyan Ware is an important vase, first for the elegance of its shape, but also because of its decoration: three bands encircle the shoulder just above the

²³¹ Marinatos 1967, 107.

²³² Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120ζ.

²³³ Lolos 1987, 206, 340–342, figs. 375h, 377.

²³⁴ Papadimitriou 2015, 92–93, 102.

²³⁵ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120γ–ε.

²³⁶ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 119β.

²³⁷ For a discussion of its shape, see cup CM 775 (Tomb Keph-2).

²³⁸ Lolos 1987, 447–448, figs. 379, 507, 667.3–5.

²³⁹ RMDP, 373, fig. 128.6.

²⁴⁰ RMDP, 69, fig. 9g–j; 83, fig. 11.20; 315.

²⁴¹ Lolos 1987, 206, figs. 375i, 375k, 378–379.

²⁴² Lolos 1987, 274–285.

²⁴³ At Samikon (Grave B) a plain squat jug was the only funerary offering in a burial, see Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β.

point of the maximum diameter. The straight perpendicular line defined by the back of the handle, the biconical body and the rendering of the spout place the jug among the most beautiful specimens of the shape in the Pylos region.²⁴⁴ According to Lolos, the vase “has an early appearance and is distinguished by a MH-type high-swung handle”, which finds parallels in LH I at Karpophora-Akones²⁴⁵ and at Samikon,²⁴⁶ as well as in examples from Englianos, which are later than the LH I period.²⁴⁷

Also, the roughly shaped askos CM 2939²⁴⁸ (Fig. 7.88–89) bears a decoration with horizontal bands and a large hatched (?) loop in between, which is filled with lines of a linked bars motif. The vase is wide-mouthed like its parallels of MH tradition. The body is ovoid/squat and somewhat spindle-shaped – bird-like – an impression accentuated by the raised mouth, the basket-like handle and the painted decoration that seems to indicate the wing of a bird.

The squat alabastron CM 2958 (FS 85), found between the upper black and the lower porous limestone stratum, probably dates to LH IIIA,²⁴⁹ and indicates a succeeding, isolated episode in the sequence of the use of the tomb. The fact, though, that the goblet from the stone packing of the entrance is no later than LH IIA, would suggest a date of the alabastron under discussion to the same period.

Due to the difficulties of the excavation, Keph-7 is scantily documented. Judging from its ground plan, it appears to have an elliptical chamber, which was cut into the rock immediately west of the chamber of Tomb Keph-5 extending right next to it or serving as a second chamber of that tomb. “It gave a few common finds, among which a one-handled cup with narrow base” (CM 2932, height 0.065 m, rim diameter 0.11 m) “and a sizable feeding bottle”²⁵⁰ (CM 2931) deserve mention. The latter (of 0.23 m in height) preserves traces of banding. According to Lolos, it “may be not later than LH I”²⁵¹ (Fig. 7.91). The third vase of the group is the beaked jug CM 2930 restored to a great extent, 0.33 m in height, 0.243 m in diameter, also of MH tradition (see CM 2926, CM 2927 in Tomb Keph-4).

Tombs Keph-5, Keph-6 and Keph-7 were found much less disturbed, even preserving funerary offerings in groups, which, besides vases, included some finds of particular importance (such as boar’s tusks, stone artefacts, the bronze pin as well as pottery). Keph-7, with undecorated vases of MH tradition, appears to be the earliest of the three tombs. Keph-6 dates to LH I–IIA, Keph-5 to MH/LH I.²⁵² The tombs of this cluster, therefore, contained burials no later than LH II.

In the case of Keph-5, a cattle sacrifice was performed on the stone packing of the entrance. The early vases from the area of the sacrifice do not necessarily establish a similar dating for that event, but they, nevertheless, testify to a sacrifice in memory of the dead.

These observations, when considered in combination with the proximity of the Tombs Keph-5, Keph-7 and Keph-6 to the ‘ancestral’ ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 (and the hitherto hardly understood equivalent neighbouring shaft of similar construction), confirm on the one hand the early date of the Kephlovryso cluster in relation to the succeeding gradual expansion of the cemetery. On the other hand, the eminent significance that the earlier tombs of this cluster may have had for the

²⁴⁴ Lolos 1987, 359, fig. 375e (referred to as plain).

²⁴⁵ Lolos 1987, 359, fig. 206.

²⁴⁶ Yalouris 1966, 11 no. 1, pl. 6γ.

²⁴⁷ Blegen et al. 1973, figs. 249.20, 250.7.

²⁴⁸ Lolos 1987, 206, 327–328 (lustrous painted), figs. 375g, 380b, 654c (referred to as undecorated). For askoi of MH tradition, see Lolos 1987, 374, fig. 195 (painted).

²⁴⁹ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120ε (left); Lolos 1987, fig. 380a. According to Kountouri 2002, 28, 503, pl. 178, the vase dates to LH IIIA1–2.

²⁵⁰ Marinatos 1967, 104, fig. 2; Lolos 1987, 207, fig. 352; Boyd 2002, 142.

²⁵¹ Marinatos 1967, 104, pl. 119ζ; Lolos 1987, 207, 355–356.

²⁵² Boyd 2002, 234, refers to Keph-5 and Keph-7 (as well as to Keph-A) as LH I, and to Keph-6 as LH I–II (including the LH IIIA alabastron). Cf. also Zavadil 2013, 342–346: Keph-5 (MH III/LH I), Keph-7 (LH I?), Keph-A (LH I), Keph-6 (LH I; LH IIIA).

descendants of the community, may have caused them to leave these intact when conducting the interments of their own dead.

The storeroom of the Chora Museum houses large quantities of sherds from the Volimidia tombs. In the course of the first sorting, the following fragments were selected: Box ‘Voria/Tsoulea Tombs (T-5, T-6), Kephlovryso Tomb (Keph-5)’:

Sherd no. 1: Sherd of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) with midrib and ripple decoration²⁵³ (Fig. 7.92 left) which indicate a probable classification as Type III (LH IIA).²⁵⁴

Sherd no. 2: Three joining fragments with a perpendicularly arranged plant motif of racket leaves (Fig. 7.93). The fragments belong to a LH IIA hole-mouthed jar (FS 101),²⁵⁵ rather than to a jar (FS 14), and bear the motif of the ‘racket leaf tree’,²⁵⁶ i.e. of hatched loops (FM 63) growing from vertical stems.²⁵⁷ The naturalistic version of this motif (as on a LH I jar from Voroulia²⁵⁸) recalls the foliate band on the gold cup from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae.²⁵⁹

Sherd no. 3: The sherd of a squat alabastron (FS 83), decorated with lily (FM 9) or crocus (FM 10)²⁶⁰ (Fig. 7.92 right) dates to LH IIA or LH IIB.²⁶¹

As the excavation of Volimidia progressed, its goals were set more clearly and its means improved, probably out of Marinatos’ desire to develop a pioneering inter-disciplinary research project of an extensive Mycenaean cemetery. The presence of the anthropologists, Emil Breiting and Egon Reuer, with their assistants, facilitated the study of the skulls, and in the years 1964 and 1965 “almost all skulls have been unearthed by the anthropologists themselves”.²⁶² Furthermore, Marinatos makes clear that “the abundance and importance of the anthropological material from the excavation of Volimidia (Palaipylos), as well as from other Pylian excavations, will necessitate the presence of the valuable colleagues during the upcoming period, too”.²⁶³ However, the excavations stopped, probably because of the priority Marinatos gave to the excavations at Akrotiri, Thera, at that time, and none of the anthropological research material was ever published.

After the end of Marinatos’ investigations, rescue excavations were continued to a limited extent. Two chamber tombs were excavated by the Archaeological Service at Kephlovryso (1972),²⁶⁴ a third one at the L. Rigas plot (1990)²⁶⁵ and a fourth one in the Athanasopoulos property, near the Voria/Tsoulea cluster by G. S. Korres (1991).²⁶⁶

Kephlovryso Tombs A and B (Excavations Th. Karagiorga)²⁶⁷

At a distance of 10.50 m northeast of Keph-3, to the west of the road to Kephlovryso, the central part of the chamber of Tomb Keph-A was located.

Due to the thorough documentation of the excavation, even though the vault had sustained damage by a bulldozer, it was established that the tomb contained but a few finds, all of them

²⁵³ For the Vapheio cup (FS 224), see the cup (without inv. no.) from Tomb A-1.

²⁵⁴ RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

²⁵⁵ RMDP, 89–91, fig. 13.40 (Argolid); 799, fig. 319.2 (Thermon).

²⁵⁶ Peristeria, Tholos Tomb 2 (Lolos 1987, figs. 434–437).

²⁵⁷ Kakovatos, Tholos Tomb A (Lolos 1987, figs. 474, 476; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.1).

²⁵⁸ Lolos 1987, figs. 116–117, 669.1.

²⁵⁹ Lolos 1987, fig. 627.

²⁶⁰ For the squat alabastron (FS 83) with plant motif, see CM 295.

²⁶¹ RMDP, 88, fig. 12.30 (LH IIA); 98, fig. 17.76–78; 324, fig. 108.28–29 (LH IIB).

²⁶² Marinatos 1967, 108. Marinatos also mentions that the material was sorted systematically and arranged “into special, custom-made boxes” in the Museum of Chora.

²⁶³ The following year (1966) Marinatos conducted excavations of limited scale in the Pylia (Chandrinos: Kissos; Soulinarion: Tourliditsa), see Marinatos 1968, 119–132.

²⁶⁴ Karagiorga 1976.

²⁶⁵ Arapoyianni 1995.

²⁶⁶ See Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

²⁶⁷ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1, pls. 193–194.

early Mycenaean. Pits 2 and 4 were dug into the chamber floor beneath the horizon of unfurnished burials and secondary burials. Another three pits and one niche were opened on the periphery of the tomb. The pits were filled with bones, piled up in disarray, and only in Pit 1 (the biggest one), amongst the accumulated bones, were three obsidian and three flint arrowheads (CM 3003α–στ) found (Fig. 7.94). The successive burials in the pits imply frequent episodes of relocation, which, though, were devoid of funerary offerings. There were a few long bones and the LH I Vapheio cup CM 2999 (FS 224) in the niche.²⁶⁸ The cup belongs to Type II, decorated with tangent spiral with blob fill (FM 46) with an exact parallel in Nichoria.²⁶⁹ Quite interesting is that whenever this motif occurs on one-handled cups or squat jugs, the stem that joins the spirals slopes up from bottom left to top right following a ‘straight alignment’ towards the handle.

In the same year, as part of the same rescue excavation, Chamber Tomb Keph-B was investigated, 13.30 m southwest of Keph-A, along the west margin of the road, at a distance of 9.50 m to Keph-3.²⁷⁰

The burial stratum of the chamber, underlying the unfurnished skeletons, contained the burials of three individuals in an extended position, accompanied by their funerary offerings, which consisted of nine vases “to a great extent intact”. The deceased in the middle had been offered two LH IIIA2 vases, the small stirrup jar CM 2991 and the miniature hydria CM 2987.²⁷¹ The one to his/her left, probably an adolescent, was holding the cylindrical alabastron (CM 2997) of LH IIIA2–B date in his left hand.²⁷² A pair of three-handled squat alabastera (CM 2995 and CM 2996: FS 83, 84), which were found next to the pelvis and the skull of the skeleton “towards the side of the wall of the vault” date to the LH IIB or IIIA1 period.²⁷³ The alabastron CM 2995 has an indiscernible decoration, while the alabastron CM 2996 features a monochrome painted triangular theme between the handles.²⁷⁴

The hybrid one-handled goblet CM 2990 with conical body (FS 262?) of possibly LH IIA–B date belongs to a burial which was pushed aside. It was recorded near the doorway of the tomb.

The following vases, which were probably moved from their original position, were associated with the third jumbled skeleton, which lay in the southern part of the chamber: the three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982, the jug CM 2984 and the piriform jar CM 2983, the latter containing a conical cup (CM 2998). This group of vases is chronologically heterogeneous, as it includes a LH IIA stirrup jar (FS 169), a LH IIIA1 piriform jar (FS 44)²⁷⁵ and a LH IIIA2–B1 jug (FS 110).²⁷⁶

Of greater interest is the three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982 (Fig. 8.95–96), with close parallels for its shape from Englianos, Routsis and Nichoria.²⁷⁷ The three-handled stirrup jar (FS 169) is a Minoan shape and particularly popular in LM IA/LC I Akrotiri and LH IIA Ayia Irini, where the stirrup jar CM 2982 finds a close parallel for its scale pattern decoration.²⁷⁸ Decoration with variations of scale pattern (FM 70)²⁷⁹ is also encountered in Attica (Thorikos,²⁸⁰ Ayios Kosmas²⁸¹) and Aigina,²⁸² demonstrating a clear preference of the mainland Mycenaean production centres for

²⁶⁸ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1-A, pl. 193δ.

²⁶⁹ RMDP, 315, fig. 105.7. For the theme, see the Vapheio cup CM 57 and the squat jug CM 44.

²⁷⁰ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1-B.

²⁷¹ Kountouri 2002, 358–359 (stirrup jars). Hydriae, handmade or painted, draw upon MH tradition and occur mainly from LH IIIA1 onwards (RMDP, 750, fig. 289.26; 754, fig. 291.44). The miniature handmade parallels are difficult to date.

²⁷² Kountouri 2002, 358–359.

²⁷³ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.28–29 (LH IIB, Pylia); 325, fig. 84.109 (LH IIIA1, Nichoria).

²⁷⁴ For monochrome painted triangles on an alabastron, see Kountouri 2002, fig. 28 (CM 46).

²⁷⁵ RMDP, 325, fig. 108.32–34.

²⁷⁶ RMDP, 118 (LH IIIA2), 134, fig. 31.233–234 (LH IIIB1).

²⁷⁷ RMDP, 321, fig. 107.19–20.

²⁷⁸ Cummer – Schofield 1984, no. 1555; RMDP, 873, fig. 357.32–33. For Melos, see RMDP, 898, fig. 365.25–28.

²⁷⁹ RMDP, 506.

²⁸⁰ Servais-Soyez – Servais 1984, 59, fig. 31.

²⁸¹ Mylonas 1959, fig. 136.1.

²⁸² Hiller 1975, pl. 20.202–203.



Fig. 8: Vases 95–99, 102–103, 105–106; knife 100; arrowheads 101; dagger 104: Tomb Keph-B

this theme of Minoan inspiration.²⁸³ One of these centres is Messenia as the occurrence of net pattern on stirrup jar CM 2991 from the same tomb and on other examples indicates.²⁸⁴

As in the islands, it is also difficult in Messenia to distinguish the Cretan imports of three-handled stirrup jars from the markedly ‘Minoanising’ local examples.²⁸⁵ The three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982 is the only example of the shape at Volimidia highlighting it among the early Mycenaean vases from the tombs. The co-occurrence of the LH IIA three-handled stirrup jar with later vases in the chamber would not exclude the reuse of this beautiful vase as an heirloom in a later burial in Tomb Keph-B.

A walled-up niche to the right as one enters the tomb is the most interesting feature of the chamber. The walling had been partially demolished, an event that seems to be related to the positioning of the intact LH IIIA2–B1²⁸⁶ wide-mouthed jug CM 2985 (FS 105 or 110) and the contemporaneous small (strainer) hydria CM 2986 (FS 129) in the niche.²⁸⁷ “Both vases are associated with libations and may be characterised as complementary funerary gifts or as an offer by those who conducted the burials on the chamber floor to the preceding dead of the niche”.²⁸⁸ What is of particular interest is that the small hydria CM 2986 was intentionally transformed into a strainer hydria: three holes with different diameters, very close to one another and opposite the vertical handle were pierced through its body. This action, the last episode in the biography of the roughly fashioned vase with rudimentary linear decoration, highlights the funerary or ritual aspect of the hydria, in a period when strainer hydriae began to be produced and spread on the mainland.²⁸⁹

Inside the niche were a skull and “some fine bones” (i.e. secondary burial[s]), the cup CM 2992, the plain earless bowl CM 2994 and the bronze knife CM 3000 (length: 0.183 m) (Fig. 8.100).

The LH IIA cup CM 2992 (FS 218) (Fig. 8.97–98) with large tangent spirals with double stems (FM 46) is monochrome painted on the inside. An identical one was found at Englianos.²⁹⁰ The Minoan influence of the internally monochrome painted cups has already been discussed in the case of cup CM 790 (Tomb Keph-2) and this feature, as would be expected, is also encountered in northern Triphylia (Kakovatos and Kleidi-Samikon).²⁹¹

The plain earless bowl CM 2994 (Fig. 8.99) is a unique specimen of the earless version of the FS 211 cup at Volimidia (see CM 790, further below CM 2993).

On the floor of the tomb, four pits were arranged around the periphery of the vault, containing “the relocated bones and funerary offerings of the first burials”. Pit 1 (with a skull and a few bones) produced an obsidian arrowhead and another one made of flint (CM 3002 α – β) (Fig. 8.101), the plain one-handled goblet with raised handle CM 2989 (Fig. 8.102), the plain cup with a similar handle CM 2993 (Fig. 8.103) and the bronze dagger CM 3001 (Fig. 8.104).

The plain goblet with raised handle (CM 2989) (FS 262) dates to LH IIA (see CM 46), although this plain vessel might be of an earlier date (mature LH I). The plain cup CM 2993 is a close variation of the cup CM 64, a hybrid shape of MH tradition (LH I).

Pit 2 also contained a skull and scattered bones, sherds and an intact Vapheio cup (CM 2988) (Fig. 8.105–106). The Vapheio cup CM 2988 has dense ripple decoration and a midrib. It belongs

²⁸³ For the LM IA theme, see Betancourt 1985.

²⁸⁴ For the motif in Messenia, see Kountouri 2002, 325, 359–360, fig. 88.

²⁸⁵ RMDP, 321 n. 179–180.

²⁸⁶ Kountouri 2002, 358–359. See RMDP, 323, fig. 24.157 (LH IIIA2); 133, fig. 31.233–234 (LH IIIB1). See above, CM 2987 (Tomb Keph-B).

²⁸⁷ For similar vessels from the Argolid cf. RMDP, 119, fig. 25.168–171 (LH IIIA2); 136–138, fig. 33.246 (strainer hydria, LH IIIB1).

²⁸⁸ Karagiorga 1976, 257.

²⁸⁹ For strainer hydriae, see Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

²⁹⁰ Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 249.27; RMDP, 323, fig. 108.22.

²⁹¹ My thanks to Birgitta Eder and Jasmin Huber for this remark.

to Type III (LH IIA) and has exact parallels from Englianos²⁹² and other sites of the Pylos region²⁹³ and northern Triphylia.²⁹⁴ The presence of only one funerary offering in the pit reiterates the setting that we have commented upon in the case of the secondary burials of the Angelopoulou cluster, where an equivalent vase is quite often used as a single funerary offering.

In Pit 3 only bones were found and Pit 4 contained two skulls and bones in disarray along with a “shallow earless bowl”, which is one of the conical cups CM 2998. The five conical cups in Tomb Keph-B raise some questions concerning the overall limited presence of the shape in the rest of the necropolis. The dating of this plain and mass-produced cup in Crete (MM III–LM IA) is linked to the LM IA period outside Crete (appearing in large numbers at Akrotiri and elsewhere in the Aegean), but in Messenia it is not popular, like all Minoan undecorated shapes.²⁹⁵ At Volimidia the conical cup is attested at least until the LH IIIA2/B period²⁹⁶ (one example was found inside the LH IIIA1 piriform jar CM 2983). The slender example from Tomb Keph-4(?) belongs to an earlier type (see further below).

To conclude, Tomb Keph-B produced seven vases that have been dated to LH IIA and two vases of LH IIB or a little later. Furthermore, two vases (piriform jar and conical cup) are assigned to LH IIIA1 and six to LH IIIA2, some of them (vessels for carrying liquids) possibly dating to LH IIIB1.

The location of another two tombs underneath the road pavement, which were not investigated, sheds light on the tomb distribution density of the necropolis, as S. Marinatos repeatedly remarked.

Although the two Tombs Keph-A and Keph-B differ as to the quantity of finds and taphonomic evidence, they have provided helpful information to supplement the picture of the Kephlovryso cluster and of Volimidia in general.

With identifiable LH I evidence, Keph-A probably remained out of use after that period. Keph-B was set up in LH IIA and regularly used during the LH IIIA1 and LH IIIA2(B?) periods. A niche with a stratified sequence indicating activities of the epigones of the earlier dead and two pits containing secondary burials revealed interesting taphonomic evidence for the early Mycenaean years.

Synthesis of Data

“The necropolis of Volimidia, one of the biggest and most important ones known to date”,²⁹⁷ “perhaps the biggest of them all”.²⁹⁸ – Marinatos excavated systematically and methodically the tombs of Volimidia recognising right from the first year (1952) the significance of the necropolis for understanding the shaping of the early Mycenaean civilisation in one of the regions where it would appear a little later in its most mature and brilliant palatial aspect.

Despite the fact that the LH I and LH II burials were found in the state of rearranged secondary burials in the pits and niches of the chambers, their excavation attracted Marinatos’ interest, who studied quite adequately the accompanying vases and illustrated the most important of them. Long before the opening of the discussion on ‘Minoanisation’ and the assessment of the role of Kythera for the understanding of the LH I/LM IA synchronisms,²⁹⁹ the future excavator of Akrotiri perceived the significance of the LH I vases from the older inhumations, pointing out in

²⁹² RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

²⁹³ Lolos 1987, 44–45, figs. 63b, 664.7 (Peristeria, East House, late LH I). For ‘Phase 2’ of Messenian LH I, see Lolos 1987, 539–540.

²⁹⁴ RMDP, 377, fig. 130.26 (Samikon).

²⁹⁵ Antoniou 2009, 586–587.

²⁹⁶ Kountouri 2002, 228–230.

²⁹⁷ Marinatos 1966a, 198.

²⁹⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 78.

²⁹⁹ Coldstream – Huxley 1972.

particular the contribution of Vapheio cups in the tracing of international contacts that the early Mycenaean of the Pylos region had developed with the Italian West.³⁰⁰ Marinatos' enthusiasm for Volimidia, expressed in his words quoted above, was based on these considerations and the admirable manner in which the chambers of the extensive unlooted necropolis were cut into the rock. The tombs had been hewn out of the soft bedrock that dominates the flat land of Volimidia and feature circular chambers, tholos-imitating roofs, shallow stomia and short dromoi with vertical walls widening towards the entrance. Their architecture was comprehensively studied by Iakovidis³⁰¹ on the basis of the plans he had drawn in the course of the excavations, putting forward the view that the chambers imitate the tholos tombs of the region, a topic that is still vividly discussed in the research community.³⁰² The early date of the LH I chamber tombs of Volimidia and the fact that they form the most extensive cemetery of the early Mycenaean period³⁰³ highlights the uniqueness of the assemblage, its great architectural importance and certainly deserves separate consideration.³⁰⁴

The interesting 'Shaft Grave' Keph-1 stands out as a typological unicum in the context of Volimidia, although Marinatos reported that there probably was a similar monument just next to it (therefore, a pair or cluster of 'shaft graves').³⁰⁵ The setting of the unlooted idiosyncratic 'shaft grave' in an area that favoured the construction of chambers, implies, on the one hand, that this type of monument derived from the MH tradition of cist and shaft graves known from the mature stages of the period (see those of Grave Circle B at Mycenae). On the other hand it was suitable for the individual burial that had been deposited in the Kephlovryso grave. In this context it would be quite interesting to compare Keph-1 with the LH IIA stone-built cist 'Griffin Warrior Grave' on the (palatial) hill of Englianos,³⁰⁶ which was preferred to the monumental vaults that were set up in the region from the end of the MH and completely prevailed by LH II.³⁰⁷

The distinct morphology of the built Shaft (?) Grave Keph-1 (a funerary mound or a simpler grave in Michael Boyd's view³⁰⁸) with the richly furnished burial of the hunter/warrior it contained, and its clear-cut dating to MH III, in all probability point to this unique funerary monument as the 'starting event' for the establishment of the neighbouring cluster of chamber tombs, which were set up at the onset of the LH I period in close proximity to it. Of those tombs which are close to Keph-1, Tomb Keph-6 is the nearest and one of the earliest in Volimidia. In the immediate vicinity of Keph-1 lies also Tomb Keph-5, which was probably already established in the MH III period.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁰ Marinatos 1956, 248, fig. 9; Marinatos 2014, 48, fig. 9. "It might turn out to be something more than mere coincidence that on the opposite side of the Mediterranean fragments of this pottery were found on the Lipari island by Dr. B. Brea" (Marinatos 1956, 248). See also Marinatos 1962.

³⁰¹ Iakovidis 1966; Marinatos 2014, 3–76. See Papadimitriou 2015, 84–85.

³⁰² For the topic of tomb architecture, see Kountouri 2002, 10–13; Boyd 2002; Zavadil 2013, 98–110; Papadimitriou 2015.

³⁰³ In LH I, chamber tombs also appear in the Argolid (Mycenae, Prosymna, Kokla) and in Lakonia (Epidauros Limeria), but their number is very small compared to that of the Volimidia tombs (Papadimitriou 2015, 83–85, 109–110). Papadimitriou 2015 considers the origin of chamber tombs as Helladic. For the possibility that this type developed in Messenia, through Kythera, see Dickinson 1994, 225; Bennet – Galanakis 2005. See also Gallou 2020, 95–97; Galanakis, this volume.

³⁰⁴ This study is going to be included in the complete publication of the Volimidia cemetery by E. Kountouri and the author.

³⁰⁵ Marinatos 1966b, 86–89; Marinatos 2014, 80–81, fig. 18, plan 21.

³⁰⁶ Davis – Stocker 2016. For the architecture of the grave and its difference from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 628 n. 5. The Griffin Warrior Grave resembles the tomb located under Room 97 in the Palace of Nestor (Blegen et al. 1973, 312–314). For the 'shaft graves' underneath the tholos tomb of Nichoria, see Wilkie 1992, 244–246, 249–252.

³⁰⁷ Iakovidis 1966, 110–111 (see n. 34 above); Lolos 1987, 492–494; Zavadil 2013, 54, 110–112; Papadimitriou 2015, 101, 107–108.

³⁰⁸ Boyd 2002, 41–42, 139, 141–142.

³⁰⁹ Boyd 2002, 139; Zavadil 2013, 111. On the basis of this early dating, Boyd 2002, 42, argues that as long as the settlement (in the Patriarcheas field) is referred to as LH I/IIA and quite a few tombs are earlier than that (LH I),

The evidence shows that twenty out of the 34 excavated Volimidia tombs (a rate of 59%) were in use in the LH I–II periods.³¹⁰ If Tombs K-1, K-2 (reported by Marinatos) are also taken into account, the number of the LH I–II tombs rises to 22, without having made allowance for the potential occurrence of LH I–II sherds in the abundant stored material, the study of which has not been exhaustive.

The LH I period is clearly documented in nineteen out of the twenty tombs mentioned above, but five of them (A-9, T-1, Keph-5, Keph-7 and Keph-A) were in use only in LH I. It is then interesting that five out of the twenty Volimidia tombs (a rate of 25%), cut in the rock in LH I, were not used in LH IIA–B, with three of them being grouped together in the Kephlovryso cluster. Only three tombs appear to have been used exclusively in LH II (T-1a, T-5, M-1), a fact indicating that they were constructed in the same period. No matter how debatable the available data are, due to the extensive disturbance of the chambers in LH III and later periods, the picture emerging from the Volimidia cemetery is the following:

- Nineteen out of the thirty-four (a rate of 56%) excavated tombs have supplied evidence of use in LH I and were therefore cut in the rock in the period between 1675–1600 BC,³¹¹ clearly forming part of the coordinated works for the establishment of a necropolis by a nearby settlement. This number may increase considerably when the study of the sherd assemblage from the chambers is completed.
- Altogether only three tombs provide firm evidence that they were set up in LH IIA and LH IIB (1600–1400 BC). However, in that period, a total of fifteen out of the twenty tombs of the LH I period continued to be in use. This picture represents population stability, continuity of kinship ties and regularity in habitation patterns.
- Maximum intensity of use for the LH I–II periods is recorded in the Kephlovryso cluster (nine out of nine chamber tombs), with Keph-6, acting, in terms of chronology, as a bridge between the MH III ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and the neighbouring LH I chamber tombs. It is followed by the Angelopoulou cluster with six out of the ten chamber tombs (or seven out of eleven, if the adjacent Mastoraki tomb is included), where the LH I and LH IIA periods predominate. Next in the sequence comes the Koroniou cluster and last of all appears to be the Tsoulea/Voria cluster. Its late date is probably explained by the fact that it forms the westward extension of the (early) Kephlovryso cluster.
- The considerable distance between the Koroniou and Angelopoulou clusters and the close-knit layout of the chambers in each of them indicate that this ‘neighbourhood of tombs’ reciprocates a conscious and distinct planning choice of the community, possibly on the basis of kinship ties or proximity relations in the settlements. The fact that some of the graves were excluded from the excavation due to the given circumstances (especially those lying under the modern road) shows, on the contrary, that the (excavation) clusters of Kephlovryso, Voria/Tsoulea and Angelopoulou had no well-defined boundaries and probably constituted groups of the same extensive cemetery.
- The chronological development of the cemetery to the west of the Kephlovryso ‘funerary nucleus’ comprises the Voria/Tsoulea and Angelopoulou clusters, where the majority of the dromoi have a fixed orientation to the west. The Koroniou cluster, which is the remotest one, deviates from this spatial planning principle.³¹²

the installation/settlement may postdate the setting up of the cemetery. However, Lolos 1987, 535, states that “most, if not all, of the LH I decorated sherds from the Patriarcheas sounding” belong to Phase 2 of LH I. Our poor knowledge of the extent as well as of the period in which the ‘settlement’ was founded, does not, as yet, allow us to draw this kind of conclusions.

³¹⁰ These are: two (or four) chambers out of the six Koroniou tombs, six out of the ten Angelopoulou tombs, three out of the eight tombs in the Voria-Tsoulea cluster, one tomb in the Mastoraki property, and eight out of the nine tombs in the Kephlovryso cluster.

³¹¹ With small adjustments, by Manning 2010, 23, tab. 2.2.

³¹² For this topic, see Boyd 2002, 38, and Zavadil 2013, 35–37.

- Anthropological data are missing from all tombs. The tombs appear to belong to families and their diachronic use is indicative of uninterrupted continuity in the habitation of the region. Despite the need to make more space for later burials and the less than careful removal of the previous ones, it seems that they were treated respectfully in regard to their original funerary furnishings. It is likely that the vases (and other offerings) may even have moved into the niches and pits of the chambers as intact assemblages.
- The LH I–II tombs closest to Volimidia are those around the palace of Englianos.³¹³ Their ongoing restudy³¹⁴ bears evidence of an equivalent early date of its clusters. If their demographic data are also similar, then two populous settlements were established in this region during the LH I and LH II periods, in the developed phases of which the ‘palatial’ generations of the palace era inhabitants probably originated.

The tombs of Volimidia, overall, are poor in funerary offerings. Quite remarkable is the dearth of jewellery and the total lack of bronze weapons of all periods, especially so in the LH IIIA intact burials. This picture perhaps ‘exonerates’ the descendants of the relocated LH I–II dead from the act of selective removal of valuable metal funerary offerings. Most of the funerary offerings reported from the tombs are tools made of stone and metal. These, as a matter of fact, are mainly related to early burials, since, as a rule, they were found with secondary burials. The lack of jewellery, weapons and hairstyle or costume accessories makes one think of a community of limited wealth, implying that the deceased practised in life the occupations of craftsmen, farmers or hunters rather than indicating an attempt to display the status of the dead. An interesting exception is the case of the relatively numerous flint and obsidian arrowheads, a funerary custom that acts as a bridge between the MH III unlooted burial in the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and some of the burials in the LH I–II chamber tombs.

Among the small quantity of finds of the early Mycenaean period, two sealstones are worth mentioning. Both originate from the Angelopoulou cluster, one ‘talismanic’ with a representation of fish (?)³¹⁵ comes from Tomb A-6 (Pit 2), which, however, contained no early Mycenaean pottery. The other one from Tomb A-8 (Niche 1) shows the representation of a lioness, a bird and a bucranium.³¹⁶ A small number of the remaining finds (i.e. double bronze axes and amber from Tomb A-5) constitute funerary offerings of special display or allude to the status of the dead.

The “strictly homogeneous in style”³¹⁷ chamber tombs of Volimidia with their “stereotypic and idiosyncratic”³¹⁸ architecture indicate that, in all probability, the entire cemetery was established in the LH I period,³¹⁹ while a few tombs of the Kephlovryso cluster dating to MH III might have been earlier. At Volimidia we probably have the opportunity to observe the transition from the built – rectangular – shaft grave to the chamber tomb with dromos. The burials of the “early Pylians” were furnished with vases that started to be produced in the cradle of the Pylian MH III in order to continue into the early local Late Bronze Age as products of the same tradition.³²⁰ This pottery coexisted with the new products of the Minoan-inspired fine Lustrous Decorated Ware, which circulated in the south of the mainland as ‘Mycenaean’ LH I pottery.³²¹

³¹³ Blegen et al. 1973.

³¹⁴ Restudy of Bronze Age tombs around the ‘Palace of Nestor’ is in progress by Joanne Murphy; cf. her contribution in the present volume.

³¹⁵ CMS V.1, no. 303. The representation has been identified as masts of a ship by Marinatos 1956, 248.

³¹⁶ Marinatos 1956, 248. CMS V.1, 241, no. 304. From the Angelopoulou cluster also comes the third sealstone (A-4), in the type of a stone bifacial ‘scarab’, imported and dated to the 8th century BC (CMS V.1, 241, no. 302).

³¹⁷ Iakovidis 1966, 100–101.

³¹⁸ Boyd 2002, 144.

³¹⁹ Iakovidis 1966, 109–110, suggested that their construction took place in the “advanced LH I, towards the end of the period”, based on his dating of the earlier pottery.

³²⁰ Lolos 1987, 524–532.

³²¹ For LH I pottery in relation to MH III and the synchronisms with LM IA Crete, see Mathioudaki 2014, with full bibliography. For the earlier synchronisms (MH III/MM III), see Girella 2010. For the role of Kythera, see Kiriati 2010, 690–693; Dickinson 2014.

The absence of LH I Mainland Polychrome Ware in Volimidia, which is attested in the shaft graves of Lerna, as opposed to the presence of LH I Lustrous Decorated pottery,³²² demonstrates that there are certainly degrees of ceramic technology, aesthetic entities and synchronisms that are missing not only from Volimidia, but from southwest Messenia in general.³²³ The presence of a greater variety of ‘lustrous ware’ styles (white-on-dark etc.), Minyan ware, ‘Aigina’ ware, as well as of unpainted wares in the well-stratified LH I deposit of Korakou,³²⁴ all absent in Volimidia, manifests how many aspects of trade and cultural as well as social contacts are not documented in the material concisely presented in this study.³²⁵ Similar discrepancies, especially with regard to the degree of ‘Minoan’ influence in the course of the MH III/MM IIIB–LM IA, LH I/LM IA and LH IIA/LM IB periods, occur at Volimidia in relation to nearby sites, such as Ayios Stephanos and Kythera, including even the much closer site of Nichoria.³²⁶ We should not, in any case, forget that, in terms of archaeology, “LH I, just like LM IA, is a period of strong ceramic regionalism”.³²⁷

Vases that accompany the dead in LH I–II are usually small or medium drinking vessels, among which Vapheio cups and squat jugs prevail. These vases are often deposited together with other drinking vessels, of both ‘Mycenaean’ and ‘Middle Helladic Tradition’ ware categories, such as goblets, cups and jugs, in their role as partitive containers furnishing the dead’s symposium. This type of behavioural ‘sets’ seems to conform to the funerary rites of northern Triphylia, namely those recorded in the burials at Samikon, where Vapheio cups and squat jugs are often paired with ladles and jars.³²⁸

The great majority of vases are locally made and only a single prestige goblet was imported from Kythera (?). Cretan influence in shapes is limited and even more so in motifs. Therefore, local potters have apparently copied only some of the Minoan ceramic ‘fashions’ in their Helladic versions. The LH I–IIB material of Volimidia shares strong similarities with that of northern Triphylia (Kakovatos, Makryisia and Samikon), pointing to a manufactural, decorative, and after all aesthetic, homogeneity that might echo an early Mycenaean *koiné* of clustered ‘states’, stretching from south of the Alpheios to modern southern Triphylia, that is, to Englianos and Volimidia. The limited presence of ‘Minoanising pottery’ at Volimidia when compared to Lakonia³²⁹ and the total lack of original Cretan vases³³⁰ are parameters that confirm the above formulated conclusion and bring forward an idiosyncratic cultural stage that appears to connect the history of the Pylos region and northern Triphylia in the LH I and LH II periods. If much still remains to be clarified before the material fingerprint of the LH I phase in the region can be defined, the LH IIA and LH IIB phases have already been illuminated, to a great extent, by the gleam of the lavish gold vessels from the unlooted tombs (of Englianos, Routsis, Peristeria etc.) and the well-structured hegemonic iconography of the signet rings that so interestingly link Kakovatos to Englianos and vice versa.³³¹

³²² Lindblom 2007, 117, figs. 2, 6. For the Argolid in general, see Girella 2010, 865–867.

³²³ LH I Polychrome Ware appears also at Samikon, see Yalouris 1966; Lolos 1987, pls. 490–491.

³²⁴ Davis 1979. For relevant differences with the LH IIA pottery of Tsoungiza, see Rutter 1993.

³²⁵ RMDP, 20: “The Mycenaean pottery forms only a very small percentage of the LH I repertoire, other wares, such as Grey and Yellow Minyan and matt painted wares, continuing to make up the bulk of the corpus.”

³²⁶ For the network of imports and Minoan influence in the Pylos region and the southern Peloponnese in general, see Antoniou 2009, 582–587, 599–601; Girella 2010, 862–863; Kiriatzi 2010, 697–699, fig. 1; Dickinson 2014. On the earlier date of the Tholos IV of Pylos indicated by MM III pottery, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 635–637.

³²⁷ Mathioudaki 2014, 15.

³²⁸ Yalouris 1966, 9–10, pls. 5β, 14γ, η, 19ζ (Grave I); pls. 5γ–δ, 14α, 20δ (Grave IA’).

³²⁹ Antoniou 2009, 599–601; Girella 2010, 863–864.

³³⁰ RMDP, 306 (LH I): “although import and some imitation of Minoan pottery takes place”. On the origin of the LH I style, see RMDP, 19. See also Antoniou 2009, 615–618. In LH IIA, RMDP, 308, 318–321, fig. 106.16–17, notes that there have been no direct imports of vases to Messenia from Crete, but the strong Minoan influence rather led to the local production of pseudo-Minoan vases.

³³¹ Vlachopoulos 2020.

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Illustrations

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Fig. 1: Plan of the Volimidia chamber tomb cemetery, 1961 (Archive of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

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The Monumental Architecture of Iklaina

*Michael B. Cosmopoulos*¹

Abstract: The excavations of the Athens Archaeological Society at Iklaina have brought to light a major LH settlement that is identified with **a-pu₂*, one of the district capitals of the Mycenaean state of Pylos. One of the most striking features of the site is its monumental architecture, which includes at least two large buildings, two paved roads, a paved piazza, and massive built stone drains. The presence of this kind of monumentality outside the traditionally defined ‘palaces’, combined with other markers of advanced socio-political complexity, opens up a number of questions regarding the processes of the unification of the Mycenaean state of Pylos. In the present paper I review the relevant architectural and stratigraphic evidence and assess its possible implications for this issue. It is concluded that the emergence of monumental architecture at Iklaina could have been initiated either by the Palace of Nestor following a peaceful annexation of Iklaina in the early Mycenaean period, or by the local Iklaina rulers following a period of continuous growth before a forced annexation in LH IIIB.

Keywords: Monumentality, state formation, Mycenaean, Pylos, Iklaina

Introduction

The excavations at Iklaina are conducted under the auspices of the Archaeological Society at Athens.² Over the course of nine field seasons we have unearthed a significant part of a LH settlement, which can be identified with **a-pu₂*, one of the district capitals of the Mycenaean state of Pylos.³ The site includes three general areas: residential, industrial, and administrative (marked as R, I, and A in Fig. 1).

A number of buildings and structures within the administrative area are monumental, in the sense that they are “large houses, public buildings, and special purpose structures, whose principal defining feature is that their scale and elaboration exceed the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform”.⁴ In the present paper I provide an overview of the architectural and stratigraphic sequence of Iklaina, with special emphasis on its monumental buildings, before assessing the possible implications that the monumental architecture of the site has for the unification of the Pylian state. It should be stressed that the reconstruction of the stratigraphic sequence presented here is based on a preliminary study of the data and that conclusions may change after the final study.

The Pre-monumental Phase

Although several MH and LH I deposits have been identified at the site, the earliest substantial architectural remains date to LH IIA/IIB and belong to a structure that we named ‘Building V’

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³ Cosmopoulos 2006, 215, with further references.

⁴ Trigger 1990, 119.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the site from the north showing the three general areas (R = Residential; I = Industrial; A = Administrative)

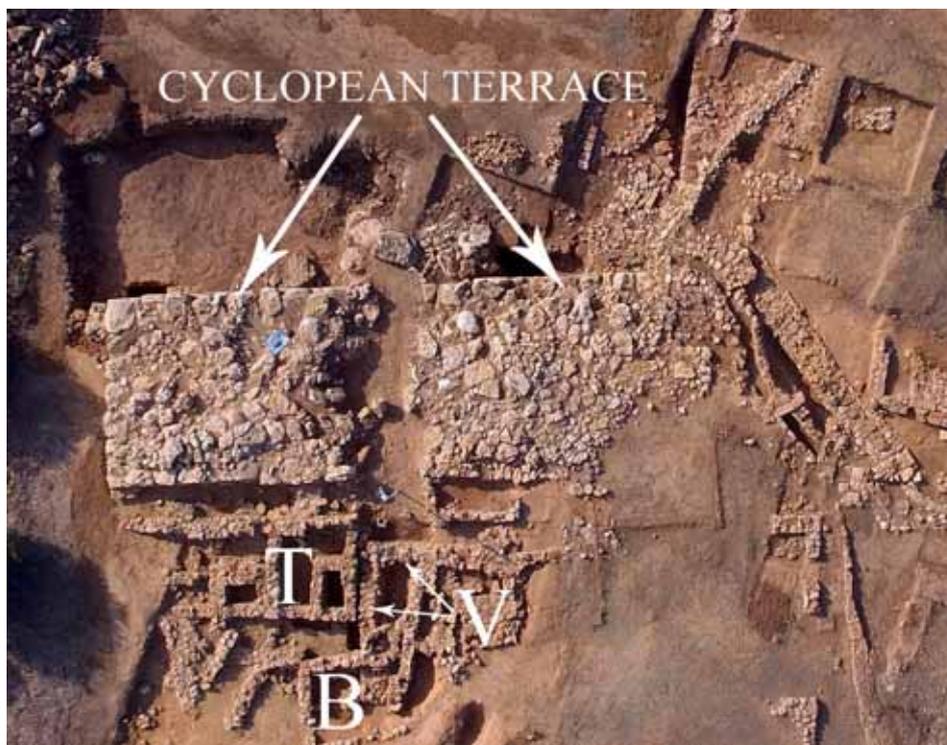


Fig. 2: Aerial view of the area of the Cyclopean Platform

(Fig. 2). Building V has only two thick (0.60–0.80 m) walls (north and west), with smooth external and rough internal faces. These features, coupled with the fact that at that point the slope drops sharply towards the northwest, suggest that the purpose of this structure was to form a terrace that supported a flat area to the east.

The next identifiable buildings are Buildings T and B (Fig. 2), which seem to date to LH IIB/IIIA1. In LH IIIA2 the two easternmost rooms of Building T were divided into smaller spaces, when this building was incorporated in the Cyclopean Terrace Building (see below). The fill from these rooms contained a large number of fresco fragments that belonged to this complex.

During the same period, a group of other buildings (Beta, Alpha, Kappa) was erected to the northwest of Buildings V and T (Fig. 3).

The Monumental Architecture

The earliest monumental architecture of the site dates to LH IIIA2, when an ambitious building project was materialised. This project included two monumental buildings connected with paved roads and a paved piazza drained by a massive built stone drain.⁵

The larger of the two monumental buildings is a massive platform built in Cyclopean masonry. It is rectangular and measures 24.30 m × 8.20 m (Figs. 1, 2, 4). Its outer walls are constructed with Cyclopean masonry and the core is filled with limestone rubble and unworked slabs of various dimensions. At regular intervals the platform forms indentations (Fig. 5), similar to those of Cyclopean terraces at Tiryns, Glas, and the Palace of Nestor.⁶ The level of the Mycenaean floor (presumably a courtyard) in front of the Cyclopean Platform is marked by a number of thick (approx. 0.60 m) slabs placed along the base of the north wall (Fig. 4). The height of the platform, from the level of this courtyard to the level of its original floor, is approx. 4 m (Fig. 4) and another 1.60 m of Cyclopean foundation continues under the courtyard all the way to the bedrock. Partial remains of a thick layer of white plaster, some with traces of blue and red colour, are still attached on the north wall of the platform and other pieces have fallen on the ground in front of this wall, suggesting that the platform was coated with a thick layer of plaster.

The purpose of this platform was to support a large building constructed in ashlar blocks, several of which (Fig. 6) have been found in a destruction layer in front of the northwest and southeast sides of the platform. This layer also contained burnt mudbricks, remains of carbonised wooden beams, and bronze nails, presumably from the building that stood on top of the platform. Based on the massive size of the platform, it is reasonable to suggest that that building would have had at least two storeys. The rooms of Building T to the south were part of the same building complex. In the early days of the excavation, when the form and function of the Cyclopean Platform, on which this building rests, had not been clearly determined, we referred to it as the ‘Cyclopean Terrace’, a name that has since become part of the narrative of the site and embedded in the bibliography. Although now it is clear that this is a platform (a solidly built structure with a stone core) and not a terrace (a structure consisting of one to three walls retaining earth), the term ‘Cyclopean Terrace Building’ has been preserved to avoid confusion.

The east end of the Cyclopean Platform is defined by a layer of flagstones that appear to have belonged to the floor of a paved open space. Further to the south there is a large open area without any architectural remains or artefacts, in places preserving patches of clay packed floor; this may have been a courtyard, but its extent and plan cannot be determined.

In the early years of the excavation we had thought that the Cyclopean Platform and the building that rose on top of it dated to the early Mycenaean period and that it was destroyed in LH IIIA2. Soundings in the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the platform indicate,

⁵ Cosmopoulos 2018.

⁶ Wright 1980, figs. 4, 5, 9.

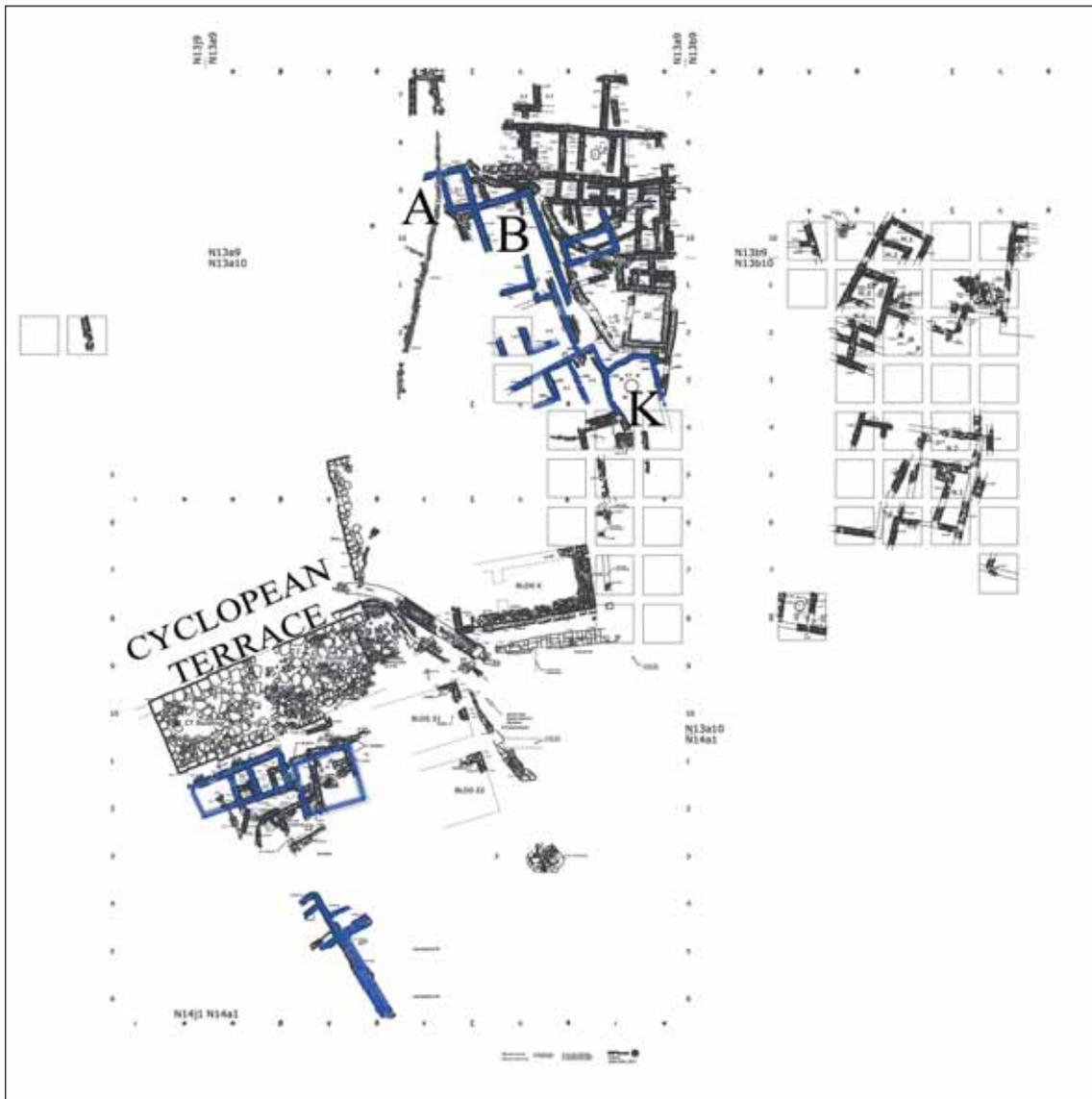


Fig. 3: State plan of the Iklaina site (M. Nelson)

however, that it was constructed sometime in LH IIIA2–IIIB. Based on the date of the destruction layer mentioned above, it seems that it was destroyed violently in the LH IIIB period.

Another large structure, Building X, exists to the east of the Cyclopean Platform (Fig. 7). The earliest phase of this building seems to date to LH IIIA2 early, when the inner south wall (CT-025) was constructed. At a later stage, within LH IIIA2 or early LH IIIB, this wall was encased by a row of orthostates, on top of which an ashlar wall was built. In its final form the building was about 15 m long and 8 m wide. The function of this building is not clear, as its north half, if it ever existed, is not preserved. Soundings in the interior of the building did not yield any artefacts, which also suggests that either the building may have never been completed or that it was only meant to have a south face.

In front of Building X passes a paved road, made of rectangular limestone blocks; the quality of construction of this road is remarkable, as shown by the fact that in the spots where it is well preserved, the joints between its blocks are barely visible (Figs. 7, 8). The road has been followed to a length of 17 m, at which point it seems to turn towards the north and to continue between two



Fig. 4: The north face of the Cyclopean Platform



Fig. 5: View of indentation and of the slabs along the north face of the Cyclopean Platform



Fig. 6: Ashlar blocks from the Cyclopean Terrace Building

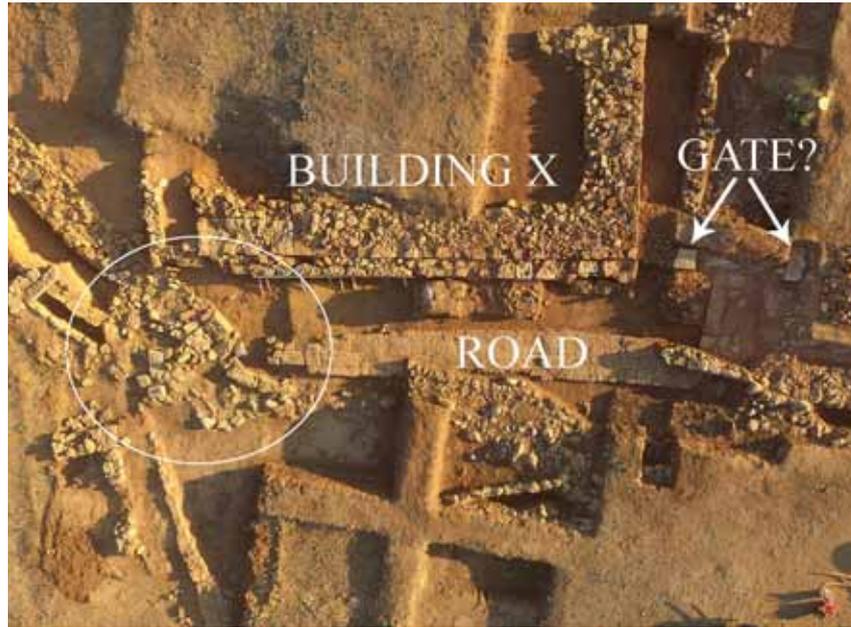


Fig. 7: Aerial view of Building X and the road



Fig. 8: The north face of Building X, the marker, and the road

large blocks of stone, which may have belonged to an entrance gate (Fig. 7). An upright slab, possibly a sort of *horos*, is lined up with the east side of Building X (Fig. 8).

Towards the west, the road ends in a paved piazza (indicated with a circle in Fig. 7), which unfortunately has suffered extensive damage by ploughing. The extent of the piazza cannot be reconstructed, but it seems to have spanned the area between Building X and the east end of the Cyclopean Terrace Building. The piazza was drained by a massive built stone drain (Fig. 9). From the piazza a second road starts, which seems to lead in the direction of a possible open-air shrine.⁷

⁷ Cosmopoulos 2015.



Fig. 9: The built stone drain from the southeast

Building X, the roads, and the piazza seem to have been destroyed sometime in LH IIIB, when the Cyclopean Terrace Building and the Houses Beta, Alpha, and Kappa of the north sector were also destroyed. The preliminary analysis of the stratigraphy suggests a site-wide destruction sometime in LH IIIB.

The Post-monumental Phase

Building activity after the destruction was restricted in the construction of industrial rooms to the north of the Cyclopean Platform (Fig. 3, marked with I in Fig. 1). Given the chronological focus that this conference has on the early Mycenaean period, a detailed discussion of these rooms is outside the scope of the present paper, but I should mention two important characteristics:

1. they date to the final period of use of the site, LH IIIB; and
2. their orientation differs significantly from that of the earlier buildings, on top of which they sit.

Conclusions

On the basis of the preliminary analysis of the stratigraphic and architectural sequence it appears that at Iklaina we can distinguish the following phases:

Phase 1 (LH IIA–IIIA1). Building V with its staircase; early Building T; early Building X; Buildings Beta, Alpha, Kappa in the north sector.

Phase 2 (LH IIIA2–IIIB). The Cyclopean Terrace Building, Building X main phase, roads, piazza, Buildings Beta, Alpha, Kappa in the north sector (continued use).

Phase 3 (LH IIIB). Industrial workshops.

It is noteworthy that there does not seem to be a destruction horizon between Phases 1 and 2, with the exception of sporadic localised deposits with rubble. In fact, the builders of the monumental buildings seem to have taken into consideration the pre-existing structures and in at least two cases the monumental buildings appear to expand those pre-existing structures: the Cyclopean Platform extended the flat area initially supported by Building V; and the external façade of Building X encased the earlier inner core of Wall CT-025. In Phase 3 industrial installations were

erected in the north part of the site, with a different orientation than the Cyclopean Platform and the buildings of Phase 2. Both the erection and the destruction of monumental buildings are seminal points in the life of the settlement and require explanation. There are two possible scenarios:

1. The first is based on current models that date the annexation of second-order centres by the Palace of Nestor to the end of the early Mycenaean period.⁸ In this scenario, given the lack of a destruction horizon until LH IIIB, annexation was peaceful and the emergence of monumental architecture at the site must have been initiated or allowed by the Palace of Nestor. Possible reasons for which the Palace of Nestor would invest in such a large-scale building programme at another site include:
 - that Iklaina may have been ruled by a relative of the ruler at the Palace of Nestor;
 - that the architectural expansion indicated by the monumental architecture could have been a form of reward for support rendered by the rulers of Iklaina to the Palace of Nestor;
 - that Iklaina could have been of special economic significance to the Palace.

The destruction of the monumental buildings in LH IIIB and the change in the function of the site to industrial during a period in which Iklaina remained under the Palace of Nestor could have been associated with the architectural changes observed at the Palace of Nestor in this period (construction of the Wine Magazine and the Northeast Building), which could reflect restructuring in the administration and acquisition networks of the Palace.⁹

2. In the second scenario Iklaina experiences continuous and uninterrupted growth from the early Mycenaean period to LH IIIB, culminating in the construction of monumental buildings. During this long period, such aspects of Iklaina as monumental and formal architecture, elaborate decorative projects (frescoes), advanced urban infrastructures (public places, paved streets, large stone drains, water distribution works), administrative records (Linear B), and clear separation of activity areas, make Iklaina look more similar to the Palace of Nestor than to the other known second-order centre of Nichoria. These characteristics could indicate internal development of complex administration without interference or forced annexation by the Palace of Nestor. In this scenario, it is possible that Iklaina may have developed into a primary centre before its annexation by the Palace of Nestor. In this case, the destruction and abandonment of monumental buildings in the course of LH IIIB with the subsequent erection of industrial workshops may indicate deep changes in the architectural organisation and the function of the site. Such changes are compatible with the demotion of Iklaina from an administrative to an industrial centre. Such an event could have been the result of a forced takeover by a new political authority (presumably the Palace of Nestor), which could have turned Iklaina into an industrial centre. This would agree with the picture of **a-pu₂* as an important industrial centre, that we have from the Linear B tablets from the Palace of Nestor.¹⁰

It is hoped that the continuation of the excavation and the completion of the stratigraphic analysis at Iklaina will help us test these theories and illuminate this important aspect of the emergence of the Pylian state.

⁸ Bennet 1998; Bennet 2002; Bennet – Shelmerdine 2001; Shelmerdine 2001; Shelmerdine 2006; Wright 2006; Bennet 2007a; Bennet 2007b; Galaty – Parkinson 2007; Bennet 2008; Shelmerdine – Bennet 2008; Wright 2008.

⁹ Nelson 2001, 214–215.

¹⁰ Cosmopoulos 2019.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Aerial view of the site from the north showing the three general areas (R = Residential; I = Industrial; A = Administrative)

Fig. 2: Aerial view of the area of the Cyclopean Platform

Fig. 3: State plan of the Iklaina site (M. Nelson)

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Fig. 5: View of indentation and of the slabs along the north face of the Cyclopean Platform

Fig. 6: Ashlar blocks from the Cyclopean Terrace Building

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Fig. 8: The north face of Building X, the marker, and the road

Fig. 9: The built stone drain from the southeast

Mycenaean Messenia in the Making: The Evidence from the Tholos Tombs

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Abstract: The analysis of Middle and Late Bronze Age tombs provides important insights into the emergence of the Mycenaean society and its later developments. The southwestern Peloponnese (Messenia and Triphylia) in particular, with its rich mortuary landscape, is suitable for studying the changes which occurred not only at the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age but also during the Mycenaean period. The purpose of this paper is to highlight these changes through the architecture of the tholos tombs as well as the burial gifts.

Keywords: Messenia, Triphylia, tholos tombs, MH, early Mycenaean period, funerary archaeology

Introduction

Since Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae in 1876, Greek Bronze Age tombs have attracted the attention of archaeologists and of historians. With the rising awareness that graves are an important source for understanding changes and developments in ancient societies, interest has extended from burial sites of the so-called elites also to more modest tombs. Especially in cultures where written records are absent or allow only a limited reconstruction of social hierarchies, the analysis of different aspects concerning burials and burial places allows us to make major contributions to this topic.

The southwestern Peloponnese with its rich late MH and LH mortuary landscape is particularly suitable for studying the socio-political changes which occurred not only at the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age but also during the Mycenaean period proper.² Whereas it is difficult to trace social hierarchies during the earlier MH period due to the small number of excavated tombs, the emergence of the early Mycenaean elite burials can be observed very well. At this point, I would like to stress that this paper does not deal only with modern Messenia: in accordance with the research of John Bennet, Yannis Galanakis and Birgitta Eder I also include Triphylia south of the Alpheios in my considerations (Fig. 1).³

The Southwestern Peloponnese in the MH Period: An Overview

After the collapse which brought the EH II material culture to an end, the Peloponnese seems to have been partially deserted.⁴ In many regions, an increase in population is only visible in the later Middle Bronze Age.⁵ It seems that this was also the case in Triphylia, where a substantial

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² Of course, it has to be kept in mind that developments were not identical in the different regions of the Peloponnese, not to mention mainland Greece.

³ Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 147; Eder 2011.

⁴ Perhaps some groups of the population in EH III were used to a nomadic lifestyle: Rutter 2017 (with further references).

⁵ Zavadil 2010; Zavadil 2016.

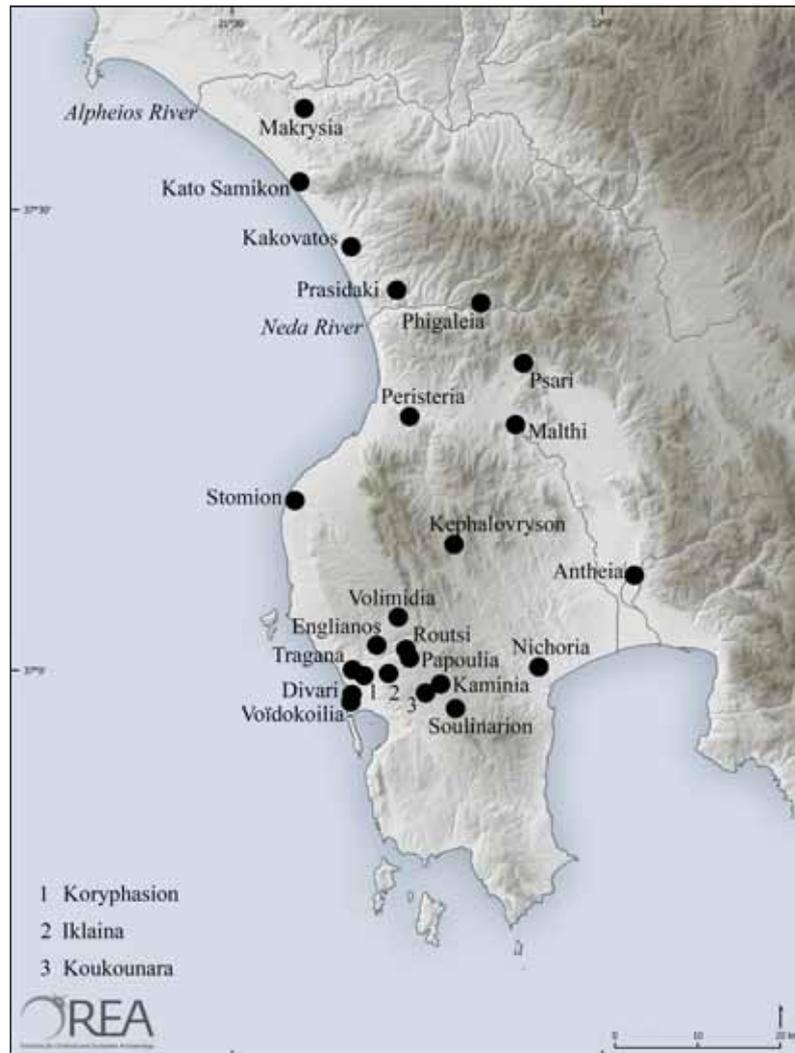


Fig. 1: Map of the southwestern Peloponnese with sites mentioned in the text (M. Zavadil, M. Börner)

number of settlements were founded only in the second half of the Middle Bronze Age or close to its end. Only a few sites, e.g. Phigaleia-Kourdoumbouli and Prasadaki, were inhabited in MH I and MH II.⁶ Accordingly, tombs from the first half of the MH period are lacking. South of the Neda River, the pattern changes: on the Epano Englianos ridge, in the vicinity of the later Palace of Nestor, evidence for habitation exists from the late EH III and the early MH periods.⁷ The settlements at Malthi, Nichoria, Stomion near Philiatra and possibly also at Iklaina-Traganes were possibly founded in the first half of the Middle Bronze Age as well.⁸ Of the many tumuli known in modern Messenia, only nine have been excavated.⁹ Apart from two burial mounds of unknown date (Divari and Myrsinochori-Routsis, Tumulus I [Giorgiopoulos]), all were built in the first half of the MH period.¹⁰ Although these tumuli constitute a fascinating phenomenon in Messenia, the

⁶ Rambach 2010, 114.

⁷ Deriziotis Aloni: Stocker 2003; Stocker 2004. Petropoulos Trenches: Davis – Stocker 2010.

⁸ Zavadil 2010, 158–159; Cosmopoulos – Shelmerdine 2016, 203. For the foundation of Malthi probably in MH II see now Worsham et al. 2018, 15, 23.

⁹ This number does not include the so-called complex tumuli (for the term see Voutsaki 1998, 43).

¹⁰ Pelon 1976, 75–77; Boyd 2002, 119–123, 126–130, 137–138, 153–159, 167–175; Rambach 2010, 113; Korres 2012, 430–432; Zavadil 2013, 288–291, 364, 499–500, 530–531, 540–546, 587–592, 601. To avoid lengthy foot-

present paper will not focus on them.¹¹ However, I would like to emphasise a few observations: Nikolas Papadimitriou has pointed out recently that at the very few sites in the Peloponnese where both extramural tumuli and settlements were excavated intramural burials were also common.¹² This coexistence may hint at some kind of social stratification already in the first half of the MH period.¹³ Not only the amount of labour and organisation required for constructing a tumulus has to be taken into account; a tumulus also enabled a larger number of mourners to attend the funeral as would have been the case at a grave within the settlement. Furthermore, a mound is visible from a distance and thus attracts attention. Moreover, albeit we have to consider a possible division of Messenia into several regions,¹⁴ the tumuli (and thus the people who were buried there) shared one common feature: at least some of the ceramic vessels used as burial gifts are thought to be imports from Aigina, the Argolid and from Crete.¹⁵ Thus, their owners might not only have been of higher social standing, but were also part of a wider network, which already existed in the first half of the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁶

The number of tombs dated to the second half and the end of the Middle Bronze Age does not match with the number of settlements known from this period: there are some cist graves or small built chamber tombs (and perhaps also pithos burials) in the tumuli at Kato Samikon-Kleidi,¹⁷ the tholos tomb at Koryphasion,¹⁸ and Tomb 1 at Chora-Volimidia/Kephalovryson.¹⁹ Possibly the intramural burials in Myron-Peristeria and Iklaina also date to the end of the MH period.²⁰ The tombs at Kato Samikon follow Middle Bronze Age traditions in terms of construction as well as of furniture, and, according to their excavator, Eleni Papakonstantinou, at least, in the way it was built one of the mounds resembled the much earlier tumulus at Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis with its radially inserted burial pithoi.²¹ By contrast, Tomb 1 at Chora-Volimidia/Kephalovryson and the tholos at Koryphasion show new features. Although Tomb 1 at Kephalovryson also belongs to the category of MH cist graves, the fact that it was cut into a natural cavity, its unusual size and the large number of grave goods set it apart from earlier burials. The tholos has no precursors on the mainland; whether its ‘invention’, which presumably took place in Messenia, can be attributed to Minoan influences or whether it was a genuinely mainland creation I do not wish to discuss.²²

notes, general references to burial sites will be limited to the main publications, which also provide the relevant bibliography (Pelon 1976; Boyd 2002; Zavadil 2013). – For a plan of Tumulus I (Giorgiopoulos) at Myrsinochori-Routsi, see now Marinatos 2014, 105, fig. 23.

¹¹ For a discussion of the relations between tumuli and tholoi in the southwestern Peloponnese, see Petrakis, this volume.

¹² Papadimitriou 2016, 338.

¹³ On this topic, see also Spencer 2010; Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016, 289.

¹⁴ Wright 2010, 813.

¹⁵ Korres 1993, 235–236; Rambach 2007, 146–147; Rambach 2011, 463–464, 471–472; Korres 2012, 430. For Cretan and/or Kytheran imports to settlements in MH I/II Messenia, see Howell 1992, 73, 76 (Nichoria); Davis – Stocker 2010 (Petropoulos Trenches, Epano Englianos).

¹⁶ See also Rutter – Zerner 1984.

¹⁷ Papakonstantinou 1988; Papakonstantinou 1989a; Papadimitriou 2001, 43–45; Boyd 2002, 186–189; Rambach 2002, 162–163; Nikolentzos 2011, 57–59.

¹⁸ Pelon 1976, 198; Boyd 2002, 125; Zavadil 2013, 451–453.

¹⁹ Boyd 2002, 139, 141–142, 144; Chasiakou 2003, Εισαγωγή: Βολιμίδια, Κεφαλόβρυσου, τάφος 1, 59–61; Μέρος Β,Ι: Κατάλογος: Β,Ι.10. Τάφος Κεφαλόβρυσου Βολιμιδίων, 837–848; Β,ΙΙ.10. Τάφος Κεφαλόβρυσου Βολιμιδίων, 1690–1721; Zavadil 2013, 93–94, 334–337.

²⁰ Myron-Peristeria: Boyd 2002, 35–36, 169, 171–172; Zavadil 2013, 505. Iklaina: Zavadil 2013, 408.

²¹ Papakonstantinou 1988.

²² For summaries of the discussion (with further bibliography), see Pelon 1976, 442–453; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 44–45; Dickinson 2011.

The Funerary Landscape in MH III/LH I

More tholos tombs are known from the transitional phase between MH III and LH I: they were built in Kato Samikon-Kleidi,²³ Epano Englianos (Tholos V, the so-called Grave Circle),²⁴ and perhaps also in Myron-Peristeria (Tholos 3)²⁵ and Koukounara-Gouvalari (Tholos 2).²⁶ Three of them stand out because of their rich grave goods; the exception is Tholos 1 (the so-called tumulus) at Kato Samikon-Kleidi. The burials in this tomb received pottery, spindle whorls made of stone and clay as well as one knife. Tholos V at Epano Englianos contained, amongst other finds, diadems and at least two vessels made of gold and silver, eight swords, several knives, razors and bronze vessels, seals, beads made of semi-precious stone, amber and glass (one Nuzi bead!), as well as pottery imported from Crete and Cyprus. It has to be stressed that these grave goods do not, however, necessarily belong to the earliest burials. In Myron-Peristeria, Tholos 3, gold and silver vessels, a diadem as well as golden foil ornaments, several beads of semi-precious stone and pottery were found. In Peristeria and Gouvalari large gilded or silver-plated rivets attest to the former presence of swords.

Apart from these tholoi with diameters varying between 5 m and c. 7 m, there is also evidence for smaller, tholos-like tombs, which frequently share a tumulus. They often lack the canonical entrance area consisting of dromos and stomion and just feature short stomion-like dromoi. For this reason, Sofia Voutsaki named them “rudimentary tholoi”.²⁷ We find such tombs at Ano Kremmydia-Kaminia,²⁸ Koukounara-Gouvalari (Tumulus α , Tumulus β , Tumulus 2?),²⁹ Nichoria/Karpophora (Tomb Nikitopoulos 4)³⁰ and at Kephlovryson.³¹ They differ from the larger tholoi neither in the method of construction nor in the quality of the building materials; only their smaller size and the range of grave goods set them apart. No prestige weapons or objects made of precious metals are known from these tombs. The main burial gifts consist of ceramic vessels, clay spindle whorls and stone arrowheads; knives, pins, rings and beads of bronze were only rarely found. Georgios S. Korres’ observation that the rudimentary Tholoi $\alpha 1$ and $\alpha 4$ in Tumulus α at Koukounara-Gouvalari were built at about the same time as Tholos 2 in their immediate vicinity has provided an important indication for the social status of the people buried in these tombs.³² From the difference in size together with the differences in the burial goods we may conclude that the owners of Tholos 2 belonged to a higher social class than the people who commissioned the rudimentary Tholoi $\alpha 1$ and $\alpha 4$.

Thus, based on tomb architecture, it is possible to identify two or possibly three regions within the area under study, that stood out against the others in the early Mycenaean period: the area around Epano Englianos, where two tholos tombs were built (Tholos V at Epano Englianos, and the tholos at Koryphasion), Myron-Peristeria and perhaps also the Koukounara plateau. These tholos tombs differ from contemporary tholoi in Messenia and Triphylia in terms of size and wealthy burial offerings.³³ It is probably correct to assume that in this phase, the construction of a ‘proper’ tholos was already sufficient to underline the importance of the

²³ Yalouris 1966; Pelon 1976, 77–78; Zavadil 2000; Boyd 2002, 186–188; Nikolentzos 2011, 55–57. For the pottery found in the tholos, see also Rambach 2002, 160–162.

²⁴ Pelon 1976, 194–195; Zavadil 2000; Boyd 2002, 147–152; Zavadil 2013, 374–379. For the tombs at Epano Englianos in general, see Murphy et al. 2020 (with references to earlier bibliography).

²⁵ Pelon 1976, 209–211; Boyd 2002, 167–175; Zavadil 2013, 510–512.

²⁶ Pelon 1976, 203–204; Boyd 2002, 108–113; Zavadil 2013, 461–463. For a sketch of the tholos, see Marinatos 2014, 154, fig. 34.

²⁷ Voutsaki 1998, 43.

²⁸ Boyd 2002, 116–119; Zavadil 2013, 264–273.

²⁹ Boyd 2002, 108–113; Zavadil 2013, 463–480.

³⁰ Boyd 2002, 160–164; Zavadil 2013, 434–436.

³¹ Boyd 2002, 185; Zavadil 2013, 449–450.

³² Korres 1976, 343–344, 349; Korres 1977, 481.

³³ For lists of MH III/LH I tholos tombs in Messenia and Triphylia, see Boyd 2002, 219–220; Zavadil 2013, 247.

person(s) who commissioned it. For this reason, no additional architectural features were necessary to illustrate distinction.

The Funerary Landscape in LH I

In LH I, the number of tholoi that were built becomes greater than in the previous periods. It has to be emphasised that some tombs – I am thinking especially of Tholos IV at Epano Englianos³⁴ – might have been constructed already at the transition from MH III to LH I. One observation is worth mentioning: The diameters of all tombs vary within the range 5 m to 6 m; the exception is Tholos IV at Epano Englianos with a diameter of 9.35 m. It seems to be no coincidence that it is situated at a site where a tholos (Tholos V) had already been constructed earlier. However, this earlier tomb has a significantly smaller diameter of 5.50 m. At Koukounara-Gouvalari the situation appears similar: although Tholoi 1³⁵ and 2 are considerably smaller than the aforementioned large tomb, the observation that the later tomb (Tholos 1, built in LH I, diameter 6.25 m) is larger than the earlier one (Tholos 2, possibly built in MH III/LH I, diameter 4.90–5.00 m) holds true. Thus one may conclude that in LH I the sponsors of the tombs at Epano Englianos and Koukounara-Gouvalari intended to exceed the older tombs in size. What can be said about the grave goods from these tombs? Is there an increase both in the size of the tombs and in the number and quality of the grave goods? There are no clear answers to these questions as the contents of most tombs had been rearranged ... by whomever and whenever. However, as far as we can tell, there was no increase in the lavishness of the burial gifts.

With diameters ranging between 5 m and 6 m, most tholoi built in LH I Messenia are considerably smaller than Tholos IV at Epano Englianos. Three of them were undisturbed at the time of their excavation: Tholos 2 at Kato Samikon-Kleidi,³⁶ Tholos 2 at Myrsinochori-Routsi³⁷ and the so-called South Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria.³⁸ Based on what we know about all LH I tholoi in the area under study, it has to be stressed again that the size of a tholos alone does not allow any conclusions as to the social status of its owner(s). Not only the grave goods have to be taken into account, but also the neighbouring tombs (if any). The burials in Tholoi 1 and 2 at Myrsinochori-Routsi³⁹ were provided with exceptionally rich grave goods, which are comparable to those found at Epano Englianos and Myron-Peristeria. Tholos 2 at Kato Samikon-Kleidi was less lavishly furnished, but contained, amongst other burial gifts, a boar's tusk helmet, seals and some beads of carnelian. However, the tomb might have been in use until LH IIIA2⁴⁰ and it is as yet unknown to which burials the above-mentioned grave goods belonged. Two tholoi – South Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria as well as the tholos at Makryisia-Ayios Ilias⁴¹ – clearly differ from the aforementioned tombs. Although they are similar in size, their grave goods are significantly less rich than in Routsi and even poorer than in Kato Samikon-Kleidi, Tholos 2. At Makryisia-Ayios Ilias they comprised pottery, four knives and two bronze pins, spindle whorls of clay and steatite as well as one stone

³⁴ Pelon 1976, 192–194; Boyd 2002, 147–152; Zavadil 2013, 369–373; Murphy, this volume. Davis – Stocker 2015 argue for a possible construction of Tholos IV already in MH III.

³⁵ Pelon 1976, 203–204; Boyd 2002, 108–113; Zavadil 2013, 460–461. For a plan of the tholos, see now Marinatos 2014, 151, fig. 33.

³⁶ Papakonstantinou 1989b; Boyd 2002, 186–189 (termed “Tholos tomb [mound 5]”); Rambach 2002, 162–163; Nikolentzos 2011, 59–60.

³⁷ Pelon 1976, 198–200; Boyd 2002, 153–159; Zavadil 2013, 526–529.

³⁸ Boyd 2002, 167–175; Zavadil 2013, 514–516. For lists of tholoi built in LH I, see Boyd 2002, 220, and Zavadil 2013, 247–248.

³⁹ For a topographical map of the tholoi, see Marinatos 2014, 106, fig. 24. – The heavily disturbed tholos at Voidokoilia (Pelon 1976, 201; Boyd 2002, 126–130; Zavadil 2013, 592–596; Marinatos 2014, 135, fig. 29) might also be included in this group of smaller, but richly furnished LH I tholos tombs.

⁴⁰ Papakonstantinou 1989b, 110, indicates LH I–III A2 as the period of use for the tomb. For the abandonment of the tholos in LH II, see Nikolentzos 2011, 58.

⁴¹ Pelon 1976, 78; Zavadil 2000; Boyd 2002, 191–192; Nikolentzos 2011, 61.

arrowhead, whereas South Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria contained solely pottery. Since this tomb is situated at a considerable distance from the other tholoi at this site, it seems justifiable to assume that the spatial distance and the different choice of burial gifts are both expressions of the class distinctions of their owners. Consequently, these tombs should be seen in the context of the rudimentary tholoi, whose construction continued in LH I. This observation is supported by the fact that neither South Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria nor the tholos at Makryisia-Ayios Ilias seem to have featured dromoi, although one has to add that the latter tomb was only very poorly preserved.

Therefore, following their first appearance in Koryphasion in MH III, tholos tombs spread rapidly in the southwestern Peloponnese during LH I. It seems that three social groups commissioned their construction, since differences become apparent in several respects:

1. At four sites tholoi were presumably built in MH III/LH I: Myron-Peristeria (Tholos 3), Epano Englianos (Tholos V) and possibly Koukounara-Gouvalari (Tholos 2). They are similar in terms of their construction as well as the recovered burial gifts.⁴² At two of these sites we notice the construction of a second series of tholoi in LH I. They are larger in size, but contain grave goods of roughly the same quality as before. The exception is Kato Samikon-Kleidi: compared with the aforementioned tombs the dead buried in these two tholoi were poorly furnished.⁴³ Furthermore, both tholos tombs seem to be more or less the same size (Tholos 1: 5.50 m;⁴⁴ Tholos 2: 5.65 m⁴⁵).

2. In LH I, tholos tombs were also built in new places: Makryisia-Ayios Ilias, Myrsinochori-Routsis (Tholos 2), Voïdokoilia and perhaps also at Nichoria/Karpophora (Tomb Nikitopoulos 5).⁴⁶ They belonged to different social groups: the people buried in Routsis may be regarded as of similar social standing as the owners of the tombs at Epano Englianos, Myron-Peristeria (and perhaps also Koukounara-Gouvalari), while those who commissioned the other tombs might have belonged to a lower social level.

3. The persons buried e.g. in South Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria and in the rudimentary tholoi appear to have belonged to yet another social group.

The Funerary Landscape in LH I/II–LH II

With the transition from LH I to LH II, the heyday of the tholoi in the southwestern Peloponnese began: Tholos 2 and the slightly younger Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria,⁴⁷ the tholos at Psari-Metsiki,⁴⁸ and Tholos A at Kakovatos⁴⁹ were constructed late in LH I or at the very beginning of LH IIA. Not only were most tholos tombs built in LH I/II–LH II, it was also in this period when tholoi were commissioned which differ drastically from other contemporary (and earlier) tholos tombs in the area under study. Their architectural elaboration – both the decoration of their façades and the quality of their masonry – as well as their size sets them apart from the majority

⁴² It is uncertain whether the tholoi in Koukounara-Gouvalari should be included in this group, since no diadems, vessels of gold or silver or fragments of gold foil were found. However, the absence of such objects may be due to the bad condition of these tombs.

⁴³ Nevertheless, at least one of the dead buried in the later Tholos 2 was provided with a boar's tusk helmet, which indicates a warrior burial (Papakonstantinou 1989b).

⁴⁴ According to Yalouris 1966, 7, the diameter is 5.50 m; from the plan (Yalouris 1966, fig. 1) a diameter of c. 5.00 m can be determined. If 5.00 m is the correct dimension, it also applies to Kato Samikon-Kleidi that the older tholos is the obviously smaller one.

⁴⁵ Papakonstantinou 1989b, 110.

⁴⁶ Boyd 2002, 160–164; Zavadil 2013, 436.

⁴⁷ Tholos 2: Pelon 1976, 209–211; Boyd 2002, 167–175; Zavadil 2013, 508–510. Tholos 1: Pelon 1976, 207–209; Boyd 2002, 167–175; Zavadil 2013, 502–504.

⁴⁸ Boyd 2002, 180–182; Zavadil 2013, 550–553.

⁴⁹ Pelon 1976, 219–221; Boyd 2002, 189–191; Nikolentzos 2011, 46–49; de Vreé, this volume.

of the tholoi. This applies to Tholos 1 at Myron-Peristeria, Tholos 1 at Tragana-Viglitsa,⁵⁰ the tholos at Antheia-Makria Rachi,⁵¹ and perhaps also Tholos III at Kato Englianos,⁵² although its masonry is of poorer quality compared with the others. In Epano Englianos and Myron-Peristeria these tombs follow a tradition which had begun as early as the transition from MH III to LH I. Furthermore, they continue a trend already noted: later tholoi surpassed their predecessors in size. The latest tombs, however, also surpass the earlier ones in the quality of their masonry. Now also in Tragana-Viglitsa and Antheia-Makria Rachi – sites where no tholoi existed prior to LH II – tholos tombs were built in outstanding masonry. In this context, it seems justified to assume close contacts between Myron-Peristeria and Antheia-Makria Rachi: the construction of the façades of the LH II tholoi is identical,⁵³ as if one and the same architect planned them.

Taking into consideration the wealth of burial gifts found in the tholoi at Kakovatos as well as their size, one is inclined to include them in this group of outstanding tombs. Although we do not have much information about their architectural design because of their pitiful preservation, one can however state that – apart from their impressive size and the paved floor in Tholos B – they do not (any longer?) show any outstanding architectural features. Nevertheless, the finds prove that the persons buried in them belonged to the same social class as the owners of the tholoi at Myron-Peristeria, Antheia-Makria Rachi, Epano Englianos, etc. How to explain this? I think the reason for this could be the very small number of tholoi in the area north of the river Neda: so far, tholos tombs are known only at Makryisia-Ayios Ilias, Kato Samikon-Kleidi and Kakovatos. Perhaps it sufficed to build the Kakovatos tholoi as large as they were to express social standing, and it was not necessary to embellish their architecture beyond that. So it seems that in terms of competitive use of architectural features, the burial monuments in the region of modern Triphylia lagged behind the area south of the Neda River, where we noticed this tendency already in LH I.

It would be interesting to know in this context where to place the tholos near Psari, since with its diameter of 9.10 m it is clearly in the same category as Tholos IV at Epano Englianos and Tholos 2 at Myron-Peristeria. Unfortunately it has been severely disturbed by activities in the post-Mycenaean period, but two rivets with gilded heads are thought by Georgia Hadzi-Spiliopoulou⁵⁴ to derive from a sword or dagger and suggest the former existence of a warrior's burial.

Apart from these exceptional tombs, both 'normal' and 'rudimentary' tholoi continued to be built. They are now found frequently throughout modern Messenia; in Triphylia, however, they remain a rare phenomenon.⁵⁵ Several of them were relatively splendidly furnished with some of their grave goods having parallels in the aforementioned rich tombs.⁵⁶ But it is important to note that none of them yielded swords (or rivets or pommels), and it is also unknown whether they once contained vessels made of precious metals (the only exception is the MME tholos in Nichoria⁵⁷). The absence of these groups of burial gifts may indicate that these tombs belonged to a less high-ranking group of people than the outstanding tholoi built in this phase at Myron-Peristeria, Antheia-Makria Rachi, Tragana-Viglitsa, Epano Englianos and Kakovatos. Their less elaborate architecture suggests this, too.

⁵⁰ Pelon 1976, 195–197; Boyd 2002, 131–132; Zavadil 2013, 559–561. For a plan of the tholos, see now Marinatos 2014, 119, fig. 27.

⁵¹ Boyd 2002, 185; Zavadil 2013, 292–294.

⁵² Pelon 1976, 190–192; Boyd 2002, 147–152; Zavadil 2013, 366–368. The new Tholoi VI and VII, discovered in 2018, were presumably built in LH IIA; see <<http://www.griffinwarrior.org/tholos-tombs/>> and <<https://chronique.efa.gr/?kroute=report&id=8078>> (last access 29 Nov. 2020).

⁵³ Zavadil 2013, 62–63, 294 n. 5, 697, figs. 81–82. See also Nelson 2007, 146–148.

⁵⁴ Hadzi 1989, 79; Hadzi 1990, 105.

⁵⁵ For lists of tholoi built in LH I/II and LH II, see Boyd 2002, 220, and Zavadil 2013, 248.

⁵⁶ E.g. some tombs in the area close to Koukounara (Tholos Akona 2, Tholoi Phyties 1 and Phyties 2; Pelon 1976, 202–205; Boyd 2002, 113–116; Zavadil 2013, 457–459, 481–482) as well as the Veves tholos at Nichoria/Karpo-phora (Pelon 1976, 188–189; Boyd 2002, 160–165; Zavadil 2013, 428–429).

⁵⁷ Boyd 2002, 213; Zavadil 2013, 418–425. For arguments for a construction of the MME Tholos in LH II or LH IIB/IIIA1, see Zavadil 2013, 76–77, 425; Boyd 2014, 200–201.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the significance of the architectural design of tholos tombs had changed by LH II. In MH III and LH I, when only few tholoi were built, there were hardly any considerable differences in their construction or in the choice of building materials. Social distinctions seem to have been expressed only by means of the size of the tombs and the choice of grave goods. With LH I/II–LH II, when tholoi spread throughout the area under study, differentiation in architectural design was deployed in the regions south of the river Neda: some tombs have exceptionally designed façades or e.g. stomia built of cut or sewn ashlar blocks. The grave goods from these tombs also point to the prominent status of their owners. These tholoi might have been the burial places of the chiefs of small territories, which had probably already begun to rise as early as MH III/LH I. In LH II it seems that competition between the elites of these territories manifested itself both in the architecture of their tombs and in the burial gifts. At sites of perhaps lesser importance tholoi were also built, but these continued, unaltered, the former architectural traditions and may also have been less richly furnished. However, this development cannot be witnessed north of the river Neda: the tholoi of Kakovatos distinguish themselves from the other tholos tombs because of their size and the abundance of grave goods, but most probably not in terms of their architectural features.

The Funerary Landscape in LH III

None of the tholos tombs which were built in the area under study in LH III equalled in size the large tombs built in LH II.⁵⁸ The largest tholoi have diameters between 6 m and 7 m. At least in respect to their size, the difference between tholoi and rudimentary tholoi decreased, since in LH IIIA numerous tholos tombs with diameters ranging between 3 m and 5 m were built. It would be interesting to know more about the burial gifts, but almost all tombs had been badly disturbed in later periods. The finds that we know include mainly pottery, spindle whorls made of clay and stone, bronze knives and razors. What about the larger tholoi? In some,⁵⁹ finds have been recovered which hint at the previous existence of rich grave goods (fragments of sheet gold and gold leaf, gilded rivets, fragments of bronze vessels, etc.). But none of these larger and better furnished tholos tombs displays the outstanding architectural design which qualified the conspicuous series of LH II. It appears a logical conclusion that the steady rise in size and architectural elaboration of the tholoi, discernible from as early as LH I onwards, reflected the competition between elite groups of some centres. When Pylos began to emerge as the dominant centre, it was perhaps no longer necessary (or appropriate?) to use tholos tombs to demonstrate wealth and power.

With the early Palatial period, two further developments attract attention: firstly, chamber tombs became more widespread throughout the area under study,⁶⁰ although in the region between the Neda and the Alpheios they remained a rare phenomenon.⁶¹ Secondly, a series of tholoi was abandoned in LH IIB/IIIA or LH IIIA, i.e. Tholoi IV and V at Epáno Englianos, Tholos 2 at Myrsinochori-Routsí, some of the tholoi in the areas of Koukounara and Nichoria/Karpophora, the tholoi at Myron-Peristeria, Tragana-Viglitsa and Kakovatos, to name just a few. J. Bennet has suggested connecting this phenomenon with the growing dominance of the Palace of Pylos, since the smaller territories, whose leaders (and/or upper class) had been buried in them, had been absorbed into the kingdom of Pylos.⁶² Convincing as this hypothesis may be, it leaves one sub-

⁵⁸ For lists of tholoi built in LH III, see Boyd 2002, 212–213; Zavadil 2013, 248–249.

⁵⁹ E.g. in Tholos II at Malthi (Pelon 1976, 213–217; Boyd 2002, 213; Zavadil 2013, 569–572) and perhaps also the tholos at Soulinarion-Tourliditsa (Pelon 1976, 206–207; Boyd 2002, 133; Zavadil 2013, 555–556).

⁶⁰ In comparison with other regions of the Peloponnese, the number of chamber tombs in Messenia and Triphyly is rather low; see also Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 3–4.

⁶¹ Nikolentzos 2011, 42, 86–89.

⁶² Bennet 1995, 596–601; Bennet 1999, 142–149; Bennet 2007. A summary of Bennet's ideas can be found in Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 77–78.

stantial question unanswered: if the palace had annexed these territories, why did several tholos tombs remain in use in LH IIIB? Tholos 2 at Myrsinochori-Routsi, for example, went out of use after LH IIIA1, but Tholos 1 received burials probably until LH IIIB, and perhaps even until LH IIIC. Had the owners of Tholos 1 come to terms with the new rulers? How can we explain the different life cycles of tombs?

Moreover, it is not the case that the use of tholoi continued exclusively in the immediate vicinity of the palace,⁶³ as might be expected, if the only cause for their abandonment was the new concentration of power at the palace. It is reasonable to suppose that other factors also contributed to the abandonment of these tholoi. One reason for this could be that the owners of these tholoi, which were in use in the Palatial period, were the representatives of the rulers in the palace of Pylos in regional subcentres. Furthermore, the increasing poverty of the population and the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of the palatial elites might also have contributed to the abandonment of a number of tholos tombs.⁶⁴

In the Palatial period wealth (and power) was no longer demonstrated through combining the construction of architecturally impressive tholos tombs with luxurious burial gifts. It sufficed to provide the dead who were buried in those larger tholoi that were still in use or were newly built with a rich range of grave goods. Viewed from the outside, these tholos tombs differed only in their slightly larger diameter from those of less wealthy and/or less high-ranking people. This is in accordance with the observation that with the rise of the palaces, the manifestation of wealth, splendour (and presumably also the claim to power) was no longer associated with tombs but had shifted to the palace and its activities.⁶⁵

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⁶³ See also Mee – Cavanagh 1984, 53.

⁶⁴ Voutsaki 1995.

⁶⁵ Davis et al. 1997, 421.

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Illustration

Fig. 1: Map of the southwestern Peloponnese with sites mentioned in the text (M. Zavadil, M. Börner)

Transforming Expressions and Perceptions of Prestige in the Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean Southwestern Peloponnese

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Abstract: This paper assesses evidence for the transformation of prestige expression in the southwestern Peloponnese during the early Mycenaean period (late MH–LH II) with special attention on the shift from patterns of elite behaviour observable throughout the MH period in the region, especially the kind of prestige conveyed by the construction and maintenance of funerary mounds or *tumuli*. It focuses on the appearance of novel perceptions of monumental prestige in architecture, such as the early employment of cut masonry, as well as the emergence of various types of built burial space, and particularly the *tholos* form (perhaps a local invention) and its role in the dramatic transformation of the funerary landscape of the region. Such novelties, apparently appearing in the southwestern Peloponnese earlier in comparison to other mainland regions, need not have a uniform explanation, as they might reflect cultural imports or local developments responding (or even contributing) to the formation of a new socio-political environment. These lasting innovations shaped basic elements of an emerging monumental prestige vocabulary that had a considerable impact in other regions of the Greek mainland and contributed, especially from LH IIA onwards, to the formation of a supra-regional ‘Mycenaean’ elite identity. In this regard, the broader social and ideological change that took place throughout the earlier part of the Late Bronze Age Aegean culminated in the adoption of what has been termed the *wanax* ideology, a kingship institution that is established by LH IIIB times, but whose first appearance on the Greek mainland can be plausibly associated with the formative stages of the palatial administrations established there.

Keywords: burial mound, tholos tomb, prestige/status expression, Bronze Age Messenia, Mycenaean

The purpose of this paper is to discuss changes in the expression of prestige that took place during the late MH and early Mycenaean period (LH I–II) in the southwestern Peloponnese. The region under study here is defined by the Alpheios River to the north and by the Taygetos Mountains to the east. ‘Elites’ are here defined as (formal or informal) groupings of social agents that are in control of what Michael Mann has termed the “sources of social power”, namely ideological, economic, military and political forces.² ‘Prestige expression’ indicates those archaeologically traceable ways in which such ‘elite groups’ chose to manifest their personae and place them within a symbolic scale of social worth.

Throughout this paper, an effort will be made to balance between two partly contrasting aims: on the one hand, to stress the special character of the evidence from the region under consideration; on the other hand, to show the relevance of such discussion for addressing broader issues regarding the emergence of the early Mycenaean culture.

Expressing Prestige in the MH Tumuli of the Southwestern Peloponnese

I propose to begin with some observations on the earlier MH background of such developments in the region. The first half of the second millennium BC seems to have been a period of considerable prosperity in the region. The number and density of MH sites identified in

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² Mann 2012, 22–32; cf. also Earle 1997, 1–16.

previous surveys,³ combined with the pollen record evidence for an episode of rapid human-induced deforestation in the area of the Osmanaga Lagoon in west-central Messenia⁴ in around 2000 BC⁵ are indicative. The approximate timing of this latter episode with the construction and use of an impressive burial tumulus in a commanding location at Voïdokoilia, Tumulus A,⁶ should perhaps be regarded as significant.

Burial mounds have been, at least from our own etic perspective, the most conspicuous feature of MH mortuary behaviour in the region. Throughout the southwestern Peloponnese, extensive and intensive surveys have revealed a landscape literally infested with mounds, most of which may be readily identified as burial tumuli of certain or probable MH date (Fig. 1).⁷ This evidence must be used with great caution, as actual excavation may alter survey data significantly. The revelation that the Kastroulia mounds concealed spectacular early MH⁸ burials instead of LH tholoi,⁹ and the evidence that the Pyrgaki-Tsouka mound, once rejected as being a natural feature,¹⁰ was indeed a re-used MH tumulus¹¹ are telling. For the time being, discussion must necessarily be limited to the better known excavated examples: Voïdokoilia (Tumulus A), Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis, Routsis (the Giorgiopoulos and Kalogeropoulos tumuli) in west-central Messenia and Kastroulia near Ellinika in the east.¹²

At this point, we should emphasise certain idiosyncratic features of southwest Peloponnesian tumuli. In theory, such apparently simple gatherings of earth and stone, being a most straight-

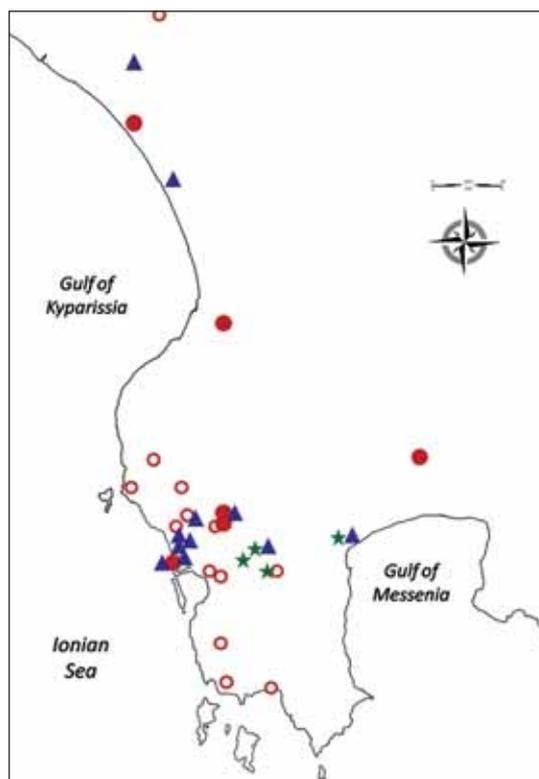


Fig. 1: Map of the southwestern Peloponnese showing the distribution of monuments discussed in the text.

● = excavated burial tumuli with multiple burial spaces;
○ = burial tumuli (insufficiently explored or identified through survey); ▲ = tholoi of late MH–LH I date;
★ = ‘complex tumulus’ with a variety of built burial spaces (small tholoi, periboloi, apsidal built tombs) (drawn and annotated by the author)

³ University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition (UMME): McDonald – Hope Simpson 1972, 133–136, Pocket-Map 8-13; Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (PRAP): Davis et al. 1997, 419–420, 434–439; for a further discussion of MH data collected by PRAP see Shelmerdine 2001, 118–119, 125; Iklaina survey: Cosmopoulos 2016, 203–204. The substantial rise in the number of sites from EH to MH has been commonly noted, although we need to acknowledge the difficulties in dating survey material within MH, as well as distinguishing similar material of early LH date.

⁴ This designation refers to the central area of the southwest subregion of the area surveyed by UMME (cf. McDonald – Hope Simpson 1972, 124, fig. 8-2).

⁵ Zangger et al. 1997, 588–589, with references.

⁶ Zavadil 2013, 587–590, with references.

⁷ We should readily acknowledge the considerable influence that the results of Spyridon Marinatos’ pre-UMME explorations, particularly his 1954–1955 excavation of the Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis tumulus (Marinatos 1957; Marinatos 1960), had on subsequent site identification, especially on later assessments of the significance of ‘multiple burial mounds’ by the UMME project (McDonald – Hope Simpson 1972, 120, 135–136).

⁸ I here deliberately avoid referring to distinct subdivisions of MH (I, II or III) as these might give the false impression that such entities have been identified cross-regionally. Instead, ‘early’, ‘mature’ and ‘late’ MH will be preferred. ‘Earlier MH’ will indicate phases that predate the Shaft Grave era.

⁹ Rambach 2007, 137–138, fig. 1; Rambach 2010, 108; Rambach 2011, 464.

¹⁰ Davis et al. 1997, 486–487, pl. 92b (pre-excavation assessment).

¹¹ Arapoyanni 2004; Hope Simpson 2007, 114–116, 118; Rambach 2010, 113, fig. 1α–γ.

¹² Zavadil 2013, 288–291 (Kastroulia), 530–531 (Routsis), 540–546 (Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis), with references. A previously unpublished plan of the Routsis-Giorgiopoulos tumulus appeared in Marinatos 2014, 105, plan 23.

forward way to mark any special place on the ground, were not a tomb type per se, but rather a manner of monumentalising single or multiple burial spaces. The latter often employed forms that continued to be used outside a tumulus arrangement, such as pit or cist graves. Such reasoning may be particularly applicable to a site such as the Asine East Cemetery (Argolid), with built cists constructed both inside and outside Tumulus IQ.¹³ Moreover, this approach could help us assess the extreme morphological variability among Helladic tumuli¹⁴ as the outcome of different (and possibly independent) regional or local responses to this basic rudimentary idea. However, west-central Messenia presents a somewhat different picture, where a specific type of burial space (the man-sized pithos intended for adult burials) seems to have been exclusively tied to the tumulus form. It would therefore seem arguable that these burial pithoi and the specific kind of tumulus they were placed in represent a coherent entity. Such distinctiveness of the local tumulus tradition seems worth stressing.¹⁵

Voïdokoilia A and Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis seem to belong to a common local type, so far unidentified outside the micro-region of west-central Messenia: low shield-shaped mounds of earth with stone capping(s) where man-sized funerary pithoi intended for adult burials had been inserted with their stomia facing outward in a remarkable radial arrangement.¹⁶ Tumuli¹⁷ in Peristeria-Kokorakou, Routsis or Divari near Gialova¹⁸ have featured the same association of man-sized MH pithoi with reportedly adult burials, whose consistency seems so far typical of west Messenia, although it reaches as far north as Peristeria-Kokorakou and, perhaps, Kato Samikon-Kleidion (Tumulus 3).¹⁹ However, other sites have preserved no clear traces of the neat radial arrangement and stone capping of Voïdokoilia A and Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis, although Peristeria-Kokorakou had a stone-built peribolos. It is quite intriguing that pithoi are so far absent from eastern Messenia, if Kastroulia is indeed typical of the local tumulus tradition.²⁰

All minor differences aside, the very construction of these tumuli poses interesting problems. There might be more to them than the commonsensical assertion that “it would take the labour of more than one family to construct them”.²¹ We should consider the number of EH II sherds recovered from the fills of the mature MH tumuli at Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis and Routsis (Kalogeropoulos

¹³ Dickinson 1983, 57; Petrakis 2010, 407 n. 22. For the most recent assessment of the evidence from the Asine tumulus see now Voutsaki et al. 2011.

¹⁴ Rutter 1993, 784, commenting on Müller 1989; Petrakis 2010, 407.

¹⁵ This is not to ignore the occasional occurrence of pithos burials in tumuli outside this region, as in the tumulus of Aphidna in north Attica (where adult burials have been reported from the horizontally placed pithoi of the mound), Argos, Tumulus A (Oikonomou plot) and the tumulus from the Thanos plot to the East of the Aspis hill where burial pithoi with adult burials have been reported, Asine East Cemetery (Burial Pithoi 1971–7 and 1971–15 located within the formal disposal area represented by a peribolos, although formally outside Tumulus IQ), and the recent find of an EH III tumulus at Atalanti in Phthiotis (Central Greece) (Papakonstantinou 2011, 395–396, fig. 4a–b; Sarri – Voutsaki 2011, 435–436, fig. 3; Voutsaki et al. 2011, 451–452, fig. 3; Pappi 2012; Dickinson 2016, 324–325; Papakonstantinou 2018. However, the *consistency* of the association between tumuli and burial pithoi observed in the southwestern Peloponnese is not yet apparent elsewhere.

¹⁶ Certain features, such as the occurrence of a central built horseshoe-shaped structure and the existence of multiple stone cappings, are present at Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis and absent from Voïdokoilia, Tumulus A, but this can be explained by the different historical trajectories of the two monuments (cf. Korres 1982, 149–150).

¹⁷ Unexcavated or doubtful examples are not discussed here (for a list of burial tumuli from the region see Boyd 2002, 218, tab. 4).

¹⁸ Zavadil 2013, 364 (Divari), 499–500 (Peristeria-Kokorakou), 530–531, 534–535 (Routsis).

¹⁹ Papakonstantinou 1988, 148–149.

²⁰ I note (but resist the temptation to further discuss for the moment) that a differentiation between west and east Messenia in this important aspect of mortuary practice might be relevant to the later development and emic conceptualisation of the later palatial polity, as divided into two ‘provinces’ either side of the prominent feature recorded as **a₃-ko-ra-o* perhaps **/Aigolahon/* in the Pylos Linear B records (see Bennet 1995 for the currently orthodox account). I expand on this and other archaeological reflections on the Prepalatial history of the region in a future study.

²¹ Dickinson 2014a, 151.

tumulus) and the early MH Kastroulia tumuli.²² The remarkable amount of EH II sherds in the fills of these tumuli may have originated from the debris of underlying or, even more interestingly, *adjacent* sites of that phase. The construction of the early MH Tumulus A at Voïdokoilia over and from the debris of a EH II settlement indicates the deliberate choice of this location; still, we need to consider the implications of the probable transportation of EH II debris material to construct at least the fill of the Kastroulia tumuli: in this case at least, we may deal with an astonishingly energetic manipulation of past remains.²³ The situation in Papoulia and Routsis is somewhat less clear and only careful intensive survey in the environs of the tumuli (as well as future excavations) can give us a clue as to the probable source of the EH II material. However, it can already be argued that these tumuli were made of material carried from adjacent sites. That EH debris was exploited during the earlier MH period in the region is also suggested by the occurrence of pierced EH II ring bases (perhaps to be used as spindle whorls) in early MH contexts at the Nichoria settlement, a site that was not occupied during EH II.²⁴

Such consistent occurrence of EH II material in MH tumuli fills must be considered as significant. That such material was chosen (perhaps even dictating the location of the tumulus in the case of Voïdokoilia A) demands a radical reappraisal of the energy expenditure demanded for such monuments, and points to the MH significance of abandoned or ruined sites (perhaps emically perceived as ‘dead’ themselves) as appropriate resources for material for burial mounds.²⁵ We must assume a strong MH motivation for such activities, possibly resting upon a solid conceptual link between ‘dead settlements’ and the treatment of certain dead individuals that initiated such expenditure.²⁶

Besides construction, the offerings placed with the deceased were almost always minimal, even occasionally absent. Although we should always entertain the possibility that perishable offerings were (at least occasionally) also made, there have been occasional exceptions to such minimalism, even including metal items, such as the silver hair-ring and bronze knife from Burial Pithos 7 in Voïdokoilia A.²⁷ Still, nothing prepared us for the remarkable finds from the early MH Kastroulia tumuli, especially the undoubtedly elite burial (reportedly single female) from Tumulus II, Grave 2, accompanied by four bronze ‘double-axe’ pendants, two spindle whorls and no fewer than thirty vessels.²⁸ We should closely observe the association, attested very scarcely in the earlier MH period, between rich burials and exotica.²⁹ As the excavator Jörg Rambach observed, all three non-local vessels in Grave 2 of this tumulus are jugs.³⁰ Such an ‘upgrading’ of pouring vessels may be indicative of the importance placed on the role of the pourer in a feasting context: a token of the virtue of a true hostess, an ideal ‘mistress of the house’ (if the identification of the sex of the deceased is confirmed). We may note the similarities of this assemblage to that

²² Already noted by Marinatos 1960, 254–255, with regard to Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis and the Routsis tumuli; Chasiakou – Korres 2006, 740 (Papoulia, Routsis); Rambach 2007, 137, 139 (Kastroulia).

²³ Rambach 2007, 137, 139, estimated that 99% of the sherd material in the fills in the northernmost Kastroulia Tumulus I was of EH II date, and a similar picture is given regarding the fill of Tumulus II.

²⁴ Howell 1992, 18. The nearest site to Nichoria where EH II material has been reported is Velika-Skordakis, almost 2.5 km to the southeast (Howell 1992, 38 n. 7; Lukermann – Moody 1978, 102; surprisingly not included in the site register of the Nichoria environs survey: Lukermann – Moody 1978, 112).

²⁵ It is important to stress how different such burial tumuli are from the well-known case of the Lerna tumulus constructed over and from the ruins of the EH II ‘House of the Tiles’: the latter was apparently not intended for burials (so just commemorative?), and its construction has now been convincingly interpreted as a final episode in the life of the thriving EH II settlement of Lerna, rather than the very beginning of the subsequent EH III settlement (Banks 2013, 23–31).

²⁶ A similar conceptual link may underlie the (far less labour-consuming) choice to locate pit or cist graves in the ruins of abandoned buildings in MH sites of the Argolid (Milka 2010).

²⁷ Korres 1980, 356, fig. 9 (paralleled in the rich and reportedly male burial from Kastroulia, Tumulus II, Grave 3: Rambach 2007, 145–146, fig. 27).

²⁸ Rambach 2007, 141–145, figs. 10–24.

²⁹ An illustrative case of that link is apparent in the items placed in the so-called ‘shaft grave’ from Kolonna IX dated to the mature MH (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997).

³⁰ Rambach 2007, 147.

of Grave 2 (‘τάφος τῆς βασιλίσσης’) in Marathon-Vrana, Tumulus I (early/mature MH³¹), where eleven vessels were assigned by Spyridon Marinatos to a single female burial,³² including again two matt-painted jugs identified as Aiginetan imports.³³ With regard to the occurrence of pairs of spindle whorls in both assemblages, we may echo here Joseph Maran’s recent emphasis on the function of the latter as symbols of ‘domestic virtue’,³⁴ an interpretation that elegantly ties with the deposition of ceramic feasting equipment.³⁵

The Papoulia and Kastroulia tumuli have also given evidence for the ascribed status of certain deceased: the remains of young children in the Papoulia pithoi was mentioned by Marinatos,³⁶ and Georgios Korres found remains of children inside two matt-painted jars (Burial Jars 23–24) recovered from the outskirts of the tumulus,³⁷ one of them (Burial Jar 23) containing a plain cut-away jug.³⁸ Likewise, a plain jug and a kantharos accompanied a child burial from Kastroulia, Tumulus II, Grave 1.³⁹ Considering the reported age and sex of the deceased buried in the various multiple spaces of these tumuli,⁴⁰ a seemingly clear case can be made that specific kin groups, either nuclear (Kastroulia, Tumulus II) or extended families (Papoulia), were represented.

The Kastroulia burials, although definitely impressive, cannot be directly associated with the accumulation of wealth in burials that is observed from the late MH. Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier has famously argued that the sporadic ‘rich’ MH burials can suggest a linear, continuous development that was basically unrelated to broader Aegean developments, leading up to (and explaining) the Shaft Grave phenomenon towards the end of the period.⁴¹ However, comparatively rich burials, such as the one entered in Voïdokoilia, Pithos 7, or even evidently rich burials, such as those at Kastroulia, cannot compare well with the later MH and early Mycenaean burials furnished with

³¹ Pantelidou Gofa et al. 2016a, 56.

³² Although Marinatos’ identification of the burial as female is here accepted, we should note that recent study of the skeletal material from the Vrana tumuli has generated a more complex picture: a couple of bones located beside the skeleton of Marinatos’ ‘queen’ preserved in situ now suggest a second burial in the same grave (Pantelidou Gofa et al. 2016b, 51, 67, fig. 6). Moreover, Marinatos’ assertion that the burial belonged to a woman was not confirmed, as the sex of neither burial could be determined (Pantelidou Gofa et al. 2016b, 51).

³³ Pantelidou Gofa et al. 2016a, 47, 53–54, 67–68, figs. 10στ, 11α–γ (the larger jug had been previously reported as ‘Κυκλαδίζουσα’ by Marinatos). Another possible import in this assemblage is the Cycladic askos (Pantelidou Gofa et al. 2016a, 55–56, 69, fig. 12δ), another shape that might have a pouring function.

³⁴ Maran 2011, 286–288.

³⁵ Apparently, the same association can be followed into LH I in the Argolid, if one endorses Hartmut Matthäus’ interpretation of five gold-sheet ornaments from Shaft Grave III (Circle A) as gold-covered spindles, suggestive of the ultimate formalisation of these artefacts into true insignia, employing the elite medium then en vogue: gold (Maran 2011, 287–288, with references). There is an interesting recent twist: although Maran 2011, 287, on the strength of Karo’s final report, assumed that all three adult burials from this grave were females, the recent analysis of the skeletal material revealed that only one of the adult skeletons certainly belonged to a woman (Dickinson et al. 2012, 173–175). This new information would lead us to assume either that spindles were not gender-specific (i.e. that they might be associated with the probable male burials Λ and Ν in Grave III) or that all five examples should be associated with the only certain female burial hitherto identified (burial M in Stamatakis’ notes). Of course, the most interesting implication of this restudy of the skeletal material from Grave III has been that certain males could have been buried, under specific circumstances, with furnishings of less conspicuously ‘masculine’ associations, namely without weapons, demonstrating that “it was not an absolute social requirement that high-ranking males be given a warrior persona in death” (Dickinson et al. 2012, 175). The absence of weapons altogether from this grave must leave the possibility open that some of the gold-covered spindles might be associated with the male burials (Λ, Ν).

³⁶ Marinatos 1960, 255.

³⁷ Korres 1982, 142–144, 146–147, fig. 3, pls. 112β–113 (Burial Jars 23–24). These jars are typologically different from the burial pithoi that contained adult burials (Marinatos’ statement needs to be clarified as to the type of funerary container that included the remains of children).

³⁸ Korres 1982, 133, fig. 2γ, 147, pl. 113α.

³⁹ Rambach 2007, 139–140, fig. 3 left.

⁴⁰ Rambach 2010, 110–112 (Kastroulia, Tumulus II); Marinatos 1957, 314; Marinatos 1960, 255; Korres 1982, 138–147 (Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis).

⁴¹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 83–106. For criticism of this approach, see Voutsaki 1999; Maran 1999; Petrakis 2010; Maran 2011.

weapons and metal jewellery. The main reason is the extreme scarcity of metal items (and the overall paucity of non-ceramic items in general) in the burials of the earlier MH. This absence gains a special significance if one considers the importance of the production and consumption of ornamented weapons as well as precious metal vessels in the formation of the Shaft Grave ethos of mortuary display and competitive emulation.⁴²

The overall scarcity of grave-goods from MH burials need not be viewed as a direct reflection of the poverty (or even egalitarianism) of contemporary mainland communities; rather, it may be indicative of the radical difference between the value systems represented in the funerary assemblages of the earlier and later MH phases, separated by what I have elsewhere termed as the ‘barrier’, a point of radical change in the late MH.⁴³ As both Joseph Maran and I have independently argued, display strategies other than the deposition of valuable items were being sought by the earlier MH elites, of which the monumentality of the burial space (that is, the grave form and its overall setting), viewed as the tangible mark of conspicuous consumption of energy, was of primary emic significance.⁴⁴ Within such a value system and with the cautionary note that grave goods might have taken the form of entirely perishable items that left negligible (or overlooked) material traces, elaboration of the burial locus may have been the primary (and presumably sufficient) marker of status. Commenting on the absence of luxury grave goods in post-4000 BC Balkan tumuli, Douglas Bailey has suggested that “the grave-goods, and thus perhaps the actual event of burial, were a less significant component than was the creation, in the raising of a substantial, visible mound, of a living memory of the deceased”.⁴⁵ I wish here to argue that similar strategies were at play during the earlier part of the MH period. Such conceptions may also have underpinned the construction of tumuli accommodating poorly furnished burials in other regions of the Greek mainland. Still, we should emphasise the distinctiveness of the local tumulus tradition in the southwestern Peloponnese. This has repercussions, as we shall see, in our understanding of the MH background that formed the inevitable matrix of early Mycenaean developments in that region.

Another feature that seems to constitute a meaningful yet fundamental absence in earlier MH mortuary prestige expression is supra-regional (perhaps even supra-local) uniformity. A contrasting trend is indeed exemplified by the remarkable variability in form and mortuary practice of Helladic tumuli, whose category was once aptly described by Jeremy Rutter as “a diverse assortment”.⁴⁶ Such variability need not reflect the isolation of MH communities; mortuary practices (or at least their archaeological phenotypes) seem otherwise to be quite uniform, with pits and cists used throughout the mainland.⁴⁷ The diversity of MH tumuli may be symptomatic of the absence at this stage of a key feature of the late MH and early Mycenaean world: cross-regional inter-elite interaction and competition.⁴⁸ Elite behaviour and emic perceptions of how prestige was to be conveyed and received may still have been largely introvert and self-contained: the intended audience must still have been limited to the local communities.

These observations might somewhat modify the recent theoretical framework proposed by James Wright, whereby leading figures in MH society formed factions, informal groups gaining prestige from adventurous achievements conceived as belonging to the outskirts of communal life: hunting, warfare or even travel to exotic otherworldly places.⁴⁹ Wright’s factions, orbiting around such ‘Men of Renown’ or ‘Big Men’, are a valuable, thought-provoking concept that may help us approach the roots of Helladic leadership institutions, especially in the post-EH II era. It is likely

⁴² See Rutter 2012, 79–82.

⁴³ Petrakis 2010.

⁴⁴ Maran 1999, 539; Petrakis 2010, 409–413; Maran 2011, 285.

⁴⁵ Bailey 2000, 249.

⁴⁶ Rutter 1993, 784.

⁴⁷ Petrakis 2010, 408–409.

⁴⁸ Petrakis 2010, 412–416.

⁴⁹ Wright 2004, 70–73, on factions; Wright 2008a, 238–243; Wright 2010, 814–815; Wright, this volume; cf. also Dickinson 2014a, 150–152.

that new developments beyond such an initial ‘faction’ stage soon occurred, perhaps already during the early MH: forms of leadership that originated as opportunistic, charismatic and achieved (so inherently informal and unstable) swiftly became more formal, and status became ascribed, embedded in kinship structures that must have already been fundamental for Helladic social organisation.⁵⁰ If so, the emergence of burial tumuli throughout the post-EH II Greek mainland may represent the progress of such formalisation, while the establishment and proliferation of burial tumuli with distinct local (even endemic) features in the southwestern Peloponnese may indicate that communities in this prosperous region of the MH world were already in the process of developing a particular mortuary vocabulary that expressed the special status of specific kin groups.⁵¹

The Transition to ‘Mycenaean’: The Birth of New Forms and New Practices

However insightful, any generic description of the dramatic changes that took place during the late MH/LH I phases is bound to conceal the dramatic differences in the trajectories followed by different sites or regions. Let us first focus on regional ‘facts’ before we proceed to interpretations. In the southwestern Peloponnese, the most conspicuous feature of the archaeological record in late MH/LH I is what appears to us as the swift establishment of a seemingly ‘new’ mortuary landscape, where built open chambers were dominant in a bewildering variety of forms and arrangements. Among these novel forms, tholos tombs (or tholoi) are most prominent, and they constitute an architectural achievement that gained great popularity throughout the Aegean during the subsequent phases of the Late Bronze Age. The general ‘open chamber’ category (not entirely unknown, but certainly scarce before late MH)⁵² seems to reflect a widespread Helladic trend at the time: sizeable chambers can be (and have been) associated with the seemingly new practice of multiple burial, the practice of secondary treatment and the really novel demand to express status through luxury grave goods, especially metal artefacts.

It is in these grave goods, constituting an entirely new artefact world with little or no reference to preceding MH developments, that one sees the clearest hints of the extra-Helladic Aegean stimulation that was apparently needed to ‘push’ Helladic elite behaviour beyond the ‘barrier’, as it is widely acknowledged that this process cannot be explained in local terms alone.⁵³ Maran has recently described the emergence of the ‘early Mycenaean’ culture as largely the result of a “realignment of Mainland Greek societies towards a distant centre of political and, above all, religious power”,⁵⁴ plausibly one or more of the sophisticated south Aegean polities of the time.

⁵⁰ As argued before, the overall make-up of the deceased buried in certain tumuli (notably at Papoulia and Kastroulia) may suggest their interpretation as monumentalised burial grounds of specific kin groups. In later MH times, the adoption of collective tomb types, suited to repeated use in the long term, may suggest a further intensification of the emphasis placed on kin relations and their configuration within the specialised ritualised funerary space (Petraakis 2010, 407; cf. also Papadimitriou 2016).

⁵¹ The erratic occurrence of such ‘special’ burials in the earlier MH, especially the occurrence of a few of them outside tumuli (e.g. the Kolonna ‘shaft grave’; cf. also the distribution of non-ceramic offerings in the Asine East Cemetery: Voutsaki et al. 2011, 449–450, 453, tab. 4) may be used as an argument against the identification of the latter as the burial grounds of an elite (Dickinson 2016, 325). The reasoning behind this is sound, but is also, I would think, symptomatic of a (subtle or explicit) projection of ‘Shaft Grave era’ standards (namely the deposition of numerous non-ceramic items with the deceased) onto earlier MH evidence, with the latter – unsurprisingly – failing miserably. But the point made here is that such a projection may be inappropriate, if one considers the possibility that different standards (and correspondingly different notions and expressions of mortuary prestige) applied to the period preceding late MH.

⁵² As far as the southwestern Peloponnese is concerned, we must also note Rambach’s convincing interpretation of Kastroulia, Tumulus II, Grave 2, as a rock-cut burial chamber (Rambach 2007, 140–141; Rambach 2011, 469). The man-sized burial pithoi that were a popular funerary container in the west Messenian tumuli essentially exhibited the same properties as open chambers (cf. Boyd 2002, 56).

⁵³ Voutsaki 1999, 113–114; Wright 2010, 811–814; Petraakis 2010, 411; Maran 2011.

⁵⁴ Maran 2011, 289.

Such a process may be related to what Michail Bakhtin has called “intentional hybridity”, the conscious appropriation (through either acquisition or emulation) of non-local forms and practices deliberately chosen to bring innovation, shatter pre-existing states of affairs and produce new inequalities.⁵⁵ Inevitably, these had to map onto pre-existing value systems, but, in doing so, they – just as inevitably – expressed marked differences with what had gone before. The precise ways of appropriation of these alien elements have an obvious transformative potential that can be activated and realised only through the agency of local ‘recipients’. To quote Oliver Dickinson, “influence is not like influenza”.⁵⁶ As always, it takes two to tango.⁵⁷

Once more, the process might be described through a medical metaphor: the exotic artefacts and the unprecedented array of diverse materials now accessible to early Mycenaean elites were the new contrast media that enhanced our own (and thus hopelessly etc) ability to discern an already extant social hierarchy, and were directly injected into a value system, where funerary monumentality used to be the only such medium.⁵⁸ At the same time, they triggered a switch to forms of burial space that would both accommodate and restrict access to the locus of mortuary deposition, the context now deemed appropriate for the use of such valuable rare exotica. A more subtle development may have been the rapidly growing realisation that access to such items was something that elites could compete about, not just within the same micro-region or region, but also cross-regionally.

The switch to open chambers as the new type of burial space apparently did not have an absolutely uniform significance across mainland regions. It may be interesting to observe how certain types are more reuser-friendly than others, but, since such practicalities are not monopolised by specific types, we cannot explain in this way the popularity of the very specific tholos form in the region during the late MH and especially LH I.⁵⁹ Even so, we should note the remarkable diversity in funerary architecture in the region, in form, size, as well as arrangement.

The regional link between tumuli and tholoi is both clear and obscure in different ways. Let me explain this oxymoron phrasing: the concentration of almost all pre-LH IIA tholoi within the

⁵⁵ Bakhtin 1981, 358–361; Werbner 1997; Maran 2012, 62–64.

⁵⁶ Dickinson 1996, 67.

⁵⁷ A more systematic acquaintance between mainland leaders and the broader Aegean world may well have begun at the initiative of the south Aegean polities (on Crete or the Cyclades) and may have been channelled through specific sites that enjoyed a special intimacy with the ‘distant centre’ in question. The reason that triggered the intensification of such contact towards the close of the MH period need not be sought in processes that began on the mainland, but Helladic agency was necessary for the transformative potential of such contact to affect significantly the development of mainland communities.

⁵⁸ This is to argue against the suggestion that the need to express prestige was created in late MH times following the flow of exotica on the mainland that transformed the undifferentiated MH communities (Voutsaki 1997; cf. Petrakis 2010, 405–407; Maran 2011, 286–288). Nikolas Papadimitriou has recently independently argued that one main objective for the adoption of various types of collective tombs in the early Mycenaean period was “to increase the visibility of existing social structures ... [making] social groupings more transparent than before”, without involving substantial structural change (Papadimitriou 2016, 344, 349). This is not in disagreement with the position argued here, although we should add that changes in the expression of prestige have the potential to trigger major social changes in the long term: in the case of the Helladic world, one major consequence of the opening of local elites to the broader Aegean world was the adoption of a literate administrative system (whose shaping took place in a Cretan ‘matrix’), perhaps already in LH IIB–IIIA1 or at the beginning of the LH IIIA2 phase.

⁵⁹ Lolos 1987, 155–159, 165–195, 208–218, figs. 188–207, 216–226, 238–285, 298–319, 387–393, 408–409, 443–450, 459–464, 474, 476, 490–496, 502–507, 508a, 509a, 512–515, 519–571, with references (Koukounara 1–2, Koryphasion-Charatsari or Osmanaga, Voïdokoilia, Tragana-Viglitsa 1–2, Epano Englianos IV and Vayenas ‘Grave Circle’, Routsis 1–2, Peristeria 3 and South Tholos, Kakovatos A, Kato Samikon-Kleidi, ‘Tumulus’ A, Makraysia-Prophitis Ilias); Davis – Stocker 2015 (Englianos IV); Lolos 1989 (Koryphasion); Murphy 2014, 213–215, fig. 16.2 (Vayenas Tholos or ‘Grave Circle’, the latter being a misnomer since this is a true tholos). Although Lolos 1987, 183, 214, considers LH I sherds found in Kakovatos A and Tragana-Viglitsa 1 as ‘intrusive’ or ‘stray’ settlement material, there is no evidence of LH I habitation in the vicinity of these tombs to substantiate such an interpretation. For a LH I (late) date for the start of Tholos A of Kakovatos cf. de Vreé, this volume. One should add the Romanos tholos recently excavated by J. Rambach, also first used in LH I (Zavadil 2013, 554, with references, add Rambach 2014).

very same region where tumuli were part of a strong MH tradition is a truly compelling point,⁶⁰ strongly suggesting the existence of an association (Fig. 1). However, the details of the ‘switch’ from the burial tumulus to the invention of the tholos tomb have so far remained elusive, and associations with both built structures within tumuli (notably the central horseshoe-shaped structure in Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis) as well as the (radially or irregularly arranged) burial pithoi have already been proposed by Korres.⁶¹

I must admit that I find the view of the tholos form as a late MH southwest Peloponnesian invention (whatever the initial spark might have been) that was adopted supra-regionally only later on,⁶² a solid basis for further discussion. With that in mind, one must accord special significance to the fact that, of all types of built and rock-cut chamber tombs that emerge during the late MH/early Mycenaean period, the tholos is the only form consistently associated with a mound heaped over its dome. This mound also played an important part in the stability of the entire structure. Maria Teresa Como’s recent analysis of the ‘membrane behaviour’ of the tholos dome has confirmed the role of the earthen mound as a compact outer ring contrasting sliding forces, especially in the upper part of the dome.⁶³ Being such an important static feature, therefore, the existence of a mound must be assumed for all tholoi, irrespective of its preservation at the time of excavation.⁶⁴

The implications of a consistent association between tholoi and mounds are of great importance for our topic. The employment of a form that necessitated the construction of a mound above it ensured the ‘phenomenological continuity’ of the landscape throughout the MH–LH

⁶⁰ This statement needs to be supplemented with comments on two finds of early tholoi from the northeastern Peloponnese. 1. Tholos Tomb 3 at Megali Magoula at Galatas in Troizenia is considered to have been constructed and first used in late MH or LH I, which is the possible date of some fragments of drinking vessels (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2015, 485–488, with references). However, if the tomb was an “entirely above ground” structure, “unlikely to have been fully vaulted in stone” and lacking a mound, as the excavator argues (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2015, 485–486), this is not a proper tholos. That said, however, similarities with the ruined condition of the Vayenas Tholos at Epano Englianos (once interpreted as a ‘Grave Circle’), may lead to an alternative interpretation of the tomb as a canonical tholos that has suffered much from later disturbance that included intense robbing of material, damage from cultivation or other uses (perhaps as a threshing-floor), together with the washing of most of the fill down the slope of the hill. It is not yet clear whether the late MH material cited was part of the original funerary assemblages on the floor of the burial chamber, although one might hope that the final publication of the assemblage will help us resolve such problems. 2. The tholos tomb of Kheliotou Mylos near Ancient Corinth (Kassimi 2015, 510–512) yielded some grave goods of certain LH I date (a Polychrome jug) or probable late MH–LH I date (a kantharos), but these were found along with two LH IIA palatial jars (used as containers of secondary burials) and could have been heirlooms. The excavator recently suggested that the Corinth tholos replaced an earlier late MH–LH I rich tomb, whose “burials were moved together with their burial goods in the burial pit of the tholos” (Kassimi 2015, 511; cf. Boyd 2002, 151, for a similar hypothesis regarding Vayenas). Unfortunately, the mobility of human remains and grave goods within the chamber as part of the so-called ‘secondary burial’ makes it extremely difficult to identify the exact provenance of the ‘secondary’ interments.

⁶¹ We should be cautious in our assessment of Korres’ sensational discovery that the LH I Voïdokoilia tholos had been built into the early MH Tumulus A as providing a tangible model for the actual emergence of the tholos from the central structure of a west Messenian tumulus: this sequence is hitherto unique within the micro-region of the Osmanaga Lagoon in west-central Messenia, so cannot be considered typical of this region or the entire southwestern Peloponnese in any way (cf. Galanakis 2011, 222). That the location of the Voïdokoilia tholos has little relevance to our assessment of the tumulus-tholos link is suggested by the fact that it is paralleled in the small tholos built within a (reportedly EH III) tumulus at Moschovi near Katouna in Aitolia (Kolonas 1995), a region where tholoi were a late and scarce adoption (LH IIB/IIIA1 onwards). For the perceptive idea that tholos tombs replaced burial pithoi as open chambers within burial tumuli see Korres 1996, 23–24; Korres 2011, 589–590 (cf. Boyd 2002, 56).

⁶² Davis – Bennet 1999, 114; Wright 2006, 58. The main arguments against the derivation of Helladic tholoi from Cretan circular tombs are presented in Dickinson 2011.

⁶³ Como 2006; personal communication.

⁶⁴ Although the absence of a mound is occasionally noted in preliminary reports, the significance of such an absence must be assessed only after considering aspects of the later history of the site. The example of the Vayenas Tholos (identified as ‘Grave Circle’ in the final report of the site), used as a threshing-floor in recent times, may be illustrative of how the appearance of the ruins at the time of the excavation should be carefully assessed.

transition and into the LH period. The image perceived by the viewer did not change significantly in the switch from a low earthen burial tumulus to the low tumulus that concealed a tholos tomb.⁶⁵ By appreciating the visual ‘convergence’ between the outward external appearances of tumuli and mound-covered tholoi, we may begin to properly comprehend the trend to locate tholoi close to earlier tumuli, even occasionally in pairs or groups (as in Tragana-Viglitsa, Routsis, Peristeria⁶⁶), as a deliberate attempt to reuse an old burial ground with a relatively minimal visual change and as an act of reverence towards the traditional mortuary landscape. The case of Voïdokoilia, where a tholos was built into a pre-existing tumulus, may also be partly understood in this context.⁶⁷ The tholoi could express the mastery of the new skills required and offer a suitable form that could receive new modes of elaboration (see below), while at the same time maintaining consistency with the centuries-old tradition of a tumuli-filled funerary landscape. With tholoi, change could be smooth while at the same time satisfying the new ethos of competitive display. From the outside, little, if anything, could betray the novelty. Tholoi could ‘camouflage’ under their mounds which were an already familiar image; but a proper appreciation of a well-built tholos, even an elaborate tholos, as well as the prestige conveyed by these qualities, were only for those limited few who had access to it. In contrast to the openly visible and apparently luminous surface of the mound, the new burial space was dark and accessible only through a single entrance. The new form emphasised the exclusivity of the new elite ethos and might also have been a spatial configuration of the newly-perceived distance between the group buried in the tholos (including attendants at the funeral) and those without legitimate access to it. Beside the spatial significance of this novel arrangement of the mortuary space, however, I would propose that the excellent equilibrium between tradition and innovation was the key to the success and proliferation of the tholos form within the southwestern Peloponnese. That the tholos was an immediate ‘hit’ is also clearly indicated by the swift emergence of emulations in the same region (Fig. 2).

Rock-cut chamber tombs clearly imitating tholoi (‘tholos-shaped’ or ‘tholoid’) appear at the extended cemetery of Chora-Volimidia already in LH I.⁶⁸ These are among the earliest chamber tombs on the post-EH II mainland, although their pioneering status is not as clear as in the case of tholoi.⁶⁹ That such emulation emerged close to Epano Englianos is easy to comprehend given the evidence for the remarkable size and early elaboration of the site, including the very early (late MH) construction of at least two tholoi there (Tholos IV and the Vayenas Tholos or Tholos V, occa-

⁶⁵ It is interesting to observe that almost entirely underground tholoi (such as those excavated at Kokla in the Argolid or Marathon in Attica) seem to be absent in the southwestern Peloponnese. It is not impossible that underground tholoi that may have lacked a covering mound emulated rock-cut chamber tombs. On the contrary, most (although not all) tholoi in the southwestern Peloponnese seem to have been *partly* underground, with only the upper part of the dome covered by a low mound, thus enhancing the resemblance to the low, shield-like burial tumuli of the earlier MH.

⁶⁶ Zavadil 2013, 559–566. In Tragana and Peristeria, however, the location is not particularly close. The (now destroyed) tumulus identified at Tragana-Kapoureika (Zavadil 2013, 601, with references) was located at a considerable distance from the tholoi at Viglitsa. Although the Kokorakou Tumulus (also now destroyed) was visible from the Peristeria hill where Tholoi 1–3 are located, the two sites are located on adjacent hills separated by a steep ravine.

⁶⁷ In the exceptional case of Voïdokoilia, additional factors may have been at play. The legitimacy of the group using the LH I tholos may have been achieved through the use of the same spot, intended as a “direct claim on behalf of the tholos-using group” to this specific commanding location (Galanakis 2011, 221; cf. already Bennet 1995, 596–597).

⁶⁸ Zavadil 2013, 308–358. Cf. Vlachopoulos, this volume.

⁶⁹ Wright 2008b, 147–148, has recently argued that rock-cut chamber tombs were an emulative invention that also took place in the southwestern Peloponnese. Unlike tholoi, chamber tombs also occur in LH I in other regions (Argolid: Prosymna, Dendra, Deiras, Schoinochori-Melissi; Lakonia: Epidauros Limera; perhaps Boiotia: Thebes-Kolonaki, Tomb 2), and their diversity in form already in this early phase may suggest that this type developed more independently in comparison to the tholos (Dickinson 1977, 63–64; Dickinson 1983, 64). That said, it should be noted that all certain examples of ‘tholos-shaped’ (or ‘tholoid’) rock-cut chamber tombs post-date the Volimidia examples (Mycenae in the Argolid, Pellana in Lakonia, Voudeni in Achaia), so that the sporadic attempts at tholos emulation can still be argued to continue an idea that originated in the southwestern Peloponnese.

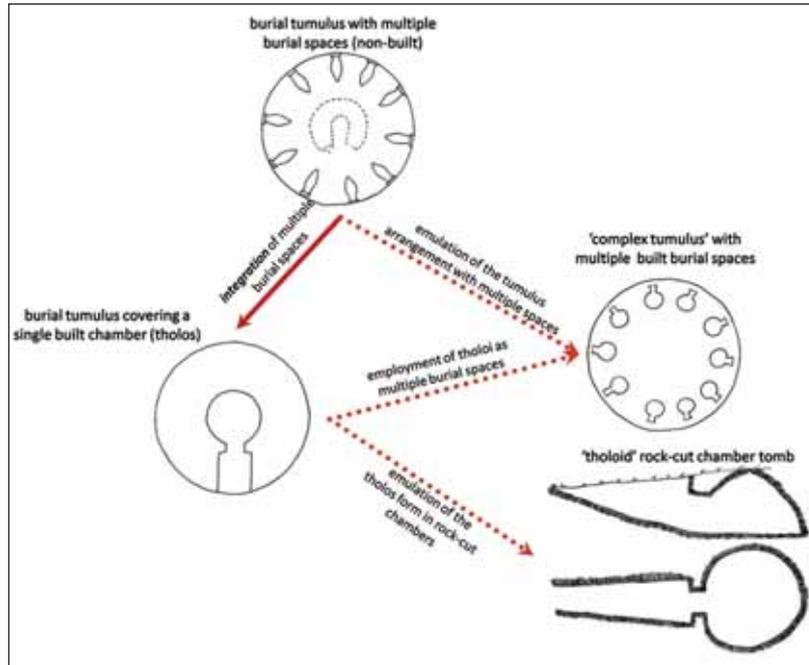


Fig. 2: Scheme showing the proposed derivation of the tholos from burial tumulus proposed here (solid line), as well as arising emulative phenomena (dotted lines). Drawings are schematised renderings showing types of monuments and not accurate renderings of actual monuments (drawn and annotated by the author)

sionally referred to as the ‘Grave Circle’).⁷⁰ This may well have triggered an emulative reaction by the groups who buried their dead in the Volimidia chamber tombs.

A similar emulative development can explain the so-called ‘complex tumuli’,⁷¹ so far most clearly represented by two examples excavated by Korres in the Koukounara region (Fig. 1). Certain artificial mounds closely follow the arrangement of the earlier MH tumuli with multiple burial spaces in the form of small (often crudely built) tholoi inserted into mounds as replacements for the earlier burial pithoi, either in a radial arrangement, as in the complex tumulus at Kaminia near Ano Kremmydia, or in a more irregular arrangement in two clusters, as in Koukounara-Gouvalari Mound α .⁷² In both cases, the emic conceptual links between burial pithoi and tholoi are quite clear. Similar is the cluster of five tholoi and one built apsidal tomb at Karpophora-Tourkokivoura (east Messenia), located very close to the Nichoria MME Tholos, although it is unclear whether these are located within an entirely artificial tumulus or an ‘accented’ natural knoll.⁷³ Besides these examples, however, the low tumulus with radially arranged built tombs of apsidal plan at Karpophora-Akones (Sambatziotis plot) (late MH/LH I–II)⁷⁴ shows that certain

⁷⁰ Zavadil 2013, 369–379; Davis – Stocker 2015 (date of Tholos IV). For the architectural history of Epano Englianos (including important discussions of the Prepalatial phases) see Nelson 2017 (also below). On survey data indicating the importance of Epano Englianos throughout the LH and its exceptional historical trajectory see Shelmerdine 2001, 114–117, fig. 2.

⁷¹ For the term, see Voutsaki 1998, 43. The term is practically synonymous with Michael Boyd’s “multiple-tholos mound” (Boyd 2016, 203–205).

⁷² Zavadil 2013, 264–273 (Kaminia), 464–479 (Koukounara-Gouvalari, Mound α), with references. The lack of a neat radial arrangement of the small tholoi on Koukounara-Gouvalari, Mound α , does not necessarily weaken its association with MH tumuli, as the arrangement of burial pithoi was also irregular in the case of at least one example, the Peristeria-Kokorakou Tumulus (Korres 2011, 586).

⁷³ Zavadil 2013, 431–438, with references; Boyd 2014, 192–196.

⁷⁴ Zavadil 2013, 429–431, with references (cf. also Lolos 1987, 154–155, figs. 186–187, on LH I pottery from Akones).

groups in east Messenia could follow the same trend without adopting (perhaps even deliberately avoiding) the tholos form. In the tumulus excavated by Marinatos at Chandrinos-Kissos, not far from Koukounara-Gouvalari or Kaminia, stone periboloi (co-existing with pithoi) may be seen as inexpensive alternatives to tholoi. Again, this tumulus seems to have been constructed after the invention of the tholos, during the LH IIA–IIIB period.⁷⁵

Their close resemblance in arrangement to MH tumuli and the small size of the tholoi has given rise to the idea that such ‘complex tumuli’ reflect the formative stage of tholos construction. This hypothesis is based on the logical assumption that the local invention of the tholos form must have moved through trial and error from structures of manageable dimensions towards larger and more elaborate examples.⁷⁶ However, such reasoning cannot be used to establish size and quality of construction as a chronological criterion. It is interesting that the Kaminia and Koukounara-Gouvalari small tholoi do not seem to be among the earliest such tombs in the region.⁷⁷ This pattern is strengthened by the fully published Karpophora-Tourkokivoura tombs, where only Tholoi 4 and 5 appear to have been used in late MH–LH I times.⁷⁸ The clustering of tholoi in these ‘complex tumuli’ was a long process, lasting (or, in the case of Tourkokivoura, even outlasting) the LH period. In ceramic terms, medium-sized but isolated tholoi, such as the Vayenas, Tholos V (d. 5.50 m) at Epano Englianos and Koryphasion-Charatsari or Osmanaga (d. c. 6 m), or even the large and elaborate Tholos IV (d. 9.35 m) at Epano Englianos, are among the first such structures on the mainland, and the first use of all three may already date to the close of the MH period.⁷⁹ Therefore, a two-stage adaptation of the tholos form, with small examples followed (however swiftly) by larger and more elaborate structures, does not seem to be supported by the evidence available so far.⁸⁰

Instead, if the aforementioned chronologies are at all significant, we may view the tholos tomb as an invention that was meant, from the very beginning and its very inception, to spatially integrate the physically separate burial spaces (including burial pithoi) within a typical Messenian tumulus into a single coherent chamber with restricted access. Such an approach would help us explain the occurrence of burial pithoi (alongside pits, cists or other burial loci) inside early southwest Peloponnesian tholoi, such as the Vayenas Tholos at Epano Englianos or the Peristeria South Tholos,⁸¹ as a continuity of a MH practice within a new spatial configuration, whereby the accessible and visible exterior of the tumulus has been turned outside-in, transformed into the closed, restrictedly accessible interior of the tholos. This radical change would reflect the grow-

⁷⁵ Zavadil 2013, 298–303 (see also Zavadil 1999).

⁷⁶ Boyd 2002, 56–57; Boyd 2014, 194–196; Boyd 2016, 203–204.

⁷⁷ Any such statement should be phrased with much caution, since relevant material is only known from Korres’ detailed (but still preliminary) reports, while excavation of both sites is incomplete. Summaries of the data available have been presented in Boyd 2002, 109–111, 232, tab. 37; Zavadil 2013, 479. In Kaminia, material pre-dating LH IIA was limited in Tholos 4 (Lolos 1987, 162–163, figs. 211–214). In Koukounara-Gouvalari, Mound α , LH I was better represented, but still only identified in three tholoi: Lolos mentions material probably dated to LH I from Tholoi $\alpha 5$, $\alpha 9$ and $\alpha 10$ (Lolos 1987, 166–168, figs. 230–236).

⁷⁸ Lolos 1987, 157–159, figs. 188–202; Boyd 2014, 193, tab. 15.1. Karpophora-Tourkokivoura Tholoi 2 and 3 were used in LH IIIA–B, Tholos 6 was used in LH IIIB up to the Dark Age I phase, while Apsidal Tomb 1 was apparently only used in Dark Age I.

⁷⁹ See Lolos 1987, 172–178, 184–194, figs. 241–278, 304–305 and 309–319 with references; see further Lolos 1989 on Koryphasion-Charatsari/Osmanaga; Davis – Stocker 2015 on Englianos, Tholos IV.

⁸⁰ Cf. Davis – Stocker 2015, 178.

⁸¹ Zavadil 2013, 374–379 (Vayenas Tholos at Epano Englianos), 514–516 (Peristeria, South Tholos), with references. Similar to Vayenas, the use of palatial jars as burial containers is also clear in at least one example from outside the southwestern Peloponnese, the tholos at Kheliotou Mylos near Ancient Corinth (Kassimi 2015, 510–512). The Kheliotou Mylos tholos bears another feature that may be considered as local to the southwest Peloponnese: an elongated depression that spans, in the case of the Corinth tholos, almost the entire distance from the entrance to the opposite wall of the burial chamber (cf. Petrakis, forthcoming). The concurrence of two ‘southwestern’ features strengthens the probability that the construction of this early tholos indicates the special connection of the local community with this region (possibly, but not certainly, within LH I, see above n. 60).

ing exclusivity of Helladic elite groups and the increasing significance placed upon participation in the funerary ritual.

If this perspective is correct, the formation of ‘complex tumuli’ such as Kaminia and Koukounara-Gouvalari, Mound α , can be viewed as representing a partial retreat (still within early Mycenaean, perhaps already in LH I) from the late MH tholos novelty, constituting a secondary adaptation of the tholos form by conservative groups of lower status who were still reluctant to move beyond the structure of the multiple tumulus as they knew it and into the new perception of fully integrated burial space represented by the tholos.⁸²

Competition and the Emerging Uniformity of Monumental Vocabulary in LH I–IIA

LH I is a period of great investment in mortuary display intended for inter-elite competition, expressed ceramically in the rise of a remarkable number of fine wares, of which the Mycenaean I style was only one.⁸³ Although local features and experimentations still occur and will never cease to be a feature of the LH mortuary record,⁸⁴ rich assemblages such as those from Peristeria, Tholos 3, the Karpophora Veves Tholos and Routsis, Tholos 2, display such similarities with contemporary Mycenae Shaft Grave assemblages as to suggest that pertinent elite groups already saw the need to establish certain commonalities; these latter generated cross-regional uniformity in an expressive material vocabulary, on which alone cross-regional competition could be based.⁸⁵

The plurality of rich and elaborate tholoi built in LH I has been commonly interpreted as evidence for the existence of many competing centres in the region throughout the early Mycenaean period.⁸⁶ This interpretation has been in consistent agreement with the findings of surveys, although we may also consider the possibility of micro-regional exclusive links (perhaps indicating special attachments or alliances?) that must have existed among elite groups within the southwestern Peloponnese. We may view the interesting distribution of the gold foil cut-outs in the shape of a seated owl that have so far only been found in Peristeria, Tholos 3 (two examples); Epano Englianos, Tholos IV (four examples); and Kakovatos, Tholos A (one example) in this light.⁸⁷

The dawn of LH IIA sees developments suggesting an unprecedented scale of effort to transcend regionalism and establish a pan-Helladic, shared elite monumental vocabulary, a further intensification of the trend that made its debut in the late MH/LH I. I will here boldly describe the occurrence of tholoi outside the southwestern Peloponnesian cradle in LH IIA as reflecting

⁸² The conservative character of the group associated with the Kaminia mound had already been noted by Korres 1977, 508. In the case of the rock-cut chamber tombs imitating tholoi at Volimidia, we may observe that these tombs were found by Marinatos to be arranged in ‘clusters’ (‘συστάδες’, see Marinatos 2014, 3, plan II, for an general plan of Volimidia). This feature may be influenced by the grouping of tholoi in sites such as Peristeria or within ‘complex tumuli’ although no tumulus-like arrangement is observable in association with any of the Volimidia tombs). Of course, the very existence of these ‘clusters’ remains to be confirmed by a thorough exploration of the entire site, in order to exclude the possibility of it being due to the chances of discovery or recovery.

⁸³ Let me maintain here, as I have done elsewhere (e.g. Petrakis 2016a, 49, 60 with endnote 1), a distinction between the Mycenaean I style and LH I as a chronological entity (phase or period) where many contemporary fine wares were produced and consumed (most notably, the so-called ‘Mainland Polychrome’ of likely Central Greek production). I am optimistic that it may not be too late to reintroduce this or any similar distinction, although I fully understand pessimistic concerns (as in Dickinson 2014b, 5, 14).

⁸⁴ For instance, gold masks seem only to occur with specific burials within the Mycenae shaft graves in LH I and apparently nowhere else. Bent swords (usually Type A rapiers) also seem to have been a regional feature of the southwestern Peloponnese already since late MH/LH I until at least LH IIIA (cf. Harrell 2016).

⁸⁵ Petrakis 2010, 412–414.

⁸⁶ Dickinson 1977, 92–93; Shelmerdine 2001, 125–127.

⁸⁷ Eder 2011, 109–110, 115–116, figs. 2, 4, with references. The LH I date of the Peristeria assemblage may suggest the date for the other less closely dated examples (the Kakovatos example may also date to LH I when Tholos A may have been first used, see above n. 59) and could support the notion of targeted associations among micro-regional elite groups.

a true diffusion of the type all over the Peloponnese as well as Attica, perhaps the outcome of cross-regional interaction between Messenia and adjacent mainland regions. Certain new tholoi constructed during this phase in Messenia (as well as in the Argolid, see below), express a new scale of monumentality, with exotic masonry styles making their debut on their most visible part: the façade.

Ashlar masonry, a style of patent Minoan origin,⁸⁸ appears now as a ‘mask’ in the façades of Peristeria, Tholos 1, and Antheia, both dated within LH IIA.⁸⁹ At approximately the same time, the same employment of ashlar in the façades of tholoi also appears in at least five examples outside the southwestern Peloponnese, namely the Aegisthus, Panagia, Lion and Kato Phournos tholoi at Mycenae, as well as Prosymna (Argive Heraion).⁹⁰ However, the background of this appearance of ashlar is different in the southwestern Peloponnese: in this region, unlike elsewhere on the mainland, as far as we know, ashlar may well have been employed by LH I in non-funerary structures at Epáno Englianos, as Michael Nelson’s identification of reused cut blocks in LH I walls suggests.⁹¹ If these early dates are confirmed by a thorough study of the associated ceramic material,⁹² they would support the intriguing case that ashlar masonry was already available in the region by LH I, but, with one possible exception (Tragana-Viglitsa, Tholos 1, see below), was not employed in contemporary tholoi.⁹³

⁸⁸ Nelson 2007, 155–159; Nelson 2017, 304–305, 351–352.

⁸⁹ Zavadil 2013, 292–294 (Antheia-Makria Rachi), 502–504 (Peristeria, Tholos 1), with references.

⁹⁰ Fitzsimons 2011, 95, tab. 5.8, with references. All aforementioned examples share typological features that allowed Wace to assign them to the second group in his scheme of the structural development of Helladic tholoi. The Aegisthus tholos was long considered as featuring a ‘mix’ of features regarded as diagnostic of both groups I and II in Wace’s scheme (the lack of relieving triangle, and the employment of ashlar respectively). In order to reconcile it with his scheme, Wace assigned the ashlar ‘mask’ of the Aegisthus’ façade to a later architectural phase (noted as “Aegisthos II” in Fitzsimons 2011, 95, tab. 5.8); however, Yannis Galanakis has convincingly shown that the ashlar ‘mask’ and the rubble structure of the stomion of the Aegisthus tholos were constructed as parts of a single plan (Galanakis 2007). Moreover, the relieving triangle of this tomb was discovered during conservation work in 1997, making Aegisthus effectively a ‘group II’ tholos in Wace’s scheme. Of course, it has frequently been noted that this grouping has no chronological significance and cannot be applied beyond Mycenae (cf. Galanakis 2007, 243).

⁹¹ Nelson 2007, 151, n. 44; Nelson 2017, 306, 311–314, 349–350, 353–357. Such reuse occurs in pseudo-ashlar masonry, a building system defined by the combination of ashlar and rubble masonry. The pseudo-ashlar ‘circuit wall’ located on the southwestern edge of the hilltop (the Southwest Quadrant, Areas W 19 and W 20) and perhaps Walls SW58 and SW59 located underneath Court 63 may be dated to LH I (Nelson 2017, 349–350; cf. Blegen 1973, 11–13, 39, figs. 17–22, 72, 128–130, 140, 302, 306; Lolos 1987, 107–108, 128). This reuse of ashlar blocks should not be confused with the ashlar style masonry that occurs in LH IIIA structures at Epáno Englianos (Nelson 2017, 318–328, 357–360, fig. 4.4). To the examples of pseudo-ashlar mentioned above we may now add the cut limestone blocks reused in the lower courses of walls of the recently excavated built tomb of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ at Epáno Englianos (Davis – Stocker 2016, 630–631, fig. 3 below).

⁹² The treatment of this material in the final report is unfortunately not extensive. Only sherds from the long stretch of wall in the Southwestern Quadrant (Areas W19 including Trench 64-1, and W20) are illustrated (Blegen 1973, 11–13, figs. 128–130, 140). Lolos 1987, 107–108, notes that the relevant illustrations include both LH I and LH IIA material. The mixture of MH-looking (but possibly of LH I–II date), LH I and LH II material appears to be characteristic of most such contexts in Epáno Englianos, and, although the density of earlier material in the deepest levels appears to be significant, there has so far been no comprehensive presentation or discussion of the stratigraphy of these tests (see Lolos 1987, 125–128, for general comments on early Mycenaean material from Epáno Englianos). There were no identifiable floor deposits associated with the complex of pseudo-ashlar walls under Court 63 (Blegen 1973, 39, figs. 72, 306; Lolos 1987, 128). Given this state of affairs, it is likely that any reconstruction of the Prepalatial history of Englianos would require assessment of the evidence from the new excavations beneath the palace complex as well as throughout the ridge. Cf. Karapanagiotou et al. and Vitale et al., this volume.

⁹³ The identification of a masonry system of Cretan derivation in Englianos as early as LH I might appear at first surprising, especially considering the “much weaker” Minoanising tradition in the southwestern Peloponnese in late MH (Dickinson 2014b, 6). However, we should always bear in mind that this picture is based on the assessment of the published Nichoria material and the lack of Lustrous Decorated antecedents to the Mycenaean I style there (Dickinson 2014b, 11); even if the *ex silentio* inference is strong enough as far as ceramic development is concerned (with no positive evidence for an independent development of a Mycenaean I style in the region), the

The apparent pioneering status of Englianos in the employment of cut masonry on the Greek mainland would seem to fit early in a sequence of Cretan-influenced styles observed in the early Mycenaean architecture of the site, including orthostate masonry (with one block from a wall recovered beneath Room 7 incised with a mason's mark) that may date within LH II.⁹⁴ Moreover, the cut poros blocks in the façade and stomion of Tragana, Tholos 1 (whose construction date in LH I is probable⁹⁵), suggest that this novel refinement in the entrances of tholoi may have been another highly eclectic southwest Peloponnesian novelty that might have occurred already within LH I.⁹⁶ However, the distinct treatment of the façade in a masonry style (often using poros ashlar blocks – with or without fascia) different than the rest of the stomion (often using conglomerate or hard limestone blocks), termed by Nelson as “two-part stomion construction”⁹⁷ does not seem to appear before LH IIA; at that time, it makes its debut seemingly simultaneously in the southwestern and northeastern Peloponnese.⁹⁸ Likewise, the use of conglomerate stone (a much more labour-consuming material than limestone) for the lintels of tholoi occurs principally in the Argolid (Mycenae; Prosymna; Kazarma), but has already appeared in tholoi built during the late MH to LH I in the southwestern Peloponnese (Tragana-Viglitsa, Tholos 1; Epano Englianos, Tholos IV; Kakovatos, Tholos A), even if the finest examples of such structures occur there in LH II (Peristeria, Tholos 1; Kambos).

There are two aspects of this development that we must comment on. First, the pioneering role of cut masonry in the southwestern Peloponnese, taking place already by LH I, certain in the case of monumental architecture for the living (Epano Englianos) and probable in mortuary architecture (Tragana-Viglitsa, Tholos 1) may suggest that the ashlar ‘masks’ in the façades of the Argolid tholoi can be explained as the result of a swift transmission of what began life as a specifically southwest Peloponnesian fashion; and that this transmission was powered by intense inter-elite interaction by the beginning of LH IIA.⁹⁹ Second, we may observe, in the southwestern

degree to which the limited Nichoria material from east Messenia can be considered a barometer of Cretan influence as a whole in the entire region can be debated. The remarkable and exceptional trajectory of Epano Englianos throughout the MH–LH periods, as inferred from survey material (Shelmerdine 2001, 113–115, fig. 2c–d), should not be underestimated. The penetration of Minoanising traditions may have never been as deep and extensive in the southwestern Peloponnese as it had been in Lakonia or the Argolid, even if the appropriation of Minoan imports and influences in the shaping of an elite artefact world there was of a comparable scale. However, at Epano Englianos Minoan influence was apparently exceptionally intensive by mainland standards throughout LH I–IIIA (Rutter 2005, 24–27, figs. 2–4; Nelson 2017, 353–360). How exactly this should be associated with the site's exceptional development through LH I–IIIB must remain debatable for the time being, but it should also be made clear that Englianos is at present atypical of the degree and character of ‘Minoan’ influence elsewhere in the southwestern Peloponnese.

⁹⁴ Rutter 2005, 24–27, figs. 2–4; Davis – Stocker 2016, 636–637; Nelson 2017, 351–352, with references.

⁹⁵ Lolos 1987, 183, mentions earlier material that also included “possibly LH I (Keftiu cup sherds?)” (cf. also Furumark 1950, 191 n. 4; Dickinson 1977, 62, 116: chapter IV, endnote 20), although he interprets it as “stray settlement-material”. However, material recovered and reported by Korres in the vicinity of the tholos originated in the sieving of discarded material from Kourouniotis' 1912 excavation of the burial chamber of the tholos (Korres 1980, 332–334; Korres 1982, 121–122). There is presently no evidence of LH I settlement around the tholos where such intrusive material might have originated (the closest securely dated LH I site being Tragana-Voroulia at a distance of 1.5–2 km from the Viglitsa tholoi), although evidence for EH activity around Tholos 1 has been reported (Korres 1982, 125; Lolos 1987, 183).

⁹⁶ However, the limited distribution of ashlar in the southwestern Peloponnese in LH IIA is certainly intriguing. So far, only Peristeria, Tholos 1, and Antheia feature such ashlar ‘masks’, while ashlar is, even more intriguingly, not employed even in the masonry of Tholos III at Kato Englianos, first used in LH IIA (Zavadil 2013, 366–368, with references).

⁹⁷ Nelson 2007, 146–148, figs. 1–2. Tragana-Viglitsa, Tholos 1, features cut poros blocks in the façade as well as the stomion walls (Korres 1978, 269, pls. 174γ, 176α–β) and, despite its employment of cut masonry, it should not be regarded as an example of “two part stomion construction” (Nelson 2007, 146 n. 23).

⁹⁸ The construction of Tholos 1 followed the demolition of the East House at Peristeria on whose ruins it was partly built. It is interesting that the latter event, in Lolos' analysis of LH I pottery from the region, may “conventionally be taken to mark the turn from LH I to LH IIA” there (Lolos 1987, 540).

⁹⁹ I would not generalise, however, to argue this was because “Messenia played a particularly important role in the circulation of Minoan-style artefacts to the rest of Greece” (Fitzsimons 2011, 95, citing Robin Hägg and Georgios

Peloponnese, a deliberately late switch in the investment of labour from the residential/ceremonial¹⁰⁰ to the mortuary realm, suggesting an unprecedented intensification of mortuary display in LH IIA, now employing forms of undisputed Cretan ancestry, in addition to independent innovations based on the local MH tradition (as tholoi may have been).

Such intensification of Cretan influence, considered perhaps the defining feature of LH IIA elite vocabulary cross-regionally, is also reflected in the dominance and repertoire explosion of the Mycenaean IIA style that out-rivalled virtually all competing fine wares.¹⁰¹ Among the new ceramic world of the LH IIA phase, monumental palatial jars were also broadly distributed across the Peloponnese with significant numbers recovered from elite burials in tholoi and chamber tombs in the northeastern and southwestern regions.¹⁰² This is certainly not the place to assess the degree to which the appropriation of Cretan forms by the mainland elites constituted an act of reinterpretation, an *interpretatio Mycenaea*. This would necessitate a much broader perspective than the one adopted in the present paper.¹⁰³ However, there are some interesting insights offered even by our limited outlook: the clear examples of the use of such palatial jars as burial containers in Vayenas Tholos V at Epano Englianos and the Kheliotou Mylos tholos at Ancient Corinth,¹⁰⁴ should lead us to at least consider the possibility that other occurrences of fragmentary palatial jars from no longer reconstructible assemblages placed in rich tholoi and chamber tombs may also reflect their use as burial jars, continuing the practice of placing adult burials in large ceramic containers broadly attested in the burial tumuli of the earlier MH period in the region.¹⁰⁵ The large number of palatial jars in Kakovatos, Tholos A, or Peristeria, Tholos 1, might receive a similar explanation. The crucial point, however, is the use of a broad range (beside the piriform palatial jars) of ceramic vessels as funerary containers in Vayenas as well as in Peristeria, South Tholos,¹⁰⁶ while Korres has advanced a similar interpretation for the jars found ‘embedded’ in the walls of the chamber of Kaminia, Tholos 3 (although this was found empty), as well as the matt-painted pithoi from Kaminia, Tholos 5, and Koukounara-Gouvalari, Tholos 2.¹⁰⁷ The possibility that the occurrence of palatial jars with rich burials in other regions of the Peloponnese and Central Greece may indicate the adoption of a southwest Peloponnesian practice that might

Korres), as this would be to play down the role of the southwestern Peloponnese to that of a mere ‘transponder’ of exotic fashions. As argued below, I find such ‘cognates’ in the monumental vocabulary of these different regions to be symptomatic of the intense interaction among regional elites within LH I–II.

¹⁰⁰ It is here assumed that the unidentified structure to which the cut blocks embedded in pseudo-ashlar LH I walls at Epano Englianos originally belonged had such a function.

¹⁰¹ A particularly well-illustrated case of a fine ware that went rapidly out of fashion after LH I was the so-called ‘Mainland Polychrome’ (for this and other contemporary varieties of bichrome and polychrome ceramics see Lindblom – Rutter, this volume). This class scarcely occurs in the southwestern Peloponnese, where it must be considered as imported, as may be the case with the Kato Samikon-Kleidi ‘Tumulus’ (actually tholos). A jug, as well as a few sherds from Nichoria and possibly Malthi (Kato Samikon jug: Lolos 1987, 298–299, figs. 490a–491, with references; the Nichoria material is assigned to late MH, but the stratigraphy is not very clear in the relevant deposits and a date in LH I cannot be ruled out: Howell 1992, 68). A bichrome pottery class now termed Light on Dull-Painted has been identified at Malthi and Nichoria and is suggested as a regional southwestern Peloponnesian product (Lindblom – Rutter, this volume).

¹⁰² Kalogeropoulos 2011.

¹⁰³ Most recent discussion in Maran 2011 (cf. also Kalogeropoulos 2015 focusing on Shaft Grave IV of Mycenae Circle A).

¹⁰⁴ Taylour 1973, 166, fig. 233.4a–c; Kassimi 2015, 510.

¹⁰⁵ Although Kalogeropoulos endorses the mortuary interpretation of (at least some) palatial jars, he argues for the East Cretan origin of the practice (Kalogeropoulos 2011, 210–212, 224–226). The strength of local MH tradition is downplayed, as is the significance of the ‘exception’ of the southwestern Peloponnese.

¹⁰⁶ Taylour 1973, 156–158, 159–166, fig. 233.1–2, 4–5; Korres 1979, 510–511, pls. 266β, 268β. It would be fascinating to consider the possibility that a MM III small pithos from Englianos, Tholos IV (Davis – Stocker 2015, 176, fig. 1), might also have been a burial jar. Fragments from at least one palatial jar were recovered from the stomion and chamber of the same tholos (Taylour 1973, 105, 111, fig. 196.2; Lolos 1987, 188).

¹⁰⁷ Korres 1977, 494, 506; Korres 1982, 128.

have accompanied the diffusion and adoption of what began life as a regional type of mortuary monument (the tholos) within LH IIA is certainly fascinating.¹⁰⁸

The recent (2015) sensational discovery of the built tomb of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ located near the entrance of Tholos IV at Epano Englianos, whose single male burial has been dated by the excavators within LH IIA, is bound to bring a gale of fresh air into the discussion of the mortuary landscape in early Mycenaean Englianos, and this prospect is further enhanced by the even more recently discovered Tholoi VI and VII northeast of Tholos IV.¹⁰⁹ The close proximity between the tomb of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ and the entrance of Tholos IV may suggest a special association between the robust male buried in the built grave and the elite group buried in the tholos. The suggested LH IIA date of this burial – whose astonishingly rich assemblage where ceramic items were absent seems to anticipate the ‘warrior graves’ or ‘burials with bronzes’ of the succeeding LH IIB–IIIA1/LM II–IIIA1 phases – is interesting in local terms too. LH II is a phase of great diversification of the burial locations around the acropolis of Englianos: the adjacent Tholos IV as well as the Vayenas Tholos V were both in use,¹¹⁰ while Tholos III in Kato Englianos and the Tsakalis rock-cut chamber tomb cemetery to the west of the later palace appear to have been first used during LH IIA.¹¹¹ Such diversity of burial grounds at the site, to which the ‘Griffin Warrior’ is a further impressive addition, may reflect the emergence of diverse elite groups aspiring to power (with varying degrees of intensity and success) at that time, contemporary with the employment of orthostate walls in Englianos,¹¹² as well as the rise of a shared Helladic monumental vocabulary forged by intense cross-regional elite interaction, as argued above.¹¹³

Moreover, it offers an opportunity to appreciate the dynamics of such interaction now observable across the early Mycenaean world, with elite groups from Boiotia to the southern Peloponnese now actively engaged in the formation of a common ‘material vocabulary’, within which individual components swiftly lost their regional flavour and an increasingly pan-Helladic ‘Mycenaean’ material identity was formed. Our difficulty in arguing for the existence of leader sites or leader regions may be symptomatic of the processes involved in the formation of this identity: this may have been based on the intense interaction among elite groups, including substantial collective activities with interregional membership, as well as exogamy.¹¹⁴ The latter hypothesis has at least now found firm support in the suggestion of a non-local (but still unidentified) origin for the high-status females buried in Mycenae, Circle A, based on strontium isotope ratio (⁸⁷Sr/⁸⁶Sr) analysis.¹¹⁵

In such an environment, the occurrence of different contributions made by different groups throughout LH I–II (and perhaps later on) must be acknowledged in any attempt to understand the

¹⁰⁸ It is interesting to consider the more limited occurrence of palatial jars in chamber tombs alongside Wright’s recent proposal (Wright 2008b, 147–148, see above n. 69) that the invention of the rock-cut chamber tomb took place in the context of the emulation of tholoi within the southwestern Peloponnese.

¹⁰⁹ Davis – Stocker 2016, esp. 635–636, on the date of the burial. For Tholoi VI and VII at Epano Englianos see <<http://www.griffinwarrior.org/tholos-tombs/>> (last access 30 Nov. 2020).

¹¹⁰ The fragments of a palatial jar from the dromos and chamber of Tholos IV (Taylour 1973, 105, 111, fig. 196.2; Lolos 1987, 188) may attest to the use of the tomb during LH IIA.

¹¹¹ Murphy 2014, 213–215, tab. 16.2. One is obviously eager to see how this picture may be further enhanced by the study of the newly discovered tholoi (see above n. 109).

¹¹² Nelson 2017, 304, 314–318, 350–351, fig. 3.26–31.

¹¹³ The choice to locate the single burial of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ close to the passageway leading from the Northeast Gate to the entrance of Tholos IV might reflect this individual’s attachment to – but, yet, non-membership in – the (kin) group using this particular tholos. However, given the preliminary character of the chronology of the ‘Griffin Warrior’ burial and the ongoing discussion of the history of use of Tholos IV and its recently discovered ‘companions’ by Sharon Stocker and Jack Davis, such a hypothesis may be considered tentative at best. For the intriguing suggestion that the individual buried in the ‘Griffin Warrior’ may have been an early Pylian /wanaks/ see Stocker – Davis 2020. For the introduction of the institution associated with this title see further below.

¹¹⁴ Petrakis 2010, 414.

¹¹⁵ Nafplioti 2009; Dickinson et al. 2012, 174, 181–182. One of these females may be identified with the good ‘mistress of the house’ associated with at least some of the five gold-covered spindles found in Shaft Grave III (Maran 2011, 287–288, see above n. 35).

formation and development of Mycenaean elite behaviour, although most details will remain etically invisible. Occasionally, we may be permitted glimpses into the identity of the agents responsible: the diffusion of the tholos during LH IIA (with or without the ashlar ‘mask’ refinement) may be assigned to the influential role of major elite groups based at Englianos as well as in some of its major competitors or allies at that time; in a similar manner, the concentration of virtually all known LH I rhyta in a few Circle A burials suggests the pioneering role of this specific elite group in the introduction and appropriation of this Minoan ritual implement during LH I and hints at the leading role of the Mycenae elite in the diffusion and adoption of rhyta elsewhere on the mainland during LH IIA, including Englianos, Peristeria and Psari in the southwestern Peloponnese.¹¹⁶

Epilogue: Transition to Palatial Mycenaean

What was anticipated by the swift diffusion and adoption of the Mycenaean I style (whatever its precise origins within the Peloponnese)¹¹⁷ in the southern Greek mainland during LH I, as well as the occurrence of similar funerary jewellery across the Peloponnese at that time, is further intensified in the next phase. The novel LH IIA ‘vocabulary’ displays the prevalence of Cretan influence in all its glory, although this is admittedly more visible in the northeastern Peloponnese, where the Mycenaean IIA stylistic explosion rapidly eclipses other fine wares that had flourished during LH I, such as the so-called ‘Mainland Polychrome’. The situation in the southwestern Peloponnese is still much less clear. Whatever the actual interpretation for the appearance or disappearance of specific pottery classes or other artefact groups, the closeness to Crete reflected by this ‘narrowing’ of influences is unprecedented and perhaps meaningful. In a bold attempt to read this intensification in political terms, I may be allowed to make a final observation. This unprecedented and far from superficial intimacy between Crete and the mainland during LM IB/LH IIA is the necessary prelude for the most dramatic change in the political make-up of the Hellenic polities that was to come. The adoption or adaptation of the *wanax* ideology, a constellation of ideas and practices regarding the ideals of rulership, would so far appear to be inextricably linked to the rise of the first literate administrations on the Greek mainland employing the Linear B script, whose formation can be plausibly dated somewhere in the LH IIB–IIIA1 range.¹¹⁸ It is largely due to the formation of a Cretan-based pan-Hellenic monumental display vocabulary that such a major institutional reform of cross-regional scale became feasible.

The new institution used the title /wanaks/,¹¹⁹ a term without a Greek or any other Indo-European etymology that may have been a Minoan loanword.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, the extensive discussion of the evidence that may positively support this hypothesis cannot be accommodated here.¹²¹ Accepting the hypothesis of such a major borrowing might just hint at the intensity of the intimacy between certain mainland groups and certain Cretan (especially Knossian) elite groups during the preceding phases. It is such intimacy that generated the necessary pan-Aegean background for the strikingly similar results of the reforms that led to the rise of the palatial institutions from coastal Thessaly to Crete during the next couple of centuries.

¹¹⁶ Petrakis 2016a.

¹¹⁷ Dickinson 2014b.

¹¹⁸ Our earliest textual documentation of the term may come from the ‘Room of the Chariot Tablets’ at Knossos, dated by Jan Driessen to the LM II–IIIA1 period (see Driessen 2000 for a comprehensive overview of this deposit, but Firth – Melena 2016 should now be consulted as well).

¹¹⁹ Spelled *wa-na-ka* in the palatial Linear B script of the palatial administrations and surviving in mostly literary use in the first millennium BC as *ἄναξ*, in the Late Bronze Age the term may have had a semantic range similar to that of English ‘Lord’.

¹²⁰ Palaima 1995, 131–134; Petrakis 2016b.

¹²¹ I have elsewhere argued (Petrakis 2016b) that the Linear B orthography of *wa-na-ka* and its derivative adjective *wa-na-ka-te-ro* /wanakeros/ ‘pertaining to the *wanax*’ shows a very persistent arbitrary orthographic vowel that may allow its possible interpretation as an ‘orthographic fossil’ taken over from the ‘parent’ system that the Linear B phonographic repertoire was based on. Such a suggestion has obvious implications for the origin of the title.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Map of the southwestern Peloponnese showing the distribution of monuments discussed in the text. ● = excavated burial tumuli with multiple burial spaces; ○ = burial tumuli (insufficiently explored or identified through survey); ▲ = tholoi of late MH–LH I date; ★ = ‘complex tumulus’ with a variety of built burial spaces (small tholoi, periboloi, apsidal built tombs) (drawn and annotated by the author)

Fig. 2: Scheme showing the proposed derivation of the tholos from burial tumulus proposed here (solid line), as well as arising emulative phenomena (dotted lines). Drawings are schematised renderings showing types of monuments and not accurate renderings of actual monuments (the tumulus with multiple burial spaces is based on Papoulia-Ayios Ioannis, see Korres 1980, 328, fig. 1; the ‘complex tumulus’ is loosely based on Kaminia, acknowledging the great diversity in this category; the ‘tholoid’ rock-cut chamber tomb is based on Volimidia, Tomb A8, see Marinatos 2014, 46, plan 16) (drawn and annotated by the author)

LAKONIA and KYTHERA

Space, Place and Social Structure in the North Cemetery, Ayios Vasileios

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Abstract: In this paper we would like to present some first observations on changing perceptions of space and shifting social relations in the site of Ayios Vasileios, Lakonia, based on the excavation and study of the early Mycenaean extramural cemetery of the site, the North Cemetery. Our aim is to investigate how space is harnessed in the creation of new cosmological and social divisions.

1. Space and Place: We will examine the location of the (extramural) cemetery in relation to the contemporary settlement and the local topography. We will attempt to understand how place is imbued with meaning by examining the previous use of the cemetery area, the spatial organisation of the cemetery (location and orientation of graves), as well as any evidence for human intervention and modifications of the cemetery area (removal and heaping of soil, use of natural gravel layers, construction of a platform, construction of retaining [?] walls).

2. Social structure: On the basis of a close contextual analysis of the mortuary practices (variation in grave type, construction and design, treatment of the body and accompanying ritual, offerings) we will reconstruct the changing social relations, and in particular differentiation by age, gender, kinship and status.

Our observations on the North Cemetery will be placed in the context of the wider transformation of the mortuary practices at the very beginning of the Mycenaean period, i.e. the introduction of formal cemeteries and new tomb types, the practice of reuse and secondary treatment, and the deposition of wealth. At the same time we will examine regional particularities and local responses.

Keywords: Space, social structure, social change, mortuary practices, Mycenaean period, Late Bronze Age, Lakonia, Ayios Vasileios

Introduction and Chronology

The palatial complex in Ayios Vasileios⁴ (named for the nearby Byzantine chapel of Ayios Vasileios) is located on a low hill, part of a hill chain oriented northeast to southwest across the plain of Sparta. The site lies in a very fertile area (now covered by olive orchards), on the east bank of the Eurotas River, at a distance of about 12 km south of modern Sparta and 4 km east-northeast of the village of Xirokambi. The North Cemetery,⁵ the early Mycenaean extramural cemetery of the settlement, is located on the northern edge of the hill, at a small distance from Building A, which probably belongs to the palatial complex (see Fig. 1). The cemetery was revealed in 2010, when trial trenches were dug in different parts of the site in order to control the results of the geophysical survey carried out in 2009.⁶ Its excavation lasted for seven years (2010–2016).⁷

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⁴ On the palatial complex in Ayios Vasileios, see Vasilogamvrou 2013; Vasilogamvrou 2014; Vasilogamvrou 2015a; Vasilogamvrou 2015b; Petrakos 2011; Petrakos 2012; Petrakos 2013; Petrakos 2014; Petrakos 2015; Petrakos 2016.

⁵ The North Cemetery is being excavated as part of the Ayios Vasileios Project, which is directed by Adamantia Vasilogamvrou, Director Emerita of the Lakonia Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society. See Voutsaki et al. 2018a; Voutsaki et al. 2018b; Voutsaki et al., in preparation.

⁶ Tsokas et al. 2012.

⁷ The 2010 excavation at the North Cemetery was carried out under the supervision of Dora Kondyli, and was financed by the Institute of Aegean Prehistory. From 2011 onwards the excavation of the North Cemetery was



Fig. 1: Aerial view of Ayios Vasileios hill (photo: V. Georgiadis)



Fig. 2: Plan of the North Cemetery (G. Nobles, I. Koulogeorgiou)

21 graves and two burials (assembled bones on top of a grave) have been found (see Fig. 2) although more must have existed as the area was disturbed during the Byzantine occupation of the hill. Most graves are cists, though a few simple pits have also been found, as well as one large built tomb (Tomb 21).

As we will see later, the graves are either unfurnished or contain few and modest offerings, therefore the dating of the individual graves cannot always be established with certainty. At this moment, the graves are given a tentative date, on the basis of any offerings found and of their stratigraphic relation with each other. We hope that the systematic study of the pottery from the cemetery by Vasco Hachtmann⁸ (and the parallel study of closed assemblages from the palatial complex by Elina Kardamaki⁹), as well as the extensive programme of radiocarbon dating which we are carrying out, will allow us to establish both relative and absolute dates of graves and successive burials.¹⁰ For the purpose of this paper, it suffices to discuss the lower and upper chronological limit of the use of the cemetery and the problems surrounding the definition of these chronological limits.

Some evidence for the foundation date of the cemetery is provided by a single body/neck sherd (Fig. 3a)¹¹ found under the deepest grave in the cemetery, the extended unfurnished inhumation in Pit 11. The shape is not certain, as the neck diameter remains uncertain – it could belong to a carinated kantharos/goblet, though a jar or jug with horizontal rim cannot be entirely excluded. The sherd is decorated with continuous pendant semi-circles, a motif which Carol Zerner placed in MH III Late/Transitional MH III/LH I,¹² while elsewhere she dates comparable pieces from a LH I/IIA context to LH IIA.¹³ This difference exemplifies the wider problems of the mainland ceramic sequence in the MH III–LH II period: In this transitional period, shapes or motifs which belong stylistically to the MH tradition continue in use into LH times, and regional and site-specific differences complicate matters further.¹⁴ The fabric (coarse orange schistose with a fine white slip) is more indicative of a date in MH III, but basing the founding date of the cemetery on the ware of one sherd would be problematic, to say the least.

The same uncertainties surround the actual offerings: for instance, the small matt-painted jug with loop handle (Fig. 3b)¹⁵ from Burial 7 (the assembled bones of three individuals found on the cover of Cist 8) could be of late MH date, in which case the foundation of the cemetery could be placed in this period. This date accords well with many extramural cemeteries (e.g. Myloi or Prosymna in the Argolid), which were established in this period. The last diagnostic ceramic offering in the cemetery is a small rounded alabastron (Fig. 3c)¹⁶ from the large built Tomb 21, which dates to the LH IIB period. However, this vase comes from a layer midway in the tomb (which contained more than 25 burials in successive layers) and does not provide a terminus ante quem. It should also be mentioned that a couple of child burials in simple pit graves have been found in the highest layers; most are unfurnished with the exception of the burial in Pit 2 which contained a goblet/

directed by Sofia Voutsaki, and carried out with the help of an international team of specialists. Vasco Hachtmann is responsible for the study and publication of the pottery, and Ioanna Moutafi for the study of the human skeletal material. The 2011–2016 fieldwork campaigns have been funded by the Groningen Institute of Archaeology, while the extensive programme of scientific analyses is supported by a generous grant from the Ammodo Foundation. Additional grants have been received from the Mediterranean Archaeology Trust. The conservation of the graves was carried out as part of an extensive conservation programme funded by the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

⁸ Hachtmann, forthcoming.

⁹ See Vasilogamvrou et al., this volume; Kardamaki 2017; Kardamaki et al., in press.

¹⁰ The radiocarbon analyses will be carried out at the Centre for Isotope Research, University of Groningen and the Centre for GeoGenetics, University of Copenhagen.

¹¹ Sherd 2606P1.

¹² Zerner 2008, 184.

¹³ Zerner 2008, 253, nos. 1639–1641, fig. 5.29.

¹⁴ Dickinson 1977, 28–29; Rutter 1993, 787.

¹⁵ Vase 409/A4.

¹⁶ Vase 2071/A8.

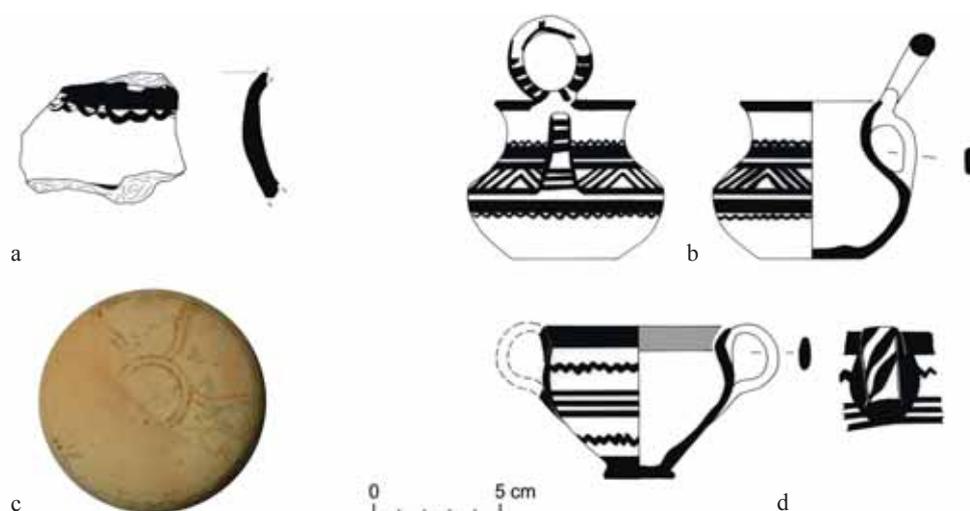


Fig. 3: Ceramic finds from the North Cemetery: a. Body sherd found under Pit 11, shape uncertain; b. Ring-handled jug from Burial 7; c. Base of an alabastron found in Built Tomb 21; d. Cup or goblet from the child burial in Pit 2 (photo: V. Hachtmann, drawings: A. Poelstra-Traga, V. Hachtmann)

cup datable to LH II and a small jug with cutaway neck.¹⁷ It is therefore, at the moment, safer to conclude that the North Cemetery was in use between the end of MH III and the end of LH II, or the beginning of LH IIIA. This discussion makes it clear that radiocarbon analysis is essential in order to obtain absolute dates and to reconstruct the sequence of the use of graves and the cemetery as a whole.

Space and Place

After the ‘spatial turn’ in the social and historical sciences,¹⁸ space is seen in a recursive relationship with human action – as constituted by, and constituting social relations – rather than as a mere container of human activities. Social practices create boundaries between and within communities, or between the living, the dead or the divine, order the cosmological and social universe and transform space to meaningful place – and these boundaries are in turn incorporated through bodily movement.

Let us examine how space is ordered, and how spatial order underwrites social relations in the North Cemetery. We can start by examining the location of the cemetery in relation to the contemporary settlement and the local topography. The Ayios Vasileios hill has a commanding view¹⁹ over the Eurotas Valley, as it is situated at the cross-roads of north-south (from inland to the coast) and east-west routes (towards openings across the Taygetos range and the Parion). The North Cemetery in particular is situated on the northern, steep edge of the hill in a very prominent location, visible for anyone approaching the hill from inland.

The cemetery was situated in close proximity to the settlement, which was already in use in the early Mycenaean period.²⁰ Interestingly, the slightly later (probably LH II–IIIA) chamber tomb

¹⁷ Vase 396/A1 and vase 396/A2.

¹⁸ In archaeology see e.g. Parker Pearson – Richards 1994; see also Dakouri-Hild 2016.

¹⁹ See similar observations about the prominent location of the LH I cemetery in Mitrou, Van de Moortel 2016, 101.

²⁰ It is not as yet possible to say with certainty how far back the settlement dates, as the excavation has reached deeper layers only in very restricted trenches, e.g. in Building A where stratified LH I–II pottery was found (Vasilogamvrou 2013, 78; Kondyli 2013; Vasilogamvrou 2014, 67).

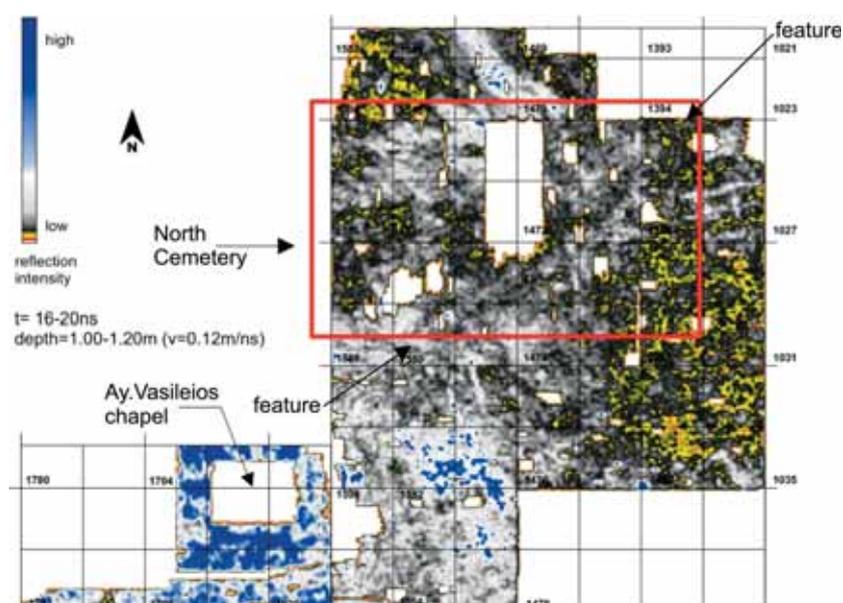


Fig. 4: Long and narrow feature demarcating the cemetery (?) (L. Polymenakos)

(which was eventually used as a pottery dump)²¹ is located further away to the west-southwest of the settlement. We see here a pattern attested in other sites as well: the early extramural cemeteries (e.g. the East Cemetery in Asine, the Grave Circles in Mycenae, the extramural cemetery in Mitrou) are often located relatively near the settlement, while the later chamber tomb cemeteries are situated further away.²²

The previous use of the area cannot be established with certainty, as the excavation has not always reached virgin soil. However, according to the sherd material found so far,²³ the cemetery must have been founded in an area occupied in EH I–II. It is too early to say whether the location among the ruins or distant memories of the EH village was chosen on purpose or not. It should be pointed out that there is very little evidence for use of the area in the earlier MH period. Only one find group²⁴ contains both EH and possibly early MH finds, but this material is too restricted and not diagnostic enough to argue for habitation, let alone continuous habitation in the area of the North Cemetery.²⁵

The way the cemetery was demarcated from the settlement is not entirely clear. The geophysics²⁶ do not show a very clear picture, as the area between Building A, the North Cemetery and the Ayios Vasileios chapel (see Fig. 1), i.e. more or less the top of the hill, was disturbed by the Byzantine village. At any rate, the dense urban grid seems to stop at a distance of c. 40m south of the cemetery. The georadar results do show, however, an intriguing long and narrow feature to the southwest of Grave 21 (Fig. 4), which seems to separate or demarcate the cemetery from the settlement. It is impossible to say if this feature is contemporary to or associated with the cemetery, and certainly not if it was a wall, a ditch or a street.²⁷

²¹ Petrakos 2011, 40; Vasilogamvrou 2013, 66–67.

²² As always in the transition to the Mycenaean period, this does not constitute an absolute rule: e.g., in Prosymna the first chamber tombs were opened between the somewhat earlier cists and pits.

²³ Once more, it needs to be stressed that these are preliminary observations, as the pottery is still being studied.

²⁴ Find group 2417 in the so-called ‘platform’ area – see below.

²⁵ The results of the surface survey of the Ayios Vasileios hill range confirm this observation; see Voutsaki et al. 2019.

²⁶ Polymenakos 2011, fig. 4A–4B; Tsokas et al. 2012; Polymenakos 2013, pl. 3e.

²⁷ Our original plan to open test trenches in this area had to be abandoned, as our work was considerably delayed by the discovery of the Built Tomb 21 with its multiple burials.

Large amounts of pottery have been found around the margins of the cemetery to the northeast, southeast and northwest, but these seem to belong mostly to the later Mycenaean period (LH IIIA to IIIC Early) – though it has to be emphasised that in all these cases only the uppermost layers have been excavated, and the pottery has not, as yet, been studied in detail. At the moment, it seems that the edges of the cemetery were encroached upon only during that later period, and that the domain of the living and the domain of the dead were strictly separated during the early Mycenaean period. The foundation of an extramural cemetery therefore brings about and inscribes on the physical landscape a new set of attitudes towards the dead, a new emphasis on the separation between the domain of the living and the domain of the dead.²⁸

At the same time, extramural cemeteries redefine social relationships within the community. While variation in mortuary practices and (social) differentiation will be discussed below in more detail, the removal of the dead from below or among houses into a formal cemetery emphasises the unity of the group which adopts the new ways and uses the new separate burial ground. The cohesion of the group is further emphasised by the spatial organisation of the graves, which follow a fairly regular orientation along either north-northwest to south-southeast or west-southwest to east-northeast (see Fig. 2), though small deviations can be seen. However, the graves are built in different depths, and in a few cases on top each other. While the regular orientation therefore stresses the cohesion of the group, the superimposition of graves²⁹ seems to emphasise links between successive graves, probably indicating the significance of memory and continuity for a specific group of mourners (presumably a family?).

Another interesting feature, the so-called ‘platform’, has been revealed to the south of the dense cluster of tombs, i.e. at the point of access from the settlement to the cemetery (Fig. 5). This ‘platform’ consists of two irregular stone layers made of small and medium-sized stones, which form a fairly even upper surface. Its boundaries are not totally clear: it is demarcated to the south, east and west by low wall fragments which follow more or less the same orientation as the graves, but the southwestern wall seems to continue for approximately 1 m to the southwest and the southeastern one continues into the baulk to the southeast. The northern boundary of the ‘platform’ is not well defined, as the area was excavated in the very first days of the 2010 campaign; however, to the northeast it ended on the small cairn of stones which marked the child burial in Pit 5.

It is worth discussing the dating of the ‘platform’ in more detail: Pottery from within and under the stone layers is exclusively early Mycenaean. Although a significant proportion of the pottery found may be of LH I date, joins between different find groups indicate that we are dealing with

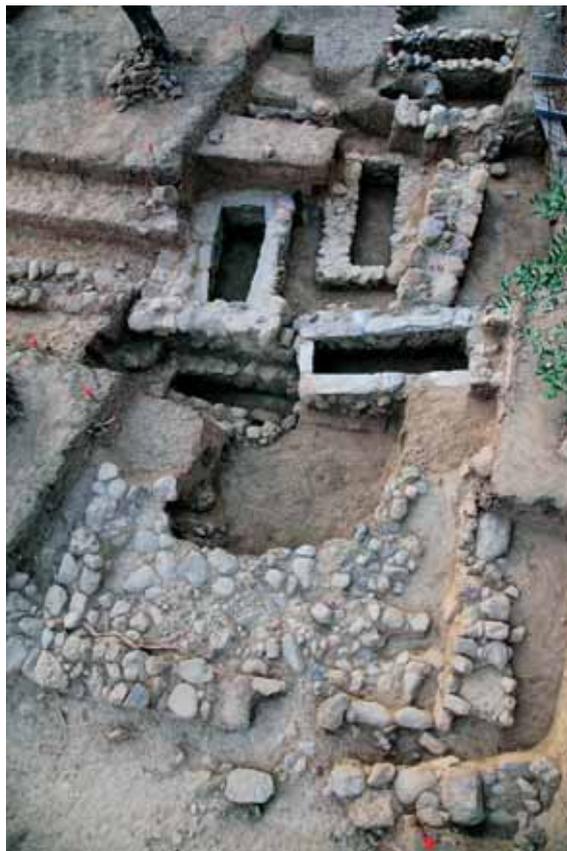


Fig. 5: The ‘platform’ overlooking the central cluster of graves: aerial view (photo: V. Georgiadis)

²⁸ For an extensive discussion on the growing emphasis on the boundary between the dead and the living, see Voutsaki 1998, and more recently articles in Dakouri-Hild – Boyd 2016.

²⁹ E.g. the superimposition of Cist Graves 6, 8 and Stone-lined Pit 9.

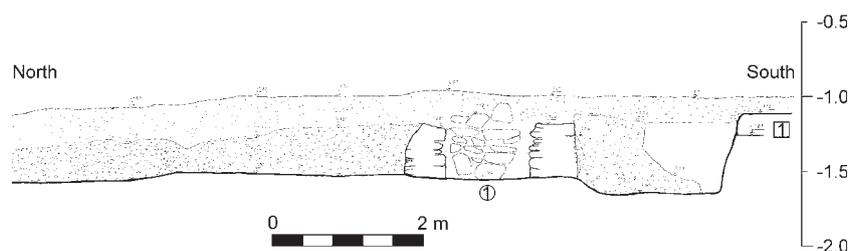


Fig. 6: Stratigraphic section on the east wall of the trench (drawing: I. Koulogeorgiou)

a single event of deposition and construction (which most likely took place early in LH IIA³⁰) rather than with an accumulation of layers in different times. The pottery in these layers (which also contained animal bones and mudbrick fragments) is predominantly of a domestic character.

Although the study of the pottery is still in progress, we would like to propose that the area was rearranged in LH I/IIA: soil was dumped from a nearby domestic deposit, and the stone layers were laid out. As the orientation of the wall segments follows that of the graves, it is possible that they are contemporary with the stone layers. The goblet/cup accompanying the child burial in Pit 2 (Fig. 3d) may belong to this phase. We therefore propose that the space around the tombs was altered and interfered with in one construction episode, while the cemetery was still in use.

This conclusion is reinforced by further indications of human intervention and modifications in the cemetery area. The graves in the northern part of the (central cluster of the) cemetery³¹ are dug in the natural dense gravel layer which was formed by the erosion of the local conglomerate bedrock. At the height of Pit 2 this gravel layer seems to disappear; in fact, it can be clearly seen on the section of the eastern wall of the trench that the gravel layer had been scooped out (Fig. 6). The fairly sharp dividing line between the gravel and the soil can be followed further to the east: Grave 19 is dug half in the gravel layer and half in soil containing no pebbles. It seems, therefore, that for reasons we cannot fully understand, the gravel layer was dug out and a cavity was formed which extended at least to the ‘platform’ area. It is not easy to establish the size and boundaries of this cavity, and certainly not its depth, as the area has not been fully excavated – but we attempt a tentative reconstruction in Fig. 7 based largely on the georadar results.³² One more indication for the existence of this cavity should be mentioned: a few metres to the west of Pit 2 (and directly to the north of a possible grave, which has not been excavated), the bedrock has been levelled.³³

In order to understand human interventions in this area, we took soil samples for micromorphological analyses.³⁴ The analysis is still in progress, but the preliminary observations confirm the existence of a large man-made cavity formed by the removal of gravel layers, which was subsequently filled in with earth within which the ‘southern’ graves of the central cluster have been dug. In addition, some wall segments (see Walls 1, 2, 3, 4 on Fig. 2) have been built in the area of the cavity.³⁵ We should single out Wall Segment 2, which unlike the others, consists of two to three courses of stones inclining from north to south, built on top of inclining layers of soil. This indicates that the cavity has been filled in with soil, but also that this soil must have been heaped above graves perhaps forming small mounds above them.

³⁰ This deposit closely resembles Zerner’s “Late Helladic I/IIA (Late Helladic I Late with early Late Helladic IIA) to Late Helladic IIA (= late LM IA)” at Ayios Stephanos (Zerner 2008, 186). It is also contemporary with LH IB as defined by Dietz 1991 in the Argolid, though with a slight admixture of LH IIA decorated pottery.

³¹ Graves 1, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18.

³² For more observations on the cavity on the basis of the georadar results, see Polymenakos 2013, 11, fig. 3d, and Lazaros Polymenakos, personal communication.

³³ In this spot the bedrock is found at a fairly low level, more or less at the cover slabs of the unexcavated grave.

³⁴ The soil micromorphology analysis is carried out by Panagiotis Karkanis, Wiener Laboratory, and Dan Fallu, University of Boston.

³⁵ Similar wall segments can be seen in the LH I cist cemetery in Mitrou: Van de Moortel 2016, 93, fig. 2.

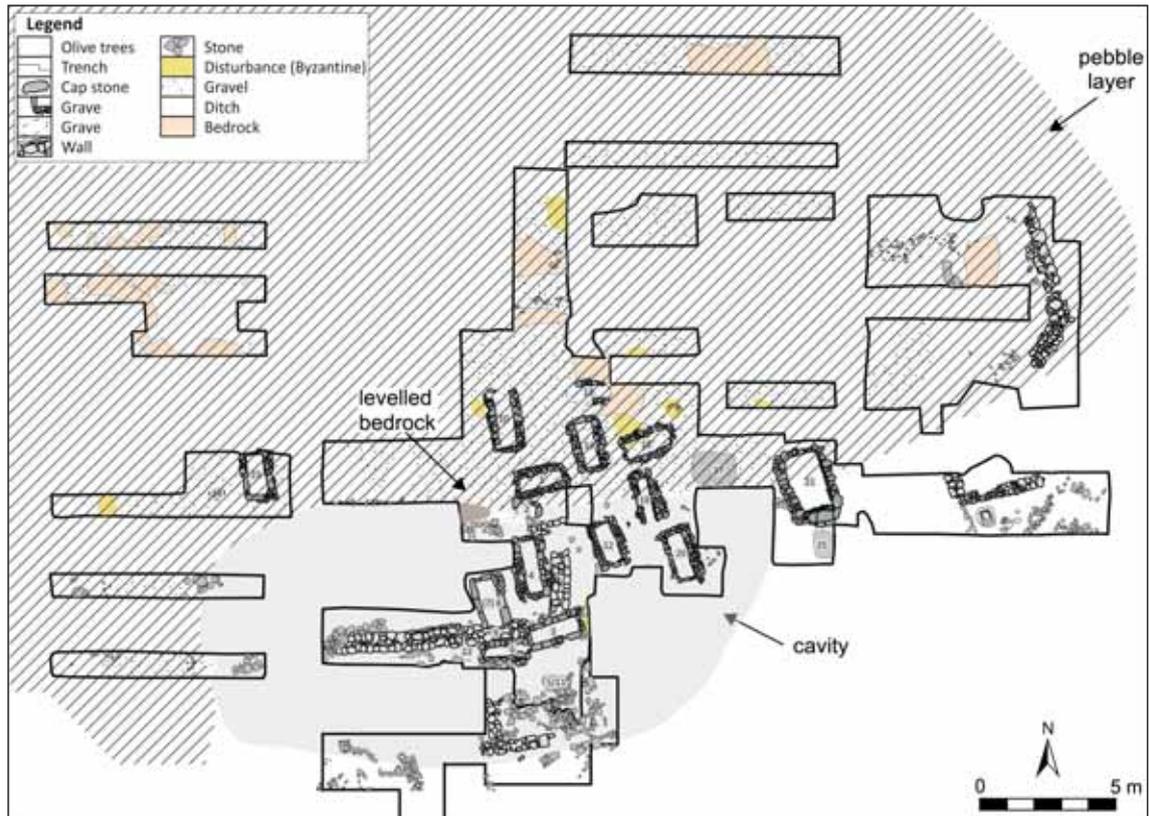


Fig. 7: Plan of the central cluster of the North Cemetery with proposed extent of cavity (G. Nobles, I. Koulogeorgiou)

Various questions arise from these observations, especially concerning the purpose of these interventions, the sequence of events and their chronological relation with the construction and use of graves, and the external appearance of the cemetery at the time of its use. We cannot, as yet, provide definitive answers to these questions. We hope to resolve them by carefully integrating stratigraphic observations and remarks on the sherd material found in between the tombs with radiocarbon analysis of the human skeletons, taphonomic observations on the burials and soil micromorphology in and around the tombs.

We can, however, reach four important conclusions: first, the domain of the dead and the domain of the living seem to be clearly separated in this period. Second, at the same time, one social group distanced itself from the rest of the community, and its unity was emphasised by the shared orientation. Third, spatial arrangements and human interventions in the area of the cemetery create some subtle differences between the people buried (some graves inside, others outside the gravel layer or the cavity; wall segments joining and dividing graves and groups of graves; some graves and burials superimposed; some graves accentuated by the ‘platform’, etc.). Finally, these human interventions also imply mobilisation of labour either by the entire social group using the cemetery, or by individual groups of mourners. We tend to associate labour mobilisation with conspicuous tumuli and, of course, with monumental tombs such as tholoi – the North Cemetery indicates that this phenomenon is more widespread and can also be attested in flat, extended cemeteries. We will return to this point in the discussion on the social relations below where we address what this relative homogeneity and subtle variation can tell us about social structure in this period.

Social Structure: The Analysis of Mortuary Practices

Theoretical debates on the interpretation of mortuary data have emphasised that the mortuary record should not be interpreted as the faithful reflection of social organisation;³⁶ mortuary practices should instead be seen as a strategy of self-representation.³⁷ Therefore, the study of mortuary variation allows us to reconstruct social structure, i.e. the idealised representation of the social order.³⁸ Indeed the contextual analysis of mortuary practices in the North Cemetery (i.e. of variation in grave type, construction and design, treatment of the body and accompanying ritual, offerings) enables us to reconstruct age, gender, kinship and status relations as well as strategies of differentiation or conformity, exclusion or inclusion.

The cemetery consists predominantly of stone-built cist tombs, which are clearly larger and more carefully built than their counterparts in the MH period.³⁹ At first sight the tombs look quite similar to each other. However, a closer examination reveals subtle variation in the quality of construction. Some tombs (e.g. Tomb 1, see Fig. 8) are built of unworked stones, including some large blocks, brought to the top of the hill from the nearby riverbed, or extracted from conglomerate outcrops on the hill itself. Other tombs, which we call elaborate cists (e.g. Tomb 8, see Fig. 9) are built more carefully: their short sides are made of orthostatic schist slabs, while the uppermost course of the walls consists of thin, carefully cut schist slabs to fit exactly the width of the wall. One of these elaborate tombs (Tomb 14) stands out, as it is built almost entirely of carefully cut, thin schist slabs, the ones in the uppermost course of a striking light blue colour. Large and heavy, roughly worked oblong and fairly regular cover slabs made of phyllite were placed along the width of the tomb (Fig. 10). Interestingly, both schist and phyllite were brought from the Taygetos slopes, i.e. a distance of 5 to 8 km, therefore the construction of these tombs was much more labour intensive than we tend to think.⁴⁰

One tomb differs from all the others. The Built Tomb 21 (Fig. 11) (internal dimensions: 2.15 × 1.21 m) is, in terms of size, more than five times larger than the average cist tomb, also because of its remarkable depth (1.10 m). In terms of construction, it is not very different from simple cists. Large boulders are used for the lower courses, and unworked stones for the walls. However, there are two differences: the southern short side is built exclusively of medium-sized and small stones, which do not join the long sides – it therefore resembles more a blocking wall. The grave was not covered with perpendicular cover slabs; instead, its upper layers were found full of large, medium-sized and small stones, including some schist and phyllite slabs. While at this moment we cannot reconstruct its cover or roof,⁴¹ stratigraphic observations and the positioning of the burials in the grave allow us to establish that the 25+ burials found in the grave must have been lowered from the top of the grave, and not introduced from its side. To put it differently, the ‘blocking’ wall was not a real entrance. The Built Tomb 21⁴² in a way provides the missing link in the transformation of elaborate and large cist tombs towards large family tombs such as the tholos or chamber tombs.⁴³ The introduction of such hybrid types is a sign of the experimentation and innovation in the transition to the Mycenaean period.

³⁶ See e.g. Hodder 1982; Parker Pearson 1999.

³⁷ Nilsson-Stutz – Tarlow 2013.

³⁸ Morris 1992, 1–30.

³⁹ The elaborate cists seem to be a Lakonian feature, as they are found also in Ayios Stephanos (Nu 2: Tylour † – Janko 2008, 137–140) and at the Menelaion (Tomb 1: Catling 2009, 188) – although in these publications they are referred to as shaft graves, as they did have a shaft.

⁴⁰ This point is developed more in Voutsaki et al. 2018b.

⁴¹ Yannick de Raaf (Research Master student, Groningen) is working towards a 3D reconstruction of the tomb and its cover/roof in cooperation with Theo Verlaan (PhD student, Groningen) and Gary Nobles (digital specialist, Koç University, Istanbul).

⁴² Papadimitriou 2001.

⁴³ Papadimitriou 2011.

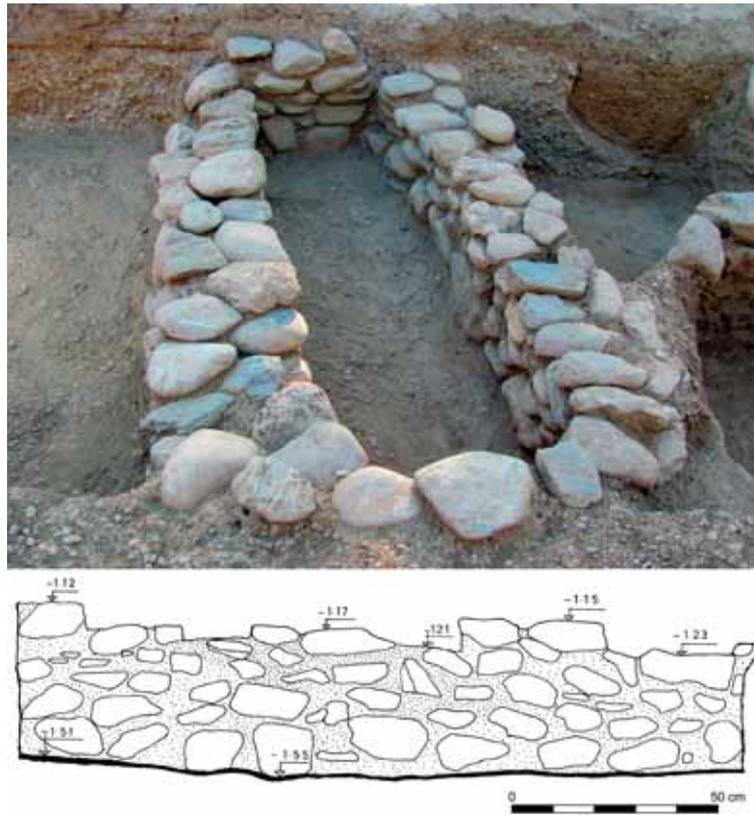


Fig. 8: A regular cist tomb: a general view of Tomb 1 (photo: V. Georgiadis) and drawing of its northern wall (drawing: I. Koulogeorgiou)



Fig. 9: An elaborate cist tomb: a general view of Tomb 8 (photo: V. Georgiadis) and drawing of its western wall (drawing: I. Koulogeorgiou)



Fig. 10: Cover slabs made of phyllite (Tomb 4) (photo: V. Georgiadis)

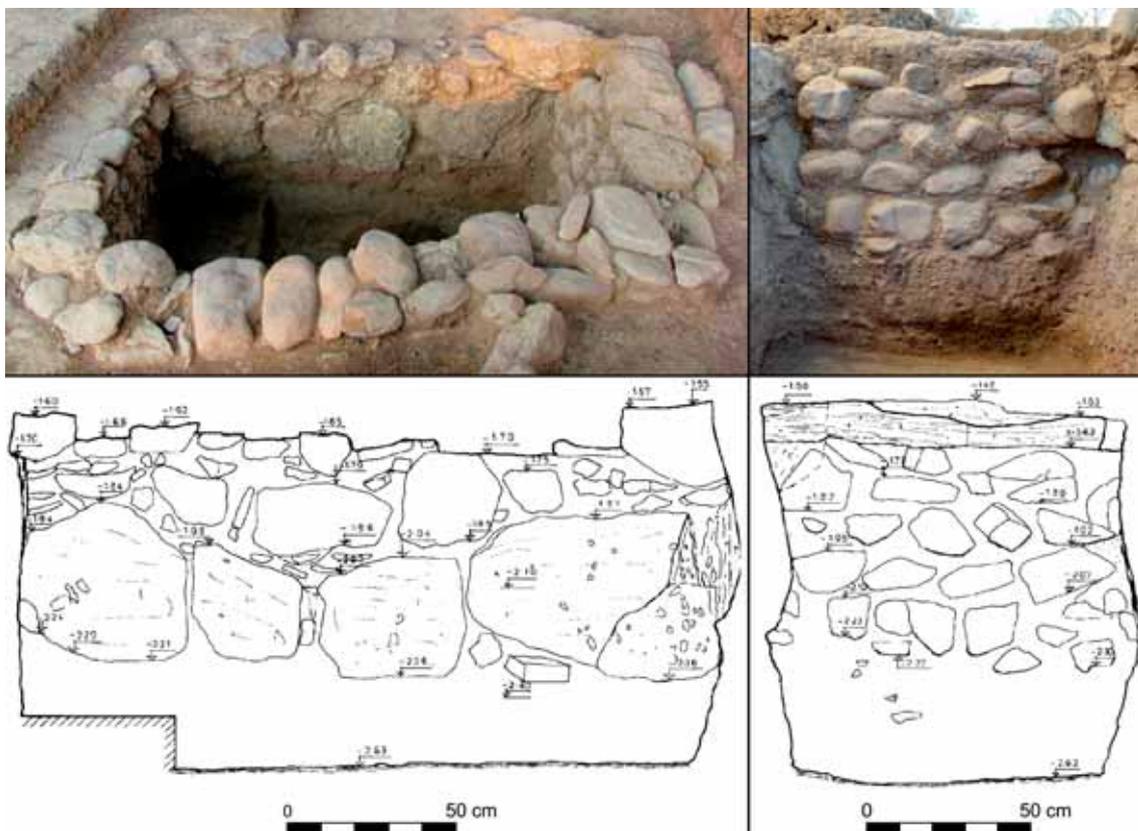


Fig. 11: The Built Tomb 21. General view (upper left) and photo of the southern wall (upper right; photos: V. Georgiadis). Drawings of the eastern (lower left) and southern walls (lower right; drawings: I. Koulogeorgiou)

While the majority of the tombs are cists, small pits are also found. Almost all of them contain neonates, infants, or small children; some, at least, must belong to the later phases of use of the cemetery, as they are found in higher levels, sometimes over earlier tombs (see Pit 5 over Pit 11; Stone-lined Pit 9 over Cists 6 and 8).

The treatment of the dead in the tombs follows the changing fashions at the end of the MH and the beginning of the LH period. While single burials are found in some tombs, the majority contain multiple ones – usually two to five, but in some cases six to ten, with the built tomb

containing the largest (25+) number. Some burials are contracted, but the majority are extended. Tombs were reused and earlier burials were sometimes pushed aside, scattered across the tomb, or placed in a pile, while evidence for removal also exists, with loose human bones found on top of graves, or on the cover slabs.⁴⁴ The Built Tomb 21 has a particularly complex history of use: a primary burial and pits overflowing with commingled material are found in its lowest layer, primary intact extended burials are found in the middle layer, and a heap of bones and scattered bones in its upper layer, below the fallen stones of the cover. The careful osteoarchaeological study of the bones and taphonomic observations during excavation⁴⁵ reveal complex practices in places where we would least expect them. For instance, the few scattered bones (Burial 7) found with two vases on top of the slabs of Cist 8 do not come from inside the tomb, but belong to three different individuals, a man, a woman and a child. Their preservation implies that they were not buried together originally. Therefore, they (or rather only a few selected bones from each individual) must have been brought from different locations and deposited on top of the slabs, together with two small incomplete vases. We see that mortuary rites in this period are becoming increasingly complex.⁴⁶

The general homogeneity of the mortuary practices, e.g. the regular orientation, the restricted variation in type or size, is strengthened by the dearth and poverty of offerings. Most graves are found unfurnished; if offerings are found, they usually consist of a few, small vases (usually cups, kantharoi, goblets and jugs); non-ceramic offerings are restricted to a set of bronze tweezers and a few spindle whorls. Differences in wealth are therefore minimal, and they do not correlate with the quality of construction of the tomb. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible to talk about status differences in the North Cemetery. Even so, the question needs to be asked: what is the status of the group buried in the cemetery? But this question, important as it is, should not be asked in isolation. Archaeologists tend to overemphasise status at the expense of other aspects of personal identities such as age, gender or kinship. For this reason, in the next section we will attempt to address each of these dimensions explicitly.

Before we do so, however, let us summarise our main observations:

The North Cemetery follows the wider transformation of the mortuary practices at the very beginning of the Mycenaean period. The adoption of extramural burial brings about a stricter division between the dead and the living, but also the separation of a specific social group whose unity is further emphasised by the organised layout of the cemetery and by the indications of collective effort (the removal and back-filling of soil – the cavity, the walls, perhaps the ‘platform’). The introduction of new, transitional and hybrid tomb types (elaborate cist, built tomb), which develop out of experimentation with the local MH traditional tomb types, the cists and pits, and the parallel use of the traditional pits, bring in new possibilities of differentiation. The variation in the size and quality of construction and the increasing elaboration of the tombs imply mobilisation of labour, something which until now we associated mostly with tumuli. The introduction of more complex mortuary rites, multiple burials, reuse and various forms of secondary treatment opens up further possibilities for subtle differentiation in mortuary treatment, and implies an increasing ritualisation of the mortuary sphere. The people buried in the North Cemetery (or their mourners) therefore adopt all the new fashions and principles. But they do not adopt the increasing deposition of wealth which is seen as the defining element of the ‘Shaft Grave phenomenon’, the transformation of mortuary practices and social relations at the onset of the Mycenaean period. Our discussion has also demonstrated that the manipulation of space played a very important role in this reconfiguration of social relations.

⁴⁴ See also Lagia et al. 2016 for similar observations.

⁴⁵ See Moutafi – Voutsaki 2016.

⁴⁶ Lagia et al. 2016 use similar methods and reach similar conclusions on the Kirrha intramural burials.

Social Structure: Discussion and Conclusions

Let us now address our main question explicitly: how can the mortuary patterning in the North Cemetery help us to reconstruct social structure in the early Mycenaean period?

1. Age: Differentiation by age can be seen in the low representation of subadults and the use of pits predominantly for neonates, infants and small children.⁴⁷ The difference is not absolute: adults are found in a pit (Tomb 17), while few subadults are found in cists and in the built tomb. Subadults as well as adults receive secondary treatment and offerings. If our preliminary observation that some child burials in pits belong to the later phases of the cemetery is correct (and this can only be established with radiocarbon analysis), it can be suggested that age differentiation changes over time, and that subadults are mostly buried in the North Cemetery when adults begin to abandon it as they presumably switch to chamber tombs.

2. Sex/gender: No overt differentiation by sex or gender can be observed: in terms of demographic composition both sexes are fairly equally represented.⁴⁸ So far, we have not been able to observe any differentiation in type of tombs or mortuary treatment nor in the presence or type of offerings. However, as the study of the osteo-archaeological material is still in progress, these conclusions can only be considered tentative.

3. Kinship: The abandonment of intramural burial among or under houses and the move to a formal burial ground emphasise the unity of a wider burial group.⁴⁹ The shared orientation and relative homogeneity in mortuary practices imply that the people buried may have been part of a wider kin group.⁵⁰ We therefore see a shift away from the MH emphasis on the household and continuity within the family group⁵¹ to a new, Mycenaean emphasis on the wider kin group.⁵² At the same time, links within a smaller group, presumably the family, or household, are also emphasised: the superimposition of a few graves, the introduction of multiple burials and the secondary treatment of earlier burials imply an emphasis on descent and continuity. Second, the subtle differentiation between tombs and burials – i.e. in the choice of single versus multiple, extended versus contracted, primary versus ‘secondary’, as well as between the different practices (pushing aside, scattering, piling, removing, transferring) that we lump together under the general term ‘secondary treatment’⁵³ – implies that new categorisations and differences are being expressed. It is not always possible to say, what exactly these differences mean, but a certain disposition towards adherence to tradition or towards adoption of new fashions and innovation must also have played a role. It seems that people in this period experiment and choose between different practices, though their choice is also to a certain extent restricted by a ‘family’ or ‘group’ tradition.⁵⁴

4. Status: Apart from the more subtle differences discussed above, we have noted some more overt differentiation among the burials – e.g., the differences in size, with the built tomb being much larger than all other tombs, or the differences in construction, with the elaborate cists, especially Cist 14, clearly standing out. Both the larger size and the better quality of construction imply the mobilisation of labour – but whether this implies asymmetrical relations or reciprocal

⁴⁷ The differentiation between adults and children is a general phenomenon at the transition to the Mycenaean period; see Voutsaki 2005; Ingvarsson-Sundström 2008; Lebegyev 2009; Pomadère 2010.

⁴⁸ Similar observations have been made in Asine (Ingvarsson-Sundström et al. 2013), while in the Grave Circles of Mycenae men clearly predominate (Voutsaki 2005).

⁴⁹ See also Sarri 2016; Papadimitriou 2016.

⁵⁰ This hypothesis will be tested with a DNA analysis, which will be carried out in the Centre for GeoGenetics, University of Copenhagen.

⁵¹ This is evident primarily in Lerna, see Milka 2010.

⁵² Similar conclusions have been reached in other sites (e.g. Lerna: Voutsaki – Milka 2017) and on the basis of the domestic evidence (Voutsaki 2010; Wiersma 2014).

⁵³ Moutafi – Voutsaki 2016; Lagia et al. 2016; Jones 2019.

⁵⁴ Voutsaki et al. 2013, Voutsaki – Milka 2017. See also Voutsaki, this volume.

exchanges among (kin) groups is not easy to establish.⁵⁵ Anyway, these differences are not really pronounced nor do they correlate with differences in offerings. Attributing them to status differences among the burials is therefore not particularly convincing – especially when the burials are so poor and austere in terms of offerings. Here the North Cemetery seems to be quite exceptional – even ordinary burials in the early Mycenaean period contain one or more small vases, and sometimes a simple ornament or tool. Why is this? Ultimately, what is the status of the people buried in the North Cemetery?

It is not easy to give an answer. On the one hand, the prominent location of the cemetery, the mobilisation of labour in the arrangement and modifications of the space, but also in the construction of individual tombs (mostly the transportation of stones from afar) and the adoption of the new ‘Mycenaean’ practices seem to suggest that the occupants of the North Cemetery enjoyed a higher status. On the other hand, the overall homogeneity (albeit with some subtle differences) and especially the poverty of the graves are striking.

The answer may actually lie outside the North Cemetery, at a distance of 50 m or so, in Building A, where there is tantalising evidence that ostentatious practices involving feasting (which are attested for the palatial phase of the complex) may date back to earlier phases of use of the building, partly at least contemporary with the North Cemetery.⁵⁶ It can therefore tentatively be suggested that the North Cemetery did belong to the aspiring elite or leading family/ies of the community – but out of the whole repertoire of new mortuary practices and forms they only chose certain aspects – the extramural ground, the larger tombs, the multiple burials, the secondary treatment – and not the deposition of wealth with the dead, because they were involved with ostentatious ceremonies in Building A. The excavation of the North Cemetery has only recently been completed, but the analysis and study of the material is still in its early stages, while the excavation of the palatial complex still has a long way to go. We may have to wait a bit longer for firmer and more secure conclusions.

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⁵⁵ We tend to favour the second explanation; for a discussion on this topic see Voutsaki et al. 2018a.

⁵⁶ Kondyli 2013; Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 103.

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The Foundation System at the Palace of Ayios Vasileios, Xirokambi, Lakonia

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Abstract: The recently discovered Mycenaean palace at Ayios Vasileios offers valuable new information about the origins of early Mycenaean palatial architecture. One of the most significant finds of the past years is a large court that was surrounded by unusually wide porticos. The structures at Ayios Vasileios belong to the earliest buildings of that scale on the Greek mainland and mark the beginning of a new social environment in Lakonia with the establishment of an administrative centre. For the construction of the court and the surrounding buildings, not only substantial manpower but also specialised knowledge was necessary. In this paper, we discuss the foundation techniques of the palace as a possible source of information for the building traditions of the engineers engaged with its construction. The designers of the palace were probably familiar not only with Cretan architecture but also with Cretan building methods and construction techniques and it is even possible that the large court was centrally located following the fashion of the Minoan palaces.

Keywords: Ayios Vasileios, Lakonia, foundation techniques, Mycenaean terraces, Minoan architecture

Introduction

The built environment – like any other material group – reflects the social and ideological background of any given society. Through human practice and interaction, the built space emerges as a meaningful space⁴ and represents a (social) product, in which the values, ideas and social meanings of the specific societies are embedded.⁵ It determines human actions but is also defined by these. The formation of the built space is deeply affected by social changes, but it also directs the human practice in its new social role. In this sense, the study of architecture represents a very useful methodological tool for the archaeologist who attempts to reconstruct past societies in their social context.

Among many other examples in human history, the case of Minoan and Mycenaean mortuary and domestic architecture provides excellent cases of how built space is created,⁶ institutionalised and transformed, according to specific needs, conventions and memories that direct performative acts within a very well thought-out and defined space and framework.⁷ A first step towards the understanding of Minoan and Mycenaean architecture as a social product is based on a broad division known in the theory of architecture between complex and simple⁸ or ‘polite’ and vernacular architecture.⁹ According to this, a series of criteria is set for estimating the labour that has been

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⁴ Rappoport 1982.

⁵ Lefebvre 1991; Casey 1996.

⁶ See Wright 2006b, 49–50. According to Wright 2006a, 50, “buildings control movement and the production and reproduction of memory”.

⁷ Wright 2006b, 49, “incorporating practice” as opposed to “inscribed practice”.

⁸ Darcque 2005, 137–138.

⁹ McEnroe 1990, 195.

invested in the construction of a building. These criteria relate to the size of a structure, the type and quality of the building material used (collected or extracted), its origin (transported from far away or local), the variety and complexity of the building tools,¹⁰ and the application of innovative building concepts unknown to previous local traditions.¹¹ Thus, while the construction of simple houses was often a task carried out by small communities based on their experience,¹² the so-called complex architecture was the work of specialised, itinerant or attached workers.¹³

At Ayios Vasileios typical elements of complex architecture¹⁴ have been discovered. The excavated remains suggest the existence of large and imposing buildings, but ashlar masonry is rare and the wall construction is different from what is attested in other Mycenaean palaces (absence of offsets in the exterior walls). The comparative study of the construction methods at Ayios Vasileios could highlight the building strategies of the local elites and whether or to what extent they depended on local or innovative concepts carried out by specialised workers.

Ayios Vasileios

Ayios Vasileios was already known prior to its excavation. The site was identified by Richard Hope Simpson and Oliver Dickinson in their *Gazetteer of Aegean Civilisation* as an important Mycenaean centre,¹⁵ while Emilia Banou suggested its possible palatial function in 1996.¹⁶ However, it was only in 2008 and 2009 that the first excavations revealed the real importance of the site and brought to light finds of a unique character.¹⁷ The main structures discovered so far are the early Mycenaean cemetery to the north (North Cemetery),¹⁸ and Building A with Building B to its east in the central part of the plateau.¹⁹ Further to the south, part of two other building complexes (Buildings Δ and E) and a large court came to light (Fig. 1).²⁰ The court had a northwest to southeast orientation and was bordered by a portico to the south (South Stoa). Part of another stoa was excavated to the west of the court (West Stoa).²¹ The long Wall 112/113 formed the rear wall of the West Stoa. The latter had an upper storey, while on the ground floor a large opening provided access to a rear room that is not yet fully excavated (Building E).

A clay stand with four pithoi was built against Wall 113 (Figs. 1–2). Traces of the rear wall of the South Stoa (Wall 117/110) appeared in two trenches (Fig. 1). From Wall 117/110 only the lower foundations survived the large-scale dismantling during the Byzantine period (Fig. 5).²² The east end of the South Stoa has not been reached so far. The floor of the West Stoa and the rear room (Building E) was continuous and it was at the same level as the floors of the court and the South Stoa (Fig. 2). A 10 cm-high clay band ran across the colonnades, which consisted of

¹⁰ See Shaw 2009 for the completely new spectrum of tools used by the builders of the first palaces suggesting the existence of a specialised workforce; McEnroe 2010, 48. For a detailed analysis of Mycenaean tools or traces of tools, see Küpper 1996, 7–25. The Mycenaean tools were basically the same as in Crete (Küpper 1996, 7).

¹¹ McEnroe 1990, 199, 201, fig. 3; Driessen – Schoep 1995; see Devolder 2012 for the study of the so-called architecture energetics.

¹² Rudofsky 1965 has epigrammatically summarised it as “architecture without architects”; McEnroe 1990; Palyvou 1990, 45; Devolder 2015.

¹³ McEnroe 1990, 195; Devolder 2015, 241.

¹⁴ Preziosi 1983; Barber 1992; McEnroe 2010, 84–86.

¹⁵ Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 110.

¹⁶ Banou 1996, 37–39.

¹⁷ Vasilogamvrou 2013, 65–80, pl. 43.

¹⁸ See Voutsaki et al., this volume.

¹⁹ For Building A see Vasilogamvrou 2013, 72, fig. 3; 74–79; pls. 48β–52; Vasilogamvrou 2014, 64–68, pls. 59–62a; Vasilogamvrou 2015a, 67–70; Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 100–104, pls. 68–70.

²⁰ Vasilogamvrou 2015a, 71–74, pls. 58–59; Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 105, fig. 2; 110–113, pls. 70β–76.

²¹ For attached and free standing stoas, see Hayden 1981.

²² Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 113, pl. 76β.



Fig. 1: Building Δ, Building E, West Stoa, South Stoa and the court at the end of the 2016 excavation (plan: K. Minakakis, K. Athanasiou, E. Koulogeorgiou, copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)

alternating pillars and columns (Figs. 1–2). Behind the South Stoa part of a pebble pathway came to light that runs parallel to Wall 117 (Fig. 2).

The area further to the south (Building Δ) is largely unexplored. It is defined by a long north-west-southeast wall (104/101) and two northeast-southwest walls (105 and 102) that run parallel to the rear wall of the South Stoa and the pebble pathway (Fig. 1). The southernmost corner of Wall 104/101 was also identified. There it bonds with another wall that runs towards the southwest and parallel to Walls 105 and 102. North of Wall 104, Wall 118 was found. The latter was sealed by the floor of the South Stoa with the clay band and may have been part of an earlier structure. In addition, a large limestone block, which may have been another pillar base of the south colonnade and seems to have been exposed to high temperatures, rests on its surface. Currently, there is no obvious connection between Wall 118 and Wall 104. In the area between the south end of Wall 118 and the north end of Wall 104 many mudbricks were found. Further investigation will clarify whether Walls 118 and 104 shared the same foundation or not.

Evidence for a severe fire destruction comes from the area of the court and the stoas. The floor, consisting of pebbles and trodden earth, was heavily burnt – almost vitrified – and burnt masses of mudbrick and mortar as well as carbonised wood appeared in many locations. Moreover, some of the vessels lying in situ on the floor of the stoas had lost their original shape due to exposure to high temperatures.²³ The fire destruction led to the collapse of the first floor of the West Stoa

²³ Vasilogamvrou 2015a; Vasilogamvrou 2015b.



Fig. 2: The West Stoa (state of the 2016 excavation)
(photo: N. Karadimas)

where an archive with Linear B tablets was stored. The plaster floor of the first storey was often found on top of a red layer of varying thickness (30–60 cm). This red layer was probably part of the substructure of the collapsed upper floor and was found lying directly on the floor of the West Stoa (Fig. 3).

The present paper will focus on the foundation system of Buildings Δ, E and the court as well as their dating. Parallels on the Greek mainland and Crete will be investigated in an attempt to place these structures, both in terms of plan and construction²⁴ as well as in terms of their function (mainly the court and stoas), in a wider context. However, it needs to be stressed that only a small part of the buildings has been revealed so far.²⁵ Thus, the plan of the structures is still largely unknown, and how far the West Stoa extended to the north or whether another stoa existed to the east of the court must remain open.

Studies on Foundation Systems

The foundation and terracing systems in Minoan and Mycenaean architecture have been the subject of thorough studies that remain fundamental until today. James Wright studied the Mycenaean

²⁴ The discussion of the upper structures such as timber framing and mudbrick constructions will represent the focus of another study.

²⁵ For geophysical prospections on the hill, see Vasilogamvrou 2014, 60–61, pl. 55α; Vasilogamvrou 2015a, 64–65; Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 98–99, pls. 64–67.

terracing system in detail with a special focus on palatial terraces.²⁶ One of the most important conclusions of his work is that the construction of the palatial terraces that allowed large-scale building in steep areas developed as a system mainly during LH IIIA, but, in reality, it represented an elaborate version of the so-called foundation terraces. The latter are a rather simple form of terracing that was applied already during the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period with the terrace of Mansion 2 at the Menelaion providing a good example for this type of foundation. Terraces of this type mainly supported single structures while the bedrock was often cut and processed (rock-cut terraces).²⁷ Vassou Fotou has thoroughly studied the terracing system during the Neopalatial period in Crete.²⁸ According to Fotou there are three systems of terracing: terracing through the cutting of the rock, terracing through filling and, finally, the combination of both.²⁹ The labour involved during levelling and terracing varies greatly from place to place, but in effect, it can be used as additional evidence for the complex nature of the building project.³⁰ In this respect, there are two broad categories of foundation systems. In the first, the natural layout is followed as much as possible, whereas in the second, the bedrock – despite disadvantages emerging from the natural terrain – is incorporated in the envisaged project.³¹ In respect to Mycenaean architecture, Paul Darcque followed Fotou's tripartite system for classifying terraces.³²

Klaus Kilian offered a typology of wall foundations, based mainly on evidence from Tiryns. His second type, the built foundations, was divided into five further types and several subtypes according to the form of the foundation trench and the placement of the wall on soil or bedrock.³³ In the course of his study, Kilian was able to show that elaborate – and time-consuming or expensive – architecture is immediately recognisable on the basis of the type of foundation of the buildings.³⁴ However, both elaborate as well as simple foundations may occur at the same site and during the same period.³⁵ A detailed analysis of the Mycenaean citadel walls and building methods was conducted by Michael Küpper,³⁶ whereas the architecture of the palace of Pylos was thoroughly investigated by Michael Nelson. In Pylos, however, due to the good preservation of the floors, a close examination of the foundations is not always possible.³⁷

The Terraces and the Foundation System at Ayios Vasileios

From the beginning of the excavations, special attention was given to a detailed description of the building methods and the construction material occurring in the wider area of the palace. However, regarding Buildings Δ and E, the excavation reached the bedrock in only very few cases, and almost nowhere were the wall foundations exposed in any greater length than 2 m. In Building E and the court, the good preservation of the vitrified floor prevents a closer examination of the underlying layers. Hence, the most valuable information regarding the foundation of the

²⁶ Wright 1980; Wright 2005; Wright 2006a; Wright 2006b.

²⁷ In these cases the terraces function as the foundation of single structures (Zygouries, House B; Mycenae, House of the Oil Merchant) and do not create a space around them (Wright 1980, 61–64).

²⁸ Fotou 1990; see also Shaw 2009, 54, figs. 111, 115.

²⁹ Fotou 1990, 47, 63–64.

³⁰ Fotou 1990, 73; McEnroe 2010, 96, tab. 9.1; 107, tab. 9.2; Devolder 2012, 172–175.

³¹ Fotou 1990, 72–73; Devolder 2012, 172. As Fotou 1990, 45, has stressed “(L’implantation) c’est la première opération qui précède et affecte le caractère de la construction elle-même”.

³² Darcque 2005, 83–87.

³³ Kilian 1990, 95, 100–112. Kilian's first type, the so-called natural foundations, refers to walls that are placed directly on the floor. This simple method of founding is characteristic for LH IIC and is best demonstrated in the case of Building T (Kilian 1990, 97; Maran 2001).

³⁴ Kilian 1990, 111–112.

³⁵ E.g. Building VI as opposed to Building A in the Lower Citadel of Tiryns. It has been demonstrated for Crete, too, that not all buildings belonging to ‘polite’ architecture had deep foundations (Zois 1990; Shaw 2009, 55–56).

³⁶ Küpper 1996.

³⁷ Nelson 2001, 96–98.

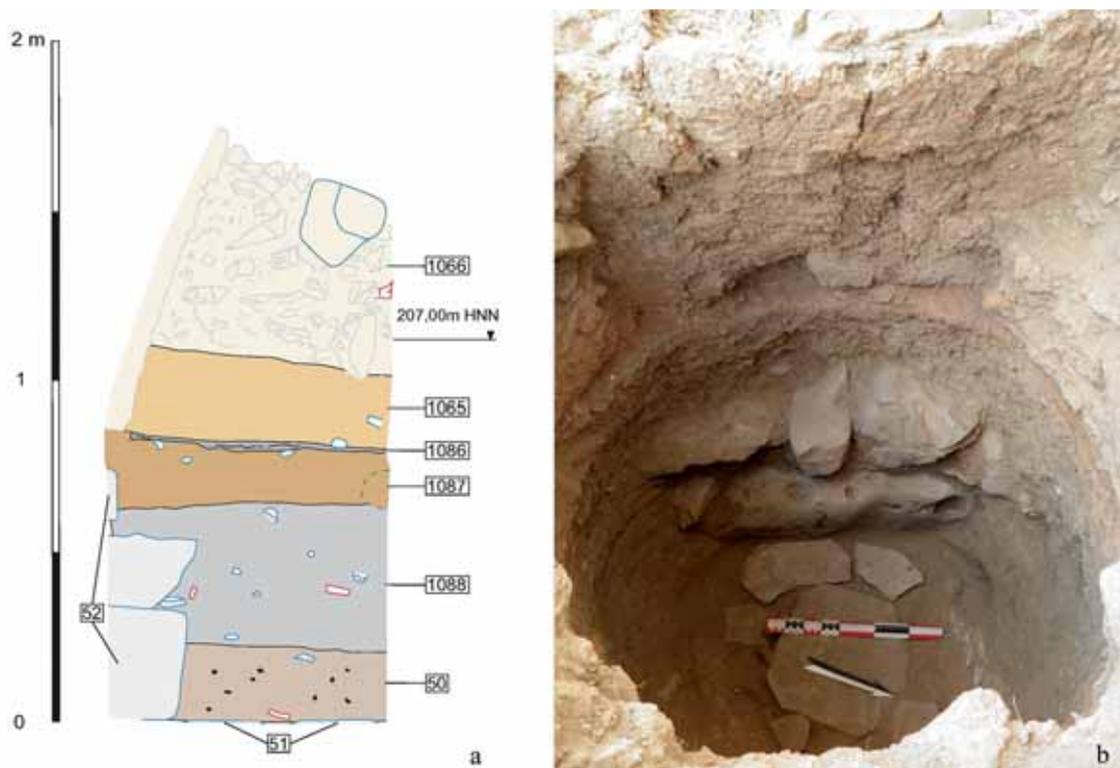


Fig. 3: Byzantine Pit 20 in the West Stoa: a. North section of the Byzantine pit. SU 52: foundation of Wall 113, SU 1086: the vitrified floor of the West Stoa (drawing: A. Buhlke); b. The west baulk of the Byzantine pit (photo copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)

West Stoa comes from the Byzantine pits that cut the Mycenaean layers down to the level of the bedrock. Byzantine Pits 20 and 4 were opened close to the rear wall of the West Stoa (112/113) and the northernmost excavated pillar base respectively (Fig. 1). In both cases, it is possible to see that the vitrified floor of the West Stoa sealed a deposit that was approx. 80 cm thick (Figs. 3–4).

The upper part of the deposit consisted of a red layer that was approx. 20 cm thick (Stratigraphic unit, hereafter SU, 1087). In Pit 20, the red layer SU 1087 is followed by two layers of grey and greyish/reddish colour respectively (SU 1088 and SU 50). Three layers appear under the red layer SU 1087 in the profile of Pit 4, namely a thin grey layer (SU 1141), another of greyish/pinkish colour (SU 50) and finally, at the bottom, one with a reddish colour (SU 1142). The east face of the foundations of Wall 113 are partly revealed in the west side of Pit 20 (Fig. 3a–b, SU 52). At the east side of Pit 4, under the pillar base, part of another wall came to light (Fig. 4, SU 1143). It probably belongs to Wall 109, parts of which were excavated further to the south in the Byzantine Pit 3³⁸ and in Trench Γ12α (Fig. 1).

A small quantity of sherds was collected from the deposit sealed by the floor of the stoa (SU 1087, SU 1088, SU 50, SU 1142) (see below), but there were no traces of earlier floors under the vitrified floor of the West Stoa. Considering this fact and due to the homogeneity of the red layer (SU 1087), we suggest that the deposit sealed by the floor of the stoa is part of levelled terrace fill, on top of which the floor of the stoa was constructed. In that case, the fill would have been retained to the west by Wall 113 and to the east by Wall 109, which runs under the colonnade.³⁹

Thus, the long foundations in the West Stoa had a double function: to retain the fill of the terrace and, at the same time, to support the rear wall of the stoa (Wall 113) and the colonnade

³⁸ Vasilogamvrou 2015a, pl. 59.

³⁹ Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 105.

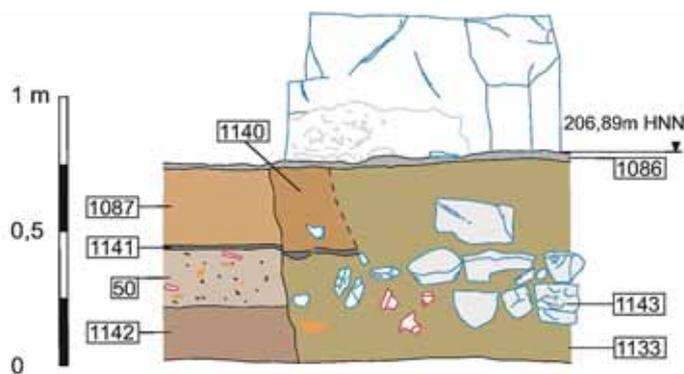


Fig. 4: Byzantine Pit 4 in the West Stoa. Northeast section of the Byzantine pit. SU 1143: Wall 109, SU 1086: the vitrified floor of the West Stoa (drawing: A. Buhlke)

(Wall 109). Both foundations are built in rubble masonry and rest on the bedrock.⁴⁰ Wall 113 is 1.40–1.50 m thick.⁴¹ Its foundation consists of three courses and is 0.80 m high. The two lowest courses (0.54 m high in total) are built with larger, roughly worked blocks that protrude approx. 25–30 cm into the upper course of the foundation (Fig. 3a–b).

For the foundation of the colonnade, a less common system was adapted at Ayios Vasileios. Instead of building individual platforms for the pillar and column bases,⁴² a 1.60–1.70 m-thick wall (109) was constructed. Wall 109 joins with the rear wall of the South Stoa (Wall 110/117) (Figs. 1, 4). It is possible that Wall 118 to the east of the court and the South Stoa had a similar function to Wall 109. Wall 118 is one of the thickest walls of the area (2 m) and, as mentioned above, a large limestone block that could have been part of a pillar base rests on its surface. Foundations of this type, constructed as long platforms that resemble wall foundations, probably betray a great concern for stability and are known from Crete⁴³ and, more rarely, from the Greek mainland (see below).⁴⁴

Although the South Stoa is largely unexcavated, a similar terrace fill as in the West Stoa must have existed there as well since the foundations of Wall 117 that have been only partly exposed lie at least 80 cm under the floor of the stoa (Fig. 5). Due to the sloping bedrock, a terrace platform retained by Wall 117 would have been necessary here.

Evidence for a second terrace in a lower level exists to the south, in Building Δ (Fig. 1). South of the pebble pathway, Wall 104 joins Walls 105 and 102 to the west. Walls 105 and 104 are of particular interest as they show interstices, which indicate pier construction with the use of timber reinforcements (Fig. 6).⁴⁵ The foundations at the corner of Walls 102 and 104 as well as the south face of Wall 102 have been excavated down to the level of the bedrock. Wall 102 is built with rubble stones of considerable size. For the exterior face of the wall larger stones have been used. In the north face of Wall 102 the lowest three courses of the foundations protrude and are built as steps (Fig. 7).

⁴⁰ See Nelson 2001, 170, for types of rubble construction (shell rubble walls, uniform rubble walls and rubble slab walls in Pylos). The majority of the walls at Ayios Vasileios belong rather to the first and second type.

⁴¹ Vasilogamvrou 2015b, 105, 113, for Walls 112/113 and 117.

⁴² Cf. Kilian 1990, 110, fig. 6; Nelson 2001, 103–108, fig. 39; Shaw 2009, 55, figs. 155–156.

⁴³ See Shaw 2009, 55, fig. 153, for the western stylobate in Phaistos.

⁴⁴ In Room 65 in Pylos two bases rest partly on early walls (Nelson 2001, 107, fig. 39).

⁴⁵ See Nelson 2001, 75, 154–169, figs. 94–98, for a discussion of the use of wood in the palace of Pylos. Real evidence for the use of wood in the walls of the palace is seen in Room 6 only in three interstices that were empty. The other gaps had a fill of lime mortar that suggests another type of construction and much less use of wood than originally thought. For a thorough discussion, see Wright 2006a, 28–33.



Fig. 5: The foundations of the rear Wall (117) of the South Stoa (photo copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)



Fig. 6: Building Δ. Walls 105 and 104. In the corner of the room, a Byzantine pithos (photo copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)

The whole area between Walls 105 and 102 was reused during the Byzantine era (c. 9th–10th century). The mixed layers, containing Byzantine and Mycenaean pottery, went approx. 15 cm deeper than the pier masonry, thus disturbing the Mycenaean floor. The Mycenaean floor of the building defined by Walls 105, 104 and 102 would have been at the level of the wall chases or slightly lower. In a sounding opened in 2012 and 2016 in the corner of Walls 104 and 102 (Sounding 2 [(S2)]) undisturbed Mycenaean layers came to light (Fig. 8). A deposit of approx. 1.20 m thickness was excavated, which contained soil with a large amount of sherds as well as three almost fully preserved vessels. It should be stressed that the fragments of a fully mended goblet were found in different levels of the deposit, from the top to the bottom. This suggests that the deposit emerged in the course of a single event and most probably represents the fill of a terrace.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ A pit recognised on the west section of S2 may relate to the construction process of the terrace (Catling 2009a, 45–49, for various structures within the terrace fills of Mansion 2 that relate to the construction process. Kilian 1990, 102 n. 37).



Fig. 7: Building Δ. The foundation of Walls 104 (top) and 102 (right) (photo copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)

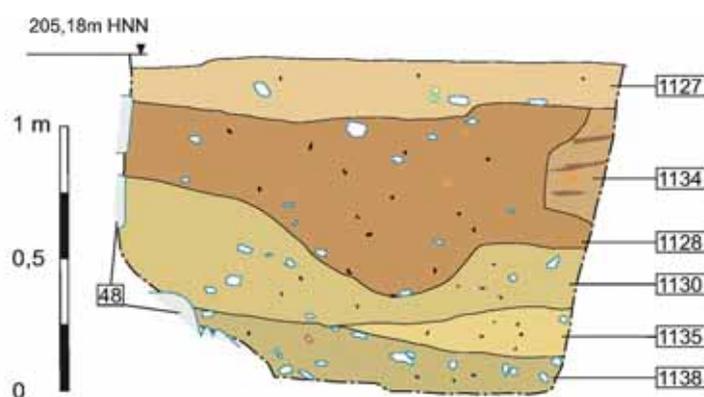


Fig. 8: Building Δ. West section of Sounding 2 (S2) at the corners of Walls 104 and 102 (SU 48) (drawing: A. Buhlke)

Finally, the area further to the south, between Walls 102 and 101, is still too poorly investigated to allow any conclusions for the existence of a third terrace.

Based on the present evidence it seems possible to suggest that the West Stoa, the court and Building Δ to the south were constructed on top of two terrace platforms that consisted of soil. The terrace fill was enclosed in rectangular compartments created by the long and thick foundations that rested on the bedrock and which were also used as structural walls (for the foundation of the walls of the buildings) or as bases for the colonnades. Due to the sloping terrain towards to the south, the heavier load must have been retained by the walls (117/110, 105 and 102) running east-west, which is why Wall 102, and probably also Wall 117, had deeper foundations than the others. It is possible that a stone platform similar to that under the colonnade of the West Stoa (Wall 109) also existed under the colonnade of the South Stoa but this needs to be confirmed by future excavation. In some cases, larger blocks, roughly worked, were placed at the exterior corners of the walls (109 and 118).⁴⁷ However, the continuation of Wall 109 further to the south is uncertain. Likewise, it is unclear if the east Walls 104/101 and 118 share the same foundation or not. Thus,

⁴⁷ Cf. Shelton 2009, fig. 4.

the terraces of Ayios Vasileios seem to represent an elaborate version of the foundation terraces. One crucial aspect here refers to the lack of earlier floors within the fill of the terraces, at least in the areas investigated so far. This point is of some importance as it relates not only to the building process itself, but also to the habitation history of the area. There are two possible explanations for the lack of earlier floors.⁴⁸ Either the area occupied by the buildings was previously uninhabited or – what is most likely – the earlier remains were razed down to the level of the bedrock. This is a time-consuming process, but it is a common practice in the course of terracing works as it allows the easier cutting and general processing of the bedrock where it is considered necessary.⁴⁹ However, as the area under discussion is large, it cannot be excluded that earlier floors and walls exist in as yet uninvestigated areas and were incorporated in the fill.⁵⁰ At present, it has to remain open whether the foundation of the walls and the colonnades of the stoas were all built at the same time with the court or whether they belonged to an earlier phase and were reused.

The Construction Date of the Ayios Vasileios Terraces

The dating of the deposit sealed by the floor of the West Stoa is based on a small group of sherds that was collected from the profiles of the Byzantine pits.⁵¹ In terms of quantity, the material is restricted, but it contains some characteristic sherds. By contrast, the sounding (S2) at the corner of Walls 104 and 102 in the lower terrace (Figs. 1, 7–8) yielded a rich pottery deposit and three almost fully preserved vessels: one plain kylix (FS 267), one conical cup (FS 204) (Fig. 9.12) and a linear-painted one-handled goblet (FS 263) with monochrome interior and reserved exterior. In S2 the open shapes are much more frequent than the closed shapes, the latter being a characteristic feature of settlement deposits. Regarding the painted pottery, the material is dominated by monochrome vessels, but linear-painted pottery is also well represented. On the other hand, pattern-painted sherds are rare. The most common open shape is the goblet (FS 254 and FS 263) (Fig. 9.1–6). Goblets may have tall everted rims, occasionally hollowed in the interior (Fig. 9.3), but medium-tall and short everted rims (Fig. 9.2, 5) occur as well. The monochrome semiglobular kylix (FS 264) (Fig. 9.7), as well as the shallow kylix and kraters with vertical handles FS 7–9 are also attested (Fig. 9.8–9). Among the very few motifs identified are rock pendant (Fig. 9.10), papyrus (Fig. 9.8), argonaut and rosettes. One wall sherd with a rosette probably belonged to an Ephyraean goblet (Fig. 9.6). From the group of the closed vessels, worth mentioning are sherds from an alabastron with rock pattern (Fig. 9.10), or sherds from other closed vessels decorated with argonaut (Fig. 9.11), vertical stripes and net pattern. The fine plain pottery is very frequent. The conical cup FS 204 is the most common shape (Fig. 9.12). The latter is followed by kylikes and goblets (Fig. 9.13–15), whereas carinated kylikes FS 267 and angular bowls FS 295 are well attested (Fig. 9.16–17). The material collected from the Byzantine pits under the floor of the West Stoa (Fig. 10.1–6) resembles the pottery from Sounding 2.

In both deposits representing secondary fills, a mixture of earlier material (e.g. the Ephyraean goblet, Fig. 9.6) and sherds from the time of the construction of the walls have to be expected.⁵² The diagnostic sherds seem to reflect a LH IIIA1 tradition, as is shown by the presence of goblets.⁵³ However, in both cases – Sounding 2 and the deposit under the floor of the West Stoa – the monochrome kylix FS 264 is attested (Fig. 9.7), a shape that either appears for the first time or

⁴⁸ Vasilogamvrou 2015a, 72.

⁴⁹ Fotou 1990.

⁵⁰ Cf. Catling 2009a, 40–45; Catling 2009b, fig. 12.

⁵¹ For discussion see Kardamaki 2017, 111, and fig. 20.313–317.

⁵² Mountjoy 1983.

⁵³ The pattern-painted and linear-painted goblet is a popular type in the group of vessels found in situ on the pebble subfloor of the Menelaion (LH IIIA1) (Catling 2009b, 89, fig. 93.ET69–ET71). For one-handled goblets with a solidly painted interior from LH IIIA2 Early contexts, see Thomas 2011, 195–196, fig. 10. Goblets with similar rims (short and triangular) as these from Tsoungiza occur also at Sounding 2 at Ayios Vasileios.

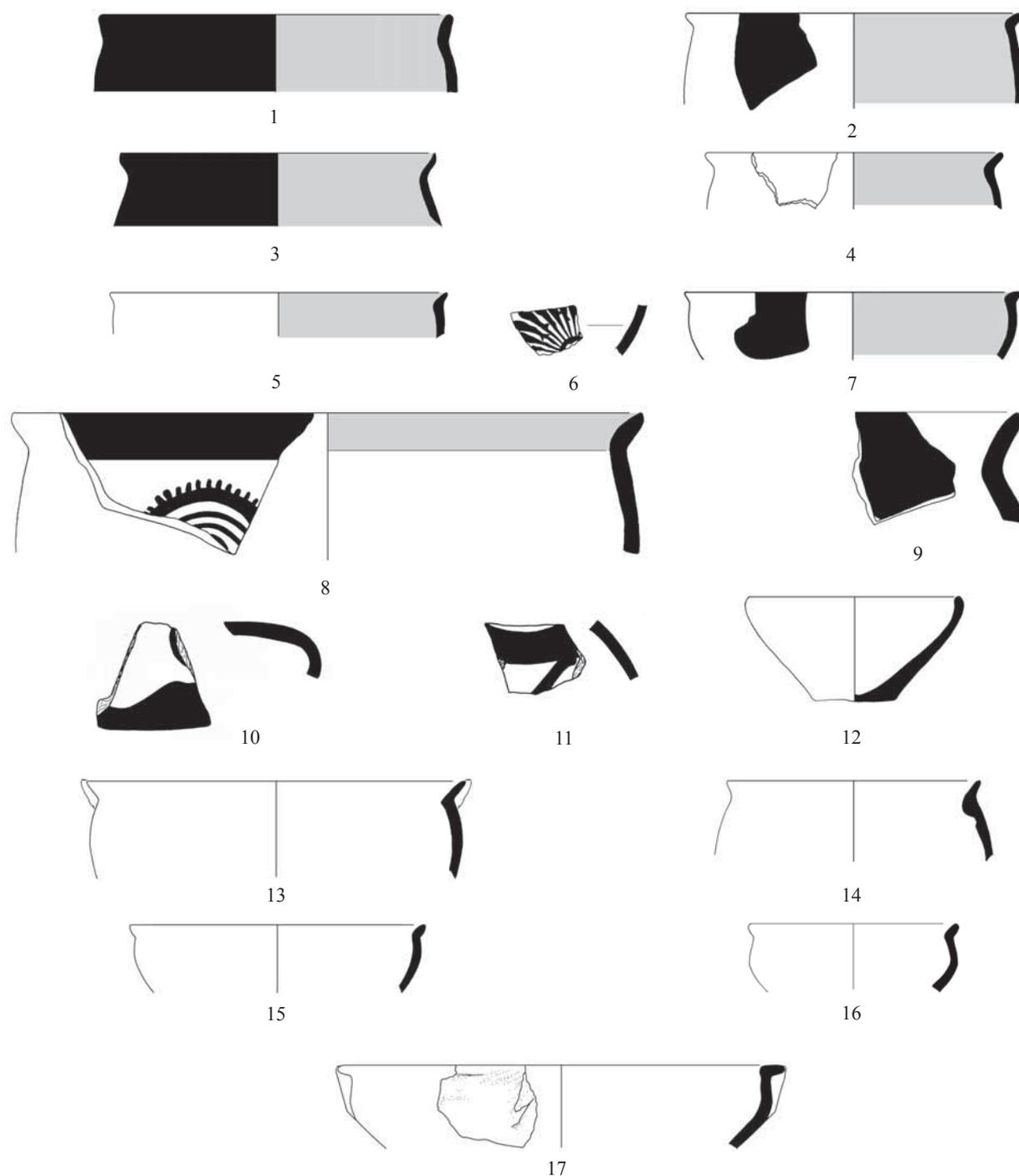


Fig. 9: Pottery found in Sounding 2 (S2) at the corner of Walls 104 and 102. Scale 1:3
(drawings: A. Poelstra)

rather becomes more common during LH IIIA2.⁵⁴ One shape that is generally accepted as beginning in LH IIIA2 and which is identified in both terrace fills is the monochrome stemmed bowl (FS 304) (Fig. 10.4).⁵⁵ However, monochrome and pattern-painted stemmed bowls are rarely

⁵⁴ Thomas 2011, 198–201; Vitale 2011, 341. See also Kardamaki 2017, 113–114.

⁵⁵ Shelmerdine 1992, 495, 538, no. P3649, fig. 9.39; Thomas 2011, 204, fig. 16.169; 226; Vitale 2011.

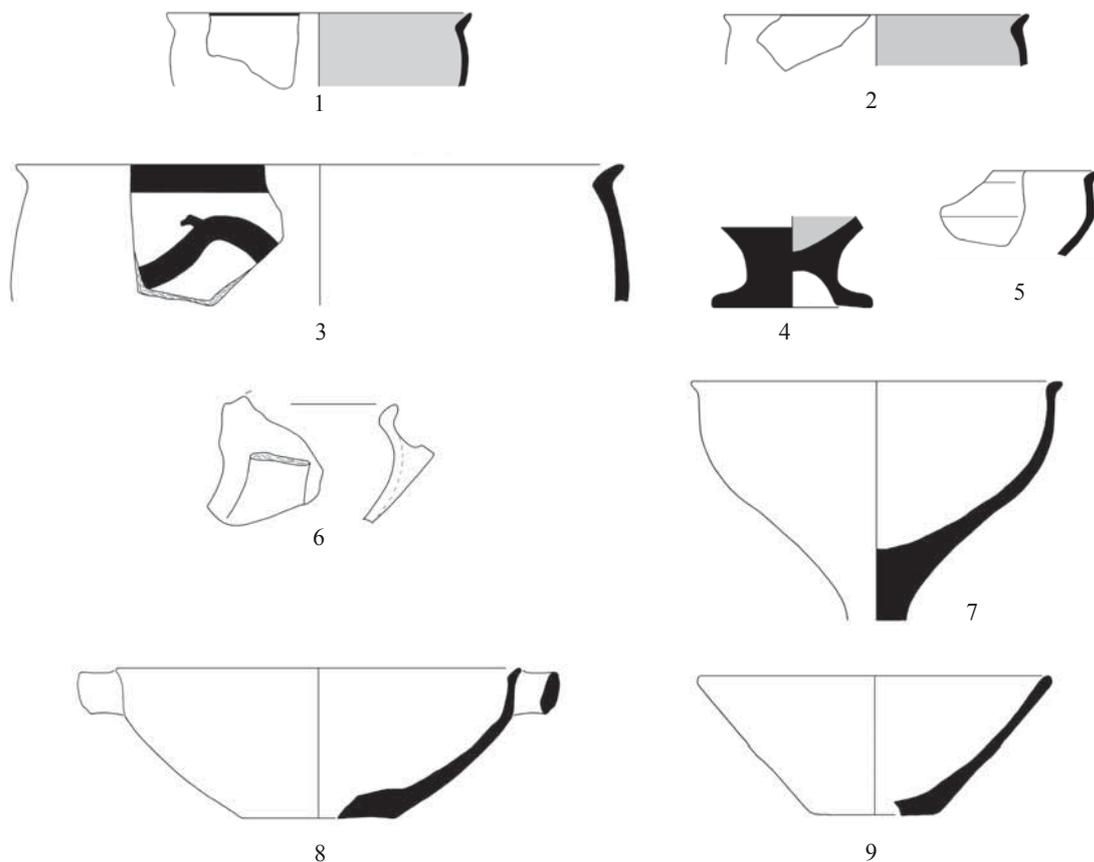


Fig. 10: 1–6. Pottery from the deposit sealed by the floor of the West Stoa (collected from the baulk of Byzantine Pit 20); 7–9. Pottery in situ on the floor of the South Stoa. Scale 1:3 (drawings: E. Kardamaki)

reported from earlier, LH IIIA1 contexts.⁵⁶ Thus, the presence of the monochrome semiglobular kylix and the monochrome stemmed bowl suggests that the latest pottery from the terrace fills dates to LH IIIA2. Since other characteristic shapes of the latter phase such as kylikes FS 256/257 and small stirrup jars FS 171–173 – to name the most important – are absent,⁵⁷ the material from the fills probably dates to the beginning of the period. LH IIIA2 Early settlement contexts have been identified at only a few sites, such as Tsoungiza, Nichoria and Mitrou.⁵⁸ The LH IIIA2 Early pottery is still largely tied to the LH IIIA1 tradition. However, a simple or tripartite division of the phase is still under discussion.⁵⁹ For Mitrou it has been argued that an early stage of LH IIIA2 existed, which is characterised by the absence of decorated semiglobular kylikes (FS 256).⁶⁰ At Ayios Vasileios, however, the beginning of the decorated semiglobular kylix does not seem to represent a very useful criterion, as the shape seems to be very rare there in general.⁶¹

⁵⁶ French 1964, 246, fig. 2, 6; 250, 257; Martin 1992, 490.

⁵⁷ Thomas 2011, 226. Cf. Kardamaki 2017, fig. 12.199.

⁵⁸ Shelmerdine 1992; Thomas 2011; Vitale 2011.

⁵⁹ Shelmerdine 1992 suggested the existence of three subphases in LH IIIA2. RMDP and Thomas 2011 follow a division in an early and late phase.

⁶⁰ Vitale 2011. In Mycenae, there is no evidence for an intermediate stage between LH IIIA1 and LH IIIA2 (French 1965, 160).

⁶¹ Kardamaki 2017, 114.

Terraces in Mycenaean Greece

The terraces of Ayios Vasileios differ significantly from the palatial terraces at Tiryns, Mycenae, Pylos and Glas. While in both cases these are built as wall compartments that largely reflect – and ultimately determine – the plan of the buildings, the construction method is different. The palatial terraces are built in the so-called Cyclopean way and, with the exception of Pylos, had a defensive character. The walls of the palatial terraces often have one face and are built as different compartments that abut one another. This is characteristically seen on the vertical joints of the exterior faces of the walls (offsets). The terrace fill consisted of soil but also large stones.⁶² There is a great debate regarding the origin of the palatial terraces. While some of their typical features seem to derive from Crete (offsets), a local development cannot be excluded.⁶³ In this regard, two questions arise: first, whether the terraces at Ayios Vasileios, constructed at an early stage of LH IIIA2, reflect a mainland tradition, and second, whether they represent a forerunner of the palatial terraces. The second question, however, exceeds the scope of the present paper. In the following, we will examine the available evidence that concerns foundation techniques in the early Mycenaean period on the Greek mainland and on Crete.

Late Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean terraces are found in Malthi in Messenia⁶⁴ and Kiapha Thiti in east Attica.⁶⁵ They have a defensive character and seem to have reflected the social needs of rivalling elites during this period.⁶⁶ Thus, between the terraces at Ayios Vasileios and these early Mycenaean terraces there are many differences and only some general similarities. Among the general similarities one can name the construction of rubble walls, that in the case of Kiapha Thiti, however, rarely rest on the bedrock,⁶⁷ or the fact that the terraces in Malthi and the terraces of Ayios Vasileios are low.

Mansion 2 at the Menelaion provides a closer parallel for Ayios Vasileios. The construction fill of the building was dated by Hector Catling to LH IIIA1,⁶⁸ but part of this material seems to fit well in LH IIIA2⁶⁹ suggesting that the terraces of both central Lakonian sites were built roughly at the same time. Mansion 2, the floor of which was excavated without proper documentation, extended across two terraces. The Lower Terrace was an artificial platform. Its fill – like at Ayios Vasileios – consisted mainly of soil and was approx. 1.30 m thick (East and South Terrace). At Ayios Vasileios the terrace fills are of similar or lesser thickness, namely 0.80 m under the West Stoa and approx. 1.20 m in the corner of Walls 102 and 104 (Figs. 3–4, 8) in Building Δ. Prior to the placement of the construction fill, the debris of the early Mansion 1 was cleared away and its walls were either dismantled or reused as foundations or as additional support to retain the fill. A pebble surface interpreted as the subfloor of the early Mansion 1 was preserved and used as a base for the fill of the terrace.⁷⁰ The new Mansion 2 walls, built in rubble masonry, usually rest on bedrock and, like at Ayios Vasileios, they were used both as foundations as well as retaining walls.⁷¹ Unlike at Ayios Vasileios, the wall foundations of Mansion 2 are rarely wider than 1 m and

⁶² Wright 1980; Wright 2006b.

⁶³ Wright 1980.

⁶⁴ Wright 1980, 60; Wright 2006a, 10, fig. 1.1a–b; 11.

⁶⁵ Lauter 1996, 79–91, and Wright 2006a, 9–11, for early Mycenaean citadels with defensive walls (Brauron, Peristeria). See also Küpper 1996, 27–28, 54.

⁶⁶ Wright 2006b; Eder 2010, 13–15.

⁶⁷ Lauter 1996, 22–21; Küpper 1996, 27–28. Only the walls of the towers are built with very large unworked blocks.

⁶⁸ Catling 2009a, 53, 87.

⁶⁹ Catling 2009b, 88 and fig. 92.ET62. See Kardamaki 2017, 77.

⁷⁰ Catling 2009a, 30, 40, assumed that slabs that formed the original floor of Mansion 1 covered the pebble layer. In very few cases, such slabs were lying in situ on top of the pebble floor (Room 8), and for the rest Catling suggested that they must have been cleared away during the dismantling of Mansion 1. In any case, such slabs that were small and thin and thus would have been inappropriate for the building of a wall, were found in many secondary contexts. In another case, Catling reports slabs lying approx. in situ in association with two poros slabs that could have been a feature of Mansion 1 or the construction period of the terrace.

⁷¹ Catling 2009a, 39–40; Catling 2009b, figs. 37, 40 (Section C–C), 41 (Sections I–I, J–J).

there is no evidence for the use of broader or ‘stepped’ foundations (cf. Figs. 3, 7–8).⁷² Instead, the terrace walls of Mansion 2 were strengthened on their exterior side by the so-called buttresses.⁷³ The latter is a building technique well attested at Crete during LM I.⁷⁴ At Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion the terrace walls had two faces and functioned both as structural as well as retaining walls. Likewise, the thickness of the terrace filling, which was generally not very large, was similar in both places. However, the volume of the material processed, transported and levelled at Ayios Vasileios must have been greater due to the larger size of the structures there. Although the wall remains in the Upper Terrace and the southern part of the Lower Terrace in Mansion 2 are very scarce, Catling has postulated the existence of very long walls that bring to mind the long walls of Ayios Vasileios (Walls 118 and 104/101).

In Pylos there is remarkable evidence for the use of Minoan building methods during LH I and LH II that even seem to follow contemporary stages of development at Crete.⁷⁵ The construction of the first palatial terrace is identified in the Southwestern Building, the earlier part of which was built in LH IIIA.⁷⁶ Use of rubble masonry⁷⁷ is extensive there, and in steep areas, the foundations are described as stepped. The latter term refers to foundations of different levels according to the inclination of the bedrock. Moreover, the inner corner of the walls was supported by an additional stone fill.⁷⁸ Although the foundations of the long northwest-southeast Walls 118 and 104/101 at Ayios Vasileios have not been fully recovered, it cannot be excluded that these too were built in the same ‘stepped’ way as the bedrock rises towards the north. The terrace walls of the Southwestern Building in Pylos are used both as retaining and as foundation walls, but these are otherwise very different from the walls of Ayios Vasileios: their exterior face shows the typical offsets,⁷⁹ the terrace fill consists not only of soil but in large part also of stones⁸⁰ and, last but not least, the rubble foundation supports an ashlar façade.⁸¹ The differences between Ayios Vasileios – and Mansion 2 at the Menelaion – on the one hand and the Southwestern Building at Pylos on the other hand may be of chronological significance but could also relate to different building traditions.

Iklaina may serve as a further example of early terracing. A very long rubble wall that was constructed in LH IIIA1 or LH IIIA2 supported the fill of a terrace upon which a court was placed.⁸² Other walls, perpendicular to the long wall of north-south direction were built as additional support for the terrace.⁸³

Crucial evidence for the history of the palatial architecture derives from the Upper Citadel of Tiryns.⁸⁴ Kilian’s original suggestion of a hiatus during LH I and LH II in the area occupied later by the Great Megaron and the Little Megaron was revised by the new excavations conducted in 1998 by Joseph Maran. The new excavations provided evidence for an uninterrupted building history that goes back to LH I – rather than MH III as Kilian first suggested. But most important, they allowed a more precise dating for the construction of the first megaron in LH IIIA1 or LH IIIA2⁸⁵ and brought to light a previously unidentified building under the portico of the Great

⁷² Catling 2009a, 34–37, figs. 8, 17. They are rarely 1 m or over 1 m.

⁷³ Catling 2009b, 37, pls. 24, 25b.

⁷⁴ Shaw 2009, 58, 261, fig. 79 (Pseira).

⁷⁵ Nelson 2001, 201–203, figs. 79–80; Rutter 2005; Wright 2006a, 21.

⁷⁶ Wright 1980, 65–68, 83; Nelson 2001, fig. 81.

⁷⁷ See Nelson 2001, 48, 101, for bedrock, built and stepped foundations. In general, 90% of the walls at Pylos are built in rubble masonry.

⁷⁸ Nelson 2001, 102–103, figs. 45, 39 (southwest inner corner of Room 65).

⁷⁹ Wright 1980; Wright 2005; Wright 2006b.

⁸⁰ Wright 1980, 70.

⁸¹ Nelson 2001, 99, 101–103, 150–152, figs. 47–48 (e.g. Section 10 of the Southwestern Building).

⁸² Skewed phase. Cosmopoulos 2013, 38–40; 39, figs. 4–5. There is evidence that adjacent rooms were built in LH IIB or LH IIIA1.

⁸³ See also Shelmerdine 2015, 243–248, figs. 2–3, and Cosmopoulos, this volume, for the building phases at Iklaina. The Cyclopean terrace to the north is later and its construction has been dated in LH IIIA2 or LH IIIB1.

⁸⁴ Kilian 1987; Maran 2001; Maran 2015.

⁸⁵ Maran 2001, 23–25.

Megaron. This building represents the direct predecessor of the first megaron and was dated to LH IIB or LH IIIA1, but due to later levelling, it was heavily destroyed. From this LH IIB/LH IIIA1 building only small parts of the walls and a staircase were preserved.⁸⁶ The walls were built in rubble masonry and were not very thick (52–58 cm), but one of these had a much wider foundation (1 m).⁸⁷ Based on the evidence from the new excavations, Maran suggested that this building extended across two terraces that were connected through a staircase and thus belonged to a completely different building type than the later megaron. The building under the first megaron rather paralleled Mansion 2 suggesting that when the first megara were constructed in LH IIIA2 a real break with the pre-existing building traditions took place at Tiryns.⁸⁸ Thus, it is perhaps possible that the first Cyclopean terraces of Tiryns, the construction of which is closely linked with the first megara, was also connected with a new architectural design and construction method without any evident or direct forerunners.⁸⁹

Evidence for early terraces also exists in the Petsas House at Mycenae. The building was constructed in LH IIIA1⁹⁰ and its foundations were built in rubble masonry and rested directly on the bedrock. Some walls were 1 m thick, and where the bedrock was steep they retained a 1–2 m thick fill containing soil and small stones.⁹¹ The bedrock was previously cut and levelled and a stone fill was occasionally placed at the bottom.⁹² As pointed out by Kim Shelton, the Petsas House was built by applying a combined system of foundation and rock-cut terraces that predates the LH IIB massive terraces of Mycenae, for which massive stone fills were used (e.g. House of the Oil Merchant and Cyclopean Terrace Building).⁹³

The above discussion suggests that foundation and rock-cut terraces were widely applied during LH IIIA1 and LH IIIA2 in various regions of the Peloponnese. It is, however, unclear whether they all continue a local line of development from the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period reflecting the same or similar building methods with local variations, or whether they appear in LH IIIA to serve the needs of a more complex architecture. The earliest palatial terraces with the typical offsets at Pylos and Tiryns could have been roughly contemporary with or slightly later than the foundation terraces at Ayios Vasileios. Some of the building techniques seen at Ayios Vasileios, such as wider foundations, anticipate later examples described by Kilian as being characteristic for LH IIB2 elaborate architecture.⁹⁴ The use of wall-like foundations for colonnades is also found in later buildings from the Upper Citadel of Tiryns. The colonnade from the south stoa of the Great Court and the west colonnade of the East Court XXX in the east wing of the palace rest on top of wall-like foundations. In the case of Court XXX, Müller assumed that the wall under the colonnade must have been part of an earlier structure.⁹⁵

⁸⁶ Maran 2001, 25–27, fig. 1.

⁸⁷ Maran 2001, 25, 27, fig. 1 (LXI 54/24–25, 34–35), pl. 3.4.

⁸⁸ Maran 2001, 28–29.

⁸⁹ For the construction of the Cyclopean terraces/walls in Tiryns, see Iakovidis 1973, 9. The first Cyclopean terrace that was characterised by the typical offsets on the exterior face of the wall was structurally connected with the north wall of the Little Megaron and the citadel wall to the east (Kilian 1990, 213, fig. 7). For a discussion on the origins of the throne rooms, see also recently Maran – Thaler 2017.

⁹⁰ Shelton 2009, 635.

⁹¹ Shelton 2009, 639.

⁹² Shelton 2009, 639, 645, fig. 5, for stone packing in Room E.

⁹³ Shelton 2009, 639–642.

⁹⁴ North wall of Corridor XV, north, west and east wall of the Great Megaron: Kilian 1990, fig. 7 (LXII 52/52); fig. 8; 110.

⁹⁵ Müller 1930, 165, pls. 5–6.

Terraces in Crete

In Crete, the so-called built and filled terraces are very common.⁹⁶ Prior to the construction of a terrace, the rock was often levelled and processed and it has been argued that this was often a time-consuming process.⁹⁷ The terrace walls had a single or two faces and the foundations were frequently built in rubble masonry.⁹⁸ The thickness of the retaining walls is often considerable, whereas the terrace fills contained mainly soil, but stone fills appeared as well.⁹⁹

Building T located in the south part of Kommos offers an example of a Neopalatial terrace that may also provide some parallels for the terracing system at Ayios Vasileios. The whole structure of Building T, including rooms and a court with porticoes, was situated on a large artificial platform that was probably built for the first time in MM IIB (Building AA). The fill, consisting of soil, was retained by very long walls of considerable thickness that, at the same time, were used for the foundation of the structures.¹⁰⁰ The foundations, probably representing the reused walls of Building AA, were wider than the walls. Unlike in Ayios Vasileios, where the wide foundations begin approx. 15 cm below the floor, those from Building T start directly below the floor. It is worth noting that the construction of wider foundations was applied elsewhere in Crete and is also known from the terrace of the second palace at Phaistos.¹⁰¹ Regarding the foundation of the colonnades in Minoan architecture these often consisted of individual large blocks (e.g. Building T in Kommos)¹⁰² but wall-like, long foundations are also known.¹⁰³

Thus, it seems that the occurrence of specific building techniques for the construction of large structures at Ayios Vasileios suggest some influence from Cretan architecture. This assumption is strengthened by other features attested at the site that are typical of Minoan architecture, and for which mainland parallels are still missing. The design and size of the South and West Stoa serve as good examples to demonstrate such influences. Both stoas are 5.50 m deep¹⁰⁴ and seem to reflect a rather rare Cretan prototype that goes back to the Protopalatial period. There are three well-known examples of porticoes, whose depth varies between 5 and 5.30 m. The first and earliest is represented by Tomb II at Mallia-Chryssolakkos, the second is the north and south porticoes of Buildings AA/T (MM II–LM I) at Kommos and the third – again from the western Mesara – is the freestanding Stoa FG at Ayia Triada.¹⁰⁵ The latter example dates to LM IIIA2, but according to Joseph Shaw it may have continued a LM I tradition.¹⁰⁶ Another point may be of some interest. The South Stoa of Ayios Vasileios does not seem to have had rear rooms. Instead of this, a pebble pathway runs behind it at its east end, and further excavation will confirm whether this was the case for the whole length of the stoa. This arrangement brings to mind again the stoas of Building T from Kommos that had no rear rooms. In addition, along the north stoa of Building T a road was built. Finally, the use of alternating pillars and columns is well documented in Minoan ‘polite’ architecture (e.g. in the eastern portico at the palace of Mallia), with some examples even dating to LH IIIA2, such as the ‘Stoa del Mercato’ in Ayia Triada.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁶ Wright 1980, 85. Followed by Darcque 2005, 87.

⁹⁷ Devolder 2015.

⁹⁸ Fotou 1990, figs. 14–15; 63. See Puglisi 2007 for the system of six terraces in the Villaggio, Ayia Triada (LM I).

⁹⁹ Shaw 2009, 54–55.

¹⁰⁰ See Fotou 1990.

¹⁰¹ Shaw 2009, 55, fig. 111. See also Darcque 2005, 90.

¹⁰² Shaw 2006, 12–13, 1027, pl. 1.117.

¹⁰³ The stylobate in the palace of Phaistos, see n. 102.

¹⁰⁴ Measure taken from the interior face of the wall to the centre of the column bases.

¹⁰⁵ La Rosa 1997; Hayden 1981; Shaw 1987, 109. Ayia Triada, Stoa FG: depth 5.00 m, intercolumniation 2.45 m. Ayios Vasileios: depth 5.50 m, intercolumniation 2.50 m.

¹⁰⁶ Shaw 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Di Vita – La Regina 1984; McEnroe 2010, 137. The eastern portico in Mallia probably had a low wooden balustrade, see McEnroe 2010, 85.

Social Space in Lakonia

The LH IIIA buildings and the stoas at Ayios Vasileios do not represent the first examples of monumental architecture in Lakonia but rather the culmination of a process that had started earlier. Monumental buildings existed during LH II in a radius of 5 to 12 km north of Ayios Vasileios and probably also at Ayios Vasileios itself. Here we only need to name the tholos tomb of Vapheio, one of the most dominant features on the west bank of the Eurotas River,¹⁰⁸ and the LH II Mansion 1 at the Menelaion with a plan that anticipates the later megara.¹⁰⁹ Certainly by LH II, perhaps even earlier, the use of specialised building techniques (ashlar masonry and timber framing)¹¹⁰ and of exclusive material that was symbolically charged (e.g. the conglomerate lintel of the Vapheio tholos) was applied.¹¹¹ However, the scale of labour investment and manpower mobilisation during the construction of the palace in LH IIIA must have been unprecedented in Lakonia.¹¹² This must have been a crucial time that marked the beginning of a new social environment in Lakonia.

The evidence presented above seems to support the idea that the construction of the palace was conducted by specialised workers, who were perhaps attached to the palaces and who used innovative building techniques and architectural designs (porticoes, cut blocks for pillar bases) or elaborate versions of earlier methods (foundation terraces).¹¹³ The court, the stoas and Buildings Δ and E were constructed on top of artificial platforms founded on different levels. These were supported by a system of very long walls. One may argue that the construction of very long walls was perhaps possible due to the local terrain that was not very steep at Ayios Vasileios. However, it cannot be excluded that the whole or a very large part of the building project – artificial terraces with long walls, the use of specific foundation techniques (broad foundations, stepped foundations) – is based on an innovative concept most probably borrowed from Crete.

The exact way in which some of the new architectural concepts arrived at Ayios Vasileios (through a direct transfer of ideas and technology, or through processes of emulation and transformation) is not clear at present. Until further excavations and detailed analyses and comparisons of the building materials and methods are made, there can be no definite answer to this. We need to stress, however, that a number of elements, typical of elaborate Cretan architecture, are not encountered at Ayios Vasileios. The use of ashlar masonry so common in Crete is restricted at Ayios Vasileios.¹¹⁴ Cut blocks were used only occasionally, e.g. for the pillar bases. For these blocks, different types of stones were chosen, such as marble from the Taygetos Mountains, limestone and conglomerate. It is possible that these stones carried a symbolic meaning, as was the case in the later palaces (Tiryns and Mycenae).¹¹⁵ Another difference to Minoan architecture is the absence of stylobates to prevent the water from entering the stoas. Instead of the stylobate, the builders of Ayios Vasileios had another solution. They applied a 10 cm-high and 10 cm-thick clay

¹⁰⁸ Chapin et al. 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Hiesel 1990. According to Catling 2009a, 21, 31, the construction of Mansion 1 must have demolished buildings of earlier phases that existed there.

¹¹⁰ See also Catling 2009b, figs. 345–348.AS17, for cut-stone slabs and blocks from the Mansion that were mainly assigned by Catling to the construction of Mansion 1. For reused ashlar blocks at Ayios Vasileios, see Vasilogamvrou 2015a, pl. 55.

¹¹¹ Maran 2006; Chapin et al. 2014.

¹¹² The list of complex architecture contains only rooms and buildings (see Darcque 2005, 137–143, fig. 33), but Darcque 2005, 137, stresses that the elaborate foundation indicates complex architecture.

¹¹³ The presence of craftsmen working in the same tradition – as part of the peer polity interaction – becomes even more apparent in later construction methods (e.g. the similarity in ashlar masonry at Mycenae and Thebes) (Wright 2006a, 36–37, fig. 1.15).

¹¹⁴ For cut blocks in the wall masonry but in secondary use, see Vasilogamvrou 2015, pl. 55β.

¹¹⁵ Maran 2006, 82, pl. 16. Blocks of conglomerate were employed as bases for columns, pillars and as thresholds on the way towards the throne room to mark liminal zones. They are characteristically situated in the Great Megaron, the main gate, the Great Propylon, the Great Court and the court of the Little Megaron.

band between each pillar and the next column base.¹¹⁶ However, the best parallels for this rather unusual feature again come from Crete. A 10 cm-high plaster band, set next to the column base, was discovered in the North Stoa of Building AA at Kommos, and it has been assumed that its function was to prevent water running into the stoa.¹¹⁷

Finally, besides some specialised construction techniques, Minoan influence is evident in the architectural design of the palace at Ayios Vasileios and perhaps in the function of some spaces. It is even possible that the envisaged architectural concept followed Cretan prototypes with a large rectangular court as a central feature that was surrounded by rooms and deep stoas, one of which did not have rear rooms (South Stoa).¹¹⁸ That some of the early Mycenaean palaces may have looked more ‘Cretan’ is convincingly demonstrated on the basis of the LH IIIA building remains at the palace of Pylos.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the deep porticoes of Ayios Vasileios represent a striking new feature in Lakonia that introduces a completely new concept in architecture. The use of porticoes is much debated in Crete. They represented protected spaces, from which a group of people could have attended ritual performances and activities that were held in the court. Based on this, it is even possible that some porticoes were constructed on a larger scale to allow more people to be present, as has been argued for Stoa FG at Ayia Triada.¹²⁰ In the North Stoa of Building T in Kommos, one permanent installation, a clay larnax-like basin, was discovered, but its exact use remains unknown.¹²¹ However, in the area of the stoas of Building T, or close to these, drinking sets and exclusive vessels – often imported from far away, e.g. Cyprus – were excavated. Moreover, cooking installations found in the rooms directly to the north of the court provide evidence for consumption activities and feasting in this area.¹²² In other cases, the Minoan – and later Mycenaean – stoas had rear rooms with openings on their long sides and Elisabetta Borgna has pointed out that these rooms could have been used for the gathering of people and feasting (e.g. Southeastern Building in Pylos [LH IIIB] and the stoas at Glas).¹²³ This arrangement brings to mind the partly excavated room behind the West Stoa of Ayios Vasileios (Building E) that also had an opening in its long side. While there were no finds in situ on the floor of this partly excavated room, a group of heavily burnt drinking vessels such as cups, kylikes and angular bowls was found directly outside of it on the floor of the West Stoa. The vessels were lying in situ across the rear wall of the West Stoa, close to the opening to the rear room and the built-in pithoi. A similar set of drinking vessels was found in situ in the northwest corner of the South Stoa (Fig. 10.7–9). Based on these finds it is possible that consumption of food and drinking was part of the activities which took place in the West and South Stoa of Ayios Vasileios, in the course of which the clay stand with the built-in pithoi may have had a relevant use.

The combined evidence from the new and old excavations seems to suggest that LH IIIA1 and early LH IIIA2 were a period of intense building activity in central Lakonia. During the latter phases the palace at Ayios Vasileios was constructed and Mansion 1 at the Menelaion was abandoned and rebuilt. Moreover, the layout of the palace at Ayios Vasileios – as far as can be seen

¹¹⁶ A pebble floor was at the same level in the South Stoa and the court of the Building AA (MM II) in Kommos and there was no stylobate. However, Shaw 2006, 12, 58, assumed that the original floor of the stoa, destroyed by later activities, would have been higher to prevent water from accumulating in the stoa. From the LM I phase no floor is preserved. The feature of the plaster band was not identified in the South Stoa (Shaw 2006, 105 n. 108).

¹¹⁷ Shaw 2006, 28, 989, pl. 1.57. The plaster band was smoothed against the floor of the stoa. Later, when a new pebble floor was laid down in the court, a stylobate consisting of slabs was built partly on top of the plastic band, thus raising the level of the floor of the stoa.

¹¹⁸ Graham 1987; Driessen 1989/1990; Driessen 2002. For the role of the court in Mycenaean palatial ideology, see Wright 2006b, 55–56.

¹¹⁹ Nelson 2001.

¹²⁰ Cucuzza 2001, 172–173; McEnroe 2010, 131. A similar but smaller stoa (again with columns) was excavated by Nikolaos Platon in Tyliisos (LM III) (McEnroe 2010, 131, fig. 10.16).

¹²¹ Shaw 2006, 27, 30, 96, left open whether the stoa was installed there in the next phase (Room 16 with metallurgical activities).

¹²² Rutter 2006, 410, 411–412, cf. also pl. 3.22 for the location of find spots.

¹²³ Borgna 2012.

so far – between LH IIIA2 and the time of its destruction in LH IIIB Middle seems to contradict the assumed uniformity in the architectural design of the Mycenaean palaces.¹²⁴ Why Mansion 1 was remodelled remains unresolved. Although Catling did not exclude natural causes and static problems, at the same time he emphasised the fact that Mansion 2 was constructed in a new and completely different orientation than Mansion 1. According to Catling the remodelling of Mansion 1 could imply a political change.¹²⁵ Whether the rebuilding of Mansion 1 relates to the political expansion of Ayios Vasileios is difficult to answer at the moment, but it is beyond any doubt that it coincides with the emergence of a new social environment in Lakonia and establishment of a central administrative power at Ayios Vasileios. Without overseeing any other parameters that are probably related to the pre-existing cultural traditions, influence from Crete played a crucial role. These influences start with new building techniques and end with the adaptation of Minoan practices. Social space did not transform suddenly in Lakonia – as elsewhere – but this only became meaningful under one very specific condition:¹²⁶ the will of the elites but also of the ordinary people to adopt new roles and perhaps a new identity.

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¹²⁴ Kilian 1987 argued that after LH IIIA2 a new architectural concept existed at Pylos. He suggested that this concept derived from the spread of an Argive prototype realised in the palaces of Mycenae and Tiryns.

¹²⁵ According to Catling, a large court probably also existed in front of Mansion 2. Catling 2009a, 22–23, 26–27, assumed the presence of a court already in front of Mansion 1, but this has to remain open. See also: Hiesel 1990, 134. A similar process with buildings constructed in new orientations is also seen at Nichoria and Iklaina at the end of LH IIIA2 (Shelmerdine 2015).

¹²⁶ Wright 2006a, 13. For the period between LH II and LH IIIA Wright assumed that “at this time architecture assumed a new importance for it was a natural display of the ability of a leader to command many resources: labour for construction, the specialized labour of crafts persons, and local and exotic material”.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Building Δ, Building Ε, West Stoa, South Stoa and the court at the end of the 2016 excavation (plan: K. Minakakis, K. Athanasiou, E. Koulogeorgiou, copyright: A. Vasilogamvrou)

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Fig. 3: Byzantine Pit 20 in the West Stoa: a. North section of the Byzantine pit. SU 52: foundation of Wall 113, SU 1086: the vitrified floor of the West Stoa (drawing: A. Buhlke); b. The west baulk of the Byzantine pit (photo copy-right: A. Vasilogamvrou)

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Social Places and Spaces on and beyond Kythera during the Second Palace Period: Exploring the Island's Landscape and Connectivity

Evangelia Kiriati¹ – Cyprian Broodbank²

Abstract: The impact of Crete on the societies and material culture of the Greek mainland, particularly in relation to the emergence of elite groups during the early Mycenaean period, has long been a focus of debate between proponents of indigenist versus interactionist models of mainland dynamics. The intervening island of Kythera has played an important role in this phenomenon not least because of its location as a stepping stone between these two distinctive geographical and cultural regions. The 1960s excavations at the coastal site of Kastri revealed a unique case of Minoanisation, both due to its early beginnings and its intensity. Understanding of this phenomenon has since been significantly enhanced through an intensive field survey that covered one third of the island, as well as through several excavations, including those on two peak sanctuaries. What becomes apparent, after c. 2000 BC, is the exclusive presence of a Cretan-style culture and the lack of any contrastive continuing local tradition, thereby rendering Kythera in cultural terms effectively a part of Crete.

The intensive field survey results for this period reveal a landscape with dispersed rural settlements and an extensive, multi-focal, potentially urban zone at coastal Kastri. The multidisciplinary study of these two parallel dimensions of the island's landscape provides significant insight into local and regional dynamics. Spatial analysis combined with geoarchaeological investigations gives a better understanding of the development of the settlement pattern and accompanying agricultural regimes, while the stylistic and scientific/technological study of material culture (mainly pottery) provides unprecedented knowledge of the island's craft traditions and their reproduction through time and across space, under strong Cretan influence. Such an approach to the island's craft products makes even more meaningful the contextual study of their spatial distribution both among the numerous communities of the island, but also beyond, among Peloponnesian groups, so shedding new light on the transfer and reproduction of technological traditions, as well as on consumer's preferences and the social context of innovation.

Keywords: Kythera, Kastri, Bronze Age, Minoanisation, field survey, landscape, connectivity, pottery analysis

Placing Kythera

Mycenaean Greece emerged regionally but also in relation to a larger mosaic of societies and spaces in the Aegean, the wider Mediterranean and southeast Europe. The material evidence for this is uncontroversial.³ What is far less certain, both in the early Mycenaean case and more generally among the extensively networked societies of the 2nd millennium BC Mediterranean, is exactly how these relations were articulated spatially, economically and politically in terms of the human actors involved. In particular, the grain of research has typically been far too coarse, and insufficiently attuned to the specifics of particular conduits of connection, intervening places, and key groups of intermediaries.

The case of early Mycenaean Greece (especially the Peloponnese) and the island of Kythera furnishes a classic example of the problem. Ever since the 1960s excavations by Nicholas Coldstream and George Huxley,⁴ which established the presence of a coastal community at Kastri that was culturally and potentially politically affiliated to Minoan Crete, Kythera has in countless

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³ Dickinson 1977; Dickinson 1994; Shelmerdine 2008; Broodbank 2013, 345–444.

⁴ Coldstream – Huxley 1972.

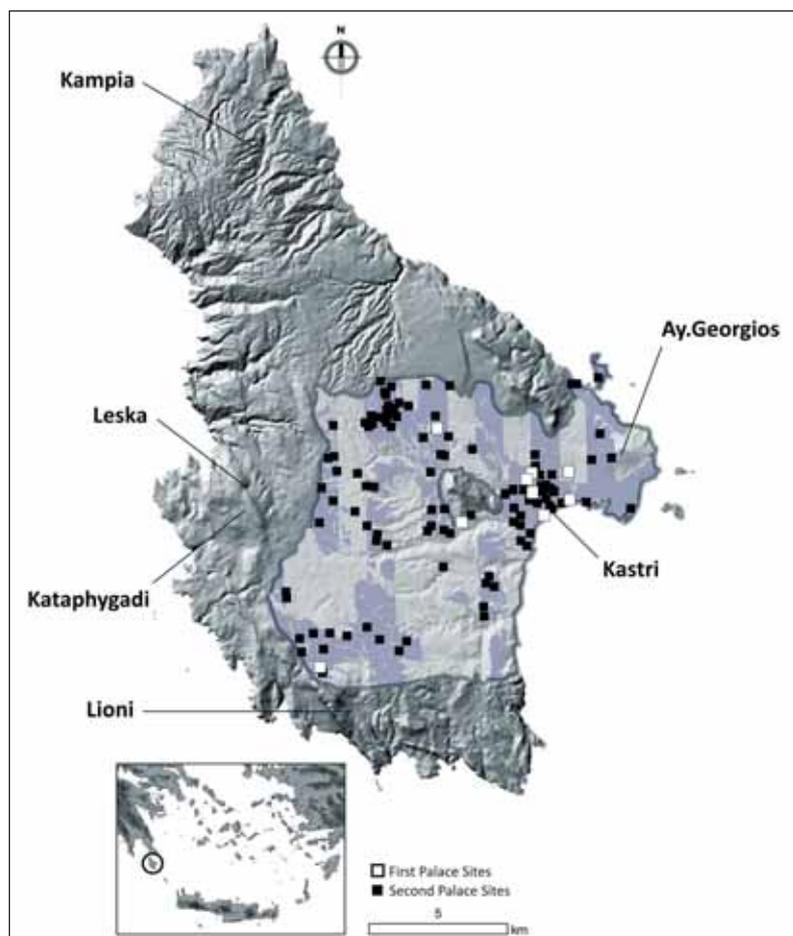


Fig. 1: Map of Kythera showing the borders of the study area and the transects covered by the KIP survey (the darker grey zones), with SPAL sites (black squares) and FPAL sites (white squares), as well as other locations mentioned in the text (D. Nenova; KIP)

studies been awarded the glorious burden of acting as a key transmitter of Cretan innovations to the Greek mainland, starting early in the 2nd millennium BC and continuing throughout the Palatial period.⁵ It is worth emphasising, however, how tightly restricted our knowledge of prehistoric Kythera remained until the 1990s: a series of trenches and tombs at Kastri (then considered one hectare in size)⁶ sufficient to establish a cultural sequence but too limited to shed light on social structure, and an almost complete blank across the rest of the island, including, of course, the then undiscovered peak sanctuary of Ayios Georgios.⁷ To the south lay the then least-known, western end of Minoan Crete; to the north, a limited number of excavations at places such as Pavlopetri⁸ and Ayios Stephanos,⁹ but otherwise expanses of sea and rugged land before one reached archaeologically more solid ground in Messenia, northern Lakonia or the Argolid. On the basis of

⁵ Coldstream 1973; Coldstream – Huxley 1984, although references to Kythera exist in many subsequent studies: Hägg – Marinatos 1984; Rutter 1993, 746; Broodbank 2004; Broodbank et al. 2005; Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Kiriati 2010; Dickinson 2014.

⁶ Coldstream – Huxley 1972.

⁷ With the exception of some possible LM I material in both funerary and apparent adjacent settlement contexts reported by Stais 1915 at Lioni in southern Kythera, and a small number of additional sites or finds recorded by Waterhouse – Hope Simpson 1961, 148–160. See also Petrocheilos 1984.

⁸ Harding et al. 1969; Gallou – Henderson 2012.

⁹ Taylour 1972; Rutter – Rutter 1976; Taylour † – Janko 2008.

such knowledge, it was truly difficult to understand precisely how Kythera, or more specifically, certain Kytherans, might have operated between the large, variegated palatial societies of Crete and those emergent on an even more diverse mainland. During the last two decades, however, a number of fieldwork projects on the island have produced ample new evidence that provides the basis for addressing such issues.¹⁰

Based on this growing amount of data, the current paper sets two targets:

First, to outline and synthesise some of the results of 22 years of fieldwork and analysis by the Kythera Island Project (hereafter KIP), as well as those published by other recent fieldwork projects on the island, in order to characterise the hugely expansive societies and economies of this island during the Second Palace period (hereafter SPAL),¹¹ contemporary with early Mycenaean Greece. In terms of the present volume's theme, therefore, the aim is to explore the construction of social places and spaces on a near island neighbour.¹²

Second, to offer new evidential insights into the material basis of Kythera's off-island connections at this time, both in general and with specific regard to the Greek mainland, incorporating some of the results of ongoing research on contemporary mainland sites by the Fitch Laboratory (British School at Athens) and, based on the existing evidence, to explore how such Kythera-mainland links may have been articulated.

Within Second Palace Period Kythera

Surface survey by KIP in central and southern Kythera has revealed that during the two to three centuries of the SPAL, Kythera's landscape experienced a major transformation, evident in a dramatic increase in the number of sites across the island and the clear contrast in their character/type and extent between the coastal Kastri zone and inland areas (Fig. 1). Following completion of the study of all the collected survey pottery, the total number of SPAL sites in the fieldwalked area has risen to c. 110, many of them small scatters in the rural hinterland. These comprise either single-period sites or multi-period ones, in the latter case with more than 2% of their datable collected pottery associated with this period, on the basis of fabric and diagnostic morphological features. Although it is acknowledged that not all of these sites may be strictly contemporaneous, the number indicates a huge rise in relation to the previous First Palace period (hereafter FPAL), when not more than a dozen sites have been identified in the surveyed area, with a concentration mainly in the coastal Kastri zone and adjacent areas (Fig. 1).

Beyond this increase in the total number of sites, Kastri itself grew significantly to cover 6–7 hectares (Fig. 2), and was surrounded not only by its cemeteries but by several further foci of occupation, some fairly substantial, that create a multi-focal, potentially urban, coastal zone and blur the edges of the wider community concentrated in and around Kastri. In tandem, the excavation of one peak sanctuary on Ayios Georgios¹³ and another, more recently, in the west, at Leska,¹⁴

¹⁰ Beyond the Kythera Island Project, fieldwork projects that have contributed new evidence for Second Palace period Kythera are: the excavations at the peak sanctuary at Ayios Georgios sto Vouno (Sakellarakis 1996; Sakellarakis 2011; Sapouna-Sakellarakis et al. 2012; Tournavitou 2014); the Australian Paliochora-Kythera Archaeological Survey (Coroneos et al. 2002; Paspalas – Gregory 2009); rescue investigations by the local department of the Archaeological Service (Tsaravopoulos 2009), including excavations of burial sites in the vicinity of Kastri (Bevan et al. 2002) and of another peak sanctuary at Leska (Georgiadis 2012), and by the Ephoreia of Speleology and Palaeoanthropology at Kataphygadi Cave (Trantalidou et al. 2019).

¹¹ For the First-Second-Third Palace periodisation of the second millennium BC Aegean adopted by KIP, see Broodbank et al. 2005, 70 n. 1.

¹² The current paper also aims to bridge the gap in the series of KIP preliminary publications to date, between analysis of Kythera's preceding, 3rd millennium BC, 'Minoanisation' (Broodbank 2004; Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Kiriati 2010) and the complex later trajectories of cultural endurance and economic abeyance during the Mycenaean full palatial age (Broodbank et al. 2005).

¹³ Sakellarakis 2011; Sapouna-Sakellarakis et al. 2012; Tournavitou 2014.

¹⁴ Tsaravopoulos 2009, 564; Georgiadis 2012.



Fig. 2: Distribution of SPAL diagnostic pottery across the Katri (Site 064) collection grid, also showing the distribution of SPAL cooking pot sherds (D. Nenova; KIP)

together with evidence for potential cult and/or burial activity at Kataphygadi Cave,¹⁵ sheds new light on the sacred landscapes of Kythera (Fig. 1). Overall, by SPAL, the island's landscape had clearly become Minoanised in a range of respects.¹⁶ This process in fact started earlier, towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC,¹⁷ but it now intensified, possibly in part through an influx of new population. Using provisional KIP data, Andrew Bevan estimated a SPAL population of c. 3500–7500 people for the entire island (more than half concentrated in the coastal zone of Katri).¹⁸ Although these calculations need to be adjusted using the final data, the orders of magnitude still stand, and distinguish Kythera from the far lower estimates for contemporary Melos¹⁹ or Keos,²⁰ let alone the tiny population of nearby Antikythera,²¹ and are more comparable to potential densities on pre-eruption Thera.²²

KIP's identification of a dense spread of SPAL pottery across a core area of 6–7 hectares, with a penumbra of further occupation, renders Katri one of the largest known settlements of its time in the Aegean outside Crete, and comparable in scale to emerging mainland centres.²³ The distribution and proportions of classes of pottery and other types of material culture across this area, in

¹⁵ Leonhard 1899, 15; Petrocheilos 1984, 63–64; Bartsiokas 1998, 33, 92, fig. 70; Broodbank et al. 2005, 21; Tsaravopoulos 2009, 564; Georgiadis 2014; Trantalidou et al. 2019.

¹⁶ Broodbank 2004.

¹⁷ Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Kiriati 2010.

¹⁸ Bevan 2002, 246–247.

¹⁹ Wagstaff – Cherry 1982, 136–140.

²⁰ Cherry et al. 1991, 227–229.

²¹ Bevan – Conolly 2013.

²² Davis – Cherry 1990, also for a comparative discussion on settlement patterns and population of the three Cycladic islands during Late Bronze Age I.

²³ Whitelaw 2001, 29.

comparison to sites in the rural landscape of the island, significantly advances our understanding of the nature and role of this centre. The high frequency at Kastri of painted pottery, comprising mainly small and medium-sized vessels, and, conversely, the relatively lower frequency of coarse wares, in particular large storage jars (pithoi), in comparison to the rural sites, are striking. Evidently, the emphasis was on consumption, cooking and short-term storage, rather than agricultural production and bulk storage of foodstuffs. Interestingly, at Kastri a further ceramic distinction can be identified between habitation and/or crafting zones, and the surrounding funerary areas, as shown by the distribution of cooking pots (Fig. 2). As such vessels are absent from excavated funerary contexts at Kastri,²⁴ the higher surface concentration of cooking pot fragments across the promontory and its inland continuation most probably signifies the habitation areas of the site. In contrast, their lack or limited appearance along the Vothonas Valley and the furthest inland sector of Kastri seems to further confirm the existence of cemeteries around and in between habitation areas.²⁵ Although macroscopic study, combined with petrographic and chemical analysis, seem to indicate that the majority of the Kastri SPAL finewares was locally produced,²⁶ the Kastri area also produces markedly more pieces of imported pottery, in comparison to the inland sites. Other revealing patterns concern the concentration of craft activities in specific areas in the wider Kastri zone, while craft production in the inland farmsteads seems to have been of a very limited scale, mostly aiming to satisfy localised everyday life needs (e.g. manufacture of grinding stone tools for on-site processing of agricultural products).²⁷ Direct evidence for pottery manufacture is rare, but the few potential kiln wasters concentrate in the Kastri zone, with good access to appropriate raw material sources. The same applies to evidence of weaving, associated with discoid loom weights. The latter, indicating use of the Cretan-style warp-weighted loom,²⁸ appear only at Kastri and sites in its immediate vicinity (Fig. 3). Furthermore, the limited evidence for stone vase manufacture also focuses at Kastri, as do the few known scraps of raw copper and recycled silver.²⁹ Overall, Kastri and the extensive zone immediately around it, with its sizeable foci of habitation, cemeteries and craft activities, resembles in certain respects other contemporaneous extensive sites in Crete, also considered to exhibit urban characteristics.³⁰ Most are characterised by a relatively loose plan, large extent but relatively low density of habitation/use, and absence of defensive walls, in contrast to many contemporary mainland and island centres that exhibit a more closed plan, often demarcated by fortifications.³¹

Turning to the rural sites, more than eighty SPAL scatters have been identified by the KIP survey beyond the wider coastal Kastri zone. These show a consistent surface signature and most appear to be between 0.1 and 0.3 hectares in extent.³² Data from the Australian Paliochora-Kythera Archaeological Survey, in the northern part of the island, indicate that a similar pattern obtains there.³³ Based on KIP data and GIS analysis,³⁴ we can go beyond the mere identification of site numbers and sizes to look at how they operated and interacted with each other, and with the coastal zone, at the landscape scale. The evidence points to the vast majority of such sites representing small, one- or two-family farms. Moreover, the presence of rock-cut tombs near to several of them and the range of activities materially attested indicate that they were probably occupied year round as a principal residence. Gridded collections of surface finds from almost half of these

²⁴ For the types of ceramic vessels present in the Kastri chamber tombs, see Bevan et al. 2002, fig. 11.

²⁵ The 1960s excavations at Kastri revealed chamber tombs in Vothonas (Coldstream – Huxley 1972, 220–258), while limited rescue work recovered parts of destroyed chamber tombs in the Tholos area (Bevan et al. 2002).

²⁶ Kiriati – Georgakopoulou 2014.

²⁷ Tsoraki et al., in preparation.

²⁸ Cutler 2012.

²⁹ Broodbank et al. 2007; Georgakopoulou 2014.

³⁰ Whitelaw 2001.

³¹ Branigan 2001a, 42–43.

³² Bevan 2002, 222–226.

³³ Paspalas – Gregory 2009, 554–555.

³⁴ Bevan 2002.

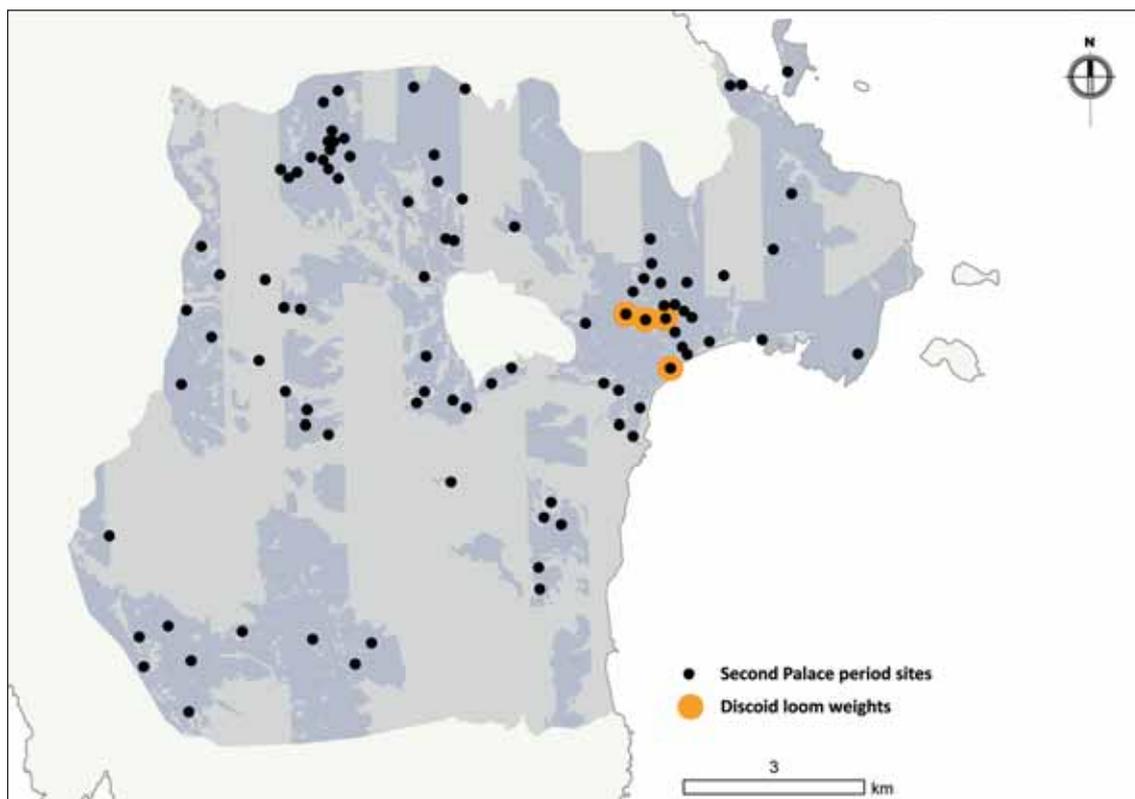


Fig. 3: Distribution of Cretan style discoid loom weights in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (D. Nenova; KIP)

sites have produced assemblages that consistently indicate a full range of household activities, including the storage and processing of agricultural products (pithoi and grinding stones), as well as food preparation and everyday consumption (tripod cooking pots, jugs, jars and limited amounts of cups and other fine wares). There is much less emphasis, in relation to Kastri and the coastal zone, on painted fine wares and an almost complete absence of pottery imported from outside the island. A whetstone on one such site points to otherwise invisible metal cutting tools, presumably related to agricultural production. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that these sites performed any specialised roles (industrial, ritual or other) beyond agriculture, in contrast to the strong evidence for such activities from similar sites of much later periods in the countryside of Kythera.³⁵

Bevan's GIS analysis reveals a consistency in site spacing and location that reflects specific intensive agricultural practices and consequent choices when colonising new land.³⁶ The precise scale of production, however, and for whom they produced, potentially beyond the family unit, is much harder to gauge. Some surplus is indicated by their ability to access craft products not produced in situ, including their entire pot repertoires, and presumably metal tools, probably through a dense network of local exchanges within the island landscape, although Christina Tsoraki's analysis of the associated grinding stones indicates non-specialised domestic-scale production.³⁷ Finally, the obvious complementarity between the different repertoires of pots associated with the farms and the Kastri zone might well indicate flows of grown, harvested and already processed

³⁵ Kiriati et al. 2012.

³⁶ Bevan 2002.

³⁷ Tsoraki et al., in preparation.

agricultural goods from the former to the latter, either in exchange for material and other desirables, or as part of an unequal political relationship.

It is worth emphasising several further distinctive features of this rural phenomenon.

Firstly, it emerges rapidly out of a much more thinly populated FPAL landscape, and only a small minority of the sites survive into the Third Palace period,³⁸ thereby defining a flourish of some 200–300 years, or 8–12 generations. Although this remarkable demographic spike could have been partly generated within the island, an additional off-island input might be postulated and could be supported by other strands of evidence (such as funerary).³⁹

Secondly, either because of this relatively rapid and brief evolution or the smaller social or spatial scales operating on Kythera, intermediate-sized, monumentalised settlements, equivalent to the so-called ‘villa’ sites on Crete, are conspicuously absent. There are a tiny number of slightly larger sites, beyond the coastal Kastri zone, but their material evidence does not seem to indicate radically different functions or connections. Despite the lack of a deep hierarchy to the settlement pattern, it still appears, however, to be a dynamic one with localised cycles of abandonment, expansion and mobility.⁴⁰

Thirdly, the precise distribution of socio-economic power across the landscape is intriguing if ultimately still elusive. Elite groups almost certainly were based at Kastri and the neighbouring coastal zone, and perhaps these directly or indirectly extracted agricultural surplus from the rural sites (in exchange for pottery, metal tools, etc.) arguably also further benefiting from craft activities, off-island trade and exploitation of Kastri’s fertile hinterland.⁴¹

Fourthly, such tiny, closely packed groups, often in shouting range of their neighbours, could not have existed in isolation and a range of localised interactions can be inferred between them, from sharing labour and equipment for agricultural activities, to acquiring tools and pots, intermarriage, and risk-buffering (perhaps as well as larger social gatherings during rituals at funerary locations or peak sanctuaries). All the above only required short- or medium-distance contacts in a variety of contexts (from hailing your next farmstead neighbour or giving a hand at harvest, to participating in larger social gatherings).⁴²

The detailed analysis of the pottery from most of these farmstead sites provides some thought-provoking insights into how such localised networks might have worked. Moreover, the systematic study of KIP’s survey finds (plus review of the publication of the 1960s Kastri excavation’s stratified material), combined with the recent detailed publication of the Ayios Georgios finds,⁴³ provide the rare opportunity to explore in parallel the rural and urban, the mortuary and religious landscapes of the island, each associated with different material culture types. In this way, a more comprehensive approach and a holistic synthesis of the island’s landscape history can be achieved.

Within KIP, the evidence of surface pottery has played a central role, and investment in the study of fabric and technology, supported by petrographic and chemical analysis in association with consideration of stylistic and functional features,⁴⁴ has started to produce rewarding results. Overall, two broad groups of pottery have been distinguished in SPAL Kythera, on the basis of fabric composition and manufacturing technology, each, to some extent, related to different repertoires of shapes.⁴⁵ The first group relates to a calcareous, usually buff- to light brown-firing fabric that appears in two varieties: one fine (untempered) and the second tempered with angular fragments of dark red or brown siliceous mudstone (or, more rarely, rounded sand grains including predominantly siliceous mudstone and carbonates) in various amounts and grain sizes (Fig. 4).

³⁸ Broodbank et al. 2005.

³⁹ Preston 2007, 249.

⁴⁰ Some supporting evidence is already presented in Bevan 2002.

⁴¹ For further supporting evidence for elite groups at Kastri based on the study of funerary remains, see Preston 2007.

⁴² See Bevan 2002, for analogous discussion based on preliminary KIP survey data.

⁴³ Sakellarakis 2011; Sapouna-Sakellarakis et al. 2012; Alexandropoulou et al. 2013; Tournavitou 2014.

⁴⁴ Kiriati 2003.

⁴⁵ Kiriati 2003, 127; Kiriati 2010, 692–693.

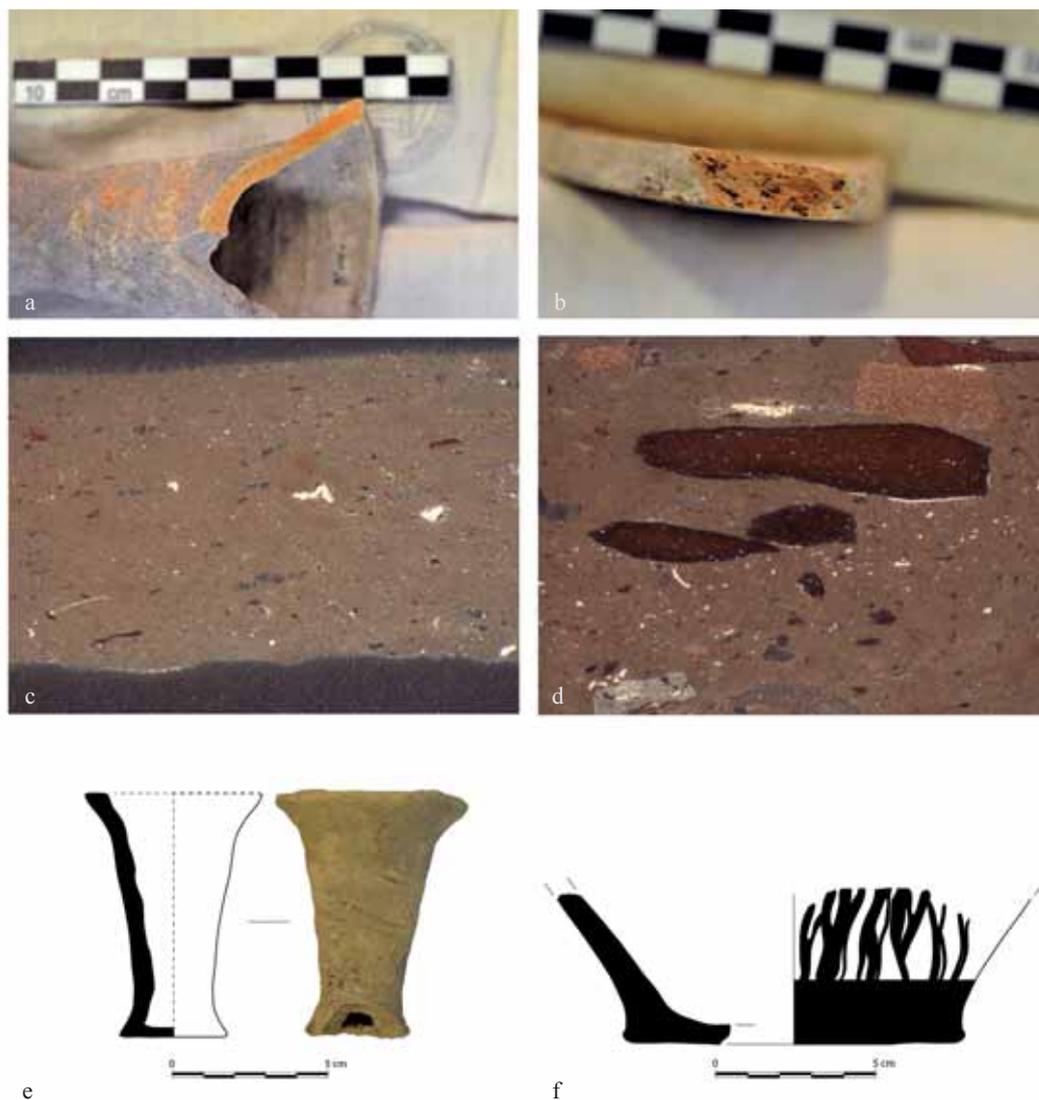


Fig. 4: The Mudstone-tempered pottery tradition: fine, untempered (a, c) and tempered versions (b, d) of the main fabric type, associated with small to medium- and large-sized vessels, plain (e) or with painted (LOD or DOL) decoration (f). Images c and d: photomicrographs, PPL, field of view 5.6 mm, by E. Kiriati (D. Nenova; KIP)

This Mudstone-tempered pottery represents the main Minoanising tradition on the island, with a long history since the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.⁴⁶ By SPAL, this pottery is usually wheel-coiled, although there are still cases of larger hand-built vessels, and it is typically dark-on-light painted (apart from plain cups). It covers a wide range of forms, from cups to medium- and large-sized vessels, including pithoi but never cooking pots. It is worth emphasising that the fine painted examples of this fabric include local versions of elaborately decorated Cretan fineware styles. The recurrent use of the tempered and fine version of this clay paste in the same pot has confirmed their common origin and facilitated the provenance investigation of the related pots and their association with central Kythera through petrographic and chemical analysis.⁴⁷ Geological sampling and replication experiments reveal that this Mudstone-tempered pottery was made with fine calcareous clays associated with a series of Neogene sediments located in the central

⁴⁶ Broodbank – Kiriati 2007; Kiriati 2010.

⁴⁷ For presentation of the preliminary results of petrographic analysis, see Kiriati 2003, 125; for the combined petrographic and chemical evidence, see Kiriati – Georgakopoulou 2014 (in preparation for publication).



Fig. 5: The Red Micaceous pottery tradition relates to both medium and coarse fabrics (a–d), occasionally coexisting in the same pot (in b, the handle is more heavily tempered than the body); they are mainly associated with cooking pots, predominantly tripod (e) and storage jars (f) of various sizes. Images c and d: photomicrographs, PPL, field of view 5.6 mm, by E. Kiriati (D. Nenova; KIP)

part of the island, tempered with weathering siliceous mudstone or sand grains from different locations within the same general area (see map in Fig. 6). Probable kiln wasters associated with this pottery fabric group have been recovered from sites in the Kastri zone, providing further supporting evidence for the production location of this pottery.

Red Micaceous, the second group of SPAL pottery on Kythera, is characterised by a low calcareous, red- to brown-firing fabric, rich in silver mica and schist fragments in varied amounts (Fig. 5).⁴⁸ This fabric is massively attested in SPAL levels at Kastri, and rises steadily in popularity there through the subphases of SPAL.⁴⁹ It is also a major component of the surface survey pottery, slightly earlier finds from which moreover hint that its production started to a limited degree in FPAL (as also claimed for Ayios Georgios).⁵⁰ This pottery is usually handmade and only in late SPAL (mainly LM IB on the basis of stratified excavation material at Kastri) do some, but not all, vessels appear to be wheel-coiled; one can therefore see a delayed adoption of the potter's wheel in this pottery, relative to the Mudstone-tempered tradition. It seems that production initially

⁴⁸ Kiriati 2003, 127; Kiriati 2010, 693.

⁴⁹ Coldstream – Huxley 1972, 282.

⁵⁰ Tournavitou 2014, 79.

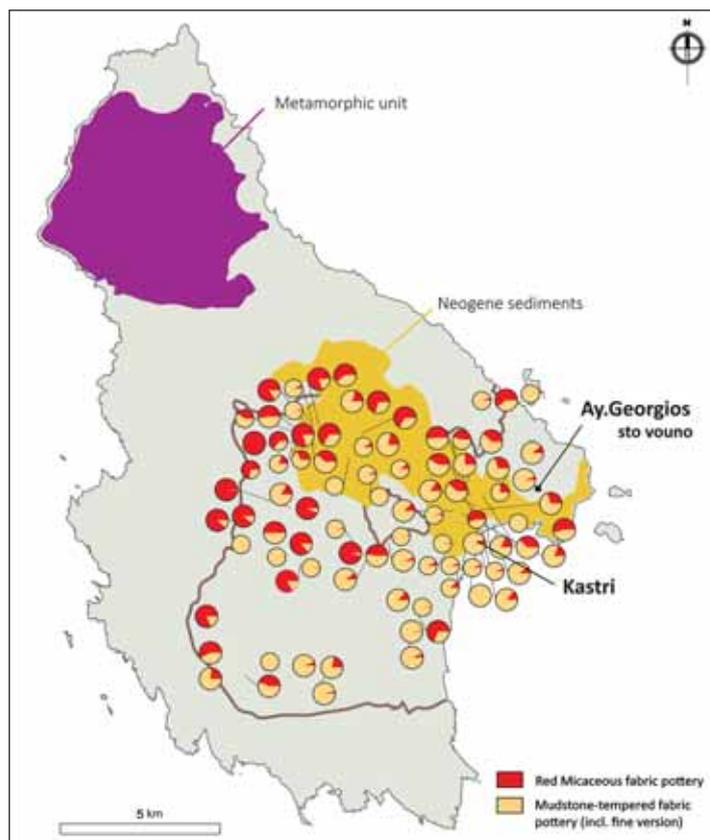


Fig. 6: Distribution and relative frequency (%) of the two main categories of locally produced pottery, the Mudstone-tempered and the Red Micaceous, in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (only SPAL sites with gridded collection of surface finds; frequencies based on weight of all period sherds from vacuumed grid squares). The mapping of the Metamorphic and the Neogene units, related to the sources of the two local pottery types, is based on Petrocheilos 1966 (D. Nenova; KIP)

focused almost exclusively on tripod cooking pots but, by mid-to late SPAL, large amounts of the pithoi were also made in this fabric, and the repertoire also expanded to include jars and jugs, and occasionally even conical cups. This pottery is, with a few exceptions, unpainted and various types of plastic/impressed/incised decoration were commonly used for pithoi. Its raw materials have been associated with metamorphic rock outcrops in northern Kythera, outside the KIP survey area (Fig. 6).⁵¹ Unsurprisingly, no potential kiln wasters associated with Red Micaceous pottery have been recovered from the survey area.

These two pottery types, both local to Kythera, although clearly internally introduced to the majority of the survey sites through some as yet uncertain distribution mechanism, represent two coexisting potting traditions, complementary to each other and displaying variably close links, direct or indirect, with Crete. Not only do they use raw materials located in different parts of the island but they also deploy different forming techniques and when they produce vessels of similar generic type (e.g. pithoi), these display different morphological characteristics. The delayed adoption of the potter's wheel, as well as other stylistic trends, in the Red Micaceous pottery tradition may indicate less direct or more sporadic links with Crete, and perhaps even ultimately descent from indigenous potting traditions (where earlier micaceous fabrics are prominent in the Early

⁵¹ Kiriati 2003, 126; Kiriati 2010, 693.

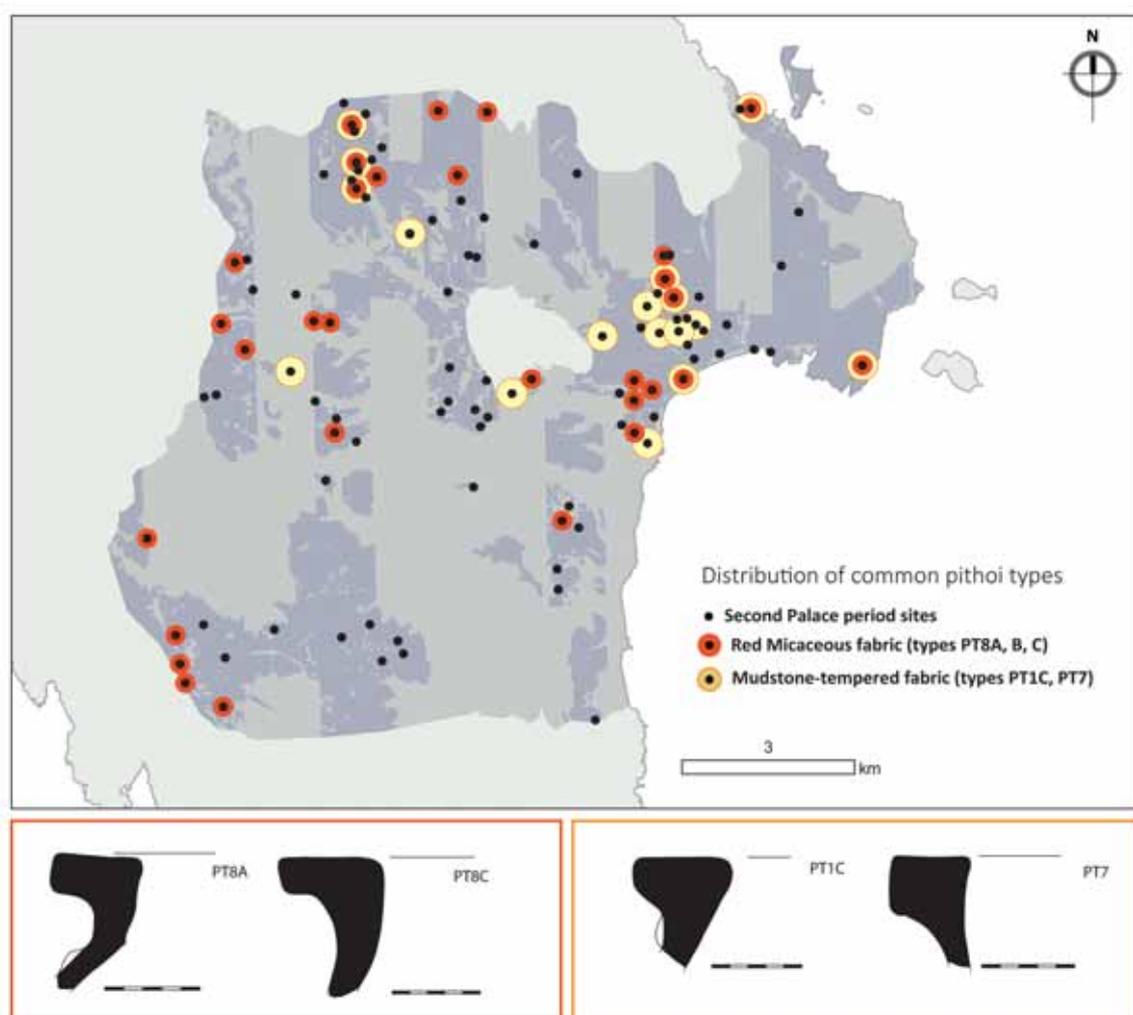


Fig. 7: Distribution of the most common pithoi (rim) types in both local fabrics (Mudstone-tempered and the Red Micaceous) in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (D. Nenova; KIP)

Bronze Age).⁵² Whatever the truth of this last speculation, and returning to the networks of SPAL farmsteads, micro-differences can be traced in the choices made by each farm in terms of its pottery selection from either production area (Fig. 6). This is illustrated clearly in the distribution of pithos types (Fig. 7). Red Micaceous pithoi predominate mainly in the inland rural settlements, whereas Mudstone-tempered ones are common mainly in the coastal zone of Kastri. Each type also has a distinctive appearance, both in terms of vessel form and decoration; the former usually with purely plastic decoration while the latter always with painted designs, often in combination with plastic decoration. Moreover, there are suggestive micro-patterns in the way different types of plastic decoration are distributed in sites across the survey area. These observations help us to understand developments through time (for example Mudstone-tempered pithoi often seem to be earlier in date [within SPAL] than Red Micaceous ones) and furthermore cast some intriguing light on issues of individual preferences, group affiliations and circulation patterns within Kythera at this time.

Such new insights prompt further observations about SPAL Kythera's landscapes of death and the sacred. The 1960s excavations at Kastri identified a series of SPAL multi-chambered tombs.⁵³

⁵² Broodbank – Kiriati 2007.

⁵³ Coldstream – Huxley 1972, 220–258.

These succeeded an earlier, thinly documented tradition of pithos burial and therefore introduced new burial customs to the island, ones most closely paralleled in the Knossos Valley of central Crete. Laura Preston's study of these, and further examples of such tombs clustered around Kastri, concluded reasonably that they related to a minority, probably high-status, subgroup of the Kastri community.⁵⁴ Interestingly, in hinterland areas with suitably soft bedrock, clearly derivative single- or occasionally multi-chambered versions of these tombs have now also been found, closely associated with individual farmsteads, most notably on the inland Mitata plateau. Rock-cut chamber tombs of similar type are also known, from outside the KIP survey area, both in the southern part of the island, at Lioni,⁵⁵ and also in the northern part, at Kambia,⁵⁶ in the latter case the two-chamber tomb was dug into the local schist. It is suggested that these tombs proclaimed a commitment to land, group cohesion and cultural identity by small groups of farmers as they became established in hitherto empty zones, distinct from, but in relation to, the major demographic focus on the coast at and around Kastri.

A similar local, rural adaptation of an elite-introduced practice may explain the differences between the rich finds and cosmopolitan connotations of the Ayios Georgios peak sanctuary,⁵⁷ with its manifestly close elite links to Kastri, and the much simpler and less diverse material from the recently discovered peak sanctuary at Leska,⁵⁸ whose westerly location is out of visual contact with Kastri and better placed to serve a localised, inland network of small farmsteads, many of which, in turn, had no sight of the Ayios Georgios peak. In this sense, both sacred sites served to Minoanise the island's landscapes, but while the one did so in a clearly knowingly Crete-related and high-status manner, the other represents a more refracted and, in a sense, 'glocalising' phenomenon.

Beyond Kythera

Kythera has long been considered to have played a key role in enabling interaction between Crete and the mainland, especially the southern Peloponnese, and the adoption of Cretan styles, practices and material culture by a number of mainland communities.⁵⁹ Speculation as to the goods produced or handled by Kastri has been rife since the site's excavation. Textiles, possibly purple-dyed and band-woven, have been offered as one option,⁶⁰ and while Kythera possesses no metal ores, save some iron,⁶¹ the implied amount of metal consumed on the island is impressive.⁶² Processed agricultural produce such as oil and wine are a distinct possibility, given the dense farming pattern on the island at this time, and if so, such products were presumably transported in pottery vessels.⁶³ But regardless of its original relative primacy, it is pottery, and in particular its technological and provenance-oriented investigation, that today acts as the best tracer of Kythera's off-island connections in time and space.

During the Middle Bronze Age and early Late Bronze Age on the mainland there is evidence of importation and use of Cretan and Minoanising pottery at a growing number of sites in the

⁵⁴ Preston 2007, 255–257.

⁵⁵ Stais 1915; Broodbank et al. 2005, 73, 88–89.

⁵⁶ Tsaravopoulos 2009, 565, figs. 5–6.

⁵⁷ Sakellarakis 1996; Sakellarakis 2011; Sapouna-Sakellarakis et al. 2012; Tournavitou 2014.

⁵⁸ Georgiadis 2012; Georgiadis 2014.

⁵⁹ Dickinson 1977; Rutter – Rutter 1976, 58; Rutter – Zerner 1984; Zerner 1993, 45–47; Dickinson 2014.

⁶⁰ For relevant references and discussion, see Broodbank – Kiriati 2007, 266.

⁶¹ Georgakopoulou 2014, 69–70.

⁶² Broodbank et al. 2007; Sapouna-Sakellarakis et al. 2012, 1–247; Kiriati et al. 2012, 297–298.

⁶³ There is some evidence for production of coarse stirrup jars on Kythera, and also for palatial jars produced on the island and exported to Peloponnesian sites (for stirrup jars, see Broodbank et al. 2005, 81; Haskell et al. 2011, 112; for palatial jars, see Huber et al., this volume).

southern, eastern and western Peloponnese.⁶⁴ Carol Zerner and Jeremy Rutter long ago defined the characteristics of this pottery based on studies of such material at Lerna and Ayios Stephanos, respectively.⁶⁵ They both identified pottery classes that are directly equivalent to the two main types of pottery on SPAL Kythera (Mudstone-tempered and Red Micaceous) and they argued for the production of this pottery either on Kythera or in the southern Peloponnese (Lakonia?) by ‘Minoan’ potters.⁶⁶ It is worth stressing that throughout this long period and across this mainland zone, the changes seen in this pottery consistently track major technological and stylistic developments seen in Crete and Kythera.⁶⁷ Equally intriguing is the enduring consistency of the two Red Micaceous and Mudstone-tempered pottery groups, which seem to reflect two distinct potting traditions associated with Minoanising ceramic vessels across the Peloponnese.

Demonstrating the Kytheran origin of the Red Micaceous pottery found on sites across the Peloponnese is fairly straightforward, as such raw materials are rare or simply not present elsewhere in this part of the Aegean and southern mainland.⁶⁸ The provenance of vessels in Mudstone-tempered fabrics found on the mainland is, however, more enigmatic. This pottery shows consistent generic characteristics, namely the use of a fine, buff-firing clay base tempered with inclusions, mainly of mudstone, chert but occasionally limited amounts of other rocks or minerals. Yet the internal micro-variability is too high to support a single origin, and production at a number of locations, certainly including Kythera, is instead inferred,⁶⁹ by potters trained in a particularly Kytheran Minoanising tradition, and who therefore sought and found similar types of raw materials in different landscapes. As already argued by Evangelia Kiriati, ⁷⁰ this evidence is considered indicative of potters’ mobility and/or relocation – temporary or periodic in some cases, perhaps permanent in others – in certain places in the Peloponnese.

This Kythera-mainland ceramic interaction and the inferred mobility of potters was a long-lasting phenomenon. It was surely through the local adaptation, or better appropriation,⁷¹ of this ultimately Kythera-centric Minoanising pottery tradition by southern mainland communities that a number of local, now called ‘early Mycenaean’ potting traditions, emerged, incorporating local and regional pre-existing elements but equally adapting to new social needs and individual preferences. To complement this process, those Peloponnesian sites with Minoanising pottery, whether from Kythera or potentially also mainland locations, usually also received direct Cretan imports,⁷² implying a wider picture of goods and craftspeople moving between Crete, Kythera and the Peloponnese. It can plausibly be argued that pots and potters did not move on their own but together with other goods and craftspeople, as technological transfer can be traced in other significant aspects of mainland life.⁷³

These movements could have been orchestrated by palatial or other elite groups in Crete, the Peloponnese and even Kythera itself. Even if their main focus was the exchange/circulation/acquisition of raw materials, craft products and technical knowledge, they would have presumably also involved the cultivation of human relations, kinships and inter-marriages at various social levels. Interestingly enough, Minoanising pottery in the Peloponnese does not only appear

⁶⁴ Kiriati 2010, 685–690.

⁶⁵ Rutter – Rutter 1976; Zerner 1986; Zerner 1988.

⁶⁶ Jones – Rutter 1977; Dickinson 1992, 110–111; Zerner 1993, 46–47; Zerner 2008, 212–214, 256, 298; Whitbread – Jones 2008.

⁶⁷ Kiriati 2010, 693–694.

⁶⁸ See Kiriati 2010.

⁶⁹ Kiriati 2010, 695–698; see also Huber et al., this volume, for relevant data and discussion in relation to pottery from Kakovatos.

⁷⁰ Kiriati 2010, 696.

⁷¹ Gosselain 2011.

⁷² See e.g. the case of Kakovatos (Huber et al., this volume).

⁷³ Graziadio 1991; Rutter 1993, 139–140, 144–146; Broodbank 2004; for evidence concerning elite architecture and building techniques, see Nelson 2007a and Nelson 2007b; for a discussion on contemporary mobility of Minoanising technologies in central south and southeast Aegean, see Nikolakopoulou – Knappett 2016.

in high-ranked elite consumption contexts and so, in many cases, cannot be directly associated with the most powerful elements in the community. On the contrary, it often comprises a relatively wide range of vessels associated with eating, drinking and serving food but also cooking (potentially introducing new culinary traditions or recipes) as well as transportation of foodstuff or aromatics. This pottery is found in Peloponnesian sites of different socio-political status, in varied frequency and diverse contexts, implying a potentially varied social meaning or role for these pots across the region, and access to them by a rather wider range of people. Taking into consideration the long duration of this overall phenomenon and its origins back to the Middle Bronze Age, when socio-political realities were very different, one might further propose that not only elite groups but a larger section of the population also became familiar with other, non-material aspects of this cultural tradition, such as everyday-life practices and perhaps language. So, beyond the more visible ‘Minoan’ influence on elites, the impact appears to have reached lower social levels, too, and wider aspects of everyday life, in what is likely to have been a highly dynamic and multi-dimensional process.

This brief interpretative synthesis has shown the complexity of the construction of social space on a landscape scale within Kythera, and how different kinds of actors were involved in its negotiation. Only a minority of these probably engaged directly with the projection of a more ‘distributed’ Kythera beyond the island itself, but even this subset assuredly comprised very different kinds of people: men, but also women; potters, and potentially other craftspeople; perhaps priests and traders, in addition to the undoubted but still quite interpretatively shadowy elites gathered at Kastri.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Map of Kythera showing the borders of the study area and the transects covered by the KIP survey (the darker grey zones), with SPAL sites (black squares) and FPAL sites (white squares), as well as other locations mentioned in the text (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 2: Distribution of SPAL diagnostic pottery across the Kastri (Site 064) collection grid, also showing the distribution of SPAL cooking pot sherds (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 3: Distribution of Cretan style discoid loom weights in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 4: The Mudstone-tempered pottery tradition: fine, untempered (a, c) and tempered versions (b, d) of the main fabric type, associated with small to medium- and large-sized vessels, plain (e) or with painted (LOD or DOL) decoration (f). Images c and d: photomicrographs, PPL, field of view 5.6 mm, by E. Kiriati (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 5: The Red Micaceous pottery tradition relates to both medium and coarse fabrics (a–d), occasionally coexisting in the same pot (in b, the handle is more heavily tempered than the body); they are mainly associated with cooking pots, predominantly tripod (e) and storage jars (f) of various sizes. Images c and d: photomicrographs, PPL, field of view 5.6 mm, by E. Kiriati (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 6: Distribution and relative frequency (%) of the two main categories of locally produced pottery, the Mudstone-tempered and the Red Micaceous, in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (only SPAL sites with gridded collection of surface finds; frequencies based on weight of all period sherds from vacuumed grid squares). The mapping of the Metamorphic and the Neogene units, related to the sources of the two local pottery types, is based on *Petrocheilos 1966* (D. Nenova; KIP)

Fig. 7: Distribution of the most common pithoi (rim) types in both local fabrics (Mudstone-tempered and the Red Micaceous) in SPAL sites across the area covered by the KIP survey (D. Nenova; KIP)

ACHAIA and ARKADIA

The Foundation and Rise to Local Prominence of the Settlement on Mygdalia Hill, near Patras

*Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki*¹ – *Constantinos Paschalidis*²

Abstract: The ongoing excavations on the hill of Mygdalia near Patras give us the opportunity of a comprehensive study of domestic and tomb material and provide means of understanding early Mycenaean western Achaia. Mygdalia was founded in the transitional MH III/LH I period and became a local centre in the early Mycenaean period. The settlement was built on three successive terraces. The lower terrace was supported by a massive enclosure and retaining wall that seems to be part of the original plan. Substantial architectural remains, including a large building, floor deposits, pottery and metal finds as well as a tholos tomb of LH IIB–IIIA1 date testify to the rise of a local elite. The transition to the Palatial period was troubled, as witnessed by the abandonment of buildings and the plundering of the tholos tomb.

Keywords: Achaia, Mygdalia, enclosure wall, monumental building, domestic pottery, metal finds, tholos tomb

The Mycenaean Settlement of Mygdalia

Mygdalia hill lies to the southeast of the city of Patras and its fertile plain. It is an extension of the foothills of the Panachaikon Mountain range and rises to 386 m. It is a naturally fortified site with particularly steep slopes, covered by low vegetation and some almond trees, hence the name Mygdalia. The coastline is less than 5 km away, but, besides fishing, the area provides ample



Fig. 1: Map of Achaia (P. Feleris)

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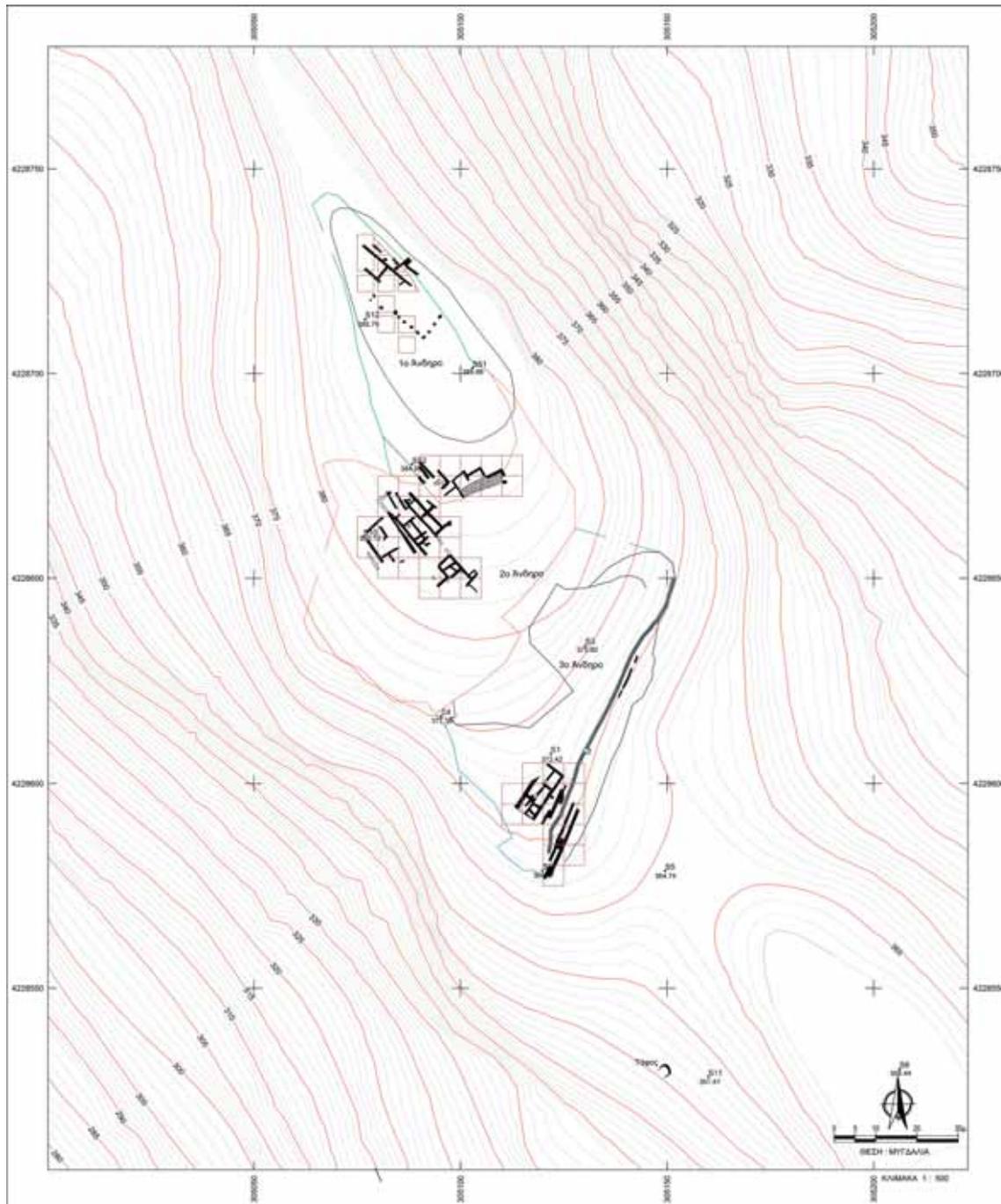


Fig. 2: Topographical plan of the excavation on Mygdalia hill (2017) (L. Marinopoulos)

means for subsistence: arable land, hilly areas for herding and two streams that run along the west and east side of the oblong hill and supply fresh water all year long. From the top, there is an excellent view of the extended plain of Patras as far to the west as Teichos Dymaion and the Ionian Islands, and to the Aitolian coast across the straits to the north (Fig. 1). The Mycenaean settlement spreads across an area of 6500 m² (0.65ha) in three successive terraces (numbered 1, 2 and 3) on the summit of the hill (Figs. 2–3).



Fig. 3: Aerial view of the excavation on Mygdalia hill. Terraces 1, 2, 3 (2017) (photo: P. Feleris)

Mygdalia I

The beginnings of the settlement go back to the transitional period of MH III/LH I or to LH I early. The building of a strong enclosure/retaining wall that supported the lowest terrace from the southeast, where the settlement is still more accessible, was an act of the first settlers. It seems part of the initial planning and required communal effort to secure the boundaries of the settlement and solidify the claims of the inhabitants on the land.

The wall is built of roughly cut large and medium-size stones, readily available since the limestone bedrock of the hill provides ample material for building. It is now partly covered by a modern dry-wall, built of stones from destroyed Mycenaean houses, which runs in exactly the same direction. The latter is a boundary of land property, still acknowledged by the shepherds herding their goats in the area. The wall is 4.00–4.10 m wide and runs from east to west following the edge of the terrace. We were able to follow it for 50 m, but the excavation is far from complete. The exterior face is well built, but the interior face is not clear, so we tend to look at it more as a retaining wall than a defensive wall (Fig. 4).

There is evidence that the area of the wall was apparently used as a communal open space, where collective outdoor activities like food preparation and consumption could take place. A makeshift 'kitchen' used a space measuring 1.30 × 0.60 m on the wall, close to its interior face. An assemblage of domestic pottery was excavated there in 2015. Some of



Fig. 4: Exterior face of the wall on Terrace 3 (photo: L. Papazoglou-Manioudaki)



Fig. 5: a. Cooking pot; b. Matt-painted pottery (photos: A. Manioudakis)



Fig. 6: Unpainted hydria with burnished surface (photo: A. Manioudakis)

the pottery is typical of Achaia like a cooking pot of western Achaian type³ (Fig. 5a) and a matt-painted stemmed jar, decorated on the body and the foot with solid triangles (Fig. 5b), a motif common in Achaia and also known in Aitolia.⁴ The body fragment of another jar has a wavy line at the base of the neck and panels on the shoulder, the vertical elements consist of black lines framing a net pattern.⁵ This jar and the unpainted hydria with burnished surface (Fig. 6) belong to mainstream wares with wide distribution and suggest a MH III/LH I or rather a LH I early date. It is at this time that we witness walled settlements on the mainland that continue to flourish in the early Mycenaean period,⁶ while Mygdalia is the first settlement which has been documented as fortified in early Mycenaean Achaia.⁷

On Terrace 2 we have an array of densely built houses with rectangular rooms and semi-open places and courtyards. They occupy different levels, following the mild slope of the hill, just like a modern Greek village. A floor deposit has been preserved in these rooms (Fig. 7, marked in blue). There were numerous shattered vases and small finds, among them a local matt-painted stemmed goblet with pointed handles, decorated with solid triangles, goblets with burnished surfaces and wishbone handles (Fig. 8) of types common in Achaia (Aigion, Pagona)⁸ or Aitolia (Thermon,

³ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 65, fig. 50 (Drakotrypa, Pharai region).

⁴ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, 135–136, fig. 11, with references.

⁵ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 65, fig. 51b (Drakotrypa, Pharai region, the pattern is hardly visible).

⁶ Phialon 2011, 151–157; Philippa-Touchais 2016, 647.

⁷ For excavated settlement sites in Achaia, see Rizio 2011.

⁸ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, 137, fig. 17, with references.

Chalkis),⁹ fragments of large jars or hydrias decorated with matt paint,¹⁰ hand-made monochrome jugs and unpainted amphoras, cooking pots and fragments of small grey-ware jugs with burnished surfaces. Fragments of a Vapheio cup (Fig. 9) decorated with a stylised foliate band belong to a common type in LH I/IIA, known from settlements sites, and may have originated in Messenia or Elis.¹¹

A rectangular grave was opened in a small courtyard next to the LH I room, to the north of the wall made by a block cut out of the bedrock.¹² The grave, measuring 0.93×0.48 m, was lined with stone-walls at four sides and was covered by four heavy slabs. It contained the remains of an infant and neonates without burial gifts. The preliminary report of the study of the bones by Olivia Jones suggests that there were at least three individuals buried in the grave, an eight- to fourteen-month-old infant (a case of infant mortality) and two unborn children, four to five and seven to nine lunar months old, the result of miscarriages. It is interesting to note the reaction of the living to these deaths. Infants or stillborn/premature-born children were considered to deserve a proper burial within the precincts of the family dwellings. What is of interest is that the infant was placed along one side of the tomb, while both the stillborn/premature babies were deposited at the opposite end, in other words, the burials were distinguished according to who had seen the light of life and who had not. Samples of the bones were processed through AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) by Olivia Jones and Johannes van der Plicht, and the preliminary results give us dates ranging from 1680 to 1530 BC that correspond roughly to a LH I/IIA date.

On top of the hill, on Terrace 1, the soil deposits range from 5 to 10 cm in depth. The extensive construction work for the building of an important LH IIIC mansion and later of an early Greek temple (Mygdalia IV and V)¹³ virtually extinguished all traces of earlier habitation. Remnants of a wall and fragments of pottery such as the foot of a local stemmed jar decorated with solid triangles, provide a terminus ante quem for habitation on Terrace 1, contemporary to the finds from the Terraces 2 and 3.

The founding of the Mygdalia settlement coincides with a period of settlement growth and an era of expanding habitation in the Mycenaean world. The settlement at Pagona, known through rescue excavations in this Patras suburb, was certainly inhabited in the same period.¹⁴ A cluster of rectangular built or cist graves in the area of Psila Alonia, in downtown Patras,¹⁵ has produced

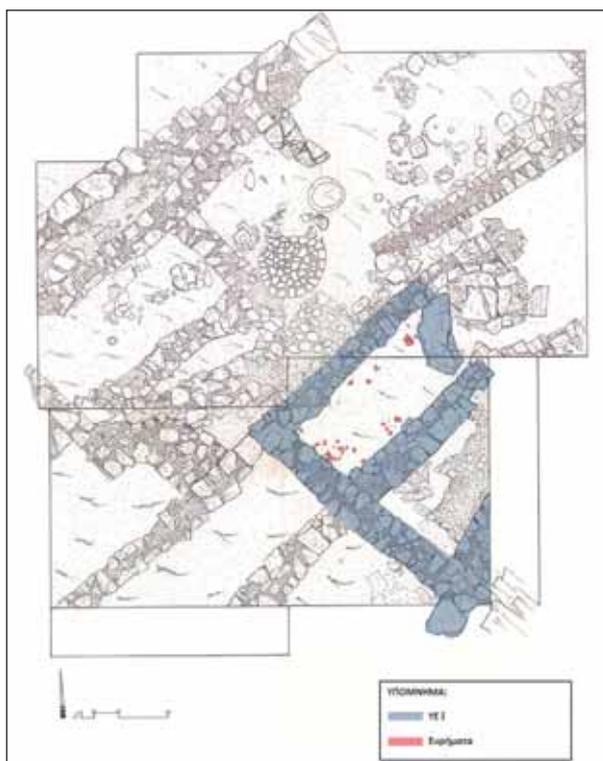


Fig. 7: Terrace 2. Plan of LH I house and intra muros grave (drawing: A. Manioudakis, 2017)

⁹ Dietz 2007, 86–87, fig. 2.

¹⁰ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 65, fig. 51a (Drakotrypa, Pharaï region).

¹¹ Lolos 1987, 434, fig. 497 (Samikon in Elis); Moschos 2000, 13, fig. 5 (Portes in Achaia); Wardle – Wardle 2003, 149–150, fig. 2 (Thermon in Aitolia).

¹² For the intramural burials of neonates, infants and children at Mygdalia, see Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 199–202.

¹³ Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis 2017, 454–455, pl. 175; Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis, forthcoming.

¹⁴ Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010; Rizio 2011, 15, 53–54.

¹⁵ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, 133–134.



Fig. 8: Matt-painted and unpainted burnished pottery (photo: A. Manioudakis)

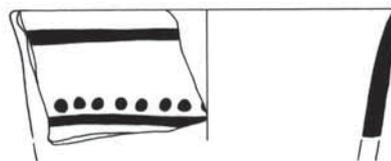


Fig. 9: Fragment of LH I/IIA Vapheio cup. Scale 1:2 (drawing: N. Petropoulos)

poor furnishings, the base of a stemmed jar and a simple cup, both with matt-painted decoration of solid triangles. They betray the existence of a settlement of MH III/LH I date in the Patras Plain. Beyond Patras, built graves dated to LH I were also found in nearby Thea,¹⁶ whereas LH I tumuli with built graves were excavated at Portes, close to Elis.¹⁷ The pottery of Mygdalia seems to be of the same chronological horizon as the long-known finds of the first phase of the settlement at Drakotrypa in the area of Pharai, southeast of Patras.¹⁸ The substantial architectural remains at Drakotrypa are still virtually unpublished and there is an ambiguity over the dating of its two main architectural phases. Though a MH date was originally suggested for the foundation of the settle-

ment, a LH I date has also been put forward by Oliver Dickinson,¹⁹ and this is certainly supported by the recent finds at the settlement of Mygdalia. The domestic pottery such as the cooking pots or the matt-painted jars from Drakotrypa now find exact parallels in the Mygdalia settlement material. There is a marked difference to the LH I assemblage from Aigion in eastern Achaia, which participated in the commercial networks of the Corinthian Gulf and where the pottery included matt-painted, Mainland Polychrome, Aiginetan ware, Lustrous Decorated Minoanising ware and Argive Mycenaean pottery.²⁰

Mygdalia II

Extensive architectural remains, pottery and metal finds of the LH IIB/IIIA1 period define a period of floruit at Mygdalia. On Terrace 2, immediately below a large LH IIIC storeroom,²¹ a spacious rectangular house with complex architectural plan (Fig. 10 marked in green) is only partly excavated. Its central elongated rooms measure 5.5 × 2.0m and 5.5 × 2.5m; doors (their thresholds are still visible) facilitated the circulation between the rooms. Building activities in

¹⁶ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1999, 272–273, figs. 14–19.

¹⁷ Moschos 2000, 9–20.

¹⁸ Giannopoulos 2008, 46–48, figs. 11–12, with references; Rizio 2011, 49–51.

¹⁹ Dickinson 1977, 23.

²⁰ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, 134–141.

²¹ Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis 2017, 456–457, pls. 180–182.



Fig. 10: Plan of the LH II house (drawing: A. Manioudakis, 2017)

LH IIIC have left little room for stratified deposits, but an unpainted LH IIB goblet has survived in a corner and a pithos was found in situ in the main room. An almost intact LH IIB Vapheio cup with flaring upper body and foliate band decoration²² has survived beneath the paved floor of the LH IIIC storeroom (Figs. 11–12).

Two cist graves built of vertical slabs and a covering slab, containing the remains of small children and infants, were excavated in open spaces near this building in 2015 and 2016 and one more 10m to the south. No gifts were found with the burials, as in the case of the above-mentioned built tomb of the infant and the stillborn/premature-born children. The bones are currently being studied by O. Jones,²³ but the interments seem to have the same date as all the *intra muros* child burials of Mygdalia I, that is LH I/IIA.

Painted pottery has been found in refuse fills in nearby trenches on Terrace 2: Vapheio cups, shallow cups, high-swung handles, and a jar decorated with wavy stems that finds parallels in the settlement strata at Aigion²⁴ and is close to material decorated with “flammas”, typical of the Krisa settlement in Phokis.²⁵ A rectangular construction made of vertical slabs near a wall was meant for the storage of household ware. It was found filled with pottery, including a monochrome goblet, painted red inside and out. Points of interest are the fragments of misfired vases recovered in a LH IIB/IIIA1 fill, such as a baggy alabastron with rock pattern, suggesting a pottery kiln and local pottery production.

In July 2016, on Terrace 3, in the area of the wall, we started excavating a building with strongly built walls. The width of the northwest wall reaches 1 m.²⁶ Its southeast wall runs parallel to the enclosure wall. The distance between these walls is about 1.60 m. It seems that this corridor could serve as a road or a communal place, but the excavation is still in an early stage in

²² Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2003, 436, fig. 19; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 508, fig. 12 (Mygdalia tholos).

²³ Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 199–202.

²⁴ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 316, fig. 4.

²⁵ RMDP, 744, fig. 287a.

²⁶ Cf. Van de Moortel 2009, 360 (Building D).



Fig. 11: LH IIB Vapheio cup beneath the later floor (photo: C. Paschalidis)



Fig. 12: LH IIB Vapheio cup. Scale 1:2 (photo: A. Manioudakis; drawing: N. Petropoulos)

this area. The excavation proceeded in investigating a quite large interior space measuring 4.5×5.0 m. There is a partition wall in the middle, and the two rectangular rooms measure 5.0×1.85 m and 5.0×2.20 m respectively. Though the excavation is still in progress, the evidence at hand allows us to speak of an impressive building with a complex architectural plan and an upper floor. (Figs. 13–14).

The room was covered by a destruction level that has remained undisturbed by subsequent rebuilding or later intervention. In the destruction fill, among massive blocks of stone, an assemblage of bronze objects and stone jewellery was found. They were located in the stone and earth rubble and at slightly varying depths from the present surface, suggesting an upper floor and a small box that had fallen from the floor above, scattering its contents. The majority was dispersed in a small area of 2.0×1.50 m in the eastern corner of the room, while a few pieces were found further to the north along the wall. A curved bronze plate looks like the sheathing of a wooden box that may have contained at least part of this assemblage. Some parts of hinges have also been recovered. The bronzes include more than 15 knives of various types (Fig. 15), five tweezers of the open spring type with flattened ends, a bronze ring or earring with attachment (a thin broad



Fig. 13: Aerial view of the House of the Bronzes and the wall. Terrace 3 (2017) (photo: P. Feleris)



Fig. 14: Plan of the House of the Bronzes and the wall (2018) (drawing: A. Manioudakis)



Fig. 15: Bronze knives (photo: A. Manioudakis)



Fig. 16: Bronze projectile
(photo: A. Manioudakis)



Fig. 17: Bronze 'arrow point'
(photo: A. Manioudakis)

strip bent into a knot), known from a LH IIIA1 context at Ayios Stephanos,²⁷ five needles and numerous other fragments.

A projectile (Fig. 16) with a pyramidal head and rectangular shaft can be added to the list of projectiles known from Nichoria (MME tholos tomb and settlement),²⁸ the Menelaion in Lakonia,²⁹ the latter of LH IIIA1 date, and from the fill of the LH IIB/III A1 chamber tomb south of Grave Circle B at Mycenae.³⁰ Initially classified as a type of arrowhead, use as a wood or ivory carving tool has been suggested for the piece at LH IIIC Lefkandi.³¹ Contrary to the more common projectiles, the leaf-shaped 'arrow point' (Fig. 17) has few parallels on the mainland (Mycenae, Thebes) or the islands (Phylakopi on Melos, Thermi on Lesbos) and is considered a rare type with affinities to Cyprus.³²

Two rings of seashell; stone, faience and seashell beads, as well as stone buttons or spindle whorls are also part of the finished artefacts recovered in the rubble of a single room, along with bronzes. There are also stone tools including two grinders, one of heavy dark-greenish stone, two small polishing tools, whetstones, flakes of flint and obsidian along with a fragment of white quartz that provide material evidence for a workshop, though we do not have any unfinished products nor any secure evidence yet for bronze working at Mygdalia. The clay spindle whorls, a sherd modified as a loom weight and, more interestingly, the fragment of a bowl with inner handle, which could represent a so-called 'spinning bowl', known from tombs and settlements in Messenia and recently also found at Kakovatos in Elis,³³ suggest spinning and weaving activities.

The pottery comprises closed and open vessels such as the tall hydria (over 30 cm) decorated with bands and splashes on the handles (Fig. 18), a fairly large shape usually found in fragments in

²⁷ French – Janko 2008, 447, no. 7012, fig. 10.1.

²⁸ Wilkie 1992, 273–277, 307; Catling – Hughes-Brock 1992, 621–622, figs. 5.106, 10.7–8.

²⁹ Catling 2009, 268, 270, fig. 321, pl. 115.

³⁰ Konstantinidi-Syvridi – Paschalidis 2015, 420–421 (NMA 18514b).

³¹ Evely 2006, 282–283, fig. 5.9.3.

³² Avila 1983, 112–113, pl. 28.

³³ For spinning bowls found in Messenia and Triphylia cf. Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume.



Fig. 18: Painted hydria (photo: A. Manioudakis)

settlement strata, which was used for storing and carrying rather than pouring.³⁴ A large rounded alabastron is decorated with net pattern on the shoulder and concentric circles on the base.³⁵ The open shapes include a monochrome-painted shallow spouted cup and unpainted ware, goblets and a two-handled cup. They had fallen from the second floor where the assemblage of bronzes and minor artefacts was also originally stored. They suggest a date for the destruction of the building at the very end of LH IIIA1 or early in LH IIIA2, the beginning of the Palatial period.

An assemblage of pottery of LH IIB/III A1 date has been reported from the settlement at Pagona in the Patras Plain.³⁶ Also the inland settlement at Pharai may represent an equivalent to Mygdalia. Judging from the published plans, both Ayios Athanasios and Drakotrypa, mentioned above,³⁷ feature houses with complex plans and intra muros graves, but the question of their date and their association with Tholos Tombs A and B at Pharai remains open. Based on a monochrome krater, the second phase of habitation of Drakotrypa was originally dated to LH IIIB,³⁸ though a LH IIIA date has also been suggested; this assumption is based on the parallel of a similar krater from Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia.³⁹ The argument for a LH IIIA2 early date for the second phase of Drakotrypa is strengthened by other finds from the settlement strata such as an unpainted shallow angular bowl.⁴⁰ The study and re-evaluation of the settlement material from Drakotrypa and the nearby settlement of Ayios Athanasios, which is closer to the tholos tombs, seems long overdue, and there is currently a new investigation of the area in progress.⁴¹ The situation is again different at Aigion in eastern Achaia, where LH IIB/III A1 material from settlement

³⁴ Mountjoy 2008, 303 (Ayios Stephanos); Thomas 2011, 192, no. 44, fig. 8 (Tsoungiza).

³⁵ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2003, 437, fig. 18 (Mygdalia tholos); cf. Thomas 2011, 187–188, no. 42, fig. 7 (Tsoungiza).

³⁶ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2001, 36, pl. 2.2; Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 122.

³⁷ Above n. 18.

³⁸ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 240, figs. 174b, 264a.

³⁹ Mountjoy 2008, 312, no. 3108, fig. 6.8.

⁴⁰ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 116, figs. 178g, 268b; cf. Thomas 2011, 215–216, fig. 24 (Tsoungiza).

⁴¹ Aktypi et al. 2019, 324–325.

deposits includes a high percentage of imported Argive pottery.⁴² An early Mycenaean settlement has recently been investigated in the area of Helike.⁴³

The sheer number of metal objects and minor artefacts found at Mygdalia in 2016 more than doubles the number of early Mycenaean bronze objects known from Achaia.⁴⁴ Otherwise, they come almost exclusively from elite tombs: gold spirals, bronze knives and pins from the Mygdalia tholos tomb; a bronze pin, a knife and tweezers from the Kallithea tholos, both in the Patras area; and the hoard of bronze vases and weapons, including a silver vessel, found outside Tholos B at Pharai (Katarraktis, locality Rhodia), which is unique in Achaia. The fragmentary vases recovered around the hoard date within the LH IIIA1 period.⁴⁵ In respect to settlement material, we know that a bronze chisel and a sickle come from Drakotrypa, but their exact context is not known.⁴⁶ In eastern Achaia there is a marked absence of metal finds in the early chamber tombs of Aigion, but an elite burial of LH IIB–IIIA1 date in the chamber tomb cemetery at Vrysari near Kalavryta was furnished with bronzes (dagger, razor, pin with double spiral terminals) and glass beads.⁴⁷

On the mainland, metal hoards in domestic contexts are not common at the end of the early Mycenaean period. A number of bronzes have been found in settlements like Nichoria in Messenia and Ayios Stephanos or the Menelaion in Lakonia. The case is different at Ayios Vasileios in Lakonia, which early acquired palatial status. In Room 3, excavation has unearthed a wooden case containing type A swords, which had been left to rot when Building A was abandoned early in LH IIIA2, a date close to the abandonment of the House of the Bronzes near the wall at Mygdalia. Apparently, neither their symbolic value as heirlooms nor their actual value meant enough to the people to retrieve the swords. The same applies to the bronze vases, which were found in the area of the feasts,⁴⁸ and that all points to a critical situation that signified the decline of the settlement. The troubled transition to the Palatial period is attested in settlements from the Peloponnese to the Euboian Gulf.⁴⁹ The beginning of LH IIIA2 was marked by destructions at important newly excavated early Mycenaean sites such as Ayios Vasileios in Lakonia, Iklaina in Messenia⁵⁰ or Mitrou (Building D) in East Lokris.⁵¹

At Mygdalia, the House of the Bronzes near the wall permits us to have a glimpse of an early Mycenaean dwelling, occupied in LH IIB/IIIA1 and early LH IIIA2 that remained undisturbed by later occupation of the site. It now measures c. 20 m in length and 7 m in width, following the northeast/southwest axis. It is divided into six main spaces, while a structure with partition walls, in the southwest corner, could represent the remains of a staircase that led to the upper floor. Its entrance had been on the narrow west side. It seems that the retaining wall was reinforced, and a pillar was constructed to support the exterior wall of the building. Its contents have remained un plundered, so we have an unexpected hoard of bronzes and other small finds that have been safely placed in space and time along with almost intact domestic pottery. The floor deposits in the rooms consisted of decorated and undecorated pottery that comprised goblets, kylikes, cups, jugs, hydrias and kraters, i.e. drinking and pouring equipment, appropriate for a communal feasting.⁵²

⁴² Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 315–320, figs. 7–11.

⁴³ Kolia 2011, 201–204, fig. 3.

⁴⁴ Kayafa 2008, 220–223, tab. 6.

⁴⁵ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1999, 278–279, with references; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 514–515, fig. 19; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2020, 132–137, fig. 7.2–9.

⁴⁶ Papadopoulos 1978/1979, 153–156, figs. 305c, 307d, 338c, 341a.

⁴⁷ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1999, 276–278, figs. 28–33; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 321; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2020, 137–138, fig. 7.10.

⁴⁸ Vasilogamvrou 2013, 76–78, pls. 50a, 51a.

⁴⁹ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1999, 279; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 320; Kramer-Hajos 2008, 125–128; Niemeier 2016, 305–306.

⁵⁰ Cosmopoulos 2015, 41.

⁵¹ Vitale 2008, 229–230; Van de Moortel 2009, 360; Van de Moortel – Zahou 2012, 1135–1146.

⁵² Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 205–206, fig. 90; Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis, forthcoming.

An earthquake may have been the cause of the destruction, and earthquakes are always a possibility in Achaia, but not sufficient cause for the abandonment of a building. It is intriguing that the inhabitants did not bother to clear the debris and recover the bronzes and the jewellery. They seem to have left in haste and the actual value of the items was not so significant to possibly endanger themselves. If we consider the plundering of the Mygdalia tholos tomb in the same period, then we can speak of a moment of severe crisis in the life of the settlement and of a troubled transition to the Palatial period. It seems that LH IIIA2 early marks the end of the early Mycenaean period at Mygdalia and the same applies for Mitrou in East Lokris.⁵³ The lack of evidence suggests that occupation of the site was on a small scale in Palatial times (Mygdalia III) until its new floruit in LH IIIC (Mygdalia IV).⁵⁴

A complex architectural plan and evidence of rich domestic strata indicate a level of sophistication at Mygdalia towards the end of the early Mycenaean era. The extra muros cemetery provides additional information on its social complexity.

The Tombs of Mygdalia

A built apsidal tomb (estimated height 2.75 m, max. d. 2.80 m) was located at a distance of 60 m from the retaining wall to the west on the western slope of the hill. Though completely plundered and to some extent destroyed, it was already partly visible before excavation, its structure betraying an early Mycenaean date. Traces of the tumulus covering the tomb, using pebble stones are still in place.⁵⁵

A tholos tomb has been excavated on the northwest slope, near the western end of the oblong hill and at about 500 m distance from the settlement. It has a circular chamber approx. 4.30 m in diameter, the second largest in Achaia after Tholos B at Pharai (5.20 m in diameter). The Mygdalia tholos and the other known tholoi in Achaia, the Kallithea tholos in the Patras region, two at Pharai, and two at Portes, the latter an inland location on the way from Elis to Achaia,⁵⁶ belong to the group of tombs in northwest Greece that are of relatively small size. They do not feature a stomion, but their dromoi, which are partly covered with slabs, lead directly to the chamber. They are built of roughly cut, rectangular stones of local limestone, placed in irregular rows. Patterns of construction and size seem not to be the only common traits. There is strong evidence that their main use dates to the LH IIB–IIIA1 period, and then the funerary remains were severely plundered and disturbed.

In the case of the Mygdalia tholos, the skeletal material and the finds from the floor deposit were shattered and scattered all around. A pit, dug in the floor, was also disturbed, and fires had been kindled on the floor. The pottery (115 partially preserved pots) dates to LH IIB–IIIA1, a few pieces may be of LH IIA and LH IIIA2 early date. The vessels comprise decorated pottery including closed shapes such as piriform jars, baggy alabaster, squat jugs, jugs, handleless jars, a stirrup jar, and a straight-sided alabastron, and open shapes such as Vapheio cups; shallow cups; Ephyraean, monochrome or undecorated goblets; grey-ware and cooking pots. A clay figurine of proto-Phi type has painted arms and hands. Some small metal objects include gold hair ornaments, two bronze knives and a pin ending in spirals. A stone pendant and a whetstone, along with amber beads, semi-precious stone, glass, and faience beads complete the picture.⁵⁷

The anthropological material is currently being studied by O. Jones. The main floor deposit contained at least 26 individuals, among whom three males, one female and a child of about

⁵³ Vitale 2012, 1148.

⁵⁴ Papazoglou-Manioudaki – Paschalidis 2017.

⁵⁵ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 502–504, figs. 2–3.

⁵⁶ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 514–517, with references.

⁵⁷ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2003; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 504–513, figs. 4–19; Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 202–205, pls. 85–89.

five years were identified. There was not enough material for the identification of the sex of the remaining individuals. The later use of the tomb for unfurnished burials or as an ossuary was rather dishonouring to the dead and this is a situation attested in many tholoi in the Peloponnese.⁵⁸ For a long time, there was no way to date the rather hasty and unfurnished burials that were nevertheless deposited in successive strata above the main floor. Nor was it possible to measure the time span that elapsed between the primary use of the tomb as an elite burial ground of the Mygdalia settlement and the later burials of rather undistinguished individuals. Even the date of the robbing of the tholos tomb, as was also the case at Nichoria,⁵⁹ could not be more accurately determined than by a terminus post quem.

Recent radiocarbon dating obtained by AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) in Groningen has finally shed some light on the obscure later history of the tomb.⁶⁰ The plundered and disturbed main floor was found covered with a thin layer of earth and small stones. On it an almost intact burial was deposited, the deceased was laid on his back with his knees bent in opposite directions. Other human and animal bones were deposited on the same level that can now be dated to the early 14th century BC, that is, almost immediately after the plundering and abandonment of the main floor. AMS has also provided evidence for dating the final burial level to the 12th century BC, thus the intriguing afterlife of the tomb also took place within the Mycenaean period.

The AMS dating supports the argument that the transition from the Prepalatial to the Palatial period witnessed incidents and casualties. There is compelling evidence that early Mycenaean tholos tombs in Achaia and elsewhere were heavily disturbed and plundered after their main period of use, but the specific date and the party responsible have remained obscure.⁶¹ We now have solid evidence that, at least in the case of the Mygdalia tholos, this intriguing course of events took place in the early Palatial period. The destruction and abandonment of the House of the Bronzes was not an isolated incident in the troubled transition to a new society emerging in the Patras area, whose members were now buried in chamber tomb cemeteries.⁶² The two monumental LH IIIA1 chamber tombs at Voudeni,⁶³ which coexisted for some time with the Mygdalia tholos, document the rise of another centre, while the Palatial period seems to be a time of recess for Mygdalia.

The early Mycenaean era in western Achaia is a period of a fragmented political landscape and of the dispersion of power in local centres that had the means of accumulating wealth. These are located all the way from Elis through Portes (literally the gateway) to the inland plain of Pharaï and the seaside area of Patras. Their internal hierarchy and their individual response to the challenges of the time remain to be determined by further research and study. The excavation and the study of the material at Mygdalia are still ongoing, but it has already given us a sense of understanding an important and underestimated period in western Achaia.

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⁵⁸ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2003, 449–450; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 514–517; Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 203–205, figs. 86–88.

⁵⁹ Wilkie 1992, 257.

⁶⁰ Jones et al. 2018; Papazoglou-Manioudaki et al. 2019, 203–205.

⁶¹ Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 508–517.

⁶² Wright 2008, 147–178.

⁶³ Kolonas 2009; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2020, 138–140.

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Early Mycenaean Arkadia: Space and Place(s) of an Inland and Mountainous Region

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Abstract: The concept of space is an abstract and sometimes a conventional term, but places – where people dwell, (inter)act and gain experiences – contribute decisively to the formation of the main characteristics and the identity of its residents. Arkadia, in the heart of the Peloponnese, is a landlocked country with small valleys and basins surrounded by high mountains, which, according to the ancient literature, offered to its inhabitants a hard and laborious life. Its rough terrain made Arkadia always a less attractive area for archaeological investigation. However, due to its position in the centre of the Peloponnese, Arkadia is an inevitable passage for anyone moving along or across the peninsula. The long life of small and medium-sized agrarian communities undoubtedly owes more to their foundation at crossroads connecting the inland with the Peloponnesian coast, than to their potential for economic growth based on the resources of the land. However, sites such as Analipsis, on its east-southeastern borders, the cemetery at Palaiokastro and the ash altar on Mount Lykaion, both in the southwest part of Arkadia, indicate that the area had a Bronze Age past, and raise many new questions. In this paper, I discuss the role of Arkadia in early Mycenaean times based on settlement patterns and excavation data, and I investigate the relation of these inland communities with high-ranking central places. In other words, this is an attempt to set place(s) into space, supporting the idea that the central region of the Peloponnese was a separated, but not isolated part of it, comprising regions that are also diversified among themselves.

Keywords: Arkadia, Analipsis, Mount Lykaion, ash altar, Palaiokastro, mountainous habitation, hybrid tholos-chamber tombs

Introduction

Arkadia was always and still is a less attractive region for excavations and surveys in comparison to the rest of the Peloponnese. Its mountainous and rough terrain complicates not only archaeological investigations but also the life of its inhabitants, which according to the ancient authors was “hard and laborious”.² Consequently, the situation at the heart of the Peloponnese is obscure, especially for the transitional phase between the MH and early LH times. Few extensive or intensive surveys have been conducted, few excavations have been carried out, fewer have been published properly and the information provided by preliminary reports often raises more questions than it answers.³

The Boundaries of Arkadia and its Mountainous Character

It has also often been a matter of debate whether our geographically oriented, seemingly objective perception of the Mycenaean ‘world’ had any meaning in later prehistory.⁴ Whether the centre of the Peloponnese was a real, existent and separate geographical region during LH times and whether the boundaries of prehistoric Arkadia coincided with the boundaries of Arkadia of the

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² Pol. 4,21,1.

³ For an overview of earlier research in Arkadia, see Salavoura 2015, 17–22.

⁴ Maran 2011, 282.

historical period are open questions. Even when written sources become available, many scholars often end up defining Arkadia not according to the land that belonged to it, but, in contrast, on the basis of what is left over from the other powerful Peloponnesian ‘states’.⁵ Ancient Arkadia was limited to the mountains and the plateaus of the central Peloponnese and did not border the sea.⁶ In the north it included a large part of the modern province of Kalavryta (modern southern Achaia), the region of ancient Kleitor (the valley of Kalavryta, Kleitoria and the Aroania Mountain range), as well as the region of Psophis and Mount Aphrodision. The basins of Pheneos and Stymphalos as well as Mount Kyllene in the modern region of western Corinthia also belonged to Arkadia, as did the southern regions of Skoteini and Alea. Moreover, the southwest part of Elis, the regions of Alipheira, Phigaleia and Vasses, with the well-known temple of Apollo Epikourios, Theisoa of Lykaion and the modern area of Andritsaina were part of ancient Arkadia. The modern province of Kynouria, the Thyreatis of antiquity, was, in early historical times, the border area between the two powerful states of Argos and Sparta and was a bone of contention between them for almost a millennium.⁷ The important centre of Analipsis is located at a node where the borders of Kynouria, Arkadia and Lakonia met. Essentially, the geographical area defined as Arkadia is identical to the central mountains of the Peloponnese. There is no proof that this region corresponded to a real administrative unit of the Mycenaean world even in the Palatial period.⁸ However, this conventional approach provides us with the framework to sum up the situation in the centre of the Peloponnese.

According to hydrological criteria, Arkadia can be divided into two different parts: in the eastern part a series of closed karst basins predominate, which were drained by sinkholes. In the western part of Arkadia the two main rivers, the Alpheios and the Ladon, and numerous other streams form small fertile valleys and constitute the natural routes facilitating communication with the western Peloponnese and the Ionian Sea.⁹ A large percentage of the region lies at high altitudes (1000m above sea level), where flysch basins lie between rugged limestone formations offering excellent summer grazing, whereas in winter they turn into harsh, inhospitable landscapes, forcing grazing animals to retreat to warmer lower altitudes.¹⁰ Livestock raising has always been the backbone of the Arkadian economy that shaped the idea of an exemplary pastoral country.¹¹ Of course, many questions remain pending as regards the livestock breeding. The mountain pastures and the harsh winters presuppose the movement of the flocks to the lowlands, a practice exercised until today. The occasional flooding of the eastern basins in winter and spring might have constituted an additional reason for the transhumance of the flocks.¹² People coming to the uplands in the summer in order to herd their flocks would perhaps have lived in temporary, seasonal dwellings, which might have left no substantial archaeological remains. However, transhumance does not always mean lack of permanent settlements, but rather the careful choice of the location of the settlement.

Arkadia was never self-sufficient, because the natural resources were not adequate to feed the entire population, especially in times of population growth. The lack of some resources – the most

⁵ Nielsen 2002, 22–23, 89–92, 109–112; see also Morgan 1999, 382–386.

⁶ Strab. 8,8,1: “Ἀρκαδία δ’ ἔστιν ἐν μέσῳ μὲν τῆς Πελοποννήσου, πλείστην δὲ χώραν ὄρεινὴν ἀποτέμνεται” (Arkadia lies in the middle of the Peloponnesus, and most of the country which it includes is mountainous); Paus. 8,1,3: “...Ἀρκάδες, τὸ ἐντὸς οἰκοῦσιν, ἀποκλειόμενοι θαλάσσης πανταχόθεν” (...the Arkadians are shut off from the sea on every side and dwell in the interior).

⁷ Faklaris 1990, 33–39.

⁸ Hope Simpson 1981, 4: “There is, of course, no guarantee that any such geographical groupings reflect actual Mycenaean *political* combinations”, 216: “elsewhere (outside Pylos) there are few clues as to the identification of any further large units or ‘states’”.

⁹ Philippson – Kirsten 1959, 294–296.

¹⁰ The same is valid for the basins of northern Greece, see Bintliff 2012, 39.

¹¹ Hom. Il. 2,605.

¹² For the possibility of grazing on fallow fields in winter and the potential for extensive use of highland pastures in summer, see Halstead 1996, 32–33, 35.



Fig. 1: Map of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (E. Salavoura)

characteristic examples are metals and salt – and the deficiency of produce provided additional reasons for breaking the isolation and promoting the development of relations and contacts with other regions.

The Early Mycenaean Sites in Arkadia

The degree of our ignorance concerning early LH Arkadia is also related to our difficulty in defining the pottery of the MH III and LH I periods, especially since the latter is notorious for its ‘low visibility’ in surveys.¹³ It is widely accepted that the transitional phase MH III/LH I is not well understood and that the LH I material is in general restricted in number and difficult to identify.¹⁴ This inability to distinguish MH II/III from LH I material at a particular site makes any assumptions about the continuous occupation of a site throughout these periods premature, since a possible occupational gap cannot be detected.¹⁵ Thus, any attempt to understand the changes in the settlement pattern at the end of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the central Peloponnese is problematic. Well-stratified deposits coming from excavations and systematic studies are still missing. Moreover, upland communities used other materials for their

¹³ Maran 1995, 67 (with further bibliography).

¹⁴ Wright 2008, 230. We often cannot distinguish MH III from LH I and frequently refer to assemblages as MH III/LH I. Even in Messenia, characteristic types of the Mycenaean cultural *koiné* are fully adopted only in LH III, see Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

¹⁵ For this problem, see also Maran 1995, 68.

	MH	LH I	LH II		LH III			Sub-Myc.	PG	G
			A	B	A	B	C			
1. Pheneos-Pyrgos/Ancient <i>Pheneos</i>	*				*	*	*			
2. Pheneos-Ayios Charalambos	*	*								*
3. Pheneos-Tsouka/Bouga	*				*					
					(?)					
4. Kandila-Bigiza	*				*	*	*			*
5. Chotoussa-Ayios Georgios	*		*						*	*
6. Vlacherna-Plessa	*				*	*				
7. Orchomenos-Acropolis/Ancient <i>Orchomenos</i>	*					?				*
8. Pikernis-Gortsouli/Ancient <i>Ptolis</i>	*				*	*	*		?	*
9. Nestani-Panigyristra/Ancient <i>Nestani</i>	*	*	*							
10. Loukas-Ayios Georgios	*				*	*				
11. Merkovouni-Ayiolias	*				*	*				
12. Thanas-Stoyia/Megali Rachi	*				*	*				
13. Alea-Temple of Athena Alea	*				*	?	*	*	*	*
14. Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos	*		*							
15. Vouno	*				*	*				
16. Alea-Palaiochori(a) or Synoikismos		?	*		*	*				
17. Alea-Sarantapotamos					*					
18. Psili Vryssi-Vationa	*	*			*	*				
19. Vourvoura-Analipsis	*	*	*	*	*	*				*
20. Kato Asea-Paliokastro	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*
21. Doriza-Ayios Athanasios	*				*					
22. Athenaion-Ayios Georgios	*	*			*	*				
23. Phigaleia-Kourdoubouli	*	*								
24. Lykaion-Prophitis Ilias	*	?	?	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
25. Palaiokastro-Palaiopyrgos	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
26. Dimitsana/Ancient Teuthis	*				*	*				?
27. Karvouni-Sphakovouni	*	*	*	*	*	*				
28. Demetra-Troupes or Damari	*		*		*	*	*		*	
29. Ayios Petros/“ <i>Aphrodite Erykina</i> ” sanctuary	*						*		*	*
30. Tourlada-Palaiopyrgos	*				*	*	*			
31. Kallithea-Philomati			*		*	*	*			
32. Kastria-Kastro	*				*					
33. Kastria-Spilaio Limnon (Cave of the Lakes)	*	?			*					
34. Kandalos-Arnounga/Bouri	*				?					
35. Layovouni-Asphakovouni	*	?								

Tab. 1: Catalogue of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (comprising the subsequent periods of their habitation)

drinking and eating vessels apart from clay, such as leather and wood that are not visible in the archaeological remains. This may have created a misleading picture that may also be due to the dissimilarities provided by the data from field surveys and excavations. With this in mind, I shall sum up our knowledge to date.

The presence of MH pottery has been recorded at 32 sites in the region defined as Arkadia (Tab. 1 and Fig. 1). Only nine of them produced evidence of LH I pottery (nos. 2, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27), extremely few, considering also that in the same area 44 LH IIIA–B sites have been identified.¹⁶ Moreover, these nine LH I sites bear traces of habitation in MH times, thus we cannot exclude the possibility that they belong to the transition between MH and LH I. LH IIA–B is also represented at only ten sites (nos. 9, 14, 16, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31).

All sites which were inhabited in LH I or II also have a MH past, but more than twice as many, at least 19, were abandoned after the MH period and were populated again only in LH III. Therefore, a reduction in the number of settlements is observed and probably also of the population in LH I and II. This is interesting in connection with James Wright's remark that in the valleys of Longopotamos, Nemea and Asopos resettlement began in MH III, suggesting a possible movement of population from Arkadia to other regions.¹⁷

Eastern Arkadia

The northern sites of eastern Arkadia, where continuous habitation from MH to LH I and/or II exists, include the following: Pheneos-Ayios Charalambos (no. 2), which has no LH II material,¹⁸ and Nestani-Panigyristra (ancient Nestani, no. 9),¹⁹ which lies on the road from Sparta to Tripolis and Corinth just before the Artemision mountain pass. The site of Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos (no. 14) near ancient Tegea must correspond to a long-lived settlement, with material from FN/EH until LH IIIA, however LH I seems to be absent.²⁰ A fragment of a LH II Vapheio cup and the lower body of an unpainted LH II–III A goblet are exhibited in the new Museum of Tegea.²¹ The survey by the Norwegian Institute collected MH and LH I material from the site of Psili Vryssi-Vationa (no. 18) at the southeastern end of the Tegean Plain.²² The site at Alea-Palaiochori(a) or Synoikismos (no. 16) seems to have been used in LH II and possibly in LH I, but without a MH past,²³ so this may well represent a newly established hamlet connected to Analipsis. The fact that the site seems to have been abandoned within LH IIIB,²⁴ like Analipsis, forms an additional element confirming their connection. Vourvoura-Analipsis (no. 19), which is the unrivalled centre of the wider region with a long and continuous life from late MH until LH IIIB1, features the one and only tholos tomb of Arkadia (with a diameter of 8.65 m).²⁵ Next to it, on the same low hill, Konstantinos Rhomaios excavated eight small built tombs imitating tholoi.²⁶ The tholos provided LH IIA/B–IIIB1 material, while a child burial in a cist grave contained MH–LH I pottery²⁷ as

¹⁶ Salavoura 2015, 245, 247, fig. 3, and tab. II.

¹⁷ Wright 2015, 214.

¹⁸ Erath 2000, 111–116; Salavoura 2015, 76–78.

¹⁹ Howell 1970, pl. 29c nos. 7–12, and fig. 5 nos. 1–2, 29. Cf. p. 113, where he notes that these sherds may also be dated to LH II–III A1.

²⁰ Howell 1970, 91, no. 24; Anaskafiko Ergo 2000–2010, 123–124; Salavoura 2015, 124–127.

²¹ Salavoura 2015, 126. Unpublished, exhibited in the Tegea Museum (visited on 13.9.2014).

²² Bakke-Alisøy 2016, 146, fig. 2. Psili Vryssi-Vationa was identified as a LH IIIA–B site by Howell 1970, 93, no. 30.

²³ Howell 1970, 93–94, no. 32.

²⁴ Salavoura 2015, 130–131.

²⁵ Rhomaios 1957, 272–275; Pelon 1976, 186–187, pls. 83.3, 161.1–2; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 9–16.

²⁶ Rhomaios 1961, 185; Rhomaios 1962, 111; Pelon 1976, 186–187; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 17–23, 79–83, pls. 5, 6a–c, especially p. 81 (the diameter of the chambers varies from 2.48 m to 3.20 m). It also remains an open question whether the eight small tombs were contemporary or successive constructions (Kalogeropoulos 1998, 21, 79).

²⁷ Rhomaios 1961, 185; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 23–24, 39–40, 42, 84, pls. 15 (nos. 64–66), 22e–g.

did a burial in a tomb of ambiguous type near the Alpheios.²⁸ Analipsis lies on the route which leads through the Eurotas Valley and northern Lakonia to the plain of Tegea and consequently to the northeastern Peloponnese. It thus seems natural that the architecture of the tombs and the pottery combine influences from the northeastern as well as from the southern Peloponnese. The three LH IIA palatial jars (FS 15) – at least one of them of local clay²⁹ – and an elaborately decorated ring-handled cup (FS 237) with spirals on the exterior and a rosette on the interior suggest that the area was incorporated into the mainstream of the Mycenaean world.³⁰ An oval-mouthed amphora showing Minoan influence (FS 71) and decorated with rows of retorted spirals,³¹ is similar to finds from Lakonia and Messenia (Monemvasia-Ayios Ioannis, Ayios Stephanos, Routsis and Nichoria).³² Although robbed, the tholos tomb held fragments of a boar's tusk helmet, two ivory combs, small finds made of gold, silver and amber, as well as bronze and flint arrowheads.³³ This larger tholos would serve the leading family, while the other more modest, smaller tombs were used by other members of the community.

At the site of Kato Asea-Paliokastro (no. 20) the plateau on the top and the slopes of the hill were used continuously from EH to LH IIIC. This seemingly remote site was part of exchange networks since the Middle Neolithic and EH periods.³⁴ Although in MH I and II the settlement flourished and imports from Aigina and the northeastern Peloponnese arrived, there were hardly any traces of MH III material, and the site seems to have been abandoned for a few decades showing no signs of destruction.³⁵ However, good quality LH I and II pottery has been found in a mixed layer along with MH and Hellenistic pottery.³⁶ We cannot exclude the possibility that some of the 29 burials in pits, cists and pithoi unearthed in the MH settlement may have belonged to the LH period.³⁷ The Hellenistic habitation on the top of the hill destroyed the Mycenaean layers, but the intensive survey by the Swedish and Finnish Institutes identified LH III material on the eastern and western slopes of the hill. Thus, it is also probable that the settlement moved to a lower level and the plateau continued to be used as a burial area³⁸ judging from a LH III askos found in one of the tombs.³⁹ At nearby Athenaion-Ayios Georgios (no. 22), about 5 km southwest of Asea, a few sherds may also indicate human presence in MH and LH I. LH II material is missing, but there are again LH IIIA–B sherds.⁴⁰ The existence of a land route across the Asea Valley,

²⁸ K. Rhomaios did not specify the exact location of this tomb. Kalogeropoulos 1998, 24, 84 and pl. 3a, D, locates the tomb on the northeast slopes of the hill, where the settlement of the Classical period lies. For the pottery see Kalogeropoulos 1998, 25, 40–41, pls. 15 (nos. 67–70), 22a–d; RMDP, 296; Waterhouse – Hope Simpson 1961, 130.

²⁹ Rhomaios 1957, 275; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 15–16, 28–33, pls. 9–10, 17, 18d–e.

³⁰ Rhomaios 1957, 280, figs. 8–9; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 15–16, 28–33, pls. 9–10, 17, 18d–e; RMDP, 296–297.

³¹ Rhomaios 1957, 276, fig. 7.

³² Kalogeropoulos 1998, 35; RMDP, 296–297.

³³ Rhomaios 1957, 281–286, figs. 11–18; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 64–72, pls. 7–8, 16.

³⁴ Dickinson 1977, 89; Forsén J. 1996, 44, 46, 71–72.

³⁵ Holmberg 1944, 1220; Forsén J. 1992, 200–203.

³⁶ Holmberg 1944, 110–112, fig. 108a, b, h; Dickinson 1977, 89. For a few LH I–II finds from the eastern foothill of the plateau, see Forsén et al. 2003a, 96, 98–99, 101.

³⁷ Maran 1995, 70. We have to be sceptical whenever cist graves with burials of adults are found in the immediate vicinity of houses, particularly when several such burials appear in the same stratigraphic horizon. The chronological relationship between the architecture and the graves can often not be clarified, and thus the archaeological circumstances can suggest contemporaneity, while in reality we are dealing with the results of chronologically distinct events. For a similar situation in the Argolid, see Milka 2010, 434–439. Examining data from Barbouna, Aspis and Lerna, Eleni Milka concludes that only a few of the excavated graves in the MH III Argolid were contemporary with the associated houses and even fewer were actually opened inside houses, when they were still in use.

³⁸ Forsén et al. 2003b, 197.

³⁹ Holmberg 1944, 111, figs. 108g, 109.

⁴⁰ Forsén et al. 2003a, 108 (only one MH/LH I handle of a cooking pot was identified, all the other material dates to LH III); Salavoura 2015, 147–148.

which connected eastern Arkadia with Messenia and Elis has been postulated in order to explain the status of Asea as a 'central place' even during the later EH phase.⁴¹

Western Arkadia

The westernmost site of early Mycenaean Arkadia is that of Phigaleia-Kourdoumbouli (no. 23), where trial trenches under and north of the later sanctuary of Athena and Zeus Soter brought to light walls of a MH and part of a LH I building, as well as a child burial of the same time (MH/LH I).⁴² Mount Lykaion (no. 24) provides us with the most important finds of the last decades in Arkadia that prove how poorly known and underestimated this region is. The excavation of the ash-altar on the top of Prophitis Ilias (1382m), brought to light material from Final Neolithic until Hellenistic times, albeit the earlier material comes from mixed layers and there is a possible absence of LH I and LH IIA finds.⁴³ However, LH IIB and later material comes from well-stratified layers, a fact that demonstrates continuous use of the altar for over a millennium.⁴⁴ The examination of the bone fragments revealed that the sacrificial animals (mainly goats and sheep) as well as the specific parts (femurs, patellas, and tailbones) that were selected for dedication remained constant over the centuries. This suggests that the cult practice was part of an ancient ritual associated with offerings and most probably with the in situ consumption of food and wine.⁴⁵ Radiocarbon dating showed that the burnt bones from the lowest bedrock level might in fact belong to the early Mycenaean phase.⁴⁶ If future research confirms this result, this will be the first example of this practice attested on a mountaintop shrine without architectural remains and in a Prepalatial context.⁴⁷

Along a small fertile valley of the Alpheios, 10 km north of the Mount Lykaion altar, lies the large cemetery of Palaiokastro-Palaiopyrgos (no. 25) (Fig. 2), a thriving centre in LH IIIC with more than a hundred chamber tombs. Few of these tombs were used in the early Mycenaean period. The material, although still unpublished, is exhibited in the Tripolis Museum, and few but very characteristic finds prove that the first chamber tombs were cut in LH II, while the cemetery was in use even in MH times, judging by a Yellow Minyan kantharos and a jug with cutaway neck.⁴⁸ Five small globular or straight-sided cups/jars with a ring handle on the rim, a typical shape of the Shaft Grave period, also belong to the late MH/LH I phase,⁴⁹ and have good parallels from many sites of the Peloponnese and from the site of Demetra, also in western Arkadia.⁵⁰ Among others, a MH III/LH I dagger⁵¹ and a LH IIA–B alabastron (FS 80) decorated with double

⁴¹ Forsén B. 2003, 63–75; Forsén et al. 2003b, 198; Forsén J. 2010, 59–60.

⁴² Arapogianni 1999, 116, 119, pls. 66–68; Arapogianni 2000, 127–128, pl. 71a–b; Arapogianni 2001, 304.

⁴³ Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 581–582, 589, 628–629.

⁴⁴ Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 628–629.

⁴⁵ Romano – Voyatzis 2010, 14–15; Starkovich et al. 2013, 502–503, tab. 1; Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 590, 628–629 and 644–648 (B. M. Starkovich, Appendix 5: Preliminary faunal report).

⁴⁶ Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 614–615: "The results of this project to date have yielded calibrated dates of 1527 ± 97 B.C., 1468 ± 54 B.C., and 1332 ± 52 B.C. from the lowest bedrock level". However, Mary Voyatzis notes that the pottery associated with these burnt bones consists mainly of LH IIIA2–LH IIIB broken kylikes. Starkovich et al. 2013, 510–511, tab. 1.

⁴⁷ Evidence for burnt animal bones is limited and it includes a few sites such as Eleusis, Apollo Maleatas, Pylos, Methana-Ayios Konstantinos, Asine, Phylakopi and possibly Mycenae, Tiryns, Kalapodi: Hamilakis – Konsolaki 2004, 144–145 (with the relevant bibliography); Whittaker 2006/2007, 184–188; Cosmopoulos – Ruscillo 2014, 263–270; Weilhartner 2016, 394–396.

⁴⁸ Unpublished, exhibited in the Tripolis Museum.

⁴⁹ Unpublished, exhibited in the Tripolis Museum. Salavoura 2015, 194, n. 707–708. For indicative parallels, see Dietz 1991, 159, 162, fig. 48 (nos. AB-7.1, 7.2, AB-12); 199, 201, 202, fig. 61 (no. BA-2) (from Mycenae, B-Circle); 212, 213, fig. 66 (no. FA-2) (from Argos); Mylonas 1975, 222, pl. 403β (from Eleusis).

⁵⁰ Syriopoulos 1973, pl. 47c (no. 18).

⁵¹ Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 2000, fig. 16. The dagger belongs to Thanasis Papadopoulos' category IA (Papadopoulos 1998, 4–6); Salavoura 2015, 505–506, fig. 5.



Fig. 2: The valley of the Palaiokastros cemetery (photo: E. Salavoura)

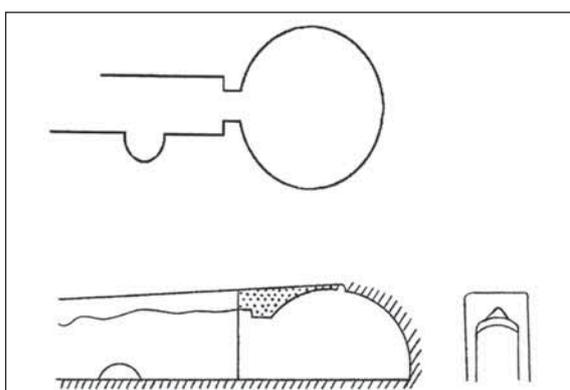


Fig. 3: The hybrid Tholos-Chamber Tomb 6 at Palaiokastros (after Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, fig. 5)



Fig. 4: The central cavity on the roof of Tomb 62 at Palaiokastros (photo: E. Salavoura)

axes and with a rosette in place of the usual wheel pattern on its base⁵² are exhibited in the Tripolis Museum. The alabastron was found in Chamber Tomb 62, which imitates the roof of a tholos with a central cavity at the top,⁵³ indicating the existence of a small, but flourishing community, which was aware of the main trends in terms of pottery production and tomb architecture (Figs. 3–4).

Northern Arkadia

Two more remote settlements, which are situated in higher altitudes, are Karvouni-Sphakovouni (no. 27) and Demetra-Troupes or Damari (no. 28). Sphakovouni is a settlement with a long life

⁵² Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, 280, pl. 56f; RMDP, 297; Salavoura 2015, 426–427.

⁵³ Blackman 1996/1997, 33; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 23–24; Salavoura 2015, 341–342, fig. 6.

from Final Neolithic until LH IIIB times.⁵⁴ The finds show that it was never isolated. MH matt-painted, Minyan and Adriatic pottery is exhibited in the Tripolis Museum along with a typical LH IIB Vapheio cup decorated with a foliate band and a small alabastron decorated with an ivy band.⁵⁵ Demetra is also insufficiently known from an old survey by Konstantinos Syriopoulos. It is another long-lived site with a variety of MH pottery (matt-painted, Adriatic, Grey Minyan),⁵⁶ and a significantly smaller amount of LH I and/or II as well as LH IIIA–C sherds.⁵⁷ A short excavation at Kallithea-Philomati (no. 31) has also revealed the existence of a small (?) LH I–II settlement without a MH past, which also continued into LH III A–C.⁵⁸ A LH I seal-stone engraved with a flying fish, now in the Ashmolean Museum, allegedly comes from the wider region of Kleitoria. However, its origin is doubtful.⁵⁹

Two other sites in the Kalavryta region, the Cave of the Lakes (Spilaio Limnon) at Kastria (no. 33) and Layovouni-Asphakovouni (no. 35), also have pottery of the transitional phase from MH to LH I (?).⁶⁰ The Cave of the Lakes seems to have been a burial ground in LH times.⁶¹

Conclusion: The Role of Arkadia in the Early Mycenaean Peloponnese

The general picture seems to justify John Bintliff's view that "slow development or little evidence of complex societies seems to typify both the prehistoric and ancient historic periods in these mountainous landscapes with low agricultural potential".⁶² Most of the aforementioned settlements were situated on low hills or on their slopes providing full or partial supervision of the surrounding area (Figs. 5–6). They are located close to water supplies and good agricultural land. Thus, most sites control a wider region, a valley or a basin, as well as the passages leading from one region to another.

The differences in geographical conditions between eastern and western Arkadia also influenced the organisation of habitation and the burial architecture. The basins of eastern Arkadia were sparsely populated during the LH I–II period compared to LH III (Tab. 1). This can partly be explained by the fact that these areas may have suffered the devastating effects of flooding, and their population increased only after the construction of drainage works (dykes, ditches).⁶³ Solving the problem of flooding is not only related to settlement, but also to the protection of valuable farmland in an otherwise mountainous area.

In MH and early LH Arkadia there is no information about tumuli,⁶⁴ large cist graves, deep shaft graves and tholoi. Status and rank differentiation within communities is currently not clear, and it remains doubtful whether a ruling elite existed there even in Palatial times. The tholos tomb of Analipsis forms the only exception. Judging by its finds, the site seems to have become

⁵⁴ Howell 1970, pl. 34c; Spyropoulos 1989, 116; Spyropoulos 1990, 5; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 2–5; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 2000, 8–10; Salavoura 2015, 209–216.

⁵⁵ RMDP, 297; Salavoura 2015, 215.

⁵⁶ Syriopoulos 1973, 197–198, 203–204, pls. 47c (no. 17), 47d (no. 5), 48a.

⁵⁷ Syriopoulos 1973, 204, pl. 48b (nos. 1–2); Salavoura 2015, 220.

⁵⁸ Alexopoulou 2002, 296, pl. 117a–e; Alexopoulou 2005, 296–297; Alexopoulou 2009, 211–212; Salavoura 2015, 229–230.

⁵⁹ CMS VI.1, 7, no. 462; CMS VI.2, XLV (Index V), no. 462. According to Athanasios Rhoussopoulos, who sold this piece to Arthur Evans, the sealstone was bought together with another black lenticular sealstone, a small white Egyptian scarab, two fibulae and a bronze vase, which all came from two graves in Kleitoria.

⁶⁰ Sampson 1997, 309–310, 361, 364; Salavoura 2015, 234–235, 237. The coarse ware and some sherds of pithoi from Layovouni are most probably MH and not LH.

⁶¹ Sampson 1997, 337.

⁶² Bintliff 2012, 799.

⁶³ See Kalcyk – Heinrich 1986, 2–14. Cf. Salavoura 2015, 278–290.

⁶⁴ The existence of EH tumuli, which have been reported at Orchomenos in Arkadia (Spyropoulos 1996), is extremely doubtful (Salavoura 2015, 87–97). The absence of tumuli is also characteristic for Lakonia, cf. Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 149.



Fig. 5: The hill of Sphakovouni (view from the east) (photo: E. Salavoura)



Fig. 6: The site of Demetra-Troupes or Damari (view from the south) (photo: E. Salavoura)

less important after LH II, a fact that has been attributed to a possible attack responsible for the LH IIB destruction layer at the so-called *prytaneion*.⁶⁵ However, in the case of Analipsis we face once more the problem: that we know almost nothing about the corresponding settlement, which is essentially unexcavated. The wealthy but not spectacular finds at Analipsis indicate a more modest register of ostentation in comparison to the spectacular finds from other tholos tombs of the southern Peloponnese (such as Routsis, Tholos 2; Pylos, Tholos V; the tholoi at Peristeria, Epia-Antheia, Kakovatos and Vapheio).⁶⁶ This display of wealth and power demonstrates the emergence of a leader or a leading family in this region that may have been based on their prowess as hunters as well as on their key role in the overland trade from the southern to the northeastern Peloponnese.⁶⁷

The emergence of Analipsis remains a mystery and its abandonment is also enigmatic. The rise of major palaces had some consequences in peripheral regions; some early principalities seem to have declined or were destroyed and then were replaced by a new social order. According to the available data, Analipsis was not replaced by another centre in its immediate vicinity, but was totally abandoned. Pellana, about 15–20 km from Analipsis, is the only known prominent site of the wider region. It is also strategically located on the route which connects Lakonia with southern Arkadia and Messenia as well as Lakonia with the Tegeatic plain and the Argolid. Although the chamber tombs of Pellana, which imitate tholoi, have been looted since antiquity, the pottery found in the large dominant tomb certifies that it was used from LH IIA until the Submycenaean period.⁶⁸ Analipsis and Pellana are included among the early principalities of the Peloponnese. The reason why Pellana, although closer to the palatial centre of Ayios Vasileios in Lakonia, has survived and Analipsis has not, is not obvious. The plain of Tegea is the largest and most fertile part of Arkadia and the Homeric tradition locates the seat of Agapenor, the leader of the Arkadians in the Trojan war, here.⁶⁹ It is plausible that a successive centre, which remains unidentified for the time being, lies in the wider region of Tegea. The existence of three LH III sites (Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos, Episkopi, and the sanctuary of Athena Alea) close to each other, i.e. within a radius of nearly 1 km, offers a first indication that the historical centre may have had a long history.⁷⁰

Five graves in the region of Alea, on the east bank of the Sarantapotamos gorge, one of which was excavated by K. Rhomaïos, are considered to be similar to the small vaulted tombs of Analipsis.⁷¹ The presence of small vaulted tombs, the absence of chamber tombs and the rarity of other types of tombs (cists, pits, burials in pithoi) in the wider region of Analipsis and in eastern Arkadia generally is remarkable. It may not be a coincidence that in the region of Asea, which has been systematically investigated, no chamber tomb cemetery has yet been detected. We cannot overlook the fact that hard limestone dominates eastern Arkadia that prevented the cutting of chamber tombs. The construction of built tombs of small dimensions with circular or elliptical plan prevails in the neighbouring cemeteries of Kynouria (Vaskina-Kotroni: LH IIIA–C; Palaiochori-Mikri Tourla: LH I/IIA–IIIB)⁷² and they may have also inspired those of Analipsis and Alea-Sarantapotamos. Recently, a LH II–IIIA2 small circular stone-built tomb or small tholos (diameter 3.15 m) was excavated at Sparta-Polydendro.⁷³

⁶⁵ LH IIB pottery is illustrated from a burnt layer, see Schachermeyr 1962, 262, fig. 49 (centre); Dickinson 1977, 89; RMDP, 297.

⁶⁶ Cavanagh 2010, 636.

⁶⁷ Wright 2008, 243.

⁶⁸ Cavanagh 2010, 636.

⁶⁹ Hom. Il. 2,603–611.

⁷⁰ Salavoura 2015, 254 and n. 38.

⁷¹ Rhomaïos 1955, 171; Howell 1970, 94, no. 32; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 47; Bakke 2008, 262–266; Salavoura 2015, 132–133.

⁷² Waterhouse – Hope Simpson 1961, 131–135, pl. 23c; Dickinson 1977, 64; Faklaris 1990, 138–139, 145–152, figs. 83–88, pls. 55, 64–67; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 66; Papadimitriou 2001, 31–34.

⁷³ Vasilogamvrou et al. 2016, 511; Anaskafiko Ergo 2000–2010, 95, fig. 6.

Even in LH III A–C, chamber tombs remained rare in Arkadia and – according to the current data – they are found only in the western part ‘looking’ towards Elis and Achaia.⁷⁴ The earliest chamber tombs were cut at Palaiokastros in LH II, and two of them belong to the type of hybrid tholos-chamber tombs with a circular and vaulted roof bearing a central cavity at the top (Figs. 3–4).⁷⁵ This type has been known since LH I at Volimidia,⁷⁶ but a triangular cutting above the entrance of Tomb 6, excavated by Chrysanthos Christou, is reminiscent of the similar tombs of LH II at Pellana (Fig. 7).⁷⁷

In Lakonia and Messenia chamber tombs appeared sometime in late MH III/early LH I,⁷⁸ while in Achaia they appeared at the latest in LH II almost throughout the whole region,⁷⁹ suggesting the rise of a new type of political order: At that time local elites began displaying their high status through this ‘new’ kind of tomb.⁸⁰ The same phenomenon seems to be visible at Palaiokastros since LH II suggesting that the site followed the trends of the northwestern Peloponnese from the early Late Bronze Age onwards.

In Arkadia we have only extremely limited evidence of settlement finds at our disposal that still remain unpublished.⁸¹ However, those sites close to natural routes were not separated from the main

developments and participated in the trade networks of the early LH Peloponnese. Sites such as Asea, Sphakovouni and Demetra-Troupes or Damari, with a very long life from the Neolithic to the Late Mycenaean period, undoubtedly owe much more to their location at nodes connecting the interior with the Peloponnesian coasts than to the potential for economic growth provided by the land (Tab. 1; Figs. 1, nos. 20, 27, 28; 5–6). Palaiokastros and Mount Lykaion lie on the diagonal axis running across the Peloponnese from the southeast to the northwest, broadly speaking



Fig. 7: Pellana, Tomb 2 with the triangular upper part of the entrance (photo: E. Salavoura)

⁷⁴ Salavoura 2015, 332.

⁷⁵ Blackman 1996/1997, 33; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 23–24; Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, 273–274, fig. 5; Salavoura 2015, 339–348.

⁷⁶ Danielidou 2001, 165–170; Boyd 2002, 144; Vlachopoulos, this volume.

⁷⁷ Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 66; Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 147; Salavoura 2015, 347–348; Boyd 2002, 196, considers it likely that the tombs at Pellana were also carved in LH I.

⁷⁸ Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 149.

⁷⁹ Arena 2015, 18 and n. 93.

⁸⁰ Arena 2015, 18–19.

⁸¹ Maran 1995, 67. There are no architectural remains of this period, not to speak of settlement plans, a phenomenon which until recently characterised the majority of mainland Greece.

connecting Sparta with Olympia. The existence of an open-air sanctuary at the top of Prophitis Ilias on Mount Lykaion, which has been active even since LH IIB times, indicates that there were more, still unidentified, flourishing communities in southwestern Arkadia.

Mount Lykaion lies at a point where the territories of Arkadia, Messenia and Elis meet. The southwest part of Arkadia and the northernmost area of Messenia still remain a *terra incognita*. The Megalopolis region is largely unknown, although its western part (the passages through Derveni and Leondari) forms the access route to the Messenian Valley. It may not be coincidental that we do not possess a clear picture of settlement in historical times either.⁸² Shrines in fixed and unchanging locations within the landscape are considered to constitute meeting points for more than one community, and the case of Mount Lykaion proves that feasting took place here on the occasion of religious celebrations. They probably effected the strengthening of the links between the populations of the wider region.⁸³ However, other early LH sites apart from Palaiokastro are still unknown and the LH I–III A1 material from the altar is extremely limited.⁸⁴ On current evidence, the assumption that the same framework also applied to the early Mycenaean phases must therefore remain speculative.⁸⁵ The existence of tholos tombs in Triphylia at a close distance to each other (Psari, Malthi, Chalkias, Peristeria, Kopanaki-Akourthi) demonstrates that this region was probably also densely populated,⁸⁶ but much work must still be done in order to identify settlements closer to Mount Lykaion. However, it is interesting to note that in MH and early LH we can locate more upland and remote sites than in LH III, when most sites lie in lowland terrain, where the cultivation of olives prevails.⁸⁷ This is the general impression resulting from the petrographic and chemical analyses of the pottery from the altar on Mount Lykaion that suggests a shift from the highlands to the lowlands. The fabrics of the Neolithic pottery reflect highland sources and use of primary, non-calcareous and coarse clays, whereas the fabrics of the LH and Early Iron Age pottery are associated exclusively with secondary calcareous clays (and at least some with Neogene formations) from lowland areas.⁸⁸

In conclusion, this article is an attempt to delineate the situation in a multifaceted and largely unknown region based on data that have inevitable gaps. Arkadia has no impressive tholoi, valuable finds, luxuries or exotic items, but it seems to be an organic part of the Peloponnese and was never isolated from general trends in other regions. Its local centres seem to have played a secondary role, complementary to the early principalities. However, they acted as intermediaries and transporters for the dissemination of the main trends from the southern to the northern and the eastern to the western Peloponnese and contributed to the formation of the later Mycenaean *koiné* of the 13th century. The LH II finds on the summit of Mount Lykaion are humble, but given that a very small part of the ash altar has been excavated (about 5%), future research is promising, if we also keep in mind that a lot of finds are also kept in the storerooms of the museums in Arkadia, waiting to be studied. Even if the process of ‘Mycenaeanisation’ is not discernible in the whole region of the central and mountainous Peloponnese,⁸⁹ former views that regard it as an isolated area, which did not adopt Mycenaean material culture until the 13th century,⁹⁰ need to be revised.

Arkadia may be poor in natural resources and inhabited by acorn-eating brave warriors, but it lies in a central position of the Peloponnese. That is why the Delphic Oracle a few centuries later answered to the Spartans “You ask me for Arkadia? You ask too much”.⁹¹

⁸² Roy 2013, 6–9, 17–19.

⁸³ For the same phenomenon in the Iron Age, see Morgan 1999, 55, 57; Lemos 2002, 224.

⁸⁴ Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 590: “there seems to be a preponderance of LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB kylikes”.

⁸⁵ See also Weihartner 2016, 398 and n. 34.

⁸⁶ Hope Simpson 2014, 27–28 (tab. 2) and maps 4–5.

⁸⁷ Salavoura 2015, 262–263, figs. 1–3, tab. II.

⁸⁸ Kordatzaki et al. 2016, 528–529.

⁸⁹ Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 149.

⁹⁰ Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

⁹¹ Hdt. 1,66,2.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Map of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (E. Salavoura)

Fig. 2: The valley of the Palaiokastro cemetery (photo: E. Salavoura)

Fig. 3: The hybrid Tholos-Chamber Tomb 6 at Palaiokastro (after Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, fig. 5)

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Fig. 5: The hill of Sphakovouni (view from the east) (photo: E. Salavoura)

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Fig. 7: Pellana, Tomb 2 with the triangular upper part of the entrance (photo: E. Salavoura)

Table

Tab. 1: Catalogue of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (comprising the subsequent periods of their habitation)

ARGOLID and AIGINA

Social Change and Human Agency: The Argolid at the Onset of the Mycenaean Era

*Sofia Voutsaki*¹

“Innovation and social change emerge from the dynamic between personal and group agencies rather than from the agitation of a few aggrandising individuals.” (Robb 2010, 504)

Abstract: At the onset of the Mycenaean era the southern mainland undergoes a pervasive transformation. The period sees the introduction of new sumptuary practices, the emergence of elites and regional centres, the redefinition of personal identities and a new receptivity to external influences. It is widely acknowledged that the Argolid, and Mycenae in particular, play a leading role in this process. While this is undoubtedly true, assigning a central position to Mycenae and the Argolid entails the risk of treating Mycenae as representing developments across the entire region, and conversely of seeing the Argolid as a homogeneous entity already during the early Mycenaean period.

In this paper, I would like to present differences and divergences within the Argolid during this period of fluid social relations, political realignments and shifting alliances. My argument will proceed in stages: I will briefly introduce the theoretical debate on agency in processes of change, and address the methodological challenges that arise. I will then discuss the diverging trajectories of different communities across the Argive Plain, and the dissimilar responses by different social parties such as age, gender, status and kin groups. The discussion will be based on contextual analyses of funerary data carried out under the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*.

The aim of this paper is to reveal the interplay between wider social processes and human agency, as different communities, groups and individuals experiment with new ideas and practices, attempt to carve their position in a changing world and to find a balance between tradition and innovation.

Keywords: Agency, social change, mortuary practices, Mycenaean period, Late Bronze Age, Argolid, innovation, tradition

The Historical Problem: Social Change at the Transition to the Mycenaean Period

The transition from the Middle Helladic to the Mycenaean period (in ceramic terms: the MH III–LH I phases) is witness to rapid and pervasive changes across the entire southern mainland. According to a generally accepted opinion, the kin-based, largely undifferentiated, fairly conservative, introverted and austere MH societies give way to the early Mycenaean competitive, ostentatious and culturally receptive principalities (Tab. 1).² These changes are most visible in the mortuary practices, where the traditional MH practices – single, usually unfurnished inhumations in simple graves inside the settlement area – are replaced by multiple burials in larger, more labour-intensive and richly furnished tombs in extramural cemeteries.³ More recently, the changes in domestic architecture and settlement layout have also been studied,⁴ and they largely confirm the observations on the mortuary record.⁵ The changes in material culture – e.g. the appearance

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² See Wright 2008; Voutsaki 2010b; Voutsaki 2010c.

³ For the development of mortuary practices in the Argolid, see Voutsaki 1995; Voutsaki 2010b; Voutsaki 2010c, and several papers in Schallin – Tournavitou 2015. For a general synthesis, see Cavanagh – Mee 1998.

⁴ Philippa-Touchais 2010; Voutsaki 2010a; Wiersma 2014.

⁵ Voutsaki et al. 2013; Voutsaki – Milka 2017.

Period	Approximate dates	Main developments	Mortuary practices
MH I	2100–1900 BC	Kin-based society	Intramural cemeteries
MH II	1900–1800 BC	Adherence to tradition Austerity Relative isolation	Simple graves Single burials No, or poor offerings
MH III	1800–1700 BC	Intensification of change	Extramural cemeteries
LH I	1700–1600 BC	Increased interaction Emergence of differentiation Appearance of regional centres	Larger graves Richer offerings More complex ritual
LH II	1600–1450 BC	Competition between emerging centres 'Petty kingdoms'	Spread of <i>tholoi</i> and chamber tombs Peak in mortuary display
LH IIIA	1450–1300 BC	Appearance of palatial system	Mortuary display more exclusive to palatial elites

Tab. 1: Chronological chart

of new ceramic styles, the intensified production, importation and imitation of valuable goods, or the introduction of figurative art, etc.⁶ – are too well known to need extensive discussion here.

However, this seemingly neutral and descriptive chronological chart is to a certain extent misleading. To start with, change is presented as taking place exclusively in the MH III–LH I periods, while the early phases of the MH period are presented as static and unchanging.⁷ The nature of social relations in MH I–II has rarely been the object of systematic study, but recent research has revealed interesting differences, asymmetries, innovations and shifts that question the traditional reconstruction of a stagnant society.⁸ This problem has been discussed elsewhere;⁹ it will therefore not be discussed further in this paper, where I will concentrate on the MH III–LH I period.

The second problem is that the sequence presented in Table 1 is largely based on the developments in the Argolid. Indeed the Argolid is often seen as encapsulating Mycenaean social and political changes and representing the entire southern mainland. While recent studies have explored differences between and within regions,¹⁰ they tend to concentrate on political competition and the emergence of the palatial system.¹¹ As a result, even the Argolid, the best documented and most intensively explored region of the Mycenaean world, is often treated as a homogeneous unit¹² with all communities seen as undergoing the same linear and teleological development towards increasing differentiation and palatial centralisation. In addition, no systematic attempt

⁶ However, these changes have received uneven attention: The appearance of new decorative ceramic styles has been heavily discussed – see e.g. Dickinson 1974; Dietz 1991; Mathioudaki 2010; Lindblom – Manning 2011; Rutter 2017; Dickinson, this volume; Lindblom – Rutter, this volume. By contrast, local manufacture (rather than importation) of valuables needs to be studied in its entirety (rather than along artefactual categories), while the introduction of figurative art (Rutter 2001, 141–142; Voutsaki 2010e, 83–88) urgently requires systematic study (see already Mina 2016; Verlaan 2016; Weilhartner, this volume).

⁷ Indeed this was my earlier position: Voutsaki 1999, 105–109; see also Dickinson 1989, 133. However, the detailed analyses carried out as part of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project* have led me to qualify my earlier opinion; see Voutsaki – Milka 2017. The main aim of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*, a multidisciplinary project funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), was to explain the social and cultural changes taking place in the southern mainland, and in the Argolid in particular, during the MH period and the transition to the Late Bronze Age. For the research design, see Voutsaki 2005.

⁸ See Spencer 2007 on the ceramic industries; Wiersma 2014 on housing; Voutsaki – Milka 2017 on changes in Lerna between EH III and MH II; Balitsari 2017 on MH I–MH III Argos. For an insightful discussion of social change during the MH period, see Cherry 2017. For a general discussion, but without extensive empirical analyses, see Whittaker 2014.

⁹ Voutsaki – Milka 2017.

¹⁰ Voutsaki 1998; Boyd 2002; Bennet – Galanakis 2005; Phialon 2011. See also papers in Wiersma – Voutsaki 2017.

¹¹ Bennet 1995; Voutsaki 1995.

¹² However, see Voutsaki 2010d and Philippa-Touchais et al., this volume.

has been made to study how different age, gender and kin groups responded to the changes taking place around them.¹³

To conclude, the rate and nature of the changes taking place on the southern mainland in the early Mycenaean period and their impact on different regions, communities and social groups are still imperfectly understood. As a result, and despite many nuanced discussions and interesting debates,¹⁴ change at the onset of the Mycenaean era is still largely conceived as linear, quasi-universal, and irreversible.

The Theoretical Debate: Agency and Social Change

If we want to understand how different communities and subgroups responded to change, we need to move beyond reconstructing the general trends, i.e. the wider processes of differentiation, centralisation, competition, emulation or resistance that underlie social and political change. We need to break down regional trajectories, and to investigate differences between and within communities. We need to understand human choices and motivations both at the level of the social group and at the level of the individual person. To put it differently, we need to address an important theoretical problem: the role of human agency in processes of social change.

Agency has been a central concept in archaeological theory for the last forty years – but it has also been a fashionable term used in a non-explanatory and circular manner. All too often practices or forms are ‘explained’ by simply stating that somebody has chosen to adopt them. On the other hand, when serious attempts were made to understand agency,¹⁵ the discussion was often highly theoretical and opaque, and the concept was rarely operationalised. I have discussed the definitional issues at length in a different paper,¹⁶ and will therefore restrict the theoretical discussion here to some basic observations, which will provide the basis for the methodology adopted.

Agency in archaeology was introduced and conceptualised under the influence of Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory,¹⁷ which defined agency as the intentional choices “knowledgeable agents” make as they take action to realise their goals. Critique was voiced by gender theorists who were the first to point out that “the knowledgeable actor is nominally neutral, but gendered male by association with traditional male behavior striving for power and prestige, and with modern male-associated personal qualities emphasising decisiveness and assertiveness”.¹⁸ Indeed, Giddens’s agent had an uncanny resemblance to the modern individual, the ‘unencumbered self’ who acts autonomously, unhindered by webs of relations, obligations and traditions. In this way, a modern-day perception of agency – effectively an essentialised, abstracted construct – was projected onto the past.¹⁹ In contrast, recent discussions on personhood in pre-modern societies see the self as embedded in social relations and cultural traditions (see Fig. 1).²⁰ This does not mean that individuals passively succumb to obligations, traditions and norms; each person partakes of different networks of sociability, interprets traditions differently, and is unique in their self-actualisation. As a result, neither personal nor group identity are clearly demarcated, as both groups

¹³ Despite the growing interest in age and gender in the Mycenaean world. On gender see Mee 1998; Ruppenstein 2010. On age, see Lebegyev 2009. On age and gender in the MH period, see Voutsaki 2004.

¹⁴ Rutter 2001; Wright 2001; Wright 2004a; Wright 2004b; Dickinson 2010; Petrakis 2010; Wright 2010; Cherry 2017. Stimulating as these papers are, we still need detailed analyses of empirical data, always within a theoretical framework – which is what the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project* has sought to provide.

¹⁵ The bibliography on agency grows by the minute: I single out Dobres – Robb 2000 and Robb 2010.

¹⁶ Voutsaki 2010e. See Binliff 2015 for an acerbic critique of the specific argument, and of archaeological theory in general.

¹⁷ Giddens 1979.

¹⁸ Gero 2000.

¹⁹ Gero 2000; Robb 2010, 496. Indeed most archaeological studies of agency focus on aggrandising, competitive leaders – see Wright 2004a.

²⁰ E.g. Fowler 2004.

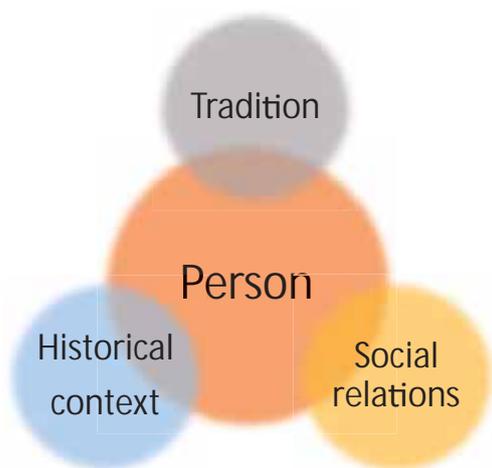


Fig. 1: Relational personhood and agency

and individuals are mixed with what appears to be outside them; therefore both selves and groups contain the potential for their transformation.²¹

Therefore, while agency was seen as an innate quality of human actors in the early stages of the discussions, recently the relational dimension of agency is emphasised.²² As John Robb has argued,²³ human nature is relational, because people develop their capacity for acting by participating in social relations and engaging with past traditions. The focus has therefore gradually shifted from the protagonists to practices and to the mutually constitutive relationships between humans and their material and social contexts.²⁴

The Methodological Problem: Agency in the Mortuary Record

The main question, however, is how we should study human choices and motivations, or detect the operation of agency on the basis of archaeological data. Following on from the discussion above, we can approach agency by studying practices and relations. Mortuary practices are ideal for this purpose as they are foremost a strategy of self-representation, with the self seen as a constellation of relations with the social, natural, supernatural and material world.

Mortuary practices involve subconscious choices, i.e. the filtering of the funerary ideology or cultural tradition, but can also be consciously manipulated to achieve social goals. It is often asked whether these choices were made by the deceased or the mourners. I believe that this ‘either – or’ formulation is symptomatic of our tendency to perceive the relation between the person and the group as antithetic, thereby denying relationality in social life. In mortuary practices in particular, the mourners are restricted by a set of cultural traditions and religious obligations summarised in the notion of proper respect for the dead²⁵ – though, as we will see below, there is room for change and innovation.

In addition, mortuary data are usually abundant and cover if not the entire, at least a wider segment of society; the analysis can be carried out at different levels (the region/the community/the social group/the individual); treatment can be correlated with different aspects of personal identity (age, gender, kin, status, etc.). In particular, the systematic contextual study of mortuary practices allows us to reconstruct interaction across space as well as change through time. I propose to use a new methodology in order to understand human choices in the mortuary sphere, namely, to reconstruct *chains* and *sequences* of human actions (Fig. 2).

We can reconstruct *chains* of human choices by investigating the origin of a new mortuary treatment or tomb type. Mourners may follow local practices, but may also decide to express an affiliation with neighbouring or distant groups – either a group which has different traditions and norms (e.g. an ethnic or cultural group), or a group of higher social status. Social relations and networks may be materialised in burials by the deposition of foreign, imported objects, which denote relations with distant groups. These observations allow us to reconstruct networks of inter-

²¹ This point is discussed more extensively in Voutsaki 2010e, 73–74.

²² Robb 2010; Voutsaki 2010e.

²³ Robb 2010, 497.

²⁴ Robb 2010, 502.

²⁵ Tarlow 2002, 86.

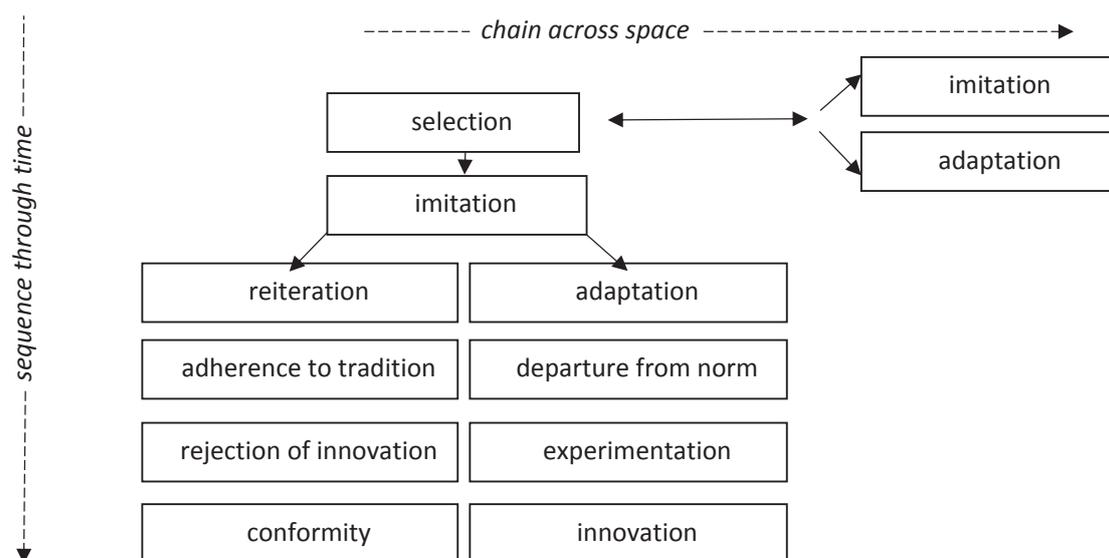


Fig. 2: Sequences and chains in mortuary practices

connections and influences across space, i.e. between regions, communities and social groups. The very act of adopting a distant practice or incorporating a foreign object creates a ‘community of practice’²⁶ and forms individuals into a group with a new collective agency.²⁷

Needless to say, new forms may also arise out of local traditions, therefore internal developments and the temporal dimension also need to be taken into account. We can reconstruct *sequences* of human choices by studying both the adoption of new practices and the adherence to traditional customs through time. Of course, this is only possible if we have close chronological control, i.e. if we can reconstruct the sequence of burials and graves of an entire cemetery or burial precinct in a reasonably accurate way. If this is the case, we can recreate decisions and choices at a new burial, as the mourners have to decide whether to adopt a new practice or to reiterate old customs, to faithfully repeat or to adapt and modify, to endorse innovation or to adhere to tradition, to adopt entire ‘packages’ of practices (i.e. a set combination of type and location of tomb, with a treatment of the body and accompanying ritual) or to select and combine elements out of a wider and ever changing repertoire of forms.

By reconstructing sequences and chains and by studying the different aspects of the mortuary practices, their correlations, and their spatial and temporal variation, we can establish choices taken by individuals and mourners, presumably the kin groups responsible for the funeral and the commemoration. First, we can place these choices within the network of relations and ensuing obligations the deceased and the mourners operated in. Second, we can assess whether the choices made at any one time are in any way restricted by earlier decisions taken by the same community or social group. In this way, we can establish whether there are *micro-traditions*²⁸ – i.e. localised sets of practices adhered to for a long time that may sometimes depart from broader trends characterising the society as a whole. This will enable us to see who innovates, and who adheres to tradition or resists change – in other words, to understand the role of agency in processes of social change.

²⁶ Knappett 2011, 98–123.

²⁷ Robb 2010, 502–504.

²⁸ Chapman 2000, 177.

Choices, Typologies and Mortuary Practices in the Early Mycenaean Period

Let us return to the beginning of the Mycenaean period, a period of rapid and pervasive changes, during which the communities of the southern mainland were confronted with complex dilemmas in the mortuary sphere.

In Fig. 3 we can see some of the choices which the mourners had to make. These choices appear complex enough, especially once we start combining them. The reality, however, was even more complex. This schematic diagram obscures a significant part of the variation, namely the fuzziness and fluidity of mortuary forms and categories in the transition to the Mycenaean period. In many ways, our typologies say more about us and our urge to organise our evidence in distinct and mutually exclusive categories than about the changing funerary ideology and the unstable social reality mortuary practices helped to construct and to undermine.

Let us take the first choice: intramural versus extramural location may appear a straightforward difference – but it is not. It is actually difficult to distinguish between the two, because already in the MH period burials tend to concentrate in ruined houses or abandoned areas of the settlement.²⁹ The new formal extramural cemeteries are located at a small distance from the settlement,³⁰ sometimes in hitherto unused areas, most often in settlement areas recently abandoned³¹ or on the ruins of earlier sites.³² Therefore, while there is a general tendency to abandon intramural burial (or restrict it to infants, neonates and small children) at the transition to the Mycenaean period and to switch to extramural cemeteries, the actual labels ‘intramural’ and ‘extramural’ do not do justice to the complexity of the situation.³³

The best way to see how schematic and almost misleading our own categories are is to examine the tomb types in use in the MH III–LH I period (see Tab. 2). We distinguish between cists and pits, but in reality the two types form a continuum with half-built cists and stone-lined pits as intermediate categories, while the presence or absence of additional features (cover slabs, stone cairns, or pebble floors) complicates distinctions further.³⁴

It is primarily in the new tomb types such as the shaft grave and the built tomb that the problem becomes acute. If we take the shaft grave, for instance, problems of definition arise immediately: do we define a shaft grave by the existence of a shaft, as the term indicates? Indeed, this is a very salient feature of the shaft graves in Mycenae and Lerna. On the other hand, graves with shafts are reported already among the intramural pits in Lerna;³⁵ a shaft is also noted above tombs which are otherwise better described as large cists in Barbouna, Menelaion or Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia.³⁶ Conversely, some tombs described as shaft graves do not have shafts – see, for instance, the so-called shaft grave (Schachtgrab) in Kolonna, Aigina, which was actually built above ground. Or should we define shaft graves on the basis of their size? The graves in Grave Circle A are indeed exceptionally large and deep. However, the ones in Grave Circle B or in Lerna are significantly smaller, and the graves in Barbouna, Ayios Stephanos and the Menelaion mentioned above have the size of a large cist. Resorting to non-architectural criteria, e.g. wealth, does not solve the problem either: while most shaft graves in the Grave Circles are rich or very rich, this is not the case for any of the other graves described as shaft graves. Neither does the introduction of additional

²⁹ Nordquist 1987, 91; Milka 2010; Sarri 2016.

³⁰ E.g. in Prosymna (Blegen 1937), or in Myloi (Dietz – Divari-Valakou 1990).

³¹ E.g. in Argos (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980), Pefkakia (Maran 1992), Asine-Barbouna (Nordquist n. d.); see also Maran 1995.

³² E.g. in the North Cemetery at Ayios Vasileios, which was established in an area with EH occupation. Ayios Vasileios was probably a new foundation in MH III (Voutsaki et al. 2019). For the association between past and present in the location of MH and LH cemeteries, see Boyd 2016, 205–206.

³³ A point made by Milka 2010.

³⁴ See Voutsaki – Hachtmann, in preparation, for a discussion on this point applied to the North Cemetery at Ayios Vasileios, Lakonia.

³⁵ Blackburn 1970, passim, 15.

³⁶ Barbouna: Nordquist n. d. Ayios Stephanos, Nu 2: Taylour † – Janko 2008, 137–140. Menelaion, Tomb 1: Catling 2009, 188.

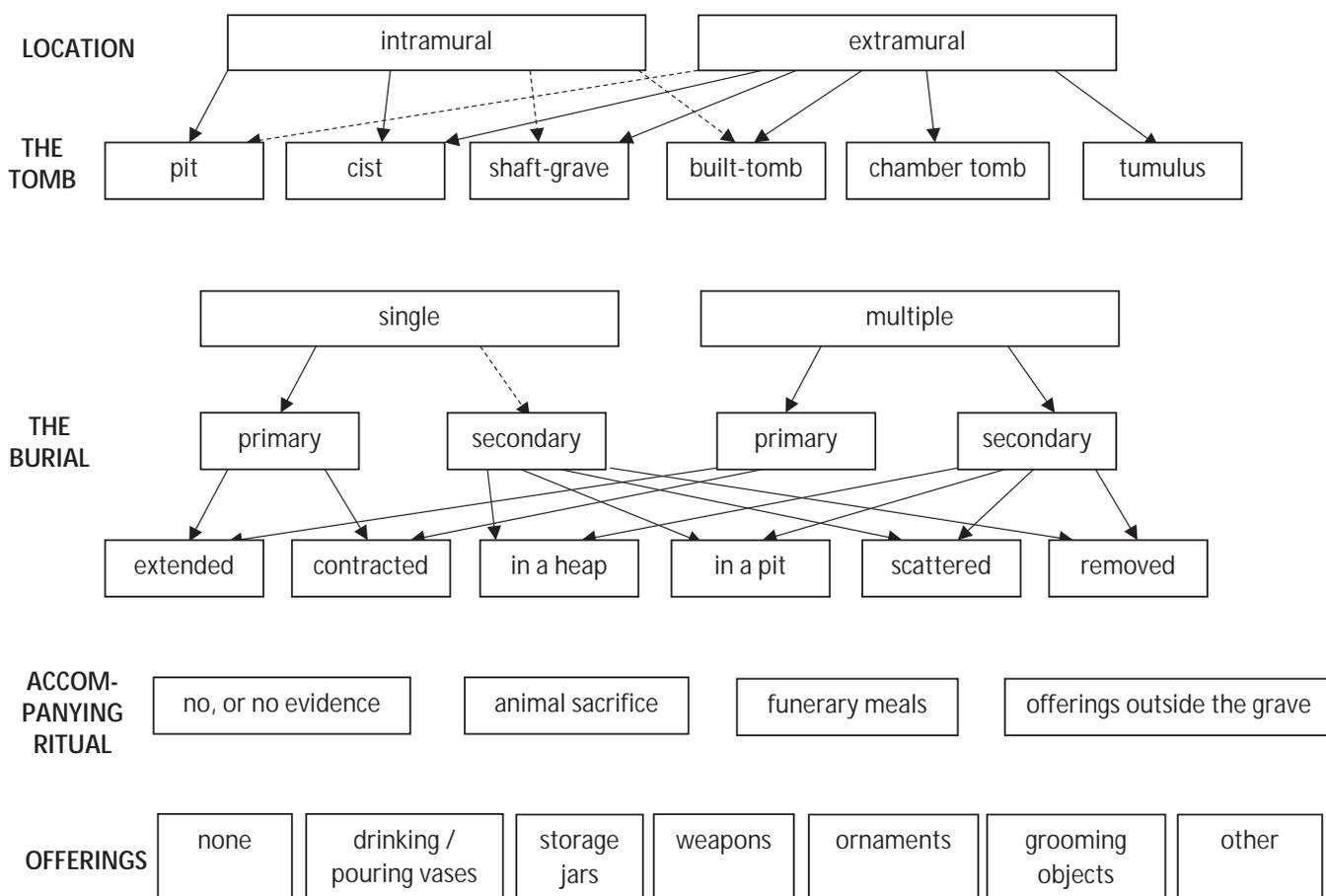


Fig. 3: Choices in the mortuary rites in the MH III–LH I Argolid (continuous arrows indicate regular associations; hatched arrows indicate rare associations)

	pit	cist	shaft grave	built tomb	tumulus	chamber tomb
Mycenae	+	+	+			+
Argos	+	+		+		?
Tiryns	+	+				
Midea	+	+				
Asine	+	+			+	
Lerna	+	+	+			
Myloi	?	+				
Prosymna	+	+				+
Berbati	+	+				

Tab. 2: Tomb types in use in MH III–LH I Argolid

criteria, e.g. location or treatment of the body, help. For instance, the Lerna shaft graves are not particularly large, they are built amidst ruined houses, and reveal evidence for collective feasting rather than the individualised deposition of wealth.³⁷ By contrast, the Shaft Graves of Mycenae are exceptionally large and deep, placed in an exclusive precinct in an extramural cemetery, contain unparalleled wealth and attest to complex rites surrounding the disposal of the body.

The situation is complicated further if we add the built tombs to the discussion. Built tombs come in different shapes, sizes and modes of construction; they are found in different variants in different sites (e.g. the ones in Eleusis with the side entrance),³⁸ and there are many unique examples (e.g. Tomb P in Grave Circle B,³⁹ the built tombs in Vrana, Marathon,⁴⁰ etc.). The dividing line between the shaft grave and the built tomb is not clear;⁴¹ this is illustrated most clearly in the uncertainty surrounding the terminology used for the Kolonna tomb or the Griffin Warrior tomb⁴² – are they built tombs or shaft graves?

Indeed, the two tomb types share important characteristics: both have been designed in order to close the tomb safely and establish a boundary, or liminal area between the dead and the living, and at the same time to be able to cross this boundary (empty the shaft or passage, dismantle the roof, or open the entrance) and reuse the tomb again and again.⁴³ There are also differences between the two types: while shaft graves are entered from above, built tombs are entered from the side – or at least, the idea of a side entrance is experimented with, as in the case of pseudo-entrances that are not really used. The entrance from the side rather than from above is an ingenious solution, which facilitates the reuse of the tomb for more burials over a longer period,⁴⁴ as well as the construction of larger tombs.⁴⁵

However, the discussion should not be exhausted in trying to devise formal criteria and distinct types.⁴⁶ I would like to suggest that shaft graves and built tombs do not constitute types as such, but facets of a process of experimentation, which links the traditional MH types (pits, cists, tumuli) with the classic Mycenaean tomb types such as the tholos and chamber tomb, which are introduced in this period. Therefore, we need to study and understand this phenomenon of innovation and creativity, which the appearance of these new tomb types signals. Here the notion of agency is indispensable.

Variation and Change in the MH III–LH I Argolid

It is now time to look more closely at the mortuary data and to examine patterns of variation among communities in the MH III–LH I Argolid. I will examine only two aspects of the evidence: the use of the different tomb types and the different mortuary treatment.

If we examine the proportional representation of different tomb types across different sites (Fig. 4), we can observe interesting variation. We notice, for instance a preference for shaft graves in the Grave Circles of Mycenae (though pits are also found), while chamber tombs are intro-

³⁷ However, some caution is necessary here as they were robbed and/or emptied. For the evidence of feasting, see Lindblom 2007.

³⁸ Mylonas 1975.

³⁹ Mylonas 1972/1973, 211–225.

⁴⁰ Papadimitriou 2001, 100–101; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016a; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016b.

⁴¹ The dividing line between built tombs and chamber tombs is not fully clear either – see e.g. the term used by Papadimitriou (2001): built chamber tombs.

⁴² Davis – Stocker 2016.

⁴³ On shaft graves, reuse and secondary treatment, see also Boyd 2015, 434–435.

⁴⁴ In the North Cemetery in Ayios Vasileios, most tombs contained one to six burials, but the built tomb with pseudo-entrance (the tomb was still entered from above) contained more than 25 burials in successive layers; cf. Voutsaki et al., this volume.

⁴⁵ Needless to say, the addition of a stomion or a rudimentary dromos introduced the tripartite figure of the tholos and chamber tomb; see Voutsaki 1998, 45; Papadimitriou 2011.

⁴⁶ I am not trying to argue that we should never employ descriptive categories such as shaft graves or built tombs (or for that matter, intramural and extramural cemeteries) – I will myself use them in the analysis below.

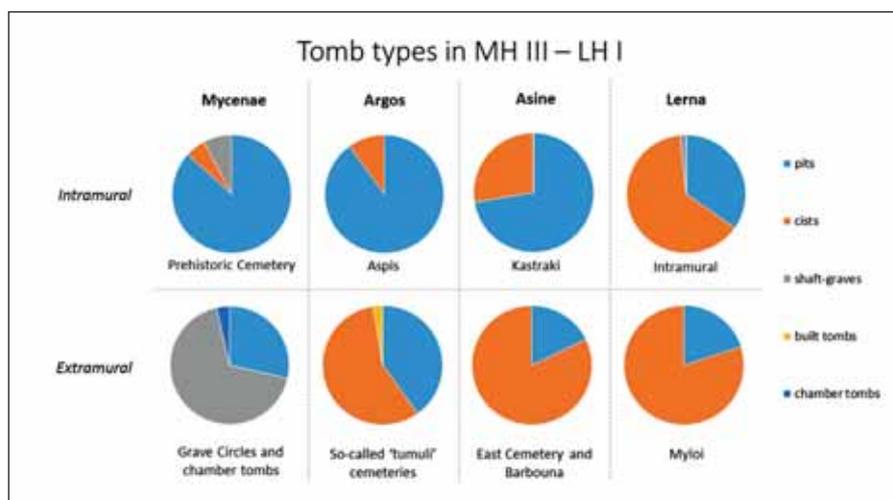


Fig. 4: Tomb types in MH III–LH I sites in the Argolid

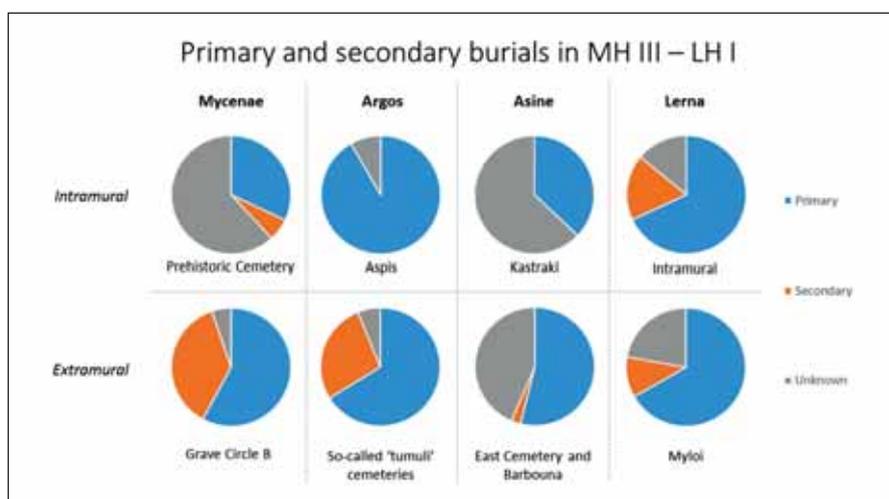


Fig. 5: Primary and secondary burials in MH III–LH I sites in the Argolid

duced already in LH I in Mycenae. In contrast, in Asine (East Cemetery, Barbouna) and in Myloi cists predominate and pits are almost absent. Finally, in the Argos extramural cemeteries (the so-called ‘tumuli’) both cists and pits are used, with very few built tombs.

At the same time, recurring associations underlie this variation: intramural burial grounds contain mostly simple tomb types (cists and pits), while extramural cemeteries comprise more complex types such as shaft graves and built tombs. While it is important to notice the general trends, it is also imperative to study the exceptions. For instance, the shaft graves in Lerna are opened in the ruins of the settlement, which by that time was at least partly abandoned.⁴⁷ Even more surprisingly, the Built Tomb 73 in Mitrou in central Greece was built in the settlement inside a house that seems to have been in use at the time!⁴⁸ Conversely, in Mycenae shaft graves are also found in the Prehistoric Cemetery, though they are considerably smaller than the ones in the Grave Circles.⁴⁹

Mortuary treatment, and more specifically primary versus secondary burials (Fig. 5), also shows significant variation (but here poor preservation or missing information blur the picture).

⁴⁷ Blackburn 1970, 168–173; Milka 2010, 352. See the discussion above, about intramural versus extramural burials.

⁴⁸ Van de Moortel 2016, 93–94, 100, 102–107.

⁴⁹ Alden 2000; Voutsaki et al. 2009a, 141–142.

Once more, secondary treatment is much more common among extramural than intramural burials. There are also significant differences among formal cemeteries, e.g. between Grave Circle B (many secondary burials) and the Asine extramural cemeteries (Barbouna and East Cemetery, where secondary burials are few).

In order to explore these differences further, I will examine more closely two very well documented and accurately dated sites: the Asine East Cemetery and Grave Circle B at Mycenae.⁵⁰ My aim is not only to note local preferences, but also to reconstruct how these preferences came about and how they evolved over time.

The East Cemetery at Asine

The East Cemetery is the formal cemetery of the contemporary settlement of Asine on the Kastraki Hill and consists of a tumulus and graves opened inside (or on top of) and just outside the tumulus. The cemetery was excavated and published in an exemplary fashion by Søren Dietz.⁵¹ More recently, the human remains were re-examined by Anne Ingvarsson-Sundström.⁵² In addition, radiocarbon analysis has been carried out which allowed us to redate most graves and reconstruct the sequence of use and the history of the cemetery in a more accurate way (Tab. 3).⁵³

The status of the group buried in the East Cemetery has been debated.⁵⁴ There is no question that the move to an extramural cemetery, the use of a tumulus, and, as we will see below, the deposition of a few richer offerings distanced and differentiated the burial group from the rest of the community. At the same time, however, any claims to a higher status were mitigated by the relatively homogeneous and austere mortuary practices.

On the basis of the radiocarbon dates and the ceramic finds, the earliest grave in the East Cemetery is the MH I or MH II Burial Pithos 1971-15,⁵⁵ which was placed (already broken) outside the tumulus containing the scanty remains of two adult men. A bowl covered the pithos, while two cups and a jar were found underneath the bowl, i.e. outside the pithos proper. This burial is exceptional in many respects: it marks the foundation of an extramural cemetery,⁵⁶ a clear departure from the tradition of intramural burials. In addition, the combination of adults in a pithos, the double interment⁵⁷ and the presence of three vases is very rare in this period. Interestingly, it is not unique: another pithos burial (1971-7) of two adult females was found nearby – but contained no offerings and unfortunately produced unreliable ¹⁴C results.⁵⁸ It is tempting to treat these two pithoi as (more or less) contemporary. If this is accepted, the second burial seems to reiterate and continue the new features and their combination. In this case we could see the establishment of a micro-tradition which restricts the choices at a new burial, at least to a certain extent (the two burials differ in some respects, e.g. in the provision of offerings). Admittedly, with only two cases, one of which cannot be dated, the conclusion is somewhat circular.

⁵⁰ See Petrakis 2010, who also undertakes a comparison between the Asine East Cemetery and Grave Circle B, though with different questions in mind.

⁵¹ Dietz 1980.

⁵² This study was carried out as part of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*. See Ingvarsson-Sundström et al. 2009; Ingvarsson-Sundström et al. 2013.

⁵³ Voutsaki et al. 2010.

⁵⁴ Milka 2006; Voutsaki et al. 2011; Ingvarsson-Sundström et al. 2013; Milka 2019.

⁵⁵ Dietz 1980, 62–63.

⁵⁶ Unless the earliest grave is 71B, a mudbrick cist containing commingled human remains which cannot be dated (may even belong to the EH period).

⁵⁷ It is not possible to say if the burials were primary or secondary.

⁵⁸ Voutsaki et al. 2010, 36.

Date	Grave			Burial						Offerings
	Grave number	Type of tomb	Construction	Skeleton number	Number	Treatment	Position	Sex	Age	
MH I-II	1971-15	Pithos		49	Double burial. Seanty remains	?	?	M	32	Bowl as cover 2 Cups, jar
				-					27	
	1971-7	Pithos		55	Double burial	?	?	F F	17 40	-
				-						
MH II-III	1971-12	Cist	Stone-built	62	Single	Primary	Contracted	?	11-13	-
				53					37	
	1971-5	Cist	Stone-built	53	Single	Primary	Heavily contracted	F	37	-
MH III-LH I	1970-12	Cist	Stone-built	44	Single	Primary	Contracted?	M	25	Gold diadem Iron nail (??)
	1971-11	Cist	Orthostate slabs	61	Single	Primary	Contracted	F	26	-
	1971-10	Pit	Stone-lined?	60	Single	Primary	Contracted	M	21	Bronze knife Gold ear-ring
	1972-5	Cist	Stone-built	66	Double burial	?	?	F ?	6 months	-
				67						
	1971-2	Cist	Orthostate slabs	51	Single	Primary	Contracted	F	18	Double jug with birds Jug
	1970-7/8	Double cist	Stone-built and orthostate slabs	42	Single	Primary	?	?	child	-
	1971-1	Cist	Stone-built	52	Single	Primary	Contracted	M	44	-
	1971-14	Cist	Stone-built	63	Single	Primary	Contracted?	?	28	-
LH I	1971-3	Large cist	Stone-built	54	Single	Primary	Extended?	M	33	14 vases (jugs, cups) Bronze dagger, pommel
LH I-II	1970-11	Cist	Orthostate slabs	43	Single	Primary	Heavily contracted	M	27	-
LH II	1972-7b	Burial		58	Remains of child on cover of cist	Primary		?	12-18 months	-

Tab. 3: Graves in the East Cemetery, Asine, listed in approximate chronological order (Graves 71B, 1971-6, 1970-16, 1972-7 are not included, as they cannot be dated accurately)

Interestingly, the combination of tumulus, pithos and ceramic offerings is also found in Argos in ‘Tumuli’ A and Γ.⁵⁹ We see, therefore, that important innovations (extramural cemeteries, the combination of tumulus and pithos, sometimes accompanied by many ceramic offerings) is adopted at more or less the same period at different sites in the Argolid. Where the idea came from, is not easy to say – the question is beyond the scope of this paper, as it opens up the complex discussion of the use and spread of tumuli.⁶⁰ It suffices to say that tumuli with pithoi are used in the early MH period in western Greece, esp. Messenia,⁶¹ but also elsewhere (e.g. Attica, i.a. in Marathon⁶² and possibly earlier in Aphidna⁶³). It is very likely that the sporadic adoption of these practices in the Argolid indicates a process of interaction and imitation. In this particular case, however, we may be able to suggest a ‘chain’, though it is not easy to understand the direction of influences.⁶⁴

The tumulus was already erected in these earlier phases, as, according to the radiocarbon results, cist 1971-12 at the edge of the tumulus was already used in the MH I–II period. The cist contained a single, contracted, unfurnished burial of an 11–13-year-old child. This burial is therefore very different from the pithos burials described above and much closer to the mortuary tradition of the MH intramural burials in Kastraki. We see, therefore, that substantially different practices, if not different traditions coexist in the same cemetery, though we cannot really explain these differences.

The main period of use of the East Cemetery is in the later part of the MH period, MH II–LH I. In this period, the number of graves in the East Cemetery increases sharply, a phenomenon which we can observe across the southern mainland with the decline of intramural burials and the foundation of several new extramural cemeteries. I should repeat that this is also a period of marked changes in the mortuary practices elsewhere: the introduction of large and complex tombs, the adoption of multiple burials, and the increasing deposition of offerings with the dead. Few of these changes seem to reach the East Cemetery, where mortuary practices – after the initial burst of innovation in the earlier MH period – become and remain remarkably homogeneous and stable until well into the LH I period. The pithos burials disappear, and almost all the tombs are cists,⁶⁵ which largely repeat the same choices: the graves are of fairly small size and simple construction (roughly built, or made of orthostate slabs); the burials are usually single, primary and contracted,⁶⁶ and most contain few, if any offerings. There are no shaft graves nor built tombs; as far as we can say, there are no extended burials, no multiple graves, and no secondary interments. We see local preferences emerging and persisting for a long period – or, to put it differently, we see the emergence and crystallisation of a micro-tradition particular to the East Cemetery. Of course, there are differences between the graves – some are inside, and some outside the tumulus; some are built of slabs, some of stones; there is one (stone-lined) pit, etc. There is also interesting variation in the offerings: while most graves are unfurnished, one contains two vases (one with a figurative representation of birds, still a rare occurrence), one a bronze knife and a gold earring, and one a golden diadem and an iron nail, which were valuable and exceptional offerings, probably imported from elsewhere. These innovations imitate similar practices elsewhere; while in

⁵⁹ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980; Voutsaki et al. 2009b; Sarri – Voutsaki 2011. See also Balitsari 2017, 112–113, 246–247, and 270 for MH I–II pithos burials in other find spots in Argos.

⁶⁰ Korres 1976; Müller 1989; Whittaker 2014, *passim*.

⁶¹ Boyd 2002; Zavadil 2013.

⁶² Marinatos 1972; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016a; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016b.

⁶³ Forsén 2010.

⁶⁴ On interregional exchanges in MH, see Alberti 2013.

⁶⁵ MH II–III: 1971-5, 1970-12; MH III–LH I: 1971-11, 1972-5, 1971-2, 1970-78, 1971-14, 1971-13. Only one pit (1971-10) was found.

⁶⁶ It should be noted, however, that the position of the body could not always be established as the skeletons were found below water level; see Dietz 1980, *passim*.

MH II golden ornaments or weapons are rarely deposited with the dead,⁶⁷ by MH III more examples can be presented.⁶⁸ Even these tombs, however, despite their possible foreign connections, are characterised by a certain traditionalism and conservatism: two of these ‘richer’ burials are placed in a cist and one in the only stone-lined pit; all three are single, primary and contracted. We seem to have here an oscillation between departure from the norm and an attempt at distinction, usually materialised by imported objects, on the one hand, and adherence to the traditions of this specific group on the other. We are actually confronted with human choices, of the attempt of people to position themselves both as individuals and as a group during these changing times.

The situation changes in the case of the LH I Cist 1971-3.⁶⁹ For the first time, a larger cist, an extended burial and a large number of offerings are found in the East Cemetery. The grave contained one dagger, 14 vases, and the usual drinking cup and pouring jug/jar combination that characterises funerary assemblages in the MH III–LH I period, including a bridge-spouted hole-mouth jar imitating Minoan prototypes. But even this burial stands firmly in the local tradition of the single inhumation in a cist – we see that the local tradition is modified, but not radically altered. Interestingly, difference from the local group is denoted with more objects, but not so much with imports.

After LH I, the use of the cemetery declines. This is a general phenomenon across the southern mainland; by LH II the use of the typically Mycenaean tomb types, the chamber tomb and the tholos, spread and these early extramural cemeteries fall out of use. The cemetery is, however, still visited – as can be attested by the discovery of two LH II vases in the northern periphery of the tumulus and the burial of a baby of 12–18 months on top of the slabs of an earlier cist. By that time, the norms are reversed: we can assume that from LH II onwards adults are buried in the newly introduced chamber tombs, while babies are buried in what was by then the traditional burial place: the East Cemetery.

Despite the limitations of the evidence (especially the small number of burials), we can try to go further towards distinguishing individual and group agency. Already among the MH I–II burials, we can observe that age is an important criterion of inclusion in an extramural cemetery – only one 11–13-year-old child was buried in a cist in the tumulus, and no younger children, neonates or infants are found. The exclusion of the youngest age categories has been observed in all extramural cemeteries;⁷⁰ we know that they still received intramural burial well into (if not throughout) the Mycenaean period. Among these earlier burials, we do not observe much differentiation between gender categories – both men and women are buried in double burials and pithoi outside the tumulus, though only men receive clay vases as offerings. Therefore, we can say that innovative practices such as the foundation of the extramural cemetery, the erection of a tumulus, the use of pithoi and double burials were introduced, primarily by – or more correctly for, adults, and for both men and women. The situation in some respects remains the same in MH II–III and MH III–LH I: children are still underrepresented, and the only neonate of six months to be included is buried together with a 30-year-old woman. However, if we look at gender, we observe a subtle, but interesting shift: the majority of those who adhere to traditional burial are women (four individuals – there is also one man and one indeterminate person). By contrast, two men adopt some new practices (deposition with valuables, ornaments, weapons), while one woman is buried with ceramic vases, one of which is decorated with flying birds.

If we want to conclude, therefore, as to which social categories within the East Cemetery group are more likely to adhere to traditions and norms and who is likely to depart from them and introduce new practices, it is becoming clear that the burial of neonates, babies and small children

⁶⁷ E.g. in the Kolonna Grave (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997; sword, diadem, imported vases), or in Grave J4B in Lerna (Blackburn 1970, 81–82; dagger, imported vases), to give only a few examples from neighbouring sites.

⁶⁸ E.g. in the North Cemetery in Corinth (Blegen et al. 1964, 3–4, 8–9), in Ayia Irini on Keos (Caskey 1972, 385–386), and in Argos Grave E:88 (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, 111–112).

⁶⁹ Dietz 1980, 34–55.

⁷⁰ Voutsaki 2004; Lebegyev 2009; Pomadère 2010.

are most conservative – they are less likely to receive extramural burial in large tombs, secondary treatment or richer offerings. Innovation also seems to be more readily endorsed for men than for women. But the difference is marginal – and some caution is needed, as we are dealing with only a small number of cases and indeterminate burials blur any patterns observed.

To summarise the analysis of the East Cemetery: In the early MH period, the group using it departs from the MH norms by opting for an extramural cemetery, a tumulus, and pithos burials with double burials and sometimes offerings. These innovations exist alongside a more conservative tradition which continues the MH practices (single, contracted inhumation in a cist) and seems to prevail until well into the LH I period, even if some variation is observed. Therefore, the East Cemetery group at first avidly endorses innovative or at least non-normative practices, but later opts for reiteration, conformity and austerity – despite the occasional insertion of new features such as the gold diadem, the large cist, etc. We see that a micro-tradition emerges which restricts later decisions, choices and actions – but only to a certain extent. This general conservatism correlates with the relative absence of imports, while we know that in the settlement in Asine ceramic imports from Crete and the Cyclades are found.⁷¹

We see, therefore, that generalising explanations fail to account for the East Cemetery group, who resist the general trend towards multiple burials, re-use and secondary treatment. But generalising explanations also fail to account for variation and different rates of change within the group, with innovative practices being adopted more readily by some sub-groups and individuals than others.

Grave Circle B in Mycenae

Grave Circle B, the earliest (MH III–LH I) elite precinct of Mycenae, is one of the best documented funerary assemblages of the Mycenaean period.⁷² It therefore offers plenty of scope for the detailed analysis which is necessary if we want to understand the interplay between innovation and tradition. As we will see, it also offers a very interesting contrast to the more conservative and introverted attitude, which we were able to deduce at the Asine East Cemetery. The evidence does present some problems, however, as many tombs have been reused, and the earlier burials have been pushed away, scattered or even partly removed. As a result, in a few cases it is not possible to attribute offerings to specific burials, nor to reconstruct the sequence of burials and graves entirely. Here I will only include the (fortunately many) graves and burials that are well preserved and can be accurately dated (Tab. 4).

Thanks to the exemplary publication by Georgios Mylonas, and detailed studies by Oliver Dickinson, Giampaolo Graziadio and Søren Dietz, we can reconstruct the general trends during the use of the Grave Circle.⁷³ Graziadio has observed a steady process of increasing elaboration, seen in the labour investment in tombs, the deposition of valuables and the complexity of the mortuary ritual during his Early Phase (MH IIIB) and Late Phase I, but also a certain regression in the last stages of use, which coincide with the foundation of Grave Circle A.⁷⁴ My aim in this section is to see how these general trends come about, but also to examine if they were also resisted by individual choices and actions.

⁷¹ Nordquist 1987, 62–67.

⁷² The skeletal material has been restudied as part of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project* by Sevi Triantaphyllou; see Voutsaki et al. 2007, 91–92.

⁷³ Mylonas 1972/1973; Dickinson 1977; Graziadio 1988; Dietz 1991.

⁷⁴ Graziadio 1991. It should be pointed out that Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986 and Dietz 1991 adopt a different chronological sequence.

The earliest well-dated graves⁷⁵ in Grave Circle B (H, Z in Graziadio's Early Phase) continue in many respects the MH tradition of single primary contracted inhumation in a (stone-lined) pit. However, they are larger than the cists in the East Cemetery. In addition, Grave Z already has a ledge on which the cover slabs rested and wooden posts in all four corners, which imply concern with an adequate and solid cover.⁷⁶ Both contain adults – which is what we would expect at an extramural cemetery. Both contain ceramic offerings (five to seven small vases; in Z they include a Cycladic import), a combination of a drinking cup and a pouring jug/jar, which becomes the new norm in MH III.⁷⁷ The deceased in Z was holding a knife in his right hand, while a bronze sword with an ivory pommel was placed to the right of the male skeleton in H. We see here new norms emerging: first, men are accompanied by weapons.⁷⁸ Second, swords are placed on the right hand-side of the body. Interestingly, this was also the case in the burial that may have been the prototype for the early Grave Circle users, the shaft grave in Kolonna Aigina.⁷⁹ Third, imports are included – again, as in the Kolonna Grave. We therefore already see in the first graves of Grave Circle B that traditional customs (single, contracted inhumation), new norms (ceramic set of pouring and drinking vessels), imports (swords, ceramic vases) and innovative practices are combined. We can reconstruct *chains* leading to Aigina, Crete and the Cyclades as well as a *sequence* of imitation, appropriation, innovation, and the crystallisation of new norms.⁸⁰ But we also glimpse exceptions and deviations: the other early pit, Θ, contains a single contracted female burial accompanied by a knife – the only case in Grave Circle B of a woman buried with a weapon or tool.⁸¹ This grave, however, was partly destroyed, and therefore our observations can only be tentative.

The next grave, Grave I, has a 0.95 m-deep shaft and a roof made of wooden beams, clay and turf; it is therefore a classic, fully-formed shaft grave.⁸² With average dimensions (2.88 m length × 1.68 m width × 1.05 m depth), it is much larger than Pits Z, H and Θ or the cists at the East Cemetery. The type of grave itself constitutes an innovation,⁸³ though one clearly rooted in the cists of the MH period. The burial is extended, with flexed feet, and there is an earlier secondary burial of a child, pushed into a heap (where an amber bead is found); we see here a departure from the single, primary, contracted MH norm. Following the emerging norm, a sword (with an ivory pommel) was placed on the right side of the deceased. In addition, the grave displays a whole series of innovative features rarely or never attested before: there is evidence for a 'funerary meal' above the cover of the grave; four large containers are deposited at the foot of the skeleton (while the usual small drinking and pouring vases had been placed near his head); the deceased was wearing golden bands around his wrists and on his body; two pairs of tweezers were deposited near his shoulder; the sword was decorated with a figurative representation (two anti-thetic butterflies); a silver cup with golden rim accompanied either the male burial or the child.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Graziadio's Early Phase includes the following graves: Z, H, I, Λ2, Ξ, Ξ1 contained pottery, while A1, A2, Θ, Σ, T, Φ did not and were dated on the basis of stratigraphy and typology. Here there is a certain risk of circularity, as some simple pits may have been dated to the early phases on purely typological grounds. The discussion here is based primarily on the burials, which can be securely dated.

⁷⁶ Graves T and Ξ have walls of mudbrick or rubble lining the sides.

⁷⁷ About the significance of commensality and feasting in this period, see Wright 2004b.

⁷⁸ For 'warrior tombs' on the MH mainland, see Kasimi-Soutou 1986. On the deposition of swords as extensions of the self, see Voutsaki 2010e; Harrell 2014; Boyd 2015, 436.

⁷⁹ See Rutter 2001, 140; Petrakis 2010 on the influence of the Kolonna burial on MH III–LH I elite burials.

⁸⁰ Weapons are found with men and on their right-hand side in Tombs Z, H, I, B, Λ, N, Γ; only in Tomb Δ may a sword have been placed to the left of the deceased, but the association is uncertain.

⁸¹ But see the fish-hook (?) with the woman buried in Grave Y.

⁸² Shaft graves are rare, even inside Mycenae; see Alden 2000, *passim*.

⁸³ Boyd 2015, 437 n. 32, disagrees that shaft graves are introduced with reuse in mind. However, a close look at the Grave Circle B sequence demonstrates that all early pits were used for single inhumations, and all early shaft graves were reused.

⁸⁴ The silver cup was found among the bones of the secondary child burial. As far as we can say (we have no detailed contextual information for the Grave Circle A burials), there is no other example of a precious vessel deposited with a child.

Tab. 4 (continued)

Late Phase I														
B	Shaft grave	–	1	52	1 Primary	Extended	M	30	Jar, goblets	Large jar, possibly wrapped in linen	Bronze knife on right lower hand	Golden ornaments, electron band	–	In fill: NL axe, traces of 'funerary meal'
Γ	Shaft grave	–	(5)	–	Secondary, bones in northern part		?	?	No pottery certainly associated	–	Sword? Dagger? Sword, ivory pommel?	Golden bands?	–	Lots of pottery in fill, removed?
Δ	Shaft grave	–	(3)	61	Primary	Extended	M	33	Alabastron, bronze bowl?	Stamnos, found above secondary burial	Dagger, 4 knives, 2 ivory pommels. Sword? 17 arrowheads? Whetstone?	–	Gold sword handle with lions' heads; incised griffins on blade, man and lion on silver cup	Animal and human bones, ivory fragments in fill
E	Shaft grave		(2?)	53?	Probably secondary, still semi-articulated		?	?		Bronze basin		Golden bands	–	Pottery in fill; goblet with bird bones on roof
Λ	Shaft grave	–	2–3	70a	Primary	Extended	M	38	Jug and cups	Stamnoi	Sword, ivory pommel, dagger, 2 knives, spearhead (all to right of skeleton), 28 flint arrowheads	Golden ornaments (from sword scabbard)	–	Minyan goblets on roof
				–	Secondary		?	?	Goblets, fragments also in fill	Stamnos? (from fill)	Knife, obsidian arrowhead	Golden bands below bones		Extra male bone among bones
N	Shaft grave	–	(2–3?)	66a	Secondary, packed bones		M	28	11 vases above roof? Bronze jug, golden cup	Hydria? Stamnoi? Stamnoi, amphora from roof?	Sword, spearhead, knives, boars' tusks	(inside cup golden foil adornments), golden bands	–	In fill: fragments of golden band, boars' tusks? Child's jaw, animal bones

Tab. 4 (continued)

Date	Grave			Burials						Offerings					Remarks			
	Grave number	Type of tomb	Stele	MNI	Skeleton number	Treatment	Position	Sex	Age	Pouring/ drinking vases	Containers	Weapons	Ornaments	Figurative art				
Late Phase I	Y	Shaft grave?	-	1	132	Primary	Extended	F	37	Askos, goblets	Stamnos	-	Golden bands, silver earrings, necklace, bronze hair rings, pins, silver pin?	-	Fish hook (?)			
				2	62	Primary	Extended	M	23	Cups, faience cup			Bronze swords, knives, spearhead, boars' tusks	Golden foil ornaments	Hunting or fighting scene on stele			
Late Phase II	Γ	Shaft grave	Stele	5	-	Secondary		M?	?	Pottery possibly removed to fill, gold cup?			Bronze band, ivory comb?	Both plain stelai and stelai with fighting				
				5	51	Secondary, but still articulated		M	28	Gold cup?			Swords, daggers, spearhead, knives, 1 ivory pommel	Ivory comb?	hunting / fighting scenes	Trephina- tion Frontal wound		
				5	55	1 Primary	Extended	M	33	Jug, jars?	Hydria			To right side: sword, alabaster pommel, dagger, ivory pommel, knife	Electron mask?	Portrait seal		
				5	58	Primary	Extended	F	36	Jug, jar, kantharoi	Hydria				Ivory comb?	Plain stele?		
				1	70	Primary	Extended	M?	45+?	Jug, skyphos	Stamnos, hydria							Small ani- mal bones below roof slabs

Tab. 4 (continued)

Late Phase II																
Λ1	Pit	–	1	56	Primary	Contracted	M	25	Jug, kantharos	–	–	–	Necklace of semi-precious stone and bronze beads	Stone seal, with palm-like tree		
M	Shaft grave	– (rough stones as marker?)	2	–	Primary	Extended		Girl	Jugs, askoi, goblets, cups, bowl	–	–	–	Golden band around neck	? (Decoration of inlaid dagger not preserved)		
N	Shaft grave	Stele	(2–3?)	66	Secondary Primary	Extended	M	Child 45	Askos, cup 1 bronze bowl near weapons. (Tweezers inside, or under bowl?)	–	–	–	1 sword, ivory pommel, 1 inlaid(?) dagger, alabaster pommel	?	In fill: Child's jaw fragment	
O	Shaft grave	Stele	3?	–	Primary	Extended	F	?	Askos, jars	Stamnoi, amphora	–	–	Golden bands, bronze pins with rock-crystal head, silver pin with gold head, necklace of golden spirals, golden ear-rings, hair-rings, necklace of stone beads, amber necklace	Plain stele. Golden rosette ornament, golden beads representing birds, stone seal with cuttlefish Rock-crystal vase with handle in shape of duck's head	Animal bones (sheep, goat) above roof	
				–	Secondary		?	Adult							On roof	
				–	Child bones among secondary		?	Child							many vases, sherds – removed from grave	
Π	pit	–	1	–	Primary	Extended	?	Child	Jug, goblets							

We see here evidence for accumulation and ostentatious deposition of foodstuffs and valuables, for the importation of exotica (ivory, amber, gold, silver), for ornamentation and body modification, as well as for complex rites accompanying the disposal of the body. What is perhaps even more important is that these practices soon become the new norms in this new social arena. They are attested in the later burials in the Grave Circles in various combinations,⁸⁵ and – though clearly less often – in other elite burials across the southern mainland. But once more, for some burials the emerging norms are not adopted: Among the Early Phase graves there are pits as well as single contracted and/or unfurnished inhumations. In the case of $\Xi 1$ or Φ we are (certainly or probably) dealing with child burials, but A1, Z, H, Θ , $\Lambda 2$, Σ contained adults.

The graves of Late Phase I (which, according to Graziadio, represent the peak in elaboration in Grave Circle B)⁸⁶ are all shaft graves, some of them quite large;⁸⁷ some contain single and some multiple (two to five) burials, as they remain in use into Late Phase II. All primary burials are extended; secondary burials are attested; ceramics include several imports, mostly from the Cyclades, but also from Crete; larger containers are found; weapons accompany some men, and as far as it can be established, they are placed on their right hand-side; men are also buried with golden bands and diadems, but not with earrings or necklaces; once more tweezers are found with a man (Grave N); precious vessels accompany men, but are still rare or uncertain; women are adorned with jewellery, including earrings, necklaces, etc.,⁸⁸ but also with golden bands; women receive clay cups, but no precious vessels; some figurative art is found.⁸⁹ The innovations of the earlier phase become the new norms of this elite group – but further elaboration can be seen, for instance in the deposition of an elaborate inlaid dagger in N.

According to Graziadio, the Late Phase II already sees certain regressive features in building activity, ostentation and complexity of the mortuary rites: While shaft graves with multiple burials continue to predominate,⁹⁰ two pits with single primary inhumations of adults, accompanied only by pottery, are found.⁹¹ The number of valuables, imports, large containers, and weapons seems to decrease, although ornaments seem to increase, especially in female burials.⁹²

However, if we look at individual graves, we see a further increase in elaboration and ostentation, but also a scaling-up in external connections: we have seen that Grave Γ , built and used already in Late Phase I was one of the largest shaft graves in Grave Circle B. The grave contains five burials (three men, one woman, one indeterminate skeleton) of which two have been pushed away into heaps, one while still mostly articulated, and two are primary burials. Despite the problems in attributing offerings to skeletons, we can make some general observations that suggest that earlier Grave Circle B burials are imitated: large containers (several of which imported from the Cyclades, one from Aigina) and golden vessels are found with some of the burials; weapons are placed on the right-hand side of the deceased;⁹³ ornaments and one ivory comb accompany the burials; figurative art is found in the form of a Minoan portrait seal or as pictorial decoration on clay vases. At the same time, the grave shows innovative features: it was among the first to

⁸⁵ Larger containers are found in Tombs I, Ξ , B, Δ , Λ , Y, A, Γ , E, K, N, O; ornaments in I, Ξ , B, Γ , M, E, Λ , N, Y, A, O; evidence for grooming can be found in I, N (tweezers), and Γ , O (combs).

⁸⁶ The following graves belong to this phase: B, Γ (first burial), Δ , E, Λ , N, Y; Graziadio 1991, 438.

⁸⁷ For instance, Grave Γ is one of the largest shaft graves in Grave Circle B.

⁸⁸ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986; Graziadio 1991, 424.

⁸⁹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986. In terms of figurative art, the sword's hilt found in Grave Δ is covered with gold foil ending in lions' heads, while the blade was incised with flying griffins; the silver cup found in the same grave carries the depiction of a man and a lion.

⁹⁰ The following graves belong to this phase: A, Γ (four burials), Δ (last or two last burials), E (later burial), K, $\Lambda 1$, M, N (later burial), O, Π .

⁹¹ These are Graves K (? – destroyed) and $\Lambda 1$.

⁹² Graziadio 1991, 427–430, 437–440, against Dickinson 1977, 44, and Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 162, 164.

⁹³ This is certain for Skeleton 55 and possible for the partially disarticulated Skeleton 51.

be marked with relief stelai,⁹⁴ and it contained the only electron mask⁹⁵ found in Grave Circle B. Interestingly, stelai and masks are also found (in larger numbers) in Grave Circle A which is founded in this period, but are never found again.

Grave O also merits closer description: a shaft grave, with stelai, one primary extended female (?)⁹⁶ burial and two secondary burials. The dead woman (?) was offered large containers and the well-known rock-crystal vase in the form of a duck's head. Her body was adorned with rich jewellery, including gold and semi-precious stone ornaments, and an amber necklace, while fragments of an ivory comb were found on the floor. In this burial we see the horizons expanding, as exotic, coveted goods are acquired, presumably via gift exchange networks among established and aspiring elites, and are deposited with the dead in an act of ostentatious display which simultaneously fixes and for ever commemorates the social network of the deceased or their family.

The rich burial in O raises the issue of differentiation between men and women. It is well known that adult men by far predominate in Grave Circle B.⁹⁷ Most of the burials I singled out in the discussion above (in Z, H, I, N, Γ) are males – but both in the early and the later phases of the Grave Circle there are also men buried in pits with few offerings (e.g. Λ2, Σ, K, Λ1). Female burials also show innovative features: the woman buried in Y was the first to be buried adorned with jewellery as well as golden bands, while the one in O was accompanied by exotic valuables denoting far-flung connections. If anything, innovation in the early phases of the use of the Grave Circle seems to be restricted to men, but in the later phases women seem to enter the innovation race⁹⁸ – though the new features they bring in are limited in range.

Turning to age, no neonates and only very few infants and young children are included among the Grave Circle B burials.⁹⁹ Interestingly, already in the early phases we can find both single, contracted inhumations in pits accompanied by a few small vases (Λ2, Ξ1) and one extended single burial in a shaft grave (Ξ1), which was adorned with golden bands and jewellery. On the other hand, a later child burial (in Shaft Grave M) was wearing a simpler necklace and reiterates some of the features of the Late Phase I–II (shaft grave, extended position, larger containers). While some children received special treatment (unlike in the East Cemetery), their burials do not partake of the constant elaboration we see among adult graves.

During the course of the use of Grave Circle B we therefore see a process of spiralling ostentation, elaboration and innovation despite (or alongside) the regression in the later stages (Tab. 5). We also see that the growing ostentation correlates with expanding networks that draw the rising group at Mycenae into the world of the Aegean elites. While there is a clear trend towards larger and complex graves, and towards richer and composite practices, this is not a uniform, linear and irreversible process. To start with, not all social groups participate equally in this process of innovation, which is to a certain extent restricted to adult men. At the same time, at every stage there are exceptions, oscillations and hesitations; in every burial, some traditional customs or new emerging norms are imitated and reiterated, and others are adapted and modified. But at every stage also, in some burials at least, novel features are introduced, elaborating upon earlier innovations. This constant urge to innovate, to elaborate, to dazzle and to expand the reach of social relations is precipitated and reaches unprecedented heights in Grave Circle A.

⁹⁴ It is worth noting that the Early Phase Graves Ξ, Σ and possibly Ξ1 were marked by a pile of stones. All *stelai* seem to belong to Late Phase II graves (A, Γ, N). *Stelai* were, of course, used in Grave Circle A, whose earlier graves were contemporary with the Grave Circle B Late Phase II graves.

⁹⁵ Of course, more, and more elaborate golden masks were found in Grave Circle A.

⁹⁶ Not examined by John L. Angel, nor by Sevi Triantaphyllou.

⁹⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 176; Voutsaki 2004.

⁹⁸ As noted already by Graziadio 1991, 429.

⁹⁹ Triantaphyllou n. d.

	Grave number	Shaft grave	Multiple burials	Secondary burials	Weapons	Containers	Ornaments	Mask	Stelai	Figurative art
Early Phase	A1									
	Z				+					
	H				?					
	Θ				?					
	I	+	+	+	+	+	+			
	Ξ	+					+	+		
Late Phase I	B	+			?	+	+			
	Λ	+	+	+	+	+	+			
	N	+			+		+			
Late Phase II	A	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	
	Γ	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Δ	+	+	+	+	+		+		+
	O	+	+	+	?	+	+		+	+

Tab. 5: Innovative features in Grave Circle B, Mycenae, over time

Concluding Discussion

The aim of this paper was to examine diverging trajectories and different responses during the pervasive transformation that swept over the southern mainland at the onset of the Mycenaean era. By analysing the burial sequence of two sites, the East Cemetery at Asine and Grave Circle B in Mycenae, I tried to reconstruct human actions and choices taken by different communities and subgroups. I hope that I have demonstrated that each group fashioned its own micro-traditions, which sometimes coalesced and reinforced broader trends (the adoption of extramural cemeteries, larger tombs and more complex ritual across the southern mainland), yet at other times resisted them by adhering to the traditional austerity (single inhumations in simple tombs in the East Cemetery) or exaggerated them by relentless innovation and flamboyance (in Grave Circle B). At each funeral and for each burial decisions and choices had to be made, which were restricted and enabled by these micro-traditions – but also by new stimuli and expanding networks. Each choice became a balancing act between tradition and innovation, between group affiliation and personal distinction, between local obligations and the lure of distant connections.

Both the East Cemetery group and the Grave Circle B group participated in the transformation of the mortuary practices and social relations at the transition to the Mycenaean era. However, they did so in very different ways (Tab. 6): The Asine East Cemetery group chose to depart from normative practices in MH I–II (adoption of extramural cemetery, tumulus, pithoi, double burials, offerings), but in MH III–LH I they opted for the traditional single inhumations in cists despite some variation in the offerings accompanying the dead. The group developed their own micro-tradition, within which subsequent changes and innovations, including modest attempts at distinction need to be understood. Their network – at least as symbolised in the mortuary arena – remained restricted to local interconnections, largely within the southern mainland. The fact that the settlement material shows more diverse connections with the southern Aegean implies that this was a conscious decision.

By contrast, the group using Grave Circle B started firmly rooted in the customary single contracted inhumations in pits, despite the novel extramural setting and the separate enclosure. The first richer burials may have drawn inspiration from the Kolonna Shaft Grave, but soon new,

 Over time	Asine East Cemetery	Grave Circle B
	selection imitation experimentation innovation reiteration rejection adherence to tradition limited innovation	selection imitation adaptation experimentation elaboration creativity virtuosity constant innovation

Tab. 6: Innovation versus tradition in the East Cemetery and Grave Circle B

ostentatious and complex practices were adopted in all aspects of the mortuary ritual, novel practices were swiftly turned into new norms, and additional strategies of distinction were devised. At every stage, networks of interaction expanded and brought with them coveted goods, new stimuli and powerful alliances. But this propensity to experimentation was not an inherent psychological characteristic and was not shared by everyone in the group. It was more a product of the group's growing contacts, exposure to new ideas and success in a network of diplomatic alliances, underwritten by gift exchanges and possibly by strategic intermarriages. Nor was this urge to innovation only and exclusively an individualising strategy – one can almost say that the emerging elite at Mycenae conformed to their own micro-tradition when innovating! Funerals in Grave Circle B must have involved a precarious balancing act between creating distance from the local community and yet consolidating local support, between devising innovations and anchoring them onto the local tradition, between individualising strategies and the formation of new communities of practice.¹⁰⁰ The very rate of innovation and ostentation suggests that the power base must have been fragile and contested by both local rivals (the group, which founded Grave Circle A, of course) and by other emerging centres. But strangely, even in this hotbed of competition, modest and traditional burials were also practised until the very end of the Grave Circle's use; micro-traditions were not binding dogmas.

My analysis has demonstrated that developments in the Argolid were neither uniform nor linear, and that Mycenae was not representative of the entire region, let alone of the southern mainland. Different communities and social groups within them positioned themselves differently vis-à-vis the old customs or the new fashions. The result was almost kaleidoscopic, with different communities, groups and individuals adopting some innovations and retaining certain traditions out of a constantly changing repertoire of forms and practices in all the different facets of the mortuary practices – the location of the cemetery, the size, design and elaboration of the grave, the complexity of the mortuary ritual, the quantity, quality and diversity of the offerings, the use of figurative representation, etc.¹⁰¹ Within this complex and fluid situation micro-traditions emerged, developed and persisted despite (or perhaps because of) the parallel convergence and formation of a collective 'Mycenaean' identity, as attested by the gradual and uneven spread of the new mortuary practices or the LH I ceramic style across regions, communities and social arenas.

Beyond the southern mainland and the Shaft Grave period, this analysis has, I hope, demonstrated that we can disentangle human choices and human agency in wider processes of change. I have argued that agency is not inherent in individual human beings but relational, as it resides in relations with the social and material world. Agency operates precisely at the interplay between tradition and innovation, between belonging and distinction, between the individual and the group.

¹⁰⁰ See also Boyd 2016, 215.

¹⁰¹ This is where I disagree with the otherwise very interesting paper by Petrakis (2010). He distinguishes between only two modes of prestige expression: the construction of monumental tombs and the ostentatious deposition of valuables with the dead. I hope I have demonstrated that the situation was more complex.

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The Social Dynamics of Argos in a Constantly Changing Landscape (MH II–LH II)

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To Jim Wright for his innovative thinking

Abstract: The present paper focuses on the life cycle of Argos during the early Mycenaean period (MH III/LH I–LH II), also taking into consideration the back-history of the settlement from the beginning of the MH period. On the basis of new evidence from the Aspis MH settlement, and using the Adaptive Cycle model for Argos and for nearby settlements (Lerna, Mycenae), we propose the existence not only of varied life paths for the different sites, but also of important potentials in the MH period that led Argos to great prosperity during the MH II phase, completing a whole AC by the end of the MH period. During the transitional phase (MH III/LH I), and despite a rather illusory image of continuous growth, as reflected in new buildings in the fortified acropolis of the Aspis, Argos enters a critical phase that then becomes apparent through the abandonment of certain residential areas and the relocation of some population groups within and probably beyond its borders. According to one possible scenario, a group of people moved, at the very beginning of MH III, from the Aspis acropolis probably to Mycenae, thus participating in its spectacular rise from the late MH period and onwards. In LH I–IIA Argos is still in a phase of reorganisation, marked by the definite abandonment of the acropolis and changes in the social and economic domains. Only in LH IIB does Argos enter a phase of substantial renewal, as reflected in both the burial/ideological and the residential spheres through the respective establishment of a new burial ground at the Deiras and the rapid expansion of the settlement in the Lower Town upon the vestiges of the old cemetery. However, the critical phase in the transition to the LH period and the restraint of Argos' dynamic course irreversibly transformed it from a leader and a prime agent of the plain (in MH) into a secondary political power throughout the Mycenaean period.

Keywords: Argos, Middle Helladic, early Late Helladic, Adaptive Cycle, social change, migration, Lerna, Mycenae

Introduction

During the MH and LH periods, several important settlements developed in the Argolid, exhibiting dynamic life cycles, diverse but interconnected. It is very thought-provoking to observe how different the trajectories of these communities seem to have been, despite the small distances between them in space and time. It is even more intriguing to investigate the variety of causes underlying this phenomenon, including internal developments (e.g. communal traditions, social coherence, dynamics, receptivity), external stimuli (e.g. exchange, contacts with foreign traditions, practices and ideologies) and interactions between and within communities (e.g. relations of cooperation and/or competition).

The main objective here is to review the history of Argos in the early LH period, focusing on the transitional phase from the MH to the LH period. For Argos, as for most MH/LH sites, this transitional phase was a period with major socio-political, economic and ideological changes, already discussed by many researchers, mainly due to the wide-ranging novelties inaugurated at Mycenae.⁴ This phase is characterised by great variation in the social landscape.⁵ While in

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⁴ E.g. Dickinson 1977; Maran 1995; Voutsaki 1999.

⁵ Wright 2008a, 230–231.

some cases it shows clear evidence of economic and cultural growth, extroversion and inventiveness (Mycenae), for other sites it is a period of reduced potential (Argos, Lerna).

In the belief that changes in the life of a community are directly related to what went before, we argue that the transitional late MH/early LH period in Argos is an integral part of a fluctuating life cycle, involving both old and new societal features and composing a complex and potentially coherent narrative. A profitable way to attempt some further insights into this narrative, as far as the existing data allow it, is to apply in a cautious way the model of the ‘Adaptive Cycle’ (hereafter AC) (Fig. 1), first introduced into Aegean Prehistory by the pioneering studies of Erika Weiberg.⁶ The model was derived from the comparative study of the dynamics of ecosystems,⁷ and, together with the resilience theory, is a useful tool in anthropology and archaeology in order to understand the source and role of change and to provide a richer perspective on social change, collapse, recovery and stability.⁸ The AC is made up of two major phases: the one, referred to as the front loop, is the slow period of growth and accumulation, during which the system becomes more and more effective and connected; this period includes the subphases of exploitation⁹ and conservation.¹⁰ The other, referred to as the back loop, is a rapid period of collapse and reconstitution leading to renewal; this period includes the subphases of release¹¹ and reorganisation.¹² We consider here that the adaptation of a cycle starts at the phase of reorganisation (α) and ends at the phase of release (Ω), while other scholars may place the start of the AC at the phase of release and the end at the phase of conservation.

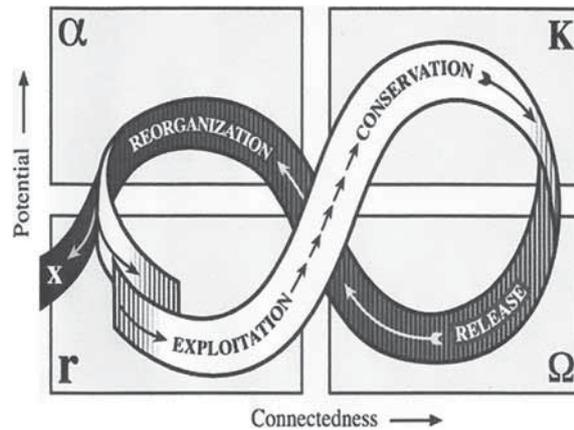


Fig. 1: The cyclical model of the Adaptive Cycle

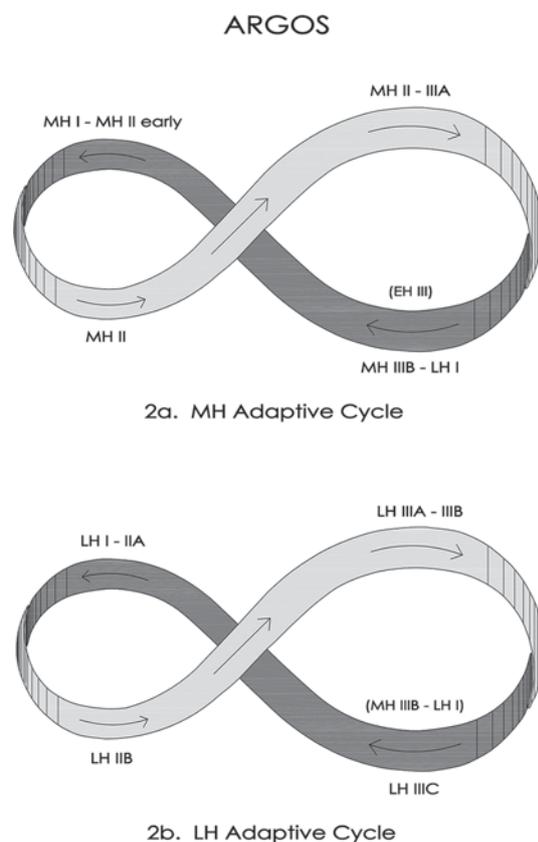


Fig. 2: The proposed Adaptive Cycles for Argos in the MH (2a) and the LH (2b) periods respectively (drawings: V. Philippa)

⁶ Weiberg 2012; Weiberg 2017; Weiberg – Finné 2013.

⁷ E.g. Holling 2001; Holling et al. 2002.

⁸ E.g. Redman 2005; Redman – Kinzig 2003; Weiberg 2017.

⁹ Characterised by low connectedness (though starting to increase), the system's potential is relatively low: the new structure is evolving, exhibiting high diversity, exploiting resources and opportunities, and enjoying high resilience (but weakening).

¹⁰ Characterised by high connectedness, the system's potential is high: effective in resource exploitation, specialisation is increasing, diversity is low, homogeneity is high, and resilience is low (and decreasing).

¹¹ Disintegration of the system: dependencies are high, the potential rapidly decreasing, low functionality of the system, most connections and resources are lost, heterogeneity.

¹² Potential is increased: a new stable regime can appear, exhibiting experimentation and invention; rules can be readily altered, so that the collapse turns into a new order with high resilience.

Using the AC model and relying on data from recent studies, we outline the social dynamics and changes at Argos, as reflected in social space, beginning with the MH period, a large part of which (MH II–III A) we consider the front loop in the life-cycle of the settlement (Fig. 2a). In the transitional phase (MH III B–LH I), we propose that Argos completes a cycle entering a critical phase (Fig. 2b), unlike Mycenae, where the transitional period marks the start of the front loop of the AC – after possibly a long stay in the back loop (Fig. 3). Therefore, in order to evaluate as reliably as possible the nature

of the phase at the heart of our study, i.e. the MH/LH transitional phase of Argos, we should start our narrative looking backwards to the beginning of the cycle, namely to the early MH period. Moreover, we believe that it is imperative to sketch the ACs of the closest neighbours of Argos, i.e. Mycenae and Lerna, in order to highlight not only the dynamics, but also the correlations of power at a regional level in the best possible way. These correlations during the MH/LH transition are particularly decisive for the later development of each community in the early and even later Mycenaean period.

Even though this is not the first time that we have attempted to gain a better understanding of LH Argos by looking back to its MH past,¹³ the difference to our previous attempt lies in the availability of new evidence from MH Aspis, with a focus on a more limited period, and the application of a specific model. Sofia Voutsaki has often emphasised the need to examine early MH social processes for a better understanding of change in the transitional and LH period.¹⁴ However, her studies do not specifically concern Argos, and her view of the MH period differs somewhat from ours. Based on evidence from Argos, we believe that the existence of kin-based social relations does not exclude the aspirations and claims of social distinction, and that competitive dispositions may have developed accordingly to play a rather vital role much earlier than the mature phase of the MH period.¹⁵

MH I – early MH II: Reorganisation and Growth

After a potential phase of ‘release’ in EH III,¹⁶ Argos experienced an impressive development during the MH I – early MH II timespan. Architectural evidence from this early phase is actually very scarce on the Aspis hilltop,¹⁷ due first to the fire destruction¹⁸ and then to the subsequent and continuous building activity throughout the Middle Bronze Age. Therefore, it is impossible to get

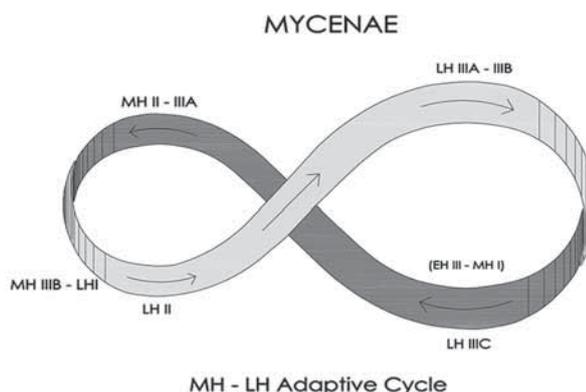


Fig. 3: The proposed Adaptive Cycle for Mycenae in the MH and the LH periods (drawing: V. Philippa)

¹³ Papadimitriou et al. 2015.

¹⁴ Voutsaki 2005; Voutsaki 2010; Voutsaki, this volume.

¹⁵ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997; Parkinson – Galaty 2007; Maran 2011; Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2011; Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016a.

¹⁶ In Argos there is little evidence for this phase, i.e. some sherds on the Aspis (see Balitsari – Philippa-Touchais 2015, 808 and fig. 11) and three bothroi with EH III pottery in the South Quarter (Katerina Barakari-Gleni, personal communication). On release and reorganisation processes in EH III, see Weiberg – Finné 2013.

¹⁷ On the contrary, clear architectural remains from this phase have been distinguished in the South Quarter of Argos, ‘Pithoi House’ (Balitsari 2017; Balitsari 2020; see also Balitsari in Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2018, 804). This evidence suggests that the settlement of Argos was organised in several nuclei (Touchais – Divari-Valakou 1998, 11; Touchais 1998).

¹⁸ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2011, 214.

a clear picture of its spatial organisation in this early phase.¹⁹ However, the detailed study of the pottery revealed important elements that urge us to rethink the nature of the first MH habitation on the hill. All the new evidence comes from the ceramic assemblages of at least two burnt ‘households’ dating back to MH I – early MH II:

1. A closed pottery deposit was found in the eastern sector of the settlement (Fig. 4). According to the recent publication of the material, it might represent part of the equipment of one or more early MH households.²⁰ The deposit comprises a wide range of ceramic classes, including five or six very large storage jars, which are rare in the settlement of the Aspis. Since the presence of agricultural production and surplus (embodied by the large storage jars) may be linked with the emergence, development and reproduction of socio-economic inequality, we formulated the hypothesis that this equipment might be an indication that such social inequality and asymmetry existed as early as the MH I – early MH II phase of the settlement.²¹ This suggestion is reinforced by the existence of a large set of imported pottery within the deposit, which may have been acquired through the agricultural surplus, as in the case of Lerna (House 98A).²²

2. The second assemblage is also related to the burnt equipment of a house in the southeastern sector (Fig. 4), the so-called ‘Ghost-House’, the exact location of which is only recognised by the concentration of its pottery.²³ The assemblage contained both locally produced and imported pots (Fig. 5), among which are Aiginetan (Fig. 5.12–19) and Minoanising (Fig. 5.20–24) vessels. Their large size, specific use (serving and storage), elaborate decoration, and the specialised technology of their manufacture suggest a household out of the ordinary, involved in distant exchange networks. We argue that the repertoire of the vessels may indicate practices of formal ceremonies involving communal eating and drinking. The ‘Ghost-House’ assemblage therefore provides evidence for feasting activities as early as the MH I – early MH II, as was apparently also the case in the settlement of Lerna.²⁴ Feasting is a significant activity that not only promotes communal cohesion, but also leads to social change, the construction of inequality and the formation of distinctive identities.²⁵ We had already surmised the existence of feasting practices at the Aspis during the final MH phase.²⁶ It is of particular interest that similar ceremonies, possibly on a different scale but nonetheless of analogous meaning, were rooted in the earlier MH period.

Concerning the burial practices, the evidence is scanty. Among the 18 graves excavated within the Aspis settlement,²⁷ five, all unfurnished and individual (adults, children and neonates), are dated to MH I according to radiocarbon analysis.²⁸ At least three more were found within the ‘Pithoi House’ in the South Quarter of Argos.²⁹ In the eastern/southeastern foothills of the Aspis, in the area of the prehistoric tumuli, at least seven graves with grave goods are also dated to MH I–II.³⁰ The latter graves may have belonged to groups of residents that lived on the Aspis hill,

¹⁹ Philippa-Touchais 2010, 792.

²⁰ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2011. According to the radiocarbon dating of a carbonised grain from the same deposit, the absolute date (2036–1877 cal. BC) concurs with the relative dating proposed for the ceramic assemblage, i.e. MH I–II early (Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016b, 746).

²¹ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2011, 214–215.

²² Voutsaki et al. 2013, 140, 144.

²³ This concentration was found under the east part of the apsidal House MA (Philippa-Touchais – Balitsari, forthcoming).

²⁴ Wright 2004b, 138, especially n. 30.

²⁵ Dietler – Hayden 2001; Wright 2004b.

²⁶ Philippa-Touchais 2010, 794.

²⁷ Philippa-Touchais 2013.

²⁸ Voutsaki et al. 2008; Philippa-Touchais 2013; Triantaphyllou 2015; Triantaphyllou 2016.

²⁹ Balitsari in Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2018, 804; Balitsari 2020.

³⁰ One burial jar (no. 121) in ‘Tumulus A’ containing at least two individuals (Protonotariou-Deilaki 2009, 43–45, 391 pl. A1, 475 pl. A3.5–6), two individual pit graves (nos. 137, 138) in ‘Tumulus B’ (Protonotariou-Deilaki 2009, 52–53, 395 pl. B1, 482–483 pls. B2:5–6, B3:1–4), two burial jars (no. 69 with at least two individuals, and no. 70 with no bones preserved) in ‘Tumulus Γ’ (Protonotariou-Deilaki 2009, 110–117, 418 pl. Γ46, 507 pl. Γ21), and two



Fig. 4: Aspis, Argos, topographic plan with vestiges of all periods. Sectors I–III excavated by W. Vollgraff (1902–1903). Sectors IV (southeast) and V (north) excavated under the direction of G. Touchais, French School at Athens (1974–1990, 2011). Cleaning took place in Sector II (east) in 2006–2007. The two stars in the southeast sector (IV) and the east sector (II) indicate the location of the MH I–II early pottery deposits (plan: L. Fadin; École française d’Athènes)

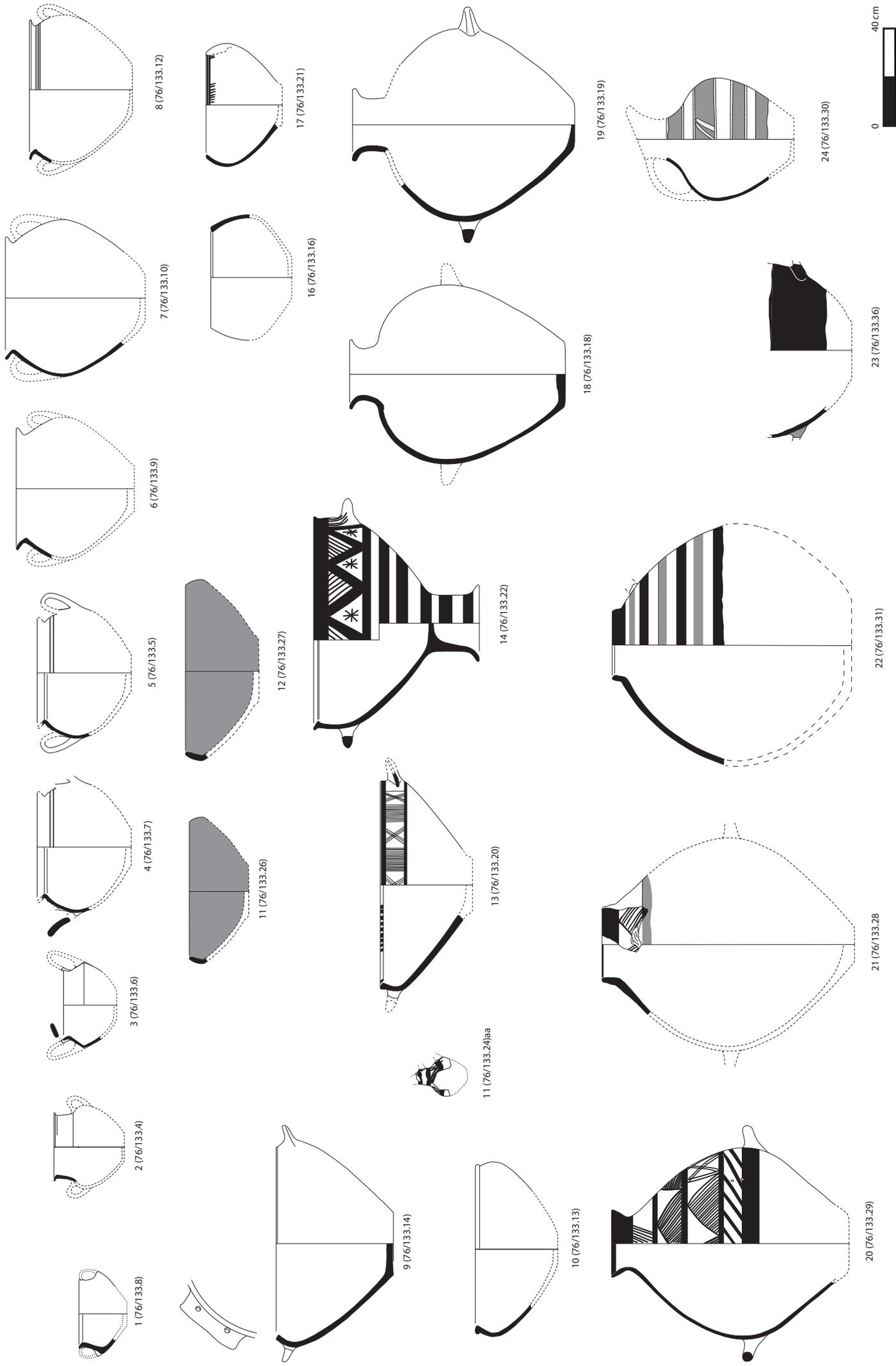


Fig. 5: Pottery from the 'Ghost House', southeast sector (drawings: Y. Nakas; École française d'Athènes)

since, as far as we know, no traces of early MH habitation were found in this area.³¹ It is worth noting that in contrast to the graves in the Aspis settlement, most of those located within or around the tumuli contained more than two individuals and grave goods of some importance.³² We may therefore observe a clear diversity concerning funerary space and practices in this phase.³³ Thus, in regard to Argos, it is difficult to support the idea that in mortuary practices differences within communities are not really marked.³⁴

The Regional Socio-Political Landscape and the AC in MH I – early MH II

In a regional context, secure and trustworthy data of the same phase come from Lerna, where signs of differentiation have been detected in terms of storage capacity, agricultural surplus and the acquisition of imports.³⁵ Imported pottery indicates that Lerna, like Argos, was already in contact with important centres of the Aegean.³⁶ As far as burial data are concerned, graves were apparently related to households, as is the case on the Aspis,³⁷ while a subtle ‘scaling up’ can be observed in the number (demographic growth), the architecture and the furnishing of the graves.³⁸ Concerning Mycenae, because of their poor preservation, little is known about MH architectural remains, and even less for MH I – early MH II;³⁹ we know, however, on the basis of pottery from this phase, that the area of the acropolis was already inhabited.⁴⁰ With regard to burials, more than 150 MH graves were found in the Prehistoric Cemetery (lower west slope of the acropolis),⁴¹ but their exact chronology cannot be determined. Some of them were dug inside or next to houses when the latter were still in use.⁴² It is possible that most of the latter burials should be dated to MH I–II.

Looking at this through the AC prism, we cannot make any serious suggestions about social structure and potential for Mycenae, apart from the fact that it was not excluded from the exchange networks operating in the Argolid at that time. For both Argos and Lerna, it is clear that they experienced a period of intense reorganisation (back loop). It is noteworthy that although these early MH communities are considered to be kin-based, and thus rather corporate and not highly differentiated,⁴³ new evidence points to important signs of both social asymmetries and an increase in the potential of the system, which are reflected in the accumulation of surpluses, the social practices of feasting and the acquisition of large quantities of imported vessels. In addition, the openness of these communities and their contact with foreign traditions must have caused considerable renewal in their material culture and their ideologies. Finally, their active participation in the operating exchange networks demonstrates their ability to exploit resources

more burial jars with multiple burials in the Thanos plot (Pappi 2012). See also Voutsaki et al. 2009; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 170–171.

³¹ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 165, tab. 1.

³² The large burial jars no. 70 (2.20 × 1.24 m) in ‘Tumulus Γ’, and no. 2 (2 × 1.10 m) in the Thanos plot (see n. 30), were accompanied by fifteen and nine vessels respectively. Among the vessels, several were imported (Aiginetan and Lustrous Decorated), very similar to vases found on the Aspis hilltop.

³³ On the diversity and meaning of the early MH funerary landscape, see Philippa-Touchais 2019.

³⁴ Voutsaki 2010, 90.

³⁵ Voutsaki et al. 2013; Voutsaki – Milka 2017, 115; for a review of the architectural and settlement organisation evidence of MH I Lerna (VA), see Wiersma 2014, 139–141.

³⁶ Zerner 1988; Zerner 1993.

³⁷ Milka 2010; Voutsaki et al. 2013; Philippa-Touchais 2013.

³⁸ Voutsaki – Milka 2017.

³⁹ Shelton 2010; Wiersma 2014, 145–146.

⁴⁰ Namely several sherds deriving from MH I–II Lustrous Decorated (Minoanising) jars, and coarse vessels with incised decoration. In 2009, on the occasion of a workshop organised by Prof. David French and the Greek Archaeological Service represented by Dr Eleni Palaiologou, Anna Philippa-Touchais had the opportunity to see the MH pottery from the excavations of the British School on the acropolis in the Museum of Mycenae.

⁴¹ Dickinson 1994, 221; Alden 2000; French – Shelton 2005, 178.

⁴² Alden 2000, 17, 19; Shelton 2010, 61.

⁴³ Voutsaki 2005; Voutsaki 2010; Voutsaki et al. 2013; Philippa-Touchais 2011.

and opportunities. These features together with the lack of standardisation in their pottery production and consumption⁴⁴ as well as in their burial practices⁴⁵ are typical in phases of intense reorganisation.

MH II–III A: Exploitation and Conservation

In MH II, the social developments observed in the previous phase continued unabated. After the devastating fire of early MH II on the Aspis, the settlement was reconstructed, expanding in all four excavated sectors, and organised in successive terraces retained by two interior circuit walls (Fig. 6).⁴⁶ Houses do not differ significantly in the ground plan but vary in size. A fortification wall of ‘proto-Cyclopean’ masonry (Fig. 7) was constructed to enclose the settlement.⁴⁷ The wall was identified in three excavated sectors, but is best preserved in the northern sector, where it was possible to date it more accurately to the late MH II or MH III A at the latest.⁴⁸ The exterior circuit wall, together with two interior ones, gave the settlement a concentric organisation, earlier than previously thought.⁴⁹ We believe that the concentric and fortified planning of the settlement on the Aspis reflects not only spatial hierarchy and the inception of differentiation within the community,⁵⁰ but also aspirations to claim or maximise its leading position as early as MH II.⁵¹ In other words, the fortification wall could be considered as the physical embodiment, in building terms, of the leading role of the Aspis in the wider region. It is worth considering, though, a provoking observation on this symbol of protection par excellence: “is the attention to defence [...] an indicator only of impending outside threat or perhaps itself a root cause?”⁵²

Apart from the settlement’s reorganisation, a large amount of pottery of the same period, both of local production and imported, was found in all excavated sectors, even in the central (I) and eastern (II) sectors excavated by Wilhelm Vollgraff (Fig. 4).⁵³ In addition, the discovery of a quite exceptional piece of ornamentation⁵⁴ seems to support the existence of a prosperous community. A gold pendant suspended from a gold chain (Fig. 8) came to light in House ML in the northern sector dating to MH II.⁵⁵ The triangular sheet and the elaborate chain show clear similarities to gold jewellery found in burial contexts of EM II–III and early MM (Mochlos, the Mesara, Archanes, Mallia).⁵⁶ Taking into consideration the meagre evidence for EH and early MH gold-working skills and the proof for the exchange of material goods and technological expertise between Crete and the Argolid,⁵⁷ we could assume that the pendant was imported from Crete. However, its manufacture in a mainland workshop – possibly in the Argolid – cannot be excluded on the basis of any certain techno-morphological features.⁵⁸ Therefore, the manufacture of valuables in the Argolid or in a wider area⁵⁹ may have started earlier than previously thought,⁶⁰ even if still

⁴⁴ In contrast to the communities of central Greece, Spencer 2010.

⁴⁵ Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 34.

⁴⁶ Philippa-Touchais 2016, 649–651.

⁴⁷ Philippa-Touchais 2016.

⁴⁸ On the dating of House MI, which is contemporary to the fortification wall, in the northern sector, see Philippa-Touchais – Balitsari 2016, 738–739.

⁴⁹ Philippa-Touchais 2010.

⁵⁰ Wright 1994, 45–46; Wright 2008a, 237.

⁵¹ Philippa-Touchais 2016, 657.

⁵² Cunningham 2017, 18.

⁵³ Balitsari – Philippa-Touchais 2015, 805–807; Balitsari – Philippa-Touchais, forthcoming.

⁵⁴ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016a; see also Dickinson 1994, 184.

⁵⁵ House ML is beneath the large House MI, Philippa-Touchais – Balitsari 2016, 738–742.

⁵⁶ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016a.

⁵⁷ Rutter – Zerner 1984; Zerner 1993, 50.

⁵⁸ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016a, 288.

⁵⁹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997.

⁶⁰ Dickinson 1977, 72; Dickinson 1994, 184; Laffineur 2010, 444.



Fig. 6: Aspis, Argos. Reconstruction of Aspis Phase III (MH II late – MH IIIA). In Sectors I and II (excavated in 1903) the presence of houses of this phase is suggested by Vollgraf’s plan and the dating of the pottery preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Argos and the NMA (drawing: V. Philippa)



Fig. 7: Aspis, northern sector. The inner face of the ‘proto-Cyclopean’ MH II late fortification wall

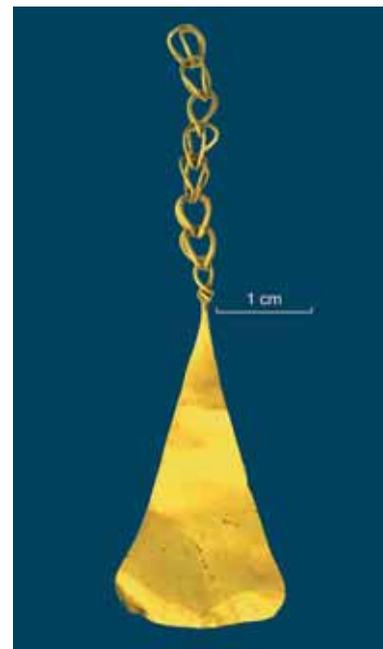


Fig. 8: The gold pendant from the Aspis settlement (photo: R. Prévaut; École française d’Athènes)

under the influence of Crete. In addition, the acquisition of such an exceptional ornament, either as part of an early MH acquisitive ethos,⁶¹ or as an act of masked aggrandisement,⁶² was possibly intended to claim or emphasise personal prestige.⁶³

In the burial sphere, we observe that during MH II–MH IIIA the diversity in burial practices continued: among the 18 graves excavated within the Aspis settlement, 13 were dated to this period,⁶⁴ with grave goods being quite rare. At the same time, the eastern/southeastern foothills of the Aspis continued to be used as burial ground, where several of those graves without grave goods probably belong to the same phase.⁶⁵ Concerning the South Quarter, several burials were excavated among the vestiges of early MH houses.⁶⁶ A very interesting element that emerged from the detailed study of the stratigraphy of this quarter is the possibility that the grave with the earliest known cremation from Argos can be dated to the MH II late – MH IIIA, i.e. earlier than originally proposed (transitional phase).⁶⁷ We hope that this issue will be further clarified by the study in progress of this exceptional grave.

The Regional Socio-Political Landscape and the AC in MH II–IIIA

In a regional context, Lerna continues to be the most important port in the Argolid and presumably the gateway community for the imported products. In terms of settlement organisation and burial practices, the pattern does not appear to change significantly from the previous phase.⁶⁸ However, some differentiated graves/burials with more complex treatment (collective, on two levels, removed/disarticulated) and richer furnishing (i.e. MH II grave J 4B) suggest new ideas, where status is claimed and performed by practices diverging from the MH norm.⁶⁹ For Mycenae, we still have little evidence: there exists no more information than that described for MH I – early II (see above).

In terms of the AC, during MH II, Argos would pass into the front loop phase, i.e. one of exploitation and conservation. Several features indicate that the community on the Aspis hilltop was going through a period of growth and development. There is evidence of settlement organisation and expansion in all four excavated sectors, mighty circuit walls, streets parallel to them and a fortification wall. These large-scale architectural developments indicate increased population, some asymmetry between households, and claims for the rise of the Aspis in the regional settlement hierarchy; at the same time they also imply communal decision-making, cooperative efforts and emergent control. In fact it seems that there is no shift from the focus on the household to a communal one (i.e. a kind of dichotomy) but rather a successful interplay between personal/family and community growth. Exchange was still quite active, as reflected in the continuing import of pottery. At the same time, the production of local ceramics increased significantly, either through the devising of clear preferences for standardised types (namely Grey Minyan and Dark Burnished bowls with shoulder grooves)⁷⁰ or through the interaction with pottery traditions from

⁶¹ Spencer 2010, 678–679.

⁶² Maran 2011, 286.

⁶³ Philippa-Touchais – Touchais 2016a, 289.

⁶⁴ Philippa-Touchais 2013, 90, tab. 1.

⁶⁵ A large burial pithos covered with a hydria (both of Aiginetan production) can be dated with certainty to MH II: Protonotariou-Deilaki 2009, 266 ('Tumulus ΣΤ', Hospital area).

⁶⁶ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 169; Balitsari 2017; Balitsari 2020.

⁶⁷ Balitsari 2017; Balitsari 2020.

⁶⁸ Wiersma 2014, 141–143; Eleni Milka (2010) has proposed an interesting sequence of successive shifts between the residential and the funerary use of some areas, but her arguments cannot be fully appreciated before the final publication of Lerna V.

⁶⁹ Voutsaki – Milka 2017, esp. 108–110, 112.

⁷⁰ Philippa-Touchais – Balitsari 2016, 740–741, figs. 10.7, 11; 11.3–4, 9–10. For an overview of the system of pottery production typically found at many Argive sites in EH III–MH II, see Spencer 2010, 678–679.

the central mainland and from the islands (mainly Aigina).⁷¹ Therefore, while there is still a clear diversity in settlement architecture, burial practices and pottery production (and consumption), we can also discern an emergent standardisation, which is a typical feature of the exploitation or expansion phase. In addition, increasing internal and regional connectedness and the system's potential in exploiting resources and opportunities go in the same direction. Lerna seems to follow a similar course of growth in the fore loop, while Mycenae might still be in a phase of reorganisation (back loop).

MH III–LH I: A Society in Movement or a Phase of Release

As Joseph Maran has very perceptively observed, “if we had to predict, solely on the basis of the social and political circumstances during the MH I and II phases, which sites would ‘evolve’ into the most important LH centres of the Argolid, the choice would undoubtedly be Argos, with Lerna serving as its harbour. That things didn’t develop this way and instead the centre of power shifted from Argos and Lerna... to Mycenae and Tiryns..., is one of those unexpected ruptures which deserve more attention.”⁷² We also support the pivotal importance assigned to the ‘unexpected rupture’ at Argos, and we believe that it can probably be attributed to certain event(s) which should be placed within the MH III–LH I period. Therefore, particular attention needs to be given to the evidence concerning the social space during this phase at Argos.

Evidence from the Aspis hill and the Lower Town reveals a series of changes in the habitation patterning. These changes, which are expressed spatially with the abandonments of certain residential areas and the relocation in others, are certainly associated with a series of movements of population groups on a local or more regional scale. Similar movements have been observed in several sites during the same period, their causes possibly being related to the changed socio-economic situation.⁷³ However, until now the specific conditions for each case were not pursued further. In order to understand better the new socio-economic conditions that prevailed at Argos during the MH III–LH I, we will examine more closely the changes in the residential space and the movements of population groups as depicted at the local micro-scale and the wider region.

Settlement Space: Abandonments and Relocations

On the Aspis hilltop, major changes took place in MH IIIA and MH IIIB–LH I. In the northern sector of the settlement, the recent detailed study of the pottery revealed that the latest building phase (large House MI and the partly excavated House MJ; Fig. 6) dates to MH II late, with only a few elements of MH IIIA.⁷⁴ Since this sector of the settlement was not inhabited in later phases, we may conclude that the abandonment of these houses marks the definitive desertion of this area at the very beginning of MH III.

In the southeastern sector, three houses were also abandoned or destroyed during MH IIIA (the apsidal House MA, House MB and House MC, Fig. 6), but here habitation continued in the next MH phase: the ‘Peripheral Complex’ was constructed in MH IIIB (Fig. 9) over the ruins of these earlier houses. The complex was built according to a specific plan and apparently for specific purposes. We have already suggested that it was intended to strengthen the protection of the Aspis settlement and emphasise its dominant position.⁷⁵ However, we should also emphasise that the construction of the complex was accompanied by a significant decrease in the size

⁷¹ Philippa-Touchais 2007; Touchais 2007; Spencer 2010.

⁷² Maran 2015, 278.

⁷³ Maran 1995, 72.

⁷⁴ Philippa-Touchais – Balitsari 2016, 738–739.

⁷⁵ Philippa-Touchais 2010, 794; Philippa-Touchais 2016, 654.



Fig. 9: Aspis, Argos. Artistic reconstruction of Aspis phase IV (MH III B–LH I). In this phase, the houses of the northern sector are abandoned as some of the houses of the central and eastern sectors (drawing: Y. Nakas, colouring: A. Goumas; based on the reconstruction of this phase published in Philippa-Touchais 2010, 801, fig. 10)

of the habitation area, since on the one hand the northern sector was already abandoned, and on the other, the space at the exterior of the complex (between the latter and the older exterior enceinte) was left uninhabited (Fig. 9). Moreover, we do not know to what extent the houses of the central and the eastern sectors (excavated by W. Vollgraff) were still in use, since the pottery preserved from these sectors dates mainly to MH I–II early and MH II–III A; very few sherds can be dated to the final phase of the settlement.⁷⁶ The ‘Peripheral Complex’ was in use for a short period of time, lasting no later than LH I, when it was abandoned, as was the entire acropolis of the Aspis.⁷⁷

In the South Quarter of modern Argos, near the ancient theatre, the fragmentarily known MH I–II settlement (‘Quartier Sud’) was also thought to have been abandoned (or moved) at the very beginning of MH III and used afterwards as a burial ground during the MH III–LH I period.⁷⁸ This hypothesis was

recently confirmed by the thorough study of the MH remains in the area.⁷⁹

In the southeastern foothills of the Aspis, where a cemetery had already been in use since MH I, a new habitation area was created, beginning in MH III. The excavations of the Archaeological Service in this area brought to light an important number of MH III–LH I architectural (and burial) remains.⁸⁰ Henceforth habitation (and burial) concentrated at this area.

Some Thoughts on the Evidence Concerning Settlement Space

Judging from the above-mentioned evidence, during the MH III–LH I period the society of Argos was in constant movement. According to the evidence, we propose two main instances of population movement and household relocation: the first one, that we call ‘Movement A’, took place at the beginning of MH III, while the second one, ‘Movement B’, happened in MH III B final or LH I. Two questions arise immediately: 1. what were the reasons behind these successive abandonments, and 2. where might the departing families have resettled?

‘Movement A’

Two cases of abandonment of residential areas were identified during MH III A, one in the northern sector of the Aspis and the other in the South Quarter (in the foothills of the Larissa). Recently it has been proposed that the abandonment of the South Quarter is related to the increasing importance of the Aspis area and the creation of a more coherent communal identity that led to a less dispersed settlement pattern, with a proper acropolis (Aspis) and a lower town (southeastern foothills of the Aspis).⁸¹

⁷⁶ Balitsari – Philippa-Touchais 2015, 805–807; Balitsari – Philippa-Touchais, forthcoming.

⁷⁷ Philippa-Touchais 2016, 657–658.

⁷⁸ Touchais 1998.

⁷⁹ Balitsari 2017; Balitsari 2020.

⁸⁰ Divari-Valakou 1998; Papadimitriou 2010, 49–50; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 164–165.

⁸¹ Balitsari 2017.

For the causes of the definitive abandonment of the Aspis hilltop (MH IIIB final/LH I), we had proposed in the past that it could have been connected with the spectacular growth of Mycenae at this very time.⁸² The new case of definitive abandonment in the northern sector of the settlement (‘Movement A’), dated quite a bit earlier, certainly cannot be linked to the same events at Mycenae, since, according to the existing evidence the impressive growth had not yet manifested at Mycenae then. Before focusing on possible factors that led to ‘Movement A’, it is worthwhile to formulate an estimate of the household numbers that moved from the Aspis in MH IIIA. It is estimated with great caution that this group might involve about five or six households, namely at least two households in the northern sector (Houses MI and MJ), and possibly some more from the central and eastern sectors since, as we mentioned above, only a few sherds from the latter sectors are dated to MH IIIB–LH I. We therefore tend to conclude that the northern sector was no longer inhabited in the transitional phase, while the central and eastern sectors became lesser occupied.

The causes that led part of the population to leave the settlement are more likely to be related to internal growing social tensions due to an increase in population (in MH II), and a settlement expansion which ended up becoming a kind of ‘village-state’; in this case, as accurately proposed by John Bintliff, the necessity for a more elaborate internal system of social control could have given rise to a minority ruling elite,⁸³ or to the emergence of leadership, as proposed by James Wright.⁸⁴ In the emerging complex and competitive social landscape of MH II–IIIA Argos, the existence of intense confrontations between competing groups would be more than expected. In one of these conflicts, some groups, particularly active and already involved in interconnected networks, chose (or were forced) to leave Argos. Tensions and increased mobility were also developed at a regional level as a result of denser habitation, interaction and competition between settlements over access to foreign trade partners or scarce resources.⁸⁵

Concerning the possible place of relocation of these departing households, it seems likely that they simply went to the southeastern foothills of the Aspis, where architectural remains of MH III were found, though habitation in this area intensifies mainly in MH IIIB/LH I. According to an alternative scenario, groups of ‘Movement A’ went to Mycenae, thus participating actively in the creation of the upcoming ‘Mycenaean Spring’. But why Mycenae? Was the ambience there more welcoming? We suggest that this is a possibility. They might have maintained some kind of relations with local groups at Mycenae since long before (i.e. through exogamies⁸⁶ or as partners in some venture), or perhaps the new place (economically and politically) promised them more. As for the Mycenaeans acting as hosts, they could have been most pleased at such an arrangement because it would offer them more power, new alliances and possibly people with new know-how. In the *longue durée*, this venture indeed proved particularly successful, for all of them.

This hypothesis is based mainly on the fact that Mycenae before MH IIIB does not appear to be a particularly important site, based on the available data. Instead, as we saw above, at MH II Argos a number of developments in architecture (‘proto-Cyclopean’ fortification wall), craft production (local pottery of excellent quality, metallurgy: e.g. gold pendant, bronze and lead items⁸⁷ and a clay bellow’s nozzle/tuyère fragment,⁸⁸ possibly a boar’s tusk helmet, see below), and in the sphere of burial practices (construction of tumuli, possibly the built grave with the cremation in the south district), indicated a particularly active and inventive society. All these developments, which Mycenae seems to lack before MH IIIB, were already present at Argos in MH II.

⁸² Philippa-Touchais 2010, 796; Touchais 2013, 110–111.

⁸³ Bintliff 2010, 760.

⁸⁴ Wright 2001; Wright 2004a; Wright 2008a, 242–243; Wright 2008b, 148; Wright 2010.

⁸⁵ Bintliff 2010; Wright 2010; Wiersma 2014, 231.

⁸⁶ On small communities practising exogamy with neighbouring (typically three or four) settlements, see Bintliff 2010.

⁸⁷ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 163; Kayafa 2016.

⁸⁸ Under study by Konstantina Karaindrou as part of her PhD thesis, entitled “Τεχνολογία, παραγωγή και κεντρική εξουσία στην Ηπειρωτική Ελλάδα κατά την Εποχή του Χαλκού. Η περίπτωση της μεταλλουργίας” (University of Thessaly).

‘Movement B’

This movement concerns the last inhabitants of the Aspis acropolis. Most of them very probably moved to the foothills of the Aspis, where the habitation became denser during the transitional phase. According to the archaeological evidence, most of the architectural remains were located on either side of a paved road of late MH/early LH date, today coinciding with Herakleous Street.⁸⁹ If most of the newcomers from the Aspis hilltop resettled along this road, as we suppose, a possible motivation for this could be a shift of economic activities.

We suggest that this paved road was possibly part of a longer one coming from Lerna, the old port of the Argolid, first to Argos and then on to Mycenae. The road might have connected all three settlements since the early MH period but it may have been paved in the transitional phase for the new needs of Mycenae, which was involved in an unprecedented level of importing valuables, as is indicated by the grave goods of the Shaft Graves. Finished artefacts or precious raw materials arriving by sea, mainly from Crete, would be transported via this road (though perhaps not only) to their final destination at Mycenae. Since Argos was situated at the midway point of this road (measuring some 21 km in total), it is quite plausible that carriages and travellers would stop at some rest house on the ‘proto-Herakleous Street’. Argos could therefore take advantage of being at this focal point of traffic, either by promoting its own agricultural or craft products, or by focusing on some other transport or commercially oriented undertakings. Therefore, the spectacular growth of Mycenae and the creation of a new, potential pole of economic attraction in the lower town of Argos could have contributed to the abandonment of the Aspis. However, more dramatic factors for this abandonment would certainly include the gradual weakening of the community (after ‘Movement A’) and its inability to compete with a neighbouring community, where the most dynamic human resources were now concentrated.

The intense transportation activity along the paved road probably lasted until early LH II at the latest, since after this phase Lerna seems to lose its role as the main port of the Argolid (see below). By LH I, a new harbour was developing at Nauplion on the eastern side of the Argive Gulf,⁹⁰ while during the Palatial period the main port of the Argolid is considered to be Tiryns.⁹¹ Consequently, the main transport road to Mycenae gradually shifted to the eastern part of the plain. We here pass over the exact reasons for this shift, which were probably of a political nature and driven by Mycenae. The certainty is that Argos did not benefit from this shift: it is likely that the former leaders of the Argolid felt aggrieved by this development.

Burial Space: Tradition versus Innovation

In MH IIIB–LH I, a demarcation between the residential and the burial space can be observed on the Aspis settlement, since no burials of this phase have been identified within the citadel. We have already argued that all inhabitants of the Aspis hilltop were now buried in the cemetery in the eastern/southeastern foothills of the Aspis.⁹² However, since the latter area now becomes densely inhabited, the graves are still related to houses⁹³ and not yet segregated in distinct or formal places. This continuous use of the traditional burial ground of MH Argos points out the persistence of traditional burial practices.⁹⁴ It is of great interest, however, that during the excavations of the Archaeological Service in this area some kind of demarcation was noticed between the residential and the burial space, with most buildings being located nearer to the hillside and most

⁸⁹ Segments of its pavement came to light at the northern end of the town, Papadimitriou 2010, 50–52; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 165, tab. I; 167, tab. 2; 168.

⁹⁰ The wealthy cemetery of Evangelistria dated to LH I–IIIB2 (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1977; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1979) suggests a thriving LH settlement certainly related to maritime trade.

⁹¹ Maran 2015, 282 (with older bibliography).

⁹² Philippa-Touchais 2013, 84; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 169 n. 67.

⁹³ Divari-Valakou 1998; Papadimitriou, 2010; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 171–172 and fig. 6b.

⁹⁴ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 178; Papadimitriou et al. 2020.

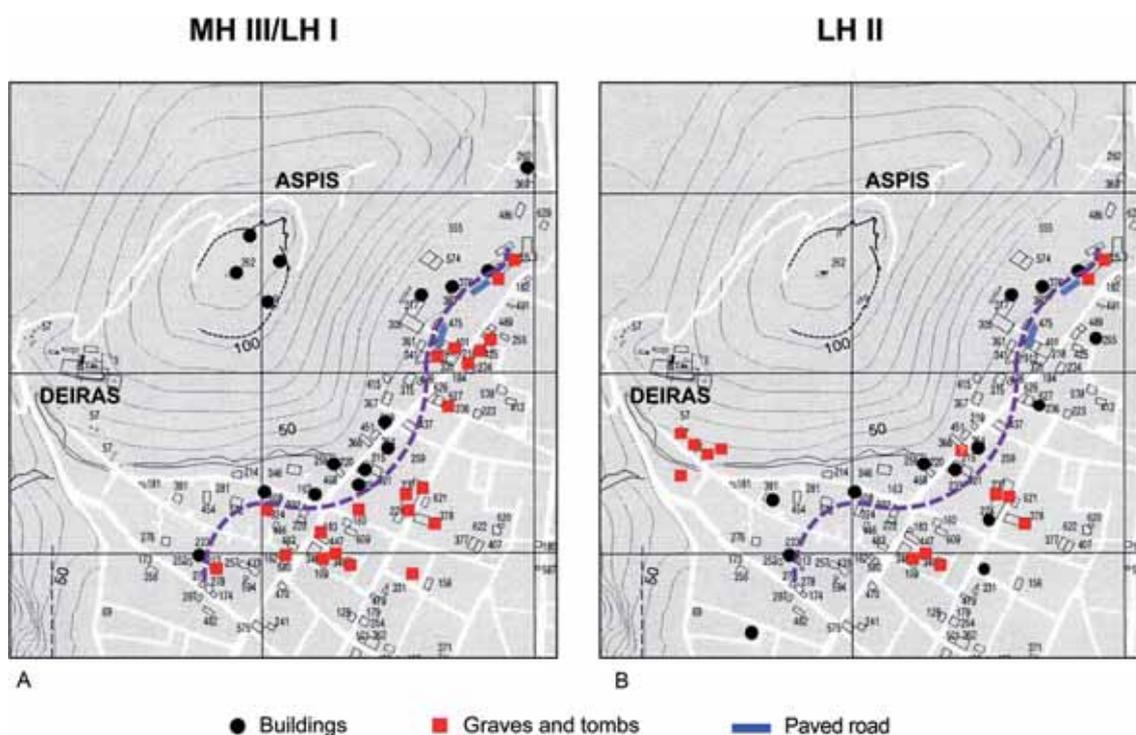


Fig. 10: a–b. The gradual change in the spatial relation between habitation and burial grounds in Argos from MH III/LH I to LH II

graves closer to the plain (Fig. 10a).⁹⁵ The hypothetical line separating the two spaces follows the relief of the Aspis foothills (Fig. 10a, in dotted line), as does likewise the course of the two excavated sections of the paved road leading towards Mycenae (Fig. 10a, in blue). This being so, the paved road would have physically demarcated these two differently utilised spaces. It could also be proposed that the burial ground, lying all along the east side of the site, gives the impression of a kind of symbolic ‘bastion’ for the protection of the settlement.

Moreover, at this time (MH IIIB–LH I) there is still no significant change in the special treatment of the dead. Most burials continued to be individual, in the traditional MH types of graves, and without exceptional offerings.⁹⁶ Certainly some change does occur: several MH IIIB graves contain offerings of some value (e.g. gold bands, bronze weapons and tools),⁹⁷ while two published built chamber tombs contained multiple burials with some LH I pottery.⁹⁸ Furthermore, two unpublished graves probably dating to MH IIIB–LH I should be considered exceptional, as they seem to belong to warriors. The first, in the southeastern foothills of the Aspis (in the area of MH ‘Tumulus A’), contained a boar’s tusk helmet in excellent condition, which was dated by Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier as prior to the transitional phase (i.e. MH II);⁹⁹ however, this early date cannot be confirmed before all the grave goods have been studied. The second grave, in the South Quarter (area of the municipal stadium, southern foothills of the Larissa), contained at least two individuals equipped with exceptional offerings, such as a bronze sword and other bronze weapons, a silver cup, a gold ring, beads of gold and carnelian, several ivory items and fragments probably coming from a boar’s tusk helmet.¹⁰⁰ This grave, as well as the presence of some others of MH IIIB–LH I date from the

⁹⁵ Papadimitriou 2010, 52; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 171–172; Papadimitriou et al. 2020.

⁹⁶ Voutsaki et al. 2009, 178–179 (by E. Milka).

⁹⁷ For a review, see Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 172, with bibliography.

⁹⁸ Papadimitriou 2001; for a review, see Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 173, with bibliography.

⁹⁹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 40, 45–47.

¹⁰⁰ Aikaterini Barakari-Gleni, personal communication; the tomb, excavated in 1987, was dated to LH I (Touchais – Divari-Valakou 1998, 12 n. 20; see also Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 176).

same area, excavated by the Archaeological Service¹⁰¹ or by the French School,¹⁰² may imply that the South Quarter was not completely abandoned during the transitional phase.

These novelties, though significant, are, however, rather exceptional within the prevailing burial ideology, which still does not seem to favour the use of the burial ground for conspicuous consumption or for self-aggrandisement. This perseverance in adhering to the traditional attitudes toward death is certainly related to the dominant conservative aspect of the community. Perhaps this conservatism was among the causes of tension and conflict within groups of the community, namely between traditional lineages and more innovative ones which were shaping and negotiating collective identities through new social practices and funerary rituals.¹⁰³

The Regional Socio-Political Landscape and the AC in the Transitional Phase

Concerning the socio-political landscape at a regional level, data from Lerna in this period are scarce: since MH III Lerna had been gradually shrinking and the residential area was later confined to only part of the site, unless another area was selected for habitation,¹⁰⁴ as in the case of the Aspis. Evidence, deriving mainly from burials and two large LH I shaft graves,¹⁰⁵ although denoting the presence of important funerary rituals and some affluent groups in the area, does not bear witness to the existence of a developed settlement such as that of MH I–II.¹⁰⁶ As for Mycenae, even if the evidence comes exclusively from the world of burial, it clearly suggests a thriving community with a rapidly increasing potential.

We could thus conclude that in terms of the AC, both for Argos and for Lerna the MH III–LH I period provided social disturbances and, to a certain degree, disruption of the (pre-)existing system: total or partial abandonment of habitation areas, relocations of population groups,¹⁰⁷ increased need for spatial demarcation and control ('Peripheral Complex' in the case of the Aspis) deriving from a rise in internal and regional conflicts,¹⁰⁸ a shift in economic activities, increasing introversion underlined by the decrease in exchanges and the development of locally produced ceramics (at least in the case of Argos),¹⁰⁹ continuing variation in funerary practices, relatively few rich graves and uneven expression of personal status. In Argos, although there does not seem to be a general population decline or an economic recession, still one cannot argue that there is any social or political stability, since the existence of the Upper and the Lower Town may indicate some intra-communal tensions. It could be suggested, therefore, that Argos enters a phase with elements of social disintegration and release (Fig. 2a), as is probably the case in Lerna. Instead, Mycenae offers many clues in terms of a population increase, suggesting the arrival of new population elements, an active exchange, growth in economic and political power, competitive consumption in death and personal status defined in funerary performances. Of course, here too, there exists variability in pottery¹¹⁰ and heterogeneity in burial practices,¹¹¹ both characteristic of periods of reorganisation and exploitation. All told, we would propose that Mycenae is making spectacular advances and is entering the front loop (Fig. 3).

¹⁰¹ K. Barakari-Gleni, personal communication.

¹⁰² Touchais 1998, 74; Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 169; Balitsari 2017.

¹⁰³ Papadimitriou 2011; Papadimitriou 2016; Boyd 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Wiencke 1998, 207.

¹⁰⁵ Wiencke 1998, 207; Lindblom 2007; Lindblom – Ekroth 2016.

¹⁰⁶ See also Voutsaki – Milka 2017, 118.

¹⁰⁷ Maran 1995, 68.

¹⁰⁸ See also Maran 1995, 69; Wright 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Philippa-Touchais 2007, 112; Voutsaki et al. 2009, 168.

¹¹⁰ Rutter 2010; Rutter 2015.

¹¹¹ Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 34.

LH II: Ruptures with the Past and the Emergence of Innovations

In LH II, mainly in LH IIB, important changes at Argos indicate a process of development and an effort to create a new collective identity, one that is different from the past.

Burial Space: The Innovations

The biggest change took place in the burial sphere. Five large chamber tombs inaugurated a new burial ground at some distance from the settlement, in the Deiras ravine (Fig. 10b).¹¹² The new type of monumental tomb and the formal cemetery are closely intertwined with new burial practices, as part of a novel funerary ideology. The large Chamber Tombs VI and VII preserved part of their wealthy offerings: gold jewellery, many ivory items, palatial jars, etc., clearly suggesting that the Deiras cemetery and the concurrent novel funerary ideology were inaugurated by privileged members of the Argos society seeking to display power, claim access to networks of exchange, and emphasise their identities and lineages (by breaking away from tradition).¹¹³ Even so, a large part of the population is still buried within the old cemetery in the foothills of the Aspis (Fig. 10b).¹¹⁴ The prolonged use of this burial ground next to the residential area suggests the symbolic power of the ancestors' place over the landscape of Argos until LH IIB/IIIA 1.

Settlement Space: A Site Under Construction

The Aspis citadel was now definitively abandoned and habitation confined to the Lower Town. The data from this new settlement space are very scanty.¹¹⁵ However, the emerging use of a new burial ground led to the gradual expansion of the settlement to the east and the occupation of the area of the former cemetery by secular buildings, a process that becomes more apparent in LH III.¹¹⁶ The progressive 'encroachment' into the traditional funerary space by a new residential district may also have some symbolic significance. The levelling of the ancestors' living-burial locales to accommodate the expansion of the settlement and the configuration of a new residential landscape could be considered as another arena for breaking away from tradition, promoting new lineages and ideologies,¹¹⁷ and reshaping collective identity.

The Regional Socio-Political Landscape and the AC in LH II

In terms of the AC, at the beginning of LH II (LH I–IIA) Argos is undergoing a period of reorganisation (back loop, Fig. 2b), since there is still a prolonged fluidity between the burial and the residential space, which perhaps reflects weak social connectedness and consistency. LH IIB is a period that can be characterised by intensive experimentation, agency and increasing growth: the first definite innovations in the burial and settlement areas suggest evolving structures, while rich and exotic grave goods underline the capacity to exploit resources and opportunities, as well as the active participation and integration in regional networks. We think that Argos presents many characteristics of a community entering the fore loop (Fig. 2b). By that time, though, Lerna no longer seems to be following a course similar to Argos; the latest burials on the mound date

¹¹² Philippa-Touchais – Papadimitriou 2015; Papadimitriou et al. 2015; Papadimitriou et al. 2020.

¹¹³ Philippa-Touchais – Papadimitriou 2015, 462–465.

¹¹⁴ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 174 and fig. 6d.

¹¹⁵ Papadimitriou et al. 2015, 166–168, with detailed bibliography.

¹¹⁶ Papadimitriou et al. 2020.

¹¹⁷ Eder 2016.

to early LH IIB and the area is not inhabited again until sometime within LH IIIA2: “It may be that the earlier wealthy elite failed in some way to sustain their influence after LH IIB.”¹¹⁸ As for Mycenae, the evidence, albeit coming almost exclusively from the burial sphere,¹¹⁹ indicates an increasing differentiation of status and the consolidation of an elite class;¹²⁰ this evidence clearly testifies to its upward course within the phase of exploitation (Fig. 3).

Conclusions

From the very beginning of the MH period, the community established on the strategic Aspis hilltop was apparently able to exploit in an effective and successful way the territorial dynamics of the Argive Plain, where the coexistence of two rivers, a wetland, and the proximity of the sea favoured a diversified agro-pastoral economy and at the same time marine communication and exchange.¹²¹ Argos underwent spectacular growth in MH II, something that is particularly interesting because it does not conform to the traditional narrative for that period.¹²² Most features of this growth (i.e. settlement expansion and consolidation, collective action, technical improvement in architecture, increased spatial control, increased imports, elements of standardisation in material culture, socio-economic complexity, connectedness and social networking) allow us to argue that this phase may be viewed, according to the AC model, as a period of exploitation and conservation through the so-called front loop. However, some prolonged features of diversity (e.g. the lack of standardisation in burial practices) suggest that MH II late/IIIA Argos, though in a phase of spectacular expansion, had possibly not reached a fully developed functioning of the conservation phase, as conceived in the AC model.

About the beginning of MH III (MH IIIA), at least one area of the Aspis settlement was definitively abandoned (northern sector). We assume that intra-communal rival groups might have come into conflict and some of them decided to move elsewhere. A possible destination might have been Mycenae. This hypothesis is not based on any conclusive data (which in any case are very difficult to find) and therefore must be regarded as rather fragile. In a recent article, Maran was led to a similar conjecture: “It would be important to know whether these persons [who were buried in the shaft graves of Mycenae and who must have had an active role in subverting the old system and shaping new norms, values and practices...] originated from Mycenae or were recent arrivals who had split off from Argos to regroup themselves against their former community.”¹²³ We believe that the new evidence from Argos may support this hypothesis; in any case it is gratifying to have arrived at similar assumptions via different paths.

At the beginning of the transitional phase (MH IIIB–LH I), Argos underwent a period of restructuring, but essentially it was a period of concern and introversion. The settlement extends to the Lower Town, but the acropolis on the Aspis is weakened and presents contradictory characteristics: while the living space is reduced, which means that the community has declined in number, an impressive building programme is conceived, encircling at least part of the settlement by an imposing complex. We do not know whether this ‘Peripheral Complex’ was built under conditions of socio-political insecurity or, as proposed for the building programmes at Tiryns in final LH IIIB, with a “feeling of security, which prevented the political dignitaries from comprehending how much the foundation of their society had been weakened.”¹²⁴ In the interior of this

¹¹⁸ Wiencke 1998, 208.

¹¹⁹ French – Shelton 2005; Shelton 2010.

¹²⁰ Dickinson 1994, 222.

¹²¹ Philippa-Touchais et al. 2014, 531–532; Chabrol 2018.

¹²² See also new evidence from Plasi Marathon (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa et al. 2016), and Vrana Marathon (Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016a; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2016b; Pantelidou-Gofa et al. 2018); on Vrana Marathon and the existence of marked social inequality prior to the Shaft Grave period, see also Maran 2011, 285.

¹²³ Maran 2015, 278.

¹²⁴ Maran 2015, 283.

complex, or at least in some of its buildings, ceremonial forms of commensality were employed, perhaps with a view to strengthening the disturbed social cohesion.¹²⁵

By the end of this phase, despite the restructuring efforts, the acropolis of Argos was eventually abandoned. Signs of the community's recession now become clearer: the loss of spatial control over a strategic and powerful position, and the pause in collective action are indications of socio-political and moral weakening. Therefore, we may deduce that, according to the AC model, the transitional phase marks a short phase of release for Argos. However, it should be emphasised that this was not a collapse, nor a crisis on a scale that could have dramatically disrupted the social cohesion of the community. Data from the habitation in the Lower Town and the funerary area illustrate a community resisting difficulties and maintaining its roots.

The phase of trouble and introversion lasted until the beginning of LH IIB, when Argos ceased to uphold its traditional cemetery and introduced radical reforms in the social space such as a new burial ground and a new residential district on the ancestors' ground. These reforms suggest the adoption, by some influential groups, of new ideologies and behaviours, more in conformity with the general practice of the time, and the beginning of a new period of growth. However, despite these changes it seems that the negative impact of the social and political difficulties faced by the community during the Transitional phase led Argos to lose its leading role and turn into a secondary political power throughout the LH period.

In closing, we would like to stress the most significant elements that emerge through the application of the AC model, namely a rather remarkable diversity and a lack of synchronisation between the various ACs. This is not unexpected since "societies are not homogenous whose members work towards common goals. Instead each society forms a unique social space."¹²⁶ Indeed, the life cycles of communities do not always correspond with each other, the advances and retreats do not follow the same pace and do not have the same dynamics. Mycenae, in our opinion, traced a long and slow AC (MH I–LH IIIC), possibly spent almost the entire MH period (MH I–IIIA) in the back loop and a longer and stable period in the front loop (MH IIIB/LH I–LH IIB). Argos, however, within the same period, traced, according to our analysis, two shorter and faster cycles of adaptive change: an intensive but unstable one (MH I–MH IIIB/LH I), and a moderate but more stable one (LH IIA–LH IIIC). As for Lerna, it went through an AC similar to that of Argos during the MH period, but in and after the early Mycenaean period its traces are not tangible enough for us to follow its course.

Another element related to the diversity of the various cycles can be detected in the differentiation of their intensity level. A characteristic difference between Argos and Mycenae was that Mycenae's cycle was marked by a spectacular rise and a spectacular fall, while the ups and downs of Argos were more numerous but less intense. Thanks to its temperate pace, due probably to a more moderate socio-political complexity and a higher resilience, Argos managed to withstand and recover more easily from stresses: the relatively small crisis at the end of the MH, but also the more serious one at the end of LH period. In the latter crisis, it is well known that there were also population movements, and indeed on a much larger scale than any postulated in MH III–LH I.

Taking into consideration the strategy of migration or fragmentation in the face of stresses¹²⁷ and the heterogeneity of the various communities, we would like to add a small note on the interpretation of the discontinuities in the history of settlements during the Shaft Grave period.¹²⁸ Klaus Kilian saw these discontinuities as signs of a recession of settlement activities, while Joseph Maran connected them with the restructuring of the settlements and therefore saw them as signs of progress. We think that the problem is, to a great extent, one of trying to deduce conclusions valid for all cases, or emphasise uniformity over a phenomenon that is, in fact, heterogeneous.¹²⁹ Restructuring may indeed upgrade the construction of society, but may also degrade it. In the

¹²⁵ Philippa-Touchais 2010, 794–795.

¹²⁶ Maran 2015, 278.

¹²⁷ Cunningham 2017, 17.

¹²⁸ Maran 1995, with bibliography.

¹²⁹ Wright 2004c; Wright 2008a, 230–231.

case of Argos, the restructuring in the transitional phase was clearly, contrary to Mycenae, one of lowering in status, while for Lerna it was a phase of decline. Therefore, it seems that changes discerned in the Shaft Grave period do not fit into a single and homogeneously applicable model, and that life cycles of sites, even when taking place in a similar cultural context, depend on diverse choices based on background conditions, internal dynamics and ambient conjunctures. Moreover, it seems that this multiplicity, which underlies the transformations in the very early LH societies, not only did not prevent most of them from developing, each one in its own way, but instead allowed for increasing activity, ingenuity and new aspects of connectedness and uniformity.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: The cyclical model of the Adaptive Cycle. Online <<https://www.resalliance.org/adaptive-cycle>> (last access 7 Feb. 2020)

Fig. 2: The proposed Adaptive Cycles for Argos in the MH (2a) and the LH (2b) periods respectively (drawings: V. Philippa)

Fig. 3: The proposed Adaptive Cycle for Mycenae in the MH and the LH periods (drawing: V. Philippa)

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Fig. 5: Pottery from the ‘Ghost House’, southeast sector (drawings: Y. Nakas; École française d’Athènes)

Fig. 6: Aspis, Argos. Reconstruction of Aspis Phase III (MH II late – MH IIIA). In Sectors I and II (excavated in 1903) the presence of houses of this phase is suggested by Vollgraff’s plan and the dating of the pottery preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Argos and the NMA (drawing: V. Philippa)

Fig. 7: Aspis, northern sector. The inner face of the ‘proto-Cyclopean’ MH II late fortification wall

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Fig. 9: Aspis, Argos. Artistic reconstruction of Aspis phase IV (MH IIIB – LH I). In this phase, the houses of the northern sector are abandoned as some of the houses of the central and eastern sectors (drawing: Y. Nakas, colouring: A. Goumas; based on the reconstruction of this phase published in Philippa-Touchais 2010, 801, fig. 10)

Fig. 10: a–b. The gradual change in the spatial relation between habitation and burial grounds in Argos from MH III/LH I to LH II

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.⁴ 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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⁴ 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. Prototariou-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 4th century BC, while extensive repair and renovation works took place during the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods.⁵

The tomb was discovered in 1966⁶ 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.⁷ 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 m⁸ and measures up to 2.50 m in width. Its walls are lined with large, roughly worked blocks.⁹ 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.¹⁰ There is no evidence of a blocking wall.¹¹ 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;¹² however we have not been able to trace it around the tholos.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Krystalli 1968.

⁷ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1968; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Pelon 1976, 182, sees the Cyclopean technique used in the dromos blocks, cf. Loader 1995, 107–108.

¹⁰ The width of the stomion ranges from 1.70 m to 1.55 m as it narrows slightly towards the chamber.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.¹³

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.¹⁴

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 deer¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ The deceased of Shaft II was also provided with five LH II alabaster, 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.¹⁹



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

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 3–6.

¹⁵ Dr Valasia Isaakidou carried out the preliminary study of the animal bones from the tomb.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 4, fig. 4.

¹⁸ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969, 4–6, figs. 5–7; Protonotariou Deilaki 1970, 105, pl. 84α–δ, ζ'–ζ.

¹⁹ Vassilopoulou et al. 2018, 80–83.

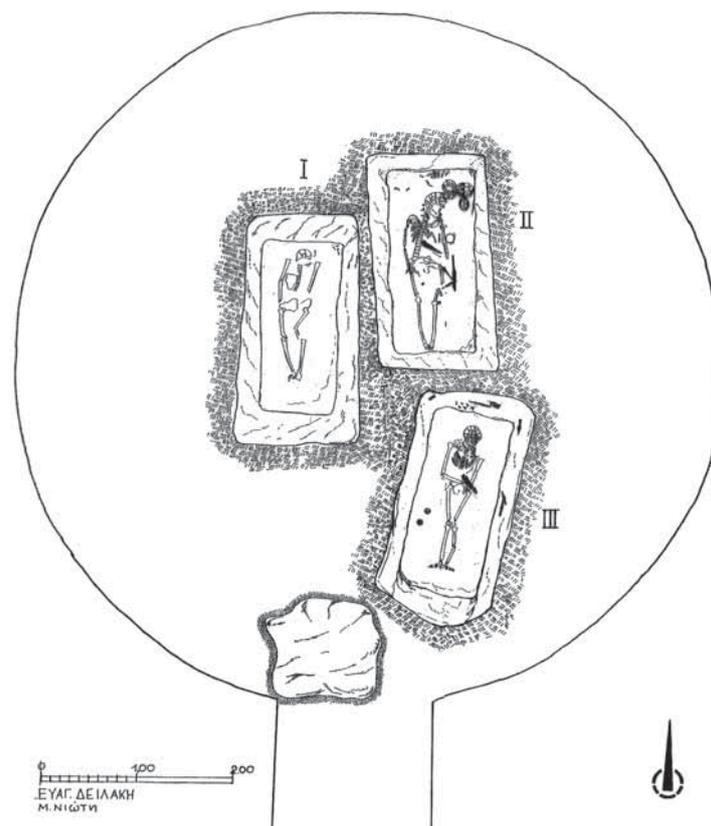


Fig. 3: Plan of the tholos chamber with Pits I–III (drawing: M. Nioti based on the excavation diaries; Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports; The Kazarma tholos project)

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.²⁰ 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,²¹ which points to the burial of eight to nine adults and three children in the tomb.²²

During the conservation process of the stored finds some new artefacts of particular interest were revealed.²³ 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.²⁴

²⁰ 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.

²¹ The analysis was carried out by Dr Sevi Triantaphyllou, lecturer at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

²² 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).

²³ For a preliminary report on the new finds, see Vassilopoulou et al. 2018.

²⁴ 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 <<http://www.griffinwarrior.org/gallery/>> (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 seal-stone 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 antiquity²⁵ 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.²⁶

The hill of Kazarma overlooks the aforementioned route;²⁷ its summit was fortified in late Classical times, while its slopes are strewn with sherds of later periods.²⁸ 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).²⁹

Moreover, the excavation of the tholos yielded evidence of EH occupation underneath the dromos floor.³⁰ 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.³¹

The proximity of the tholos (about 500 m) to the well-known Mycenaean bridge at Kazarma³² is of considerable importance; the latter, along with the three other similar bridges preserved in

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ Balcer 1974, 149; Tausend 2006, 201. For the definition of a route, see Marchand 2009, 108 n. 2.

²⁷ 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).

²⁸ 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 Álin 1962, 51; TMA; contra: Hope Simpson – Hagel 2006, 44.

²⁹ Hope Simpson 1965, 19; Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 51.

³⁰ Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105, pl. 82β.

³¹ Krystalli 1968, 180; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1970, 105; Proskynitopoulou 1988.

³² 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 Palouki³³ to the west, have been interpreted as the remains of a Mycenaean ‘highway’ connecting the Argive Plain with the Saronic Gulf.³⁴ 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.³⁵

1965, 19; 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.

³³ 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 was presented at the International Colloquium “Land Routes in Greece”, Athens 23–25 May 1991, and which would offer a great deal of enlightening information on the topic, has not been published, cf. Pikoulas 1995, 353 n. 215.

³⁴ 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 Mycenaean 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 13th cent. BC, while the land route that led to it could have been under the control of Midea.

³⁵ 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 bridges³⁶ – 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.³⁷ 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.³⁸

However, people have always moved around and certainly also before the 13th 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.³⁹ It is these paths that were most probably converted to roads in Palatial times,⁴⁰ 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,⁴¹ 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.⁴²

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.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴ For example, the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, where evidence of early Mycenaean cult practice has been attested,⁴⁵ 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.

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

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Crouwel 1981, 29; Nordquist 1987, 67; Bintliff 2012, 192.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Fotiadis 2011, 282.

⁴² 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 13th century) road arrangements.

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ Nordquist 1987, 67; Schallin 1996, 173; Siennicka 2003, 184; Newhard 2003; Sjöberg 2004, 133.

⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸ 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,⁴⁹ which apparently served as communication posts between the core of the Saronic Gulf and their inland neighbours. Nea Epidaurus-Vassa⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ In this fragmented landscape, and within the final phase of the MH period, Argos⁵² seems to have been an important player in such an idiosyncratic environment. The two important counterparts of Argos should be identified in Asine⁵³ and Mycenae,⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ Lerna,⁵⁶ 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, Midea⁵⁷ 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-

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ Gauß 2010, 171–172.

⁴⁸ Rutter 1993, 776, 778, 780; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2012, 70; Rom 2013, 49.

⁴⁹ Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2001, 218; Konsolaki-Yiannopoulou 2010; Zavadil 2010, 152–154.

⁵⁰ The acropolis of Nea Epidaurus-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.

⁵¹ For the sites in the area: Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 27–49; Spathari 2012, 132–137.

⁵² Papadimitriou et al. 2015.

⁵³ Nordquist 1987.

⁵⁴ French – Shelton 2005; Shelton 2010.

⁵⁵ Maran 2015, 278.

⁵⁶ Voutsaki – Milka 2017.

⁵⁷ Demakopoulou – Divari-Valakou 2010.

plion.⁵⁸ On the other hand, there are sites which manage to dynamically evolve in the new environment, e.g. Prosymna and Berbati.⁵⁹ Others, struggling with their traditional values, seem to slowly disintegrate, and Argos constitutes such a paradigm.⁶⁰ The decisive confrontation,⁶¹ 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.⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ In Kazarma, architectural remains and pottery dating to the EH period⁶⁵ have been unearthed underneath the dromos floor of the tomb and point to a prior occupation of the site.⁶⁶

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,⁶⁷ about 5 km northwest of the tomb.

This perceived isolation of the tholos is a rare phenomenon.⁶⁸ Tombs were usually placed in association with others, perhaps as an expression of some kind of relationship between groups.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ In the Argolid, the early tholoi of Mycenae are integrated into a landscape comprising varied funerary and scanty building remains.⁷¹ The Berbati⁷² and Prosymna⁷³ tholoi lay at a distance of about 1 km from the contemporary sites of

⁵⁸ Maran 2015, 278–279; Piteros 2015, 248, 252.

⁵⁹ Voutsaki 2010, 100; Klintberg 2011, 97, 99, 110–111; Lindblom 2011, 77, 89–90.

⁶⁰ Philippa-Touchais – Papadimitriou 2015, 464–465; Philippa-Touchais et al., this volume.

⁶¹ Voutsaki 2001, 183.

⁶² Cavanagh – Mee 1990, 55; Georgiadis – Gallou 2008, 179; Galanakis 2011, 224.

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

⁶⁴ Boyd 2002, 35.

⁶⁵ 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.

⁶⁶ 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).

⁶⁷ 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.

⁶⁸ Darque 1987, 202 n. 79; Boyd 2002, 46.

⁶⁹ Boyd 2002, 96.

⁷⁰ See below n. 77.

⁷¹ French – Shelton 2005.

⁷² Holmberg 1983, 9; Santillo Frizell 1984, 25–44; Georgiadis – Gallou 2008, 174.

⁷³ Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 330–338.

Mastos and the Argive Heraion respectively. The tholos of Dendra⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶

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;⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

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,

⁷⁴ Persson 1931, 3–4; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 42; Schallin 2016, 161, 164, 167, 180.

⁷⁵ Demakopoulou 1989, 83–85.

⁷⁶ Konsolaki-Yiannopoulou 2012, 506–511.

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ Dickinson 1983, 56; Cavanagh 2008, 337; Heitz 2008, 8.

⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰

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,⁸¹ and to a landscape 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.⁸²

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.⁸³ In this respect, Kazarma, as well as other early Mycenaean sites with tholoi, may represent an independent local centre in this transformative Prepalatial period.⁸⁴

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,⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶

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.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ 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).

⁸¹ Miliarakis 1886, 70, 88.

⁸² Wright 2008b, 243; Wiersma – Voutsaki 2017, viii–xiii.

⁸³ Voutsaki 1997, 45; Wright 2008a, 11–13.

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ 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.

⁸⁶ 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.

⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸

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?),⁸⁹ the essential challenge connects to the reasoning behind the act of mobility.⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹ 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.

⁸⁸ Heitz 2008, 29–31.

⁸⁹ Maran 2015, 278. See also Philippa-Touchais et al., this volume.

⁹⁰ Bintliff 2010, 758, 761.

⁹¹ Wright 2004, 127.

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Illustrations

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Artisans in the Service of the Royalty at Dendra and their Role in the Formation of Fashion Trends

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Abstract: Through its remarkable finds the necropolis at Dendra, covering the periods LH IIB–IIIB, offers an eloquent picture of the luxury possessed by the aristocracy up to the final phase of the early Mycenaean period. It is a time when art and crafts shift away from the hitherto Minoan influences to create forms and symbols that are purely Mycenaean, in search of a new identity. Metalwork of an advanced workmanship, testifying to the presence of highly skilled craftsmen, furnished the distinguished deceased in the necropolis. Craftsmen in the service of the elite seem to have circulated between various areas of the Aegean and Cyprus, forming through their creations common codes between its members. Being one of the few unlooted tholoi of the period, the Dendra tomb gathers most of those features that became fashionable in art and crafts among the early Mycenaean elite. A re-evaluation of the grave goods can therefore provide the impetus for a discussion on the production, manufacture and trade of luxurious items, especially metalwork, at the threshold of the Mycenaean Palatial period.

Keywords: Dendra, warrior burials, metalwork, metal vessels, tholos tombs

Within the fragile socio-political landscape of the early Mycenaean period, the elite families fought for the establishment of their political and economic power over the region,² and at the same time shared a network of common values and symbols of prestige. A remarkable resemblance distinguishes the grave goods of the warriors, who were furnished with the same sets of weapons, vessels of bronze, gold and silver (indicating dining sets), mirrors with ivory handles and combs, necklaces of gold relief beads, signet rings and seal stones.³

The tholos tomb at Dendra, one of the few unlooted tombs of the period, provides information on the symbols used by the elite towards the end of the Prepalatial period and offers the opportunity for a discussion on those elements that distinguish the art and crafts at the dawn of the Palatial period.

On 26 July 1926, and after a rather disappointing three-week session, the excavator Axel Persson and his crew, convinced that the tomb had been disturbed, began to empty the pits of the chamber's floor, covered with small ornaments, agate and faience beads.⁴ Starting from the easternmost pit, a gold signet ring with a scene of women in front of a shrine was the first precious find unearthed.⁵ Over the next two weeks, an array of superb artefacts would follow. At the time, they were comparable only to the ones found inside the unrobbed pit of the Vapheio tholos tomb by Christos Tsountas in 1889.⁶

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² On the emergence and establishment of the new Mycenaean elite, identified by homogenous burial practices and grave goods see, among others Papadimitriou 2001, 200, 207; Papadimitriou 2016; Wright 2008, 148–150.

³ The occupants of several tholoi and chamber tombs in the Argolid, Messenia and Crete belong to the same 'generation' as the deceased in the Dendra tholos tomb; for a list of contemporary tombs based on similar grave goods, see Konstantinidi-Syvridi – Paschalidis 2015, 408, 414–415.

⁴ Persson 1931, 29–30.

⁵ Persson 1931, 13, pl. 17.2; CMS I, no. 189.

⁶ Tsountas 1890. Of course, Heinrich Schliemann and Panayiotis Stamatakis had unearthed the six tombs of Grave Circle A in Mycenae in 1876/77, see Karo 1930/1933.

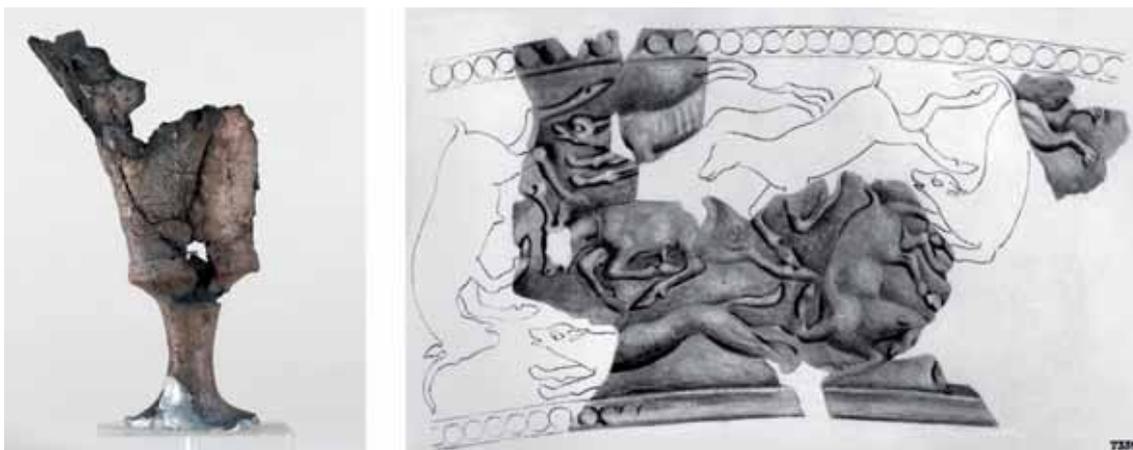


Fig. 1: Silver chalice decorated with hunting scenes found on the 'king's' breast, tholos of Dendra (a. photo: I. Miari, NMA photographic archive; b. Reconstruction after Persson 1931, pl. 17.2)

The pits of the tholos tomb held three burials,⁷ those of a woman placed next to a man in the same pit along the west side of the chamber, and another one of a young girl of a slightly earlier date, and Persson, amazed by the wealth of their grave goods, conventionally named them 'king', 'queen' and 'princess'.⁸ Indeed, the pits held an unusually large number of silver and gold vessels; jewellery of gold, ivory, stone, glass and faience; gold-hilted bronze swords and exotic items, which indisputably place the Dendra 'royalty' among the most distinguished people of their time.

The pottery, remarkably poor – also a common feature of the warrior burials of the Prepalatial period⁹ – consists of sherds of a LM IIIA1 stirrup jar on the floor of the chamber, in the pits and in the dromos of the tholos tomb;¹⁰ a beaked jug; a triple handle from spout to shoulder and a few sherds from carinated kylikes of LH IIIA2 date,¹¹ providing a *terminus post quem* for the date of the burials. However, some objects, based on stylistic grounds, date a little earlier.¹² The first burial unearthed in the pit was that of the woman. A gold and silver cup with bull's heads decoration lay between her bent right arm and the chest, and a carnelian gem decorated with two wild boars was found near to her left wrist.¹³ A miniature gold box was placed a little higher up close to the head.¹⁴ As the two burials are more or less contemporary and the male one held most of the finds, Persson suggested that the woman was 'offered' to accompany her husband in the grave.¹⁵

The 'king' was completely hidden under treasures:¹⁶ A quantity of glass and faience objects, mostly curled leaves, encircled his head and in Persson's opinion imitated the boar's tusks of a helmet. However, the fact that most of the accessories have suspension holes only on the upper side indicates that they probably belonged to a headdress. Near the neck were two beads, one drop-shaped of rock-crystal and one ivy-shaped of agate. The famous large cup of gold with the

⁷ For the anthropological study, see Fürst 1930.

⁸ From the four pits in total, the easternmost held the burial of the young girl; the third pit held no bones, only minor finds and the fourth held the remains of human and animal burials, including the skull of a dog, see Persson 1931, 18.

⁹ Konstantinidi-Syvridi – Paschalidis 2015; Davis – Stocker 2016, 635.

¹⁰ Persson 1931, 39, 66–67, fig. 46.

¹¹ Persson 1931 mentions as parallels the carinated kylikes from Zygyouries (Blegen 1928, 153), which belong to shape FS 267, starting from LH IIIA2.

¹² According to Drakaki 2011, 64 n. 29, the 'queen's' sealstone exhibits strong stylistic and compositional similarities with CMS II.3, no. 310, a LM II–III A seal.

¹³ Persson 1931, 48–50; Drakaki 2011, 61 (CMS I, no. 184).

¹⁴ Persson 1931, 58, pl. 28; Konstantinidi-Syvridi 2012, 50.

¹⁵ Persson 1931, 70.

¹⁶ For the description of the finds that follow, see Persson 1931, 31–37.

octopuses lay highest up on his breast and contained four metal rings with bezels and six seal-stones, with typical Neopalatial motifs.¹⁷ Lower down on the ‘king’s’ breast, a silver chalice lay to the right (Fig. 1a–b), decorated with hunting scenes (deer and hounds); to the left lay a large shallow silver cup without decoration and below it another silver cup of the Vapheio type, pressed badly out of shape by the weight of the soil.

The lower part of the body was covered by a shallow bronze vessel. At the ‘king’s’ right side, a Type B sword with a gold-mounted hilt (possibly an heirloom)¹⁸ rested with its hilt against his shoulder. To his left side, three bronze swords were arranged in the same manner, one of Type C1 and two of D1,¹⁹ all richly decorated with gold-mounted hilts and pommels. At his feet, a gold-mounted sword of Type C1, four spearheads and two knives, as well as a pair of lead horns were placed in a disorderly heap that may be considered the gifts of his friends and co-warriors.²⁰

In the layer between the ‘king’ and the ‘queen’, in the middle of the pit, Persson discovered the ostrich egg with gold mountings, an undecorated stone lamp and a necklace consisting of 61 gold beads in the shape of a conventionalised ivy leaf.

Re-evaluating the Finds

The wealth of valuable metalwork, especially in vessels, is a typical feature of several contemporary tombs from the Argolid, Messenia and the region of Knossos.²¹ Furthermore, the custom of placing a precious vessel on the chest or the hands of the deceased, as is the case with both the ‘king’ and the ‘queen’, is known from examples from both the mainland and Crete.²²

Typologically, the gold and silver vessels from the Dendra tholos fall into the four basic shapes that appear in the warrior burials of the period, with minor variations:²³

The hemispherical shallow cup – best represented here by the ‘king’s’ octopus cup – has a few parallels in Crete in both metal and clay and several more on the mainland.²⁴ The shape and variants have been extensively discussed by Robert Laffineur.²⁵ However, it is worth commenting on a couple of technical details that are noticeable on the octopus cup (Fig. 2). On the Cretan examples, the body and handle are made from a single thin gold plate; on the examples from the mainland however, the handles are made from a separate sheet and fixed onto the body with miniature rivets.²⁶

Furthermore, the rolled rim on the octopus cup is formed separately from several strips of gold, folded over a strip of bronze. This is seen again on a gold cup from Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10, only now the rim is made of a cast ring, and on a silver cup from Chamber Tomb 2 (Fig. 3) with a gold-plated bronze ring around the rim.²⁷ Both are decorated with a similar band of conventionalised ivy leaves and are of virtually the same dimensions.

¹⁷ Poursat 2014, 112–115.

¹⁸ Sandars 1961, 27.

¹⁹ Sandars 1963, 121 (discussion on the ‘king’s’ swords), 123–124, 144–145; see also Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993.

²⁰ Harrell 2014, 3–17.

²¹ Konstantinidi-Syvridi – Paschalidis 2015, 408, for relevant bibliography.

²² For the mainland cf. the recently excavated tomb of the ‘Lord of the Rings’ in Pylos (now more commonly referred to as ‘Griffin Warrior’) (Davis – Stocker 2016); for Crete, see Sellopoulo, Tomb 4, where a small silver cup had been placed in the region of the stomach of two warrior burials (Popham et al. 1974, 201–202), or in the chamber tomb of Ayios Ioannis, Knossos, where again a warrior was furnished with a gold cup (Hood 1956).

²³ Davis 1977, 276–286; Laffineur 1977; Poursat 2014, 100–103.

²⁴ Hurwit 1979, 416–417.

²⁵ Laffineur 1976, 197.

²⁶ Davis 1977, 269.

²⁷ Persson 1931, 99–100 (Chamber Tomb 2, NMA 7314); Persson 1943, 74–75 (Chamber Tomb 10, NMA 8743); Davis 1977, 267–269, 286–288.



Fig. 2: The 'king's' octopus cup, tholos of Dendra (photo: Y. Patrikianos, NMA photographic archive)

Based on those close parallels, a local manufacture has been suggested,²⁸ although it is also possible that one cup is an import and the other two represent local imitations. The hypothesis of a local manufacture is further reinforced by the type of the raised handle terminating in a double papyrus at its lower end, common in both gold cups. Another rare feature of the octopus cup is the rendering of the decoration: in order to appreciate the full image, one must turn the cup around in one's hands, and the decoration is best seen on the inside of the cup. Stylistically, this rendering does not belong to the Cretan tradition, and perhaps it should be interpreted as a Mycenaean innovation.²⁹

The Vapheio cup is a standard Minoan type and becomes the drinking vessel *par excellence* of the early Mycenaean period.³⁰ In the tholos tomb, it is represented by another one of the 'king's' cups, made of silver – although now largely decomposed – with an inner lining of gold (Fig. 4). The use of an inner lining is already known from the famous gold cups of the Vapheio tholos tomb,³¹ although the use of two different metals for the inner and outer surface seems to be a new feature. A silver cup of a similar shape was found outside Chamber Tomb 12 of Dendra, and although much of the decoration is now damaged, it originally consisted of bulls' heads and double axes.³²

The silver cup or goblet with wishbone handle and a button, usually bearing an inner lining of gold, finds parallels in Grave Circle A of Mycenae,³³ the tholos tomb of Vapheio,³⁴ Chamber Tomb 10 at Dendra,³⁵ the chamber tombs of Mycenae³⁶ and the tholos at Kazarma.³⁷ The finest

²⁸ Davis 1977, 269.

²⁹ For the parallel of a LH IIIA ivory pyxis from the Agora in Athens, see Immerwahr 1971, 166, pl. 35.

³⁰ Davis 1974.

³¹ Davis 1977, 256.

³² Davis 1977, 263–266.

³³ Karo 1930/1933, pl. 136 (NMA 786, 787), pl. 106 (NMA 212); Davis 1977, 157–159, 247–248.

³⁴ Tsountas 1890, pl. 7, no. 15; Davis 1977, 260–261 (NMA 1875).

³⁵ Persson 1943, 89, fig. 99.4; Davis 1977, 269–271 (NMA 8759).

³⁶ Davis 1977, 296–297 (NMA 3147).

³⁷ Davis 1977, 310–311.



Fig. 3: Silver cup with gold-plated rim and handle, Dendra, Chamber Tomb 2 (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)



Fig. 4: Silver cup with an inner gold lining, the 'king's' burial, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

example by far is the 'queen's' cup (Fig. 5):³⁸ the decoration consists of five bulls' heads with long curved horns and curled forehead, adorned with small gold inlays.³⁹ The wishbone handle, already well known in Cypriot pottery,⁴⁰ and the rosette-shaped button, most probably a Mycenaean addition, must originally have been decorated with inlaid metal as well.

The only parallel to the 'queen's' cup so far is the well-known cup from Enkomi Tomb 2.⁴¹ Its decoration consists of six bulls' heads between lotus flowers, richly adorned with inlay, while a composition of rosettes in arcades covers the lower part. The Enkomi cup is dated to LC IIA (LH II – beginning of LH IIIA) and is rightfully considered to be one of the most impressive objects of its period. The decoration on top of the wishbone handle is formed by a thin black metal sheet wrapped around the handle, which was then hammered and inlaid with gold. The fine lines on the bucrania are often interrupted indicating that they consist of thin metal inlays that follow a primary incision.⁴² Although the Enkomi cup is much better preserved than the Dendra example,

³⁸ Persson 1931, pls. 1, 12–15; Davis 1977, 284–286 (NMA 7336).

³⁹ Persson 1931, 48–50.

⁴⁰ Mostly bowls that belong to White-Painted IV and V wares of Middle Cypriot III (c. 1750–1650 BC), see Karageorghis 2003, 67–68; cf. also Davis 1977, 286 n. 617, for examples from Crete and the relevant bibliography.

⁴¹ Schaeffer 1952, pl. 116, figs. 116–117 (French Mission, Nicosia Museum, inv. no. 4207).

⁴² Giunlia-Mair 2012, 107.



Fig. 5: The 'queen's' silver cup, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)



Fig. 6: Detail of the 'queen's' cup with one of the bull's heads, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

the fine chasing of the details and the more diligent setting of the inlay into a designated grooved area on the Dendra cup (Fig. 6) betray the work of a more experienced artist.

Black copper inlay with gold wire was already practised in Egypt in the Middle Kingdom (19th century BC) at the time of the 12th Dynasty on metal statuettes and ritual weapons.⁴³ The technique applied here seems to be a Mycenaean version. In 1992, Katie Demakopoulou, Director of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, together with a team of chemists, ran XRF tests on the Dendra cup, among other Mycenaean artefacts, in order to find out the composition

⁴³ Giunlia-Mair 1996.

of the black inlay.⁴⁴ The results showed that it is a silver alloy with a small percentage of copper and gold (5–10%). Similar results were gained more recently from the analysis of the Enkomi cup concerning the silver alloy, while the gold alloy contains 3% copper and 8% silver. Furthermore, experimental reconstruction in Cyprus confirmed that the black colour could be achieved by treating the whole surface of the decorated object with acidic compounds (i.e. copper salts and alum).⁴⁵

Both analyses confirm that the black inlaid decoration on daggers and vessels of the early Mycenaean period presents a wide range of bronze alloy compositions with variable quantities of gold and silver, some lead or arsenic. As far as their iconography is concerned, it seems that, although it draws from the Minoan repertoire, their manufacture cannot at present be attributed to local Cretan workshops, due to the absence of similar items on Crete.⁴⁶

During this period, silver seems to be a more popular metal for vessels than gold and this certainly has to do with the exploitation of the silver-rich lead mines in Laurion and perhaps in Siphnos.⁴⁷ However, the lead isotope analysis of silver vessels from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae showed that this particular class of objects was possibly made of silver imported from Transylvania,⁴⁸ although local silver was available from the above sources. Quantities of silver scraps are known from several tholoi and chamber tombs. The fact that silver easily oxidises should explain why we do not have more sets of silver drinking vessels like the one from Shaft II in the Chamber Tomb 10 of Dendra, consisting of a shallow silver cup, three silver goblets and a silver krater,⁴⁹ or the one from Kokla, which includes seven silver vessels, one-handled and two-handled kylikes and conical cups, carefully placed on a stone bench and on the floor beneath it.⁵⁰

The traditional, mainly Minoan shapes of metal vessels, previously known in clay, may indicate their symbolic or even ritual use⁵¹ and certainly emphasises the high rank of the owners. Some of them must have been placed as heirlooms in the tombs, although not the ones made of silver, since it so easily decomposes. In this context, it has been suggested that the 13 vessels recorded in the Linear B tablet PY Tn 316 as offerings to a number of deities were ceremonial heirlooms that were used repeatedly in drinking rituals. They comprise a single cup or bowl without handles, a cup with small handles, either a goblet or a kylix and a chalice. Quantities of golden ritual and drinking vessels in the shape of a bull's head and a Vapheio-type cup are also recorded in a Linear B tablet from Knossos, today in the Ashmolean Museum.⁵² It seems plausible that the production of such metal vessels continued as late as LH IIIB, as is the case with other types of artefacts with symbolic affiliations.⁵³ The procession frescoes and the Ayia Triada sarcophagus provide further evidence for the use of precious metal vessels, where vessels of gold and silver appear among the carried objects as the red and blue colours suggest.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ Demakopoulou et al. 1995, 137–153.

⁴⁵ Giunlia-Mair 2013, 98.

⁴⁶ Demakopoulou et al. 1995, 152; the sole exception seems to be a dagger from Knossos (unpublished, Ephorate of Antiquities of Heraklion, inv. no. M 567).

⁴⁷ Stos-Gale 2014, esp. 187 for relevant bibliography, 195.

⁴⁸ The lead isotope ratios consistent with the Transylvanian ores were found amongst all groups of vessels from different graves and from other Mycenaean sites, see Stos-Gale 2014, 204–205.

⁴⁹ Persson 1943, 74–75, 94–95; Davis 1977, 269–275.

⁵⁰ Apart from this group of vessels, from the floor of the tholos came a gold hemispherical one-handled cup with embossed decoration of whorl shells on the rim and handle and a circular gold sheet with similar decoration, which probably belonged to an unpreserved silver vessel, see Demakopoulou 1990, 119; Demakopoulou – Aulsebrook 2018.

⁵¹ See, among others, Whittaker 2008, 93–95.

⁵² PY Ae 2031 (1375–1350 BC).

⁵³ I.e. necklaces with beads in the shapes of ivy, rosettes and papyrus which may have actually adorned figures in a ritual context, see Pliatsika 2012, 615–617.

⁵⁴ See, for example, the conical rhyton held by one of the male figures in the Knossos procession, Poursat 2014, 88, pl. 51.



Fig. 7: Tholos of Dendra: a. The 'king's' long sword with gold embroidery; b. Detail of the technique on the handle (photos: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

The inventiveness of metalworking artisans was not exhausted in creating vessels. We should classify as an early Mycenaean achievement another advanced technique, first noticed by Christos Tsountas in Mycenae, who named it χρυσοκέντηση (gold embroidery):⁵⁵ minute gold bars are sewn together and then soldered onto an organic surface to produce a mosaic-like result that is then further decorated with incised patterns (Fig. 7).⁵⁶ Parallels so far come from Grave Circle A of Mycenae, the Mycenae Chamber Tombs 78,⁵⁷ 81 and 93, Vapheio, Kakovatos, Prosymna, Dendra, and the burial of the 'Lord of the Rings' of Pylos⁵⁸ and indicate the Mycenaean origin of the technique.

At this time more than ever, artisans were thoroughly familiar with the combination of metals on the same artefact, not only for their value or in order to achieve polychromy (e.g. with the metal inlay) but also for the symbolism metals might carry. For the early Mycenaean period, this symbolism remains unknown to us; there is, however, richer evidence from contemporary Cyprus, Egypt and the Levant, where precious metals were linked to political and religious power.⁵⁹ Whatever the case was, the symbolism of the metals undoubtedly played an important role, apart from any other technical or aesthetic reasons, i.e. for the sake of polychromy.

⁵⁵ Tsountas 1897, 122, pl. 7.4–6 (sword no. III).

⁵⁶ For a preliminary presentation of the technique and possible remains of gold embroidery in Kakovatos, Tholos C, Vapheio and Knossos, see Xenaki-Sakellariou 1982; more recently, Konstantinidi-Syvridi et al. 2014, 341–343 (the technique is currently under experimental reconstruction by the above team).

⁵⁷ The tomb produced two swords, one of Type D1 (with gold embroidery) and one of Type A, a diadem of lily-shaped beads and two silver one-handled cups, see Xenaki-Sakellariou 1985, 215–219.

⁵⁸ For a brief discussion and relevant bibliography see Steinmann 2020, 389 (note however a typographical error, it is Mycenae Tomb 93 instead of 82); Davis – Stocker 2016, 634.

⁵⁹ Persson 1943, 57, mentions that in the Babylonian religion silver is the symbol of the moon, copper of Venus, lead of Saturn and iron of Mars; cf. also Gillis 1999; Müller 2012, 467–468.



Fig. 8: Two of the ‘king’s’ finger rings that had been placed inside the octopus cup, tholos of Dendra (photos: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Finger rings combining two or more metals on the bezel belong to this period (LH IIB–IIIA):⁶⁰ only five examples have been thoroughly examined so far,⁶¹ coming from Mycenae, Chamber Tomb 71 (gold, silver and bronze, NMA 2972), Asine (gold and iron covering bronze, NMA 10275), Kalyvia in Phaistos (gold, iron and bronze, HM 48), Heraklion (gold, iron and bronze, HM 2921), while a silver finger ring covered with iron was also worn by the ‘priest’ in Anemospelia.⁶² Furthermore, both Tholos A of Kakovatos⁶³ and Chamber Tomb 7 of Aidonia⁶⁴ produced examples of similarly manufactured rings (iron with gold) but with only partly preserved bezels due to intense corrosion.

However, none of those finds is comparable to the ‘king’s’ finger rings (Fig. 8) that had been placed inside the octopus cup, along with the six sealstones already mentioned. The quantity and the materials of the rings⁶⁵ indicate again the high social and perhaps religious rank of the ‘king’. The simplest of his finger rings consists of two sheets of silver and has no remnants of the bezel; the other three each consist of silver, lead and iron in successive layers. The ring and the inner sheet of the bezel are made of silver, the intermediate layer of lead, and the top layer of iron.

Unfortunately, the presence of lead prevented us from acquiring any useful results from the radiography conducted at the National Museum in Athens; and because of corrosion we will perhaps never know whether the rings originally held a gold-plated bezel like the ones found in Mycenae and Asine. In any case, the use of lead between silver and iron poses questions: was it used in order to make the ring heavier or did the Mycenaeans already know what the Romans did not, namely that lead prevents the corrosion of silver and iron?⁶⁶

For the rest of the jewellery from the tholos, there is not much to comment on, apart from the fact that there is a very restricted number of motifs that are repeated on relief beads and plaques of gold, glass or faience: ivy leaf, lily, rosette and papyrus. The iconography, as in the other sectors of art, is still balancing between Minoan and Mycenaean elements. Although the subsequent period will create more versions of those types and some new forms, they will be of a more conventionalised rendering.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Poursat 2014, 108 (with relevant bibliography), pls. 37–38, fig. 109.

⁶¹ CMS I, nos. 91, 108; CMS II.3, no. 113; also Müller 2012, 467 n. 36, with results of XRF tests run on two of the rings.

⁶² Dated to MM IIB–IIIA, see Sakellarakis – Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 650–651, fig. 717.

⁶³ NMA 5682; see Müller 1909, 275, pl. 13.35.

⁶⁴ Demakopoulou 1996, 27; furthermore, preliminary analyses on the gold rings of the warrior burial in Pylos indicate that they are not made of solid gold either, see Davis – Stocker 2016.

⁶⁵ The ‘king’s’ finger rings will be the focus of a separate publication by the author and Maria Kontaki, conservator of antiquities at the Metals Laboratory of the NMA.

⁶⁶ See, among others, Facsády – Verebes 2009, 997–998.

⁶⁷ Higgins 1980, 70.



Fig. 9: Gold earrings from Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10
(photo: G. Patrikianos, NMA photographic archive)



Fig. 10: a. Necklace of gold beads from Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10; b. The ivory 'Lady from Prosymna' wearing a similar necklace (photos: a. G. Patrikianos; b. P. Pheleris; NMA photographic archive)

Since the tholos tomb provided only a few simple types of jewellery, any substantial discussion of the jewellery of the period needs to be based on the only other burial in the necropolis of Dendra that can be paralleled with the 'king's' in respect of the wealth of luxurious items and materials, that is the female one from Chamber Tomb 10.⁶⁸ The magnificent pair of gold earrings consisting of an outer circle with the pattern of foliate band – a popular motif of the period – which encloses a rosette pendant (Fig. 9), finds its closest parallel on an ivory inlay from Aidonia, Chamber Tomb 7,⁶⁹ confirming once again that the same motifs were reproduced in several media and materials, denoting not only aesthetic preferences, but also symbolic connotations.⁷⁰ Thus, it should not be taken as a coincidence, that necklace beads similar to those of the female burial in

⁶⁸ Persson 1943, 75–87.

⁶⁹ Demakopoulou 1996, 55, no. 28.

⁷⁰ Eder 2015, esp. 228.

Chamber Tomb 10 (Fig. 10) are worn by the contemporary ivory figurine from Prosymna Chamber Tomb 51.⁷¹

Toilet implements continue to play a significant role in female burials, and cosmetic boxes reappear after the examples from Shaft Grave III in Grave Circle A at Mycenae, only now they take the form of miniature metal pendants, with suspension holes on the body and lid. This is at least the case with the cylindrical box which was found near the ‘queen’s’ neck (Fig. 11) and with the two boxes from Tholos A at Archanes, all three of them decorated with granulation.⁷² The Archanes pendants – one rectangular and one elliptical – were found in the undisturbed layer of the side chamber of Tholos A and belonged to the LM IIIA1 female burial, which was also furnished with some iron jewellery in the region of the chest.

Chamber Tomb 10 at Dendra also revealed a beautiful silver spoon, which had been placed inside a luxurious silver goblet decorated with flying birds. It bears a pattern of ivy leaf that was also reproduced in several media including the gold pendants from the large necklace of the ‘Lord of the Rings’.⁷³



Fig. 11: Gold miniature pendant in the shape of a cylindrical pyxis (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Epilogue

The palatial economy of the subsequent period will radically change the picture of the manufacture and production of artefacts. Techniques requiring extremely high skill, like gold embroidery and the combination of metals in massive rings will not survive, neither will masterpieces like the octopus or the bulls’ heads cups. Although many tombs of the period have been found robbed and one could argue that such masterpieces did exist, but have not yet been found, evidence from abroad⁷⁴ confirms what is already known from mainland tombs: as only pottery (mainly stirrup jars) was exported, it seems that in their prime the Mycenaean were more interested in exporting luxurious pottery, oil and textiles, than masterpieces of high quality.⁷⁵

The new artistic profile of the industrialised palatial production will dictate standard, almost lifeless shapes and motifs. The eclectic taste of the early Mycenaean rulers will disappear with them; only a few features will outlive their era – like the vessels of ritual character or specific shapes of relief beads that served as a communicative code – as a conscious effort to continue previous traditions related to cult and religion.

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⁷¹ Blegen 1937, 224–225, 461–463, fig. 573.

⁷² Sakellarakis – Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 603; at the 11th Cretological Conference (Rethymnon 2011), Nota Demopoulou presented another miniature pyxis pendant of gold (unpublished) from a rock-cut tomb in Poros, Heraklion, of MM III–LM I date.

⁷³ Davis – Stocker 2016, 627.

⁷⁴ For exported Mycenaean pottery, see Rutter 2010, 415–429.

⁷⁵ Cf. Eder 2015 for the ideological dimension of jewellery.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Silver chalice decorated with hunting scenes found on the 'king's' breast, tholos of Dendra (a. photo: I. Miari, NMA photographic archive; b. Reconstruction after Persson 1931, pl. 17.2)

Fig. 2: The 'king's' octopus cup, tholos of Dendra (photo: Y. Patrikianos, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 3: Silver cup with gold-plated rim and handle, Dendra, Chamber Tomb 2 (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 4: Silver cup with an inner gold lining, the 'king's' burial, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 5: The 'queen's' silver cup, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 6: Detail of the 'queen's' cup with one of the bull's heads, tholos of Dendra (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 7: Tholos of Dendra: a. The 'king's' long sword with gold embroidery; b. Detail of the technique on the handle (photos: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 8: Two of the 'king's' finger rings that had been placed inside the octopus cup, tholos of Dendra (photos: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 9: Gold earrings from Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10 (photo: G. Patrikianos, NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 10: a. Necklace of gold beads from Dendra, Chamber Tomb 10; b. The ivory 'Lady from Prosymna' wearing a similar necklace (photos: a. G. Patrikianos; b. P. Pheleris; NMA photographic archive)

Fig. 11: Gold miniature pendant in the shape of a cylindrical pyxis (photo: M. Kontaki, NMA photographic archive)

Kolonna on Aigina: The Development of a Fortified Late Middle and Early Late Bronze Age Settlement

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Abstract: The present paper summarises research and excavation work regarding the late Middle Bronze Age and early Late Bronze Age development of the prehistoric settlement at Kolonna on Aigina. The starting point is the studies undertaken between 2002 and 2011 in the area of the large building complex of advanced Middle Bronze Age date. There the gradual development of Aiginetan pottery production and the sudden appearance of a clear period of ‘Minoanisation’, manifested in the monumental building, Minoan imports, and the local production of Minoanising pottery in the advanced Middle Bronze Age, could be demonstrated by stratigraphic observations. At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age a new trend in terms of pottery production and consumption is traceable, characterised by the appearance of Aiginetan and Mainland Bichrome-Painted pottery and other classes of pottery, including very small amounts of Mycenaean pattern-painted pottery. This process of the ceramic ‘Mycenaeanisation’ is completed with the adoption of Mycenaean forming techniques in LH IIIA and seems enduring.

Keywords: Kolonna, Aigina, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, Mycenaeanisation

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of research and excavations at Kolonna on Aigina² concerning the second part of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age.³ The site of Kolonna is a major Early and Middle Bronze Age centre of the central Aegean that flourished after the middle 3rd millennium BC.⁴ The ideal geographical setting of the island between the mainland, the Cycladic islands and Crete as well as the continuous habitation of the Kolonna settlement are the key elements for approaching the phenomenon of Kolonna.⁵ The settlement has a basically planned regular layout from the late 3rd millennium BC and a fortification system that was exceptional in the central Aegean for a couple of centuries. The internal organisation of the site does not seem to change much after the developed Early Bronze III

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² Research and excavations at Kolonna relevant for this paper were part of the SCIEM 2000 project. Excavation reports on the 2002 to 2010 excavations, see Felten et al. 2003, 54–63; Felten et al. 2004, 114–126; Felten et al. 2005, 23–35; Felten et al. 2006, 29–38; Felten et al. 2007a, 111–119; Felten et al. 2008, 66–76; Felten et al. 2009, 98–108; Felten et al. 2010, 59–65; Felten et al. 2011, 61–72.

³ General on Middle and Late Bronze Age Kolonna on Aigina: Hiller 1975; Walter – Felten 1981; Wohlmayr 1989; Rutter 1993b, 775–780; Wohlmayr 2000; Lindblom 2001; Gauß 2006; Gauß 2007a; Gauß – Smetana 2007a; Gauß – Smetana 2007b; Wohlmayr 2007a; Wohlmayr 2007b; Gauß – Smetana 2008; Deger-Jalkotzy 2009; Felten 2009; Gauß 2010; Gauß – Smetana 2010; Pruckner 2010; Gauß et al. 2011a; Pruckner 2011a; Pruckner 2011b; Gauß 2018. Regarding Late Bronze Age research on Aigina apart from Kolonna, see Kalogeropoulos 2005; Gauß 2007b; Sgouritsa 2009; Sgouritsa 2010; Eustratiou – Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2016; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2012; Salavoura 2014; Sgouritsa 2015; Salavoura 2018; Vokotopoulos – Michalopoulou 2018; Gauß 2019a; Gauß 2019b; Gauß – Knodell 2020. Regarding research on the absolute chronology at Kolonna, see Wild et al. 2010.

⁴ On Early Bronze Age II Kolonna, see in particular Walter – Felten 1981, 12–22; Felten 1986; Berger 2003; Berger 2004; Felten – Hiller 2004; Berger 2011; Berger – Gauß 2016.

⁵ The importance of its geographical setting has been stressed regularly, see with further references Klebinder-Gauß – Gauß 2015.

phase of Kolonna V, whereas the fortification system is continuously modified, strengthened and extended.⁶

Previous research regarding Bronze Age Kolonna often focused on the definition of the local production of pottery, the distribution of Aiginetan pottery and the range of imports⁷ as well as on the definition of a stratigraphically well-based ceramic development and its link with the sequence of settlement and fortification phases.⁸ Occasionally, however, questions have been raised, such as to what extent Kolonna is a Helladic or a Mycenaean site,⁹ and furthermore, if it is, when did it become Helladic or Mycenaean, and is it possible to characterise this process in more detail?

Middle Bronze Age Kolonna

The middle and beginning later part of the Middle Bronze Age (this is Kolonna settlement Phase IX) is a clear peak of importance in our current understanding of the site.¹⁰ A new massive fortification wall was built in front of the primary fortification wall and on top of the first line of defence.¹¹ This change in defensive strategies resulted in a significant raising of the entrance ways and the level of the gateways leading to the innermost settlement.¹² Furthermore, and in consequence thereof, the original main fortification wall of the Kolonna VIII settlement now formed a platform that was used for housing (Fig. 1).¹³ The newly built Kolonna IX fortification was unique in two respects: the wall comprised three individual parts and the building technique consisted of a combination of stone and mudbrick in the lower zone and half-timber and mudbrick in the upper zone which was not previously attested at Kolonna.¹⁴ The reasons for these changes in building techniques are unknown and seem not to have had a long-term impact. It is, however, noteworthy that new features in the material culture, such as the local production of Minoan-style pottery (see below), are traceable roughly at the same time, and one wonders if external influences may (in part) have also stimulated these presumably short-lived building techniques.

Another major change at that time is the extension of the settlement towards the east and its subsequent fortification.¹⁵ The layout, phasing, construction details, and the date of the eastern extension and its fortifications are currently under study,¹⁶ and several architectural phases have

⁶ Walter – Felten 1981; Felten – Hiller 2004; Gauß 2010. The Bronze Age fortification system is summarised in Gauß 2018; Gauß 2019b.

⁷ Rutter 1993b, 776, 777, fig. 12; Lindblom 2001; Mommsen et al. 2001a; Gauß – Kiriati 2011; Pruckner 2011a; Pruckner 2011b; Pruckner 2013; Gauß et al. 2015a; Klebinder-Gauß – Gauß 2015; Lindblom et al. 2015; Gauß et al. 2017; Gauß – Knodell 2020.

⁸ E.g. Gauß – Smetana 2007a; Gauß – Smetana 2007b; Gauß – Smetana 2008.

⁹ Regarding the Middle Bronze Age, see Stefan Hiller's statement: "Although Aegina is certainly part of the Helladic, i.e. mainland cultural sphere, vivid Minoan and Cycladic relations exist, especially during the Middle Bronze Age" (Hiller 1989, 139). See also Jeremy B. Rutter's statement on the special role of Kolonna: "The careful disentanglement by Walter and Felten of several stages of EH III and MH defensive systems at the site, together with their presentation of some of the ceramic evidence for dating them, has made abundantly clear how atypical Kolonna is for either a mainland Greek or a Cycladic site of the later third and early second millennia B. C." (Rutter 1993b, 776 and n. 135).

¹⁰ Wild et al. 2010, 1020, tab. 3; Gauß 2019a, 1109, fig. 2.

¹¹ Walter – Felten 1981, 72–82; 74, fig. 58; 76, fig. 60; Gauß 2018, 52.

¹² Walter – Felten 1981, 74, fig. 58.

¹³ Walter – Felten 1981, 72, fig. 56; Gauß 2018, 52. However, one has to note that remains of the houses found on top of the fortification wall and attributed to the settlement phase of Kolonna IX lack associated finds.

¹⁴ Walter – Felten 1981, 76, 81, figs. 60–61, 65, pl. 64.2. For general remarks on this building technique, see Naumann 1971, 91–117; Küpper 1996, 67–69.

¹⁵ First evidence for settling outside the main fortifications are attributed to the Kolonna VIII settlement phase (Walter – Felten 1981, 70), but its size is yet unknown.

¹⁶ The documentation and study of the eastern extension started in 2012 under the direction of Katja Sporn and Lydia Berger and have been continued since 2014 by the late Wolfgang Wohlmayr and L. Berger. Regarding previous research, see Wohlmayr 1989; Wohlmayr 2000; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 67–82; Wohlmayr 2007a.

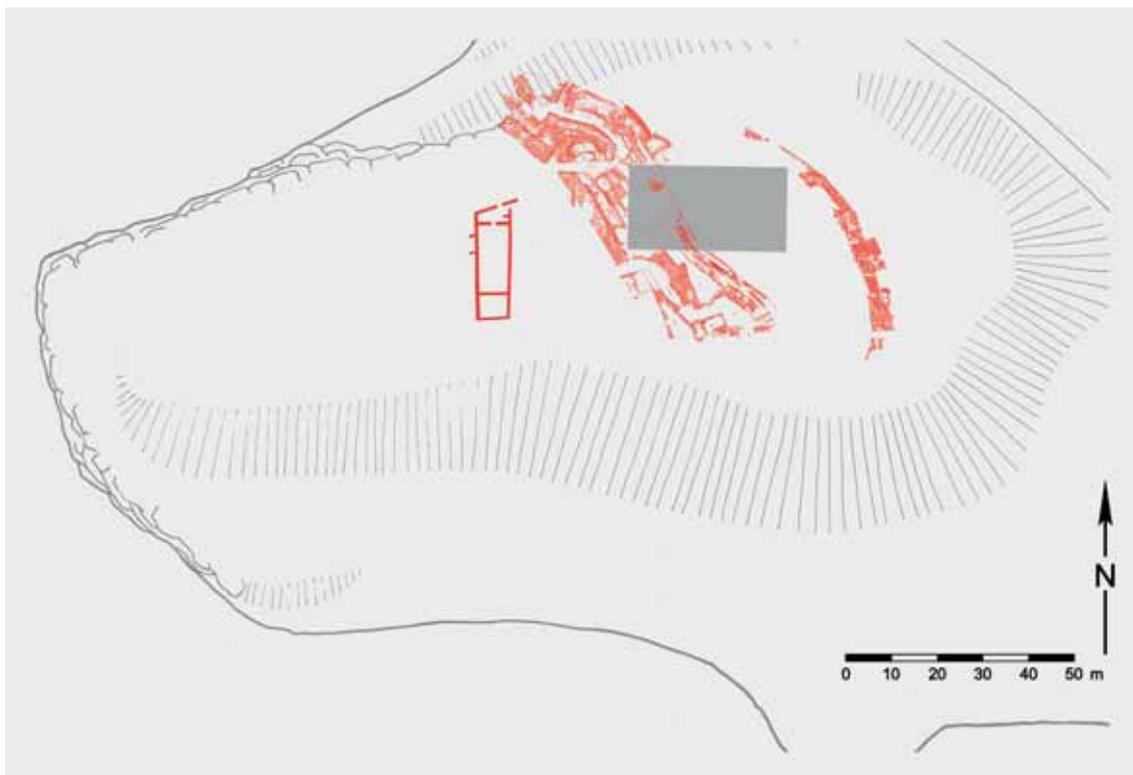


Fig. 1: Kolonna on Aigina. The settlement of Kolonna IX with its fortifications and the large building complex (after Walter – Felten 1981, pls. 10–11, with additions; plan: H. Birk, W. Gauß; ÖAW-ÖAI)

already been noted by the excavators in the 1970s.¹⁷ The system of communication between the main settlement and the eastern extension are not yet clear, nor are the number or layout of the gateways of the extension. The effort undertaken to separate and protect this relatively small extension is notable, and the location of a potter's kiln here may indicate that the eastern extension functioned as a separate, especially protected workshop area.¹⁸ Another remarkable feature of that time is the burial of a member of the social elite with exceptionally rich gifts in a shaft grave situated in front of the fortifications of the settlement extension.¹⁹ The 22- to 26-year-old man was buried with precious metal gifts, a gold diadem, a sword and a dagger, and other metal finds as well as a number of ceramic containers.²⁰ The photograph and plan of the grave after its recovery may cast doubt on the reconstruction of a boar's tusk helmet.²¹ It seems as if the boar's tusks were found next to and alongside the sword, partly also lying under the sword and on top of

¹⁷ Walter 1976, 151; Walter 1977, 185–186.

¹⁸ Interestingly, Valerios Stais already assumed that this part of the settlement may have been used as a workshop area. Noteworthy is the fact that a Minoan type potter's wheel-head of non-local clay was found next to the kiln together with locally produced pottery of Minoan type during the excavations of the 1920s (Gauß 2006, 441 with references; Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 176–177). A life-size model of the reconstructed kiln is displayed in the Museum at Kolonna (Walter 2001, 124–125, fig. 110).

¹⁹ Walter 1981/1982; Walter 1981/1983; Hiller 1989, 139; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997; Hubert 2016.

²⁰ Walter 1981/1982; Walter 1981/1983; Hiller 1989, 139; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 13. Five complete or almost complete vessels were found at the lower end of the grave: three matt-painted Aiginetan jars (Hiller 1989, 139; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 66, cat. no. 19) and two beaked jugs of Cycladic, presumably Keian origin (Hiller 1989, 139; only one jug is illustrated by Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 57, cat. no. 12, figs. 29.12; 33.12). Some of the other pottery illustrated by Kilian-Dirlmeier joins with fragments found by the pre-World War II excavations outside the grave shaft. It needs to be determined whether these pieces were part of the original burial gifts, or whether they originate from the fill of the shaft, as already pointed out by Hiller 1989, 139.

²¹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 35–40, fig. 3.1, pl. 1; Buchholz 2010, 122, 196 and n. 627, fig. 110.



Fig. 2: Plan of the large building complex with its main architectural phases (plan: H. Birk, W. Gauß; ÖAW-ÖAI)

the right arm.²² In particular, the apparent arrangement of a number of boars' tusks in pairs at the lower part of the sword may also indicate alternative explanations, e.g. as part of the scabbard, chape or chest band.²³

The most important building inside the innermost fortifications, the so-called large building complex, is by far the largest individual building at the site and presumably the administrative centre of the settlement.²⁴ Very large limestone blocks were used for its lowermost courses, and three major modifications can be distinguished within its period of use (Figs. 2–3). Based on the grave goods, the aforementioned shaft grave is contemporary with the second phase of the monumental building.²⁵

²² Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 35: "Die Eberzahnlamellen waren, wie die Fundlage zeigt, im Verband, d.h. auf eine Unterlage aufgenäht, ins Grab gelegt worden. Nach dem Befund – es liegen Plättchen auf den Knochen des rechten Arms und unter der Schwertklinge – muß aber mit Verlagerungen innerhalb der Grabkammer gerechnet werden."

²³ See Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, fig. 3.1, pl. 1. Regarding scabbards, chapes or chest bands, see Buchholz 1980, 239–240; note also the reference to Odysseus' scabbard of ivory (Hom. Od. 8, 404); Buchholz 2012, 170–173, 201. On Early Bronze Age Cycladic male marble figurines with shoulder strap see e.g.: Zervos 1957, fig. 253; Renfrew 1969, 18, cat. nos. IV.C.17–19; Buchholz – Karageorghis 1971, 100, cat. no. 1201; Getz-Preziosi 1987, 20, fig. 11f, g; pl. 11A1, 12A1; Getz-Gentle 2001, pl. 49; Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe 2011, 281–282, cat. no. 73.

²⁴ Gauß et al. 2011a.

²⁵ Hiller 1989, 39: "According to the pottery deposited in the grave it should be dated to the developed MH period, but – in my opinion, at least – still before the shaft grave period proper." Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, 66: "Der Kantharos lokaler Herstellung (Abb. 27, 10; 32, 10), der minoische Brückenskyphos (Abb. 27, 16; 28, 16), die Schnabelkanne (Abb. 29, 12; 33, 12) und die Schale von Melos (Abb. 31, 15; 32, 15) datieren die Bestattung in die Zeit



Fig. 3: The large building complex during the excavations: 1. View from the north towards the south; 2. View from the west towards the east (photos: W. Gauß, M. del Negro)



Fig. 4: Kolonna on Aigina. The settlement of Kolonna X with its fortifications and the large building complex (after Walter – Felten 1981, pls. 10–11, with additions; plan: H. Birk, W. Gauß; ÖAW-ÖAI)

Regarding the material culture remains, the evidence for a selective adoption of Minoan practices that are particularly associated with the monumental building is most interesting.²⁶ In terms of pottery production the traditional hand-built pottery with pre-firing marks still constituted the absolute bulk of the material.²⁷ At the same time, wheelmade pottery made of local clay is also manufactured in small quantities and in a limited repertoire of shapes, mainly small-sized tableware.²⁸ The shapes of this new kind of pottery are unattested in the previous and contemporary production of hand-built vessels and furthermore, they lack potter's marks, suggesting that the production was differently organised. Interestingly, the use of the potter's wheel and of rotational kinetic energy²⁹ in vessel forming was not adopted by the traditional potters on Aigina.³⁰ As far as we can tell, the technique was used only on a small scale in this phase of the Middle Bronze Age for the specific production of Minoan-type pottery.³¹ Afterwards it seems to disappear and, at the same time, the number of Cretan imports drops. One of the reasons for the rejection of the new foreign technology could have been associated with its consumption by a small part of the population, the local elite, in its attempt to emulate selected aspects of a Minoan lifestyle.³² Only

der Siedlung IX von Kolonna, der Älteren Paläste auf Kreta und der Siedlung II von Phylakopi auf Melos. Nach der konventionellen Terminologie ist dies die Stufe MH/MM/MK II”.

²⁶ Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 176–177; Lindblom et al. 2015, 228–232. Regarding diet and subsistence, see also Forstenpointner et al. 2010; Galik et al. 2010; Galik et al. 2013.

²⁷ The study of the finds from the 2002 to 2010 excavations inside the large building complex is not yet finished, therefore no absolute numbers in sherd counts and percentages can be provided.

²⁸ Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 64–65; Lindblom et al. 2015, 241, fig. 5.

²⁹ E.g. Roux – Corbetta 1989; Courty – Roux 1995; Roux – Courty 1998; Roux – Jeffra 2015.

³⁰ Lindblom et al. 2015, 229.

³¹ Lindblom et al. 2015, 232.

³² Lindblom et al. 2015, 232.



Fig. 5: Pottery associated with the large building complex of the late Middle Bronze Age (photos: W. Gauß, R. Smetana; ÖAW-ÖAI)

much later, in the course of the Late Bronze Age, and then most likely under the influence of workshops on the Mycenaean mainland, was the potter's wheel adopted by local potters and this time used more extensively.³³

The later and final stages of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age correspond to the Kolonna X settlement phase.³⁴ The monumental building was extended, presumably at the beginning of the Kolonna X settlement, i.e. in the later stages of the Middle Bronze Age, and covers an area at least 5–10 times larger than other contemporary houses at the site (Fig. 4).³⁵ The fortifications of Kolonna X are less clear and comprise reinforcements of Kolonna IX walls, as well as major changes in the access to the inner settlement.³⁶ Posterns and narrow passages between the Kolonna IX settlement area and the Kolonna IX fortification wall were blocked and filled, and thus enlarged the settlement area considerably. As a consequence, new, higher gateways connected the eastern extension of the settlement and the innermost settlement, but the form of the gates remains unknown.³⁷

Although a number of contexts from the monumental building and other residential areas can be attributed to this phase, only a few complete vessels could be mended so far (Fig. 5).³⁸ In this phase, interestingly there is almost no evidence for ceramic Minoan imports and the local Minoan type production seems to have stopped. Furthermore, there is no clear indication for the use of the wheel in the local production, and imported 'Minoanising' sand-tempered pottery is very rare.³⁹ Keian imports are far less common than in the preceding phases, whereas Theran/Melian pottery seemingly increases and Cycladic panelled cups become common.⁴⁰ Interestingly this shape is immediately adopted and produced in local clay on Aigina (Fig. 5.1).⁴¹

³³ Lindblom et al. 2015, 232 n. 30 and below. See also Gauß 2007a; Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 220–227, 231–232, 234–236; Gauß et al. 2017. On the use of the wheel in Mycenaean times, see also Berg 2013.

³⁴ Walter – Felten 1981, 83–85.

³⁵ Gauß – Smetana 2010, 169; Gauß et al. 2011a, 76.

³⁶ Walter – Felten 1981, 83; Gauß 2018, 56.

³⁷ On the situation at Kolonna X, see Walter – Felten 1981, 82–85; Gauß 2018, 52.

³⁸ Fig. 5; see also Gauß et al. 2011a, 83, fig. 4.2.

³⁹ Walter – Felten 1981, pl. 123, cat. no. 454; Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 78, fig. 10 no. XXVIII-8; Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 178–180. General on 'Minoanising' sand-tempered pottery: Kiriati 2010.

⁴⁰ Cycladic panelled cups: Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 65, 78, fig. 10 no. FG 87-11; 79, fig. 11 nos. Q3/40-8, Q3/50-1.

⁴¹ Walter – Felten 1981, pl. 122, cat. nos. 446–447; Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 65, 78, fig. 10 nos. XXXVIII-6 and -7. General on panelled cups see Davis 1978.

Late Bronze Age Kolonna

The next stage in the development at Kolonna took place in the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The monumental building must have suffered some severe damage and was rebuilt by partly using the walls of the earlier building as foundations,⁴² and a number of successive floor horizons can be attributed to this building. On one of the later, but not latest, floors, a deposit of Late Bronze Age pottery was found (Fig. 6).⁴³ The best comparisons for the imported pottery come from the shaft graves of Lerna that should be dated to a later stage of LH I.⁴⁴ It is the first time that lustrous decorated Mycenaean pottery is noticed at Kolonna, admittedly in very small amounts of about 1% of the total amount.⁴⁵ Also, Mainland Polychrome-painted pottery makes its first appearance,⁴⁶ and a special find is one of the few southeastern Aegean imports known from Kolonna.⁴⁷

The large building complex remained in use probably as late as LH IIA, even though the amount of pottery and the number of floor deposits that can be attributed to its final stages are very few (Fig. 7).⁴⁸ The almost complete vessel to the left was found lying on one of the top-most floors and shows similarities to goblets from the Menelaion in Lakonia.⁴⁹

Within this early stage of the Late Bronze Age the settlement of Kolonna once more extended towards the east.⁵⁰ This new extension of the settlement was again fortified with a massive wall of very large limestone blocks (Fig. 8).⁵¹ It shows various modifications that may actually indicate a sequence of fortification walls in the eastern part of the site.⁵²

Typical Aiginetan pottery of that time is hand-built and not wheelmade, and bears potters' marks.⁵³ Open vessels are mostly solidly painted with a dark burnished surface. Matt-painted motifs continue in the Middle Bronze Age tradition but now display a less strict horizontal and vertical organisation of the patterns. Aiginetan Bichrome-Painted pottery is an innovation of the early Late Bronze Age.⁵⁴ This kind of pottery seems to be restricted to a limited repertoire of shapes, and has a narrow range of patterns that most commonly consist of two wavy bands on the shoulder of open vessels. Another category, the Aiginetan kitchenware, is also widely distributed in the Late Bronze Age.⁵⁵ It is actually the only Aiginetan ceramic product that continues to be

⁴² Gauß et al. 2011a, 82–83.

⁴³ Fig. 6; see also Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 65, 80, fig. 12.

⁴⁴ Lindblom 2007; Lindblom – Manning 2011.

⁴⁵ Also, Mycenaean-style pottery (imported and/or locally produced) occurred only in small quantities in the easternmost extension of the site, as indicated by Wohlmayr 2007a, 48. Furthermore, Mycenaean-style pottery was also exceptionally rare in Well SH B1/06 (Pruckner 2010, 74–78). The chronological relation between the filling of Well SH B1/06 and the last phase of the large building complex, respectively Ceramic Phases J and K, needs to be established (regarding the definition of Phases J and K, see Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 65). Cf. also Lindblom – Rutter, this volume.

⁴⁶ Gauß – Smetana 2007a, 65 and n. 70 with references. General on Mainland Polychrome pottery: Mathioudaki 2010.

⁴⁷ A number of southeast Aegean fragments, including large-sized ones, were found during the pre-World War II excavations and now lack stratigraphic information. On southeast Aegean imports on the Greek mainland now also Davis 2015; see also Huber et al., this volume.

⁴⁸ Fig. 7; see also Gauß et al. 2011a, 84, fig. 4.3–4.

⁴⁹ E.g. Catling 2009b, 88, fig. 92, ET57, ET63; 152, fig. 156, TH23–28; on monochrome LH II goblets from the Menelaion cf. also Catling 2009a, 347–348.

⁵⁰ Current evidence indicates an extension in LH IIA, see Wohlmayr 2000, 127–128; Wohlmayr 2007a, 44, attributes the early Mycenaean extension to the settlement phase of Kolonna XI; in general also Felten 2007, 18 and n. 29.

⁵¹ Wohlmayr 2000, 127, fig. 61; Wohlmayr 2007a, 45.

⁵² The results of the excavations conducted by the University of Salzburg under the direction of the late W. Wohlmayr together with L. Berger will contribute greatly to our understanding of the spatial organisation of this area as well as to the chronology and phasing of the newly built fortifications.

⁵³ Regarding Late Bronze Age Aiginetan potter's marks, see Lindblom 2001, 112–117.

⁵⁴ See also Lindblom – Rutter, this volume.

⁵⁵ E.g. with further references Gauß et al. 2017; Gauß – Knodell 2020; cf. also Lis 2012.



Fig. 6: Pottery associated with the large building complex at the beginning of Late Bronze Age (photos: W. Gauß, R. Smetana; ÖAW-ÖAI)

exported on a large scale in the Mycenaean palatial world, whereas the export of all other categories of Aiginetan pottery seems to cease within the LH IIIA period.⁵⁶

LH I Mycenaean pottery imports to Kolonna seem very rare, as at many other sites.⁵⁷ We are not yet able to present definite statistics but a share of less than 3% of the total amount seems most likely.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, more and larger deposits than those excavated in the monumental building are needed to confirm our observations. In addition, deposits from other contemporary residential areas would be extremely helpful to illustrate similarities and differences to the depositional practices and material culture remains at different parts of the site.

LH II imports seem very rare at Kolonna too, and the Ephyraean goblet, a hallmark of LH IIB pottery,⁵⁹ is an exceptional find.⁶⁰ Thus, from a ceramic point of view, Late Bronze Age I and II Kolonna does not seem to be very ‘Mycenaean’ in character. When does Kolonna become Mycenaean in terms of its pottery – either by the takeover of the Mycenaean-mainland potting traditions to their own local repertoire – or by the abundance of Mycenaean imports?

It seems as if local potters tried to imitate or emulate Mycenaean style pottery from LH IIA at the latest.⁶¹ However, Aiginetan potters continued their traditional forming techniques for creating Mycenaean shapes – they did not use the wheel, and occasionally even potmarks appear. Furthermore, the pattern-painted decoration is not lustrous as on the Mycenaean imports, but matt, dull

⁵⁶ Regarding the distribution of Late Bronze Age matt-painted Aiginetan pottery, see Maran 1992, 192–195; Rutter 1993a, 82–84; Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 243–247. Regarding the distribution of Bichrome-Painted Aiginetan pottery, see Pruckner 2011, 244 n. 27–35. Regarding Late Bronze Age Aiginetan cooking pottery and its distribution, see Gauß et al. 2017.

⁵⁷ Rutter 1989; Maran 1992, 205; Rutter 2010, 417; Dickinson 2014.

⁵⁸ See also Lindblom – Rutter, this volume.

⁵⁹ E.g. Mountjoy 1983; Rutter 2010, 418.

⁶⁰ Hiller 1975, 54.

⁶¹ Generally Hiller 1975, 51–54.



Fig. 7: Pottery associated with the large building complex in the early Late Bronze Age (photos: W. Gauß, R. Smetana; ÖAW-ÖAI)

at the most.⁶² The degree of this emulation is not yet clear, neither in terms of quality, e.g. an exclusive emulation of pattern-painted Mycenaean pottery, nor in terms of quantity, e.g. are these emulations the exception to the rule or rather common? Again, statistics on the frequencies of the various classes of pottery from well-stratified deposits would be of enormous importance.

Regarding the manufacturing processes necessary to produce Mycenaean-looking pottery on Aigina, one should note that some manufacturing techniques are easier to perceive and to adopt than others.⁶³ Thus, some clearly visible manufacturing stages such as decoration or shape are easily transmissible, whereas other techniques that do not leave distinct traces on the finished product or rely on specialised gestures cannot be adopted without additional information.⁶⁴ This could

⁶² E.g. Hiller 1975, 51, pl. 2, cat. nos. 21–22; pl. 11, cat. nos. 152–153.

⁶³ Gosselain 1998; Arnold 2000, esp. 351; Gosselain 2000, esp. 191–193; Gauß et al. 2015b, 8.

⁶⁴ Gosselain 2000, esp. 191–193; Gauß et al. 2015c, 8.

mean that the potters who created Mycenaean emulations on Aigina did not necessarily need special knowledge in Mycenaean-mainland potting techniques.

This situation changes abruptly in the following period, when the amount of traditional Aiginetan pottery, i.e. hand-built vessels in traditional forms and matt-painted decoration, is no longer dominant. It seems as if only a few classes of pottery continued to be produced and even fewer were exported in LH IIIA: the exported containers are cooking pottery⁶⁵ and medium-sized closed vessels, e.g. amphorae and hydriae with a matt-painted decoration.⁶⁶ Such vessels are still found in Athens, Keos and a few other sites in the closer proximity of the island, but this ceramic class seems to vanish soon afterwards.⁶⁷ Cooking pottery continued to be manufactured in hand-building techniques and carried potters' marks throughout its period of production, which, according to our current knowledge, includes the Postpalatial period of LH IIIC Early.⁶⁸



Fig. 8: Fortification wall of the easternmost extension of the settlement, view from the north to the south (photo: W. Gauß; ÖAW-ÖAI)

The majority of the now locally produced Aiginetan pottery is Mycenaean wheelmade unpainted and solidly painted and even pattern-painted pottery.⁶⁹ We now assume a complete takeover of Mycenaean forming techniques and probably also the ability to create a lustrous paint. This sketched picture coincides perfectly with the construction of a potter's kiln that was built right on top of the walls of the large building complex.⁷⁰ Regrettably, and due to later disturbances of the Archaic and Classical sanctuary, it is not clear if there is a hiatus between the end of the large building complex and the construction of the kiln, or if its abandonment was caused by the kiln. In any case, the construction of a kiln on top of a former power structure could be interpreted as a deliberate break with former traditions. The construction of the kiln and its period of use should be dated to LH IIIA1⁷¹ (Figs. 9–10).⁷² Nos. 1–3 on Fig. 10 illustrate pottery that was found in between the raised floors of the firing chamber, all local according to macroscopic analysis, and nos. 4–8 in the same illustration form a representative selection of pottery from underneath the ash walking horizon that led to the entrance of the firing chamber.

⁶⁵ Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 243–247 (with references); Gauß et al. 2017.

⁶⁶ Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 243–247 (with references).

⁶⁷ Rutter 1993a, 82–84 (with references); Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 243–247 (with references). Regarding a possible Aiginetan import to Troy VIg (LH IIIA1), see Mommsen et al. 2001b, 183, fig. 14; 184, cat. no. 9.

⁶⁸ Gauß – Kiriati 2011, 223–224, 243–247 (with further references); Gauß et al. 2017. The results of the excavations conducted by the University of Salzburg under the direction of the late W. Wohlmayr together with L. Berger will contribute greatly to our understanding of this area.

⁶⁹ Lindblom et al. 2015, 232 n. 30.

⁷⁰ Gauß 2007a; Karkanias et al. 2019.

⁷¹ RMDP, 493, notes that LH IIIA1 pottery is barely represented at Kolonna.

⁷² Fig. 10; see also Gauß 2007a, 171, figs. 3–4.



Fig. 9: Mycenaean potter's kiln on top of the large building complex (photo: W. Gauß; ÖAW-ÖAI)



Fig. 10: Pottery associated with the period of use of the Mycenaean potter's kiln (photos: W. Gauß, R. Smetana; ÖAW-ÖAI)

Conclusion

To conclude, there seems a continuous development at Kolonna throughout the Middle and early Late Bronze Age. The site received imports from various regions throughout time. Two factors influencing the development of the site are, however, most striking: first, in the advanced Middle Bronze Age there is a clear period of ‘Minoanisation’ manifested in the monumental building, Minoan imports, and the local production of Minoanising pottery. The distribution of the latter seemed to be limited to the monumental building and presumably elite consumption associated with the building. Minoan imports and manufacturing techniques seem to disappear after a relatively short period.

The second process seems to have developed in stages. In ceramic terms the beginning of the Late Bronze Age is characterised by the appearance of Aiginetan and Mainland Bichrome-Painted and other classes of pottery including very small amounts of Mycenaean pattern-painted pottery. The latter class of pottery seems to have inspired local potters, and emulations of Mycenaean shapes and patterns in the local ceramic traditions began, as it were, the ignition spark of the ‘Mycenaeanisation’ of Kolonna. This process was completed with the adoption of Mycenaean forming techniques in LH IIIA and seems enduring.

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Illustrations

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GENERAL ASPECTS

The Significance of Developments in Peloponnesian Pottery over the Middle to Late Helladic Transition

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Abstract: The Peloponnese is often called the heartland of Mycenaean civilisation, and it is certainly possible to follow the processes involved in Mycenaean development more closely through the archaeological material of the Peloponnese than through that from any other region of mainland Greece. But the Peloponnese was not a unity in the Middle Helladic period; its different regions show evidence of distinctive characters, not least in their pottery, and show differing patterns of contact with the outside world. We might therefore expect them to show differences in their development towards Mycenaean, and there is evidence for this, in the pottery as in other features; but there are also indications of closer links between the regions, which helped spread the influence of the increasingly prominent northeast and the development towards the notably homogeneous pottery tradition of later Mycenaean times. This paper will consider the evidence now available for these developments and the motivation that may lie behind them.

Keywords: Aiginetan, Argolid, Cycladic, import, Kythera, Minoan, Mycenaean, pottery

It is a sobering thought that I first came to Greece in January 1966, over 50 years ago. I changed my doctoral topic to the origins of Mycenaean civilisation, at the suggestion of Mervyn Popham, in that year, which naturally involved me in paying much attention to MH. Looking back, it is interesting to be reminded how little attention MH attracted at that time. It is symptomatic that, in his account in the *Cambridge Ancient History*,² John Caskey made no attempt to subdivide a period of three centuries or more – although his excavations at Lerna provided plentiful material – and took little interest in regional variation. In traditional style, he presented Minyan and Matt-Painted as the two major MH pottery wares, although their distribution patterns were patently restricted within the MH area. He had no reason to suspect that the great bulk of the Matt-Painted that he discussed, and that was at the centre of the classic analysis in Buck 1964, would prove to be from a single source, the island of Aigina; but he might have commented that it is rarely found outside what I have defined as the ‘central area’.³ Similarly, he might have commented that, although Grey Minyan is very common in Central Greece, it appears very rarely in the Peloponnese outside the northeast, surely as an ‘imported’ ware. Even good local imitations of Minyan are not common, and to my knowledge these hardly ever include attempts to reproduce the shape that has often been illustrated as typically MH, but is actually characteristic only of the mature and late phases, the ring-stemmed or ‘Lianokladhi’ goblet (Fig. 1.5).⁴

Despite the limited distribution of Grey Minyan, I largely based my system of MH phases on its development, since major sites in the ‘central area’ like Lerna and Lefkandi produced clear evidence for a sequence of phases. Although the sequence at Lefkandi has proved not to be

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² Caskey 1973.

³ Dickinson 1977, 17. Aigina Matt-Painted does appear in Lefkandi V and perhaps much earlier, in IV, but in very small quantities.

⁴ One or two possible goblet pieces are reported from Nichoria by Howell 1992, 74, and two definite examples from MH III Early at Ayios Stephanos (Zerner 2008, 182).

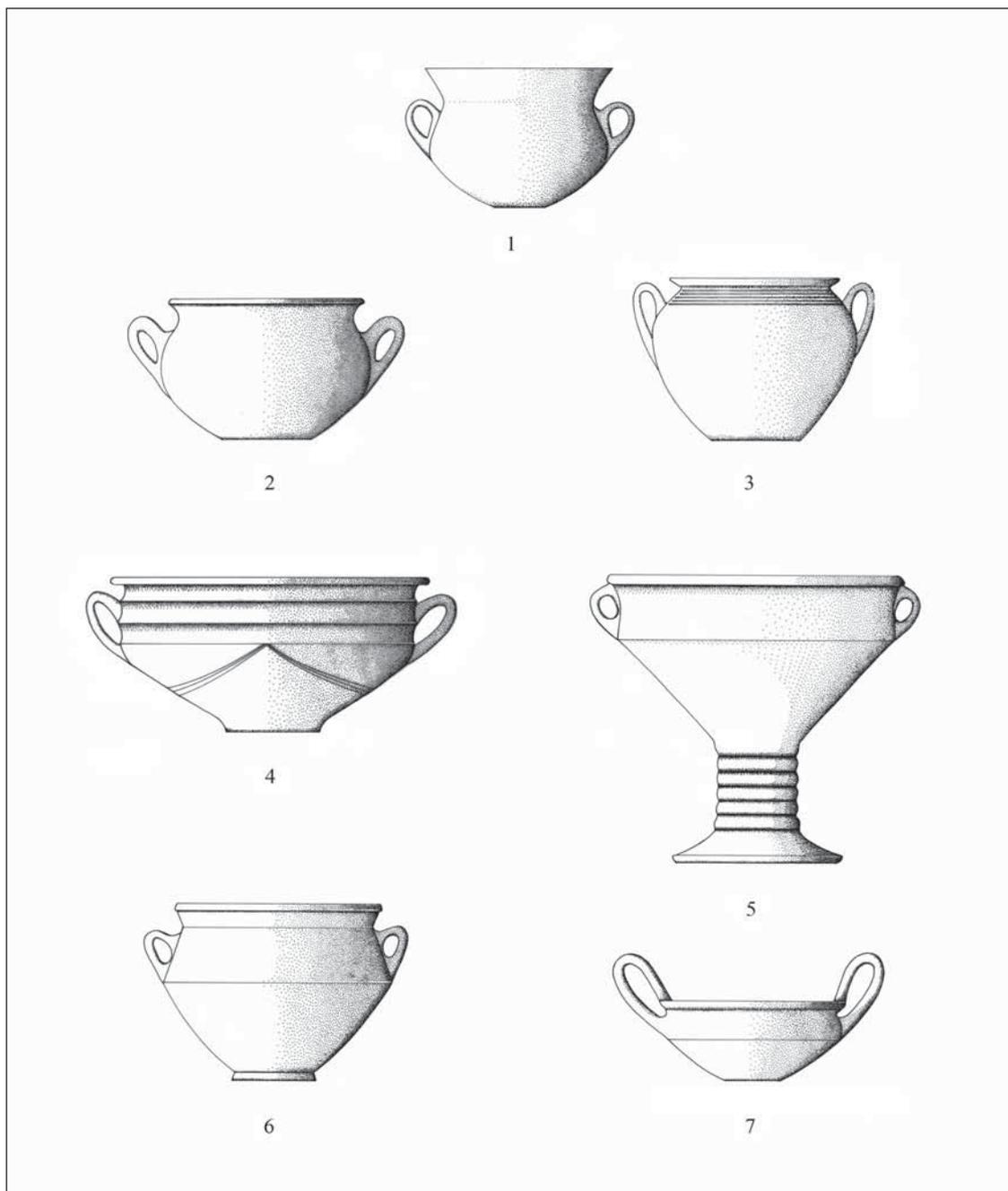


Fig. 1: The development of Minyan ware: 1. EH III 'Bass Bowl'; 2. Early MH two-handled bowl; 3. Developed MH two-handled bowl with regular grooved decoration; 4. Mature MH 'Argive Minyan' bowl; 5. Mature MH 'Lianokladhi' goblet; 6. Mature MH carinated bowl; 7. Mature MH carinated kantharos. Scale 1:6 (adapted from Dickinson 1977, 19, fig. 2)

continuous,⁵ and I made a major error in placing the so-called ‘Argive Minyan’ bowl (Fig. 1.4) too early in the sequence,⁶ my system seems to fit the sequence now established in more detail at other sites, particularly Mitrou in Lokris,⁷ reasonably well. But I based my account of what I called the ‘Late Phase’ in my sequence mainly on tomb groups from various clearly late cemeteries in the northeast Peloponnese and not on settlement material, although I did find support in Carl Blegen’s separation of a clearly late ‘MH II’ at Korakou. Blegen characterised this by the plain wares that he collectively termed Yellow Minyan, by Matt-Painted of more developed styles, including motifs derived from the Minoan tradition, and by fine decorated wares in both light-on-dark and dark-on-light style that he considered influenced by MM III and thus precursors of the full Mycenaean style.⁸ Some of the examples that he illustrated are actually LH I in style,⁹ but he did anticipate what has become increasingly clear, that the fine Matt-Painted styles that I attributed to my ‘Late Phase’ and thought earlier than LH I¹⁰ were to a great extent its contemporaries, so that all may be found in the same contexts during the period of transition from MH to LH.

How does Peloponnesian MH look now, in the light of all the excavation and publication over the last half-century? We are much better informed, but it is striking how much of our detailed information still comes from just a few sites. The northeast Peloponnese is best represented, with considerable deposits relevant to one or more phases from several sites, notably Lerna, Argos, Asine, and Tsoungiza. But for Lakonia and Messenia, most of our information comes from Ayios Stephanos and Nichoria respectively, while Asea is the only helpful site in Arkadia, but not beyond the middle phase. We still know very little about the whole northwest sector of the Peloponnese, although there have been summary reports on sites in Elis and Achaia, and information relevant to the transition to LH has been reported recently from Aigion and Pagona near Patras.¹¹

The overriding impression is that, while Peloponnesian MH shows considerable uniformity in some basic features that are typical of MH generally – the coarse domestic pottery, the house types, the preference for burial in cists and pits – the different regions show evidence of local traditions in their finer pottery, as in other features; for example, burial tumuli are widely found in the western Peloponnese, but very rare elsewhere. Striking differences can be observed in the patterns of external contacts, as indicated in the finer pottery: to simplify heavily, the northeast Peloponnese had strong links with Central Greece and Aigina, and Lerna also shows clear evidence of contacts with Kythera, the Cyclades and Crete. Lakonia had links with the northeast Peloponnese (as observed in the Menelaion material¹²), but at Ayios Stephanos the strongest external links were with Kythera, and marked northeast Peloponnesian and Aiginetan influences are only apparent very late in MH.¹³ Messenia seems not to have had very strong links with other parts of the Peloponnese (though I understand that better evidence is becoming available from the new excavations at Pylos), but at Nichoria there is evidence for the popularity of the ‘Argive Minyan’ bowl type,¹⁴ and some late decorated and coated material may be imported from Ayios Stephanos, Kythera or even Crete.¹⁵ Finally, Achaia shows links to the north, perhaps especially Aitolia, to judge from

⁵ My study of Roger Howell’s unpublished manuscript on the Lefkandi MH sequence has revealed that there are almost certainly gaps in the sequence, as represented in Trench CC, on either side of the Lefkandi V deposit (as argued in Dickinson 2020), which cannot be filled by other deposits from the site.

⁶ It should be recognised that the sequence shown in Dickinson 1977, fig. 2, is unreliable for this and other reasons, but I offer an adapted version here in Fig. 1, to reflect something closer to the present state of knowledge.

⁷ Hale 2016.

⁸ Blegen 1921, 32–35 (see 35 especially on ‘Middle Helladic II’), figs. 47–49, pls. 2–3.

⁹ Blegen 1921, pl. 3.5–7.

¹⁰ Dickinson 1977, 22–23.

¹¹ Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010.

¹² Particularly in the prevalence of ‘Dark Burnished’, related to ‘Argive Minyan’ ware, cf. Catling 2009, 325.

¹³ Cf. Zerner 2008, especially 212–214.

¹⁴ Howell 1992, 58–59.

¹⁵ Howell 1992, 76–77, 79.

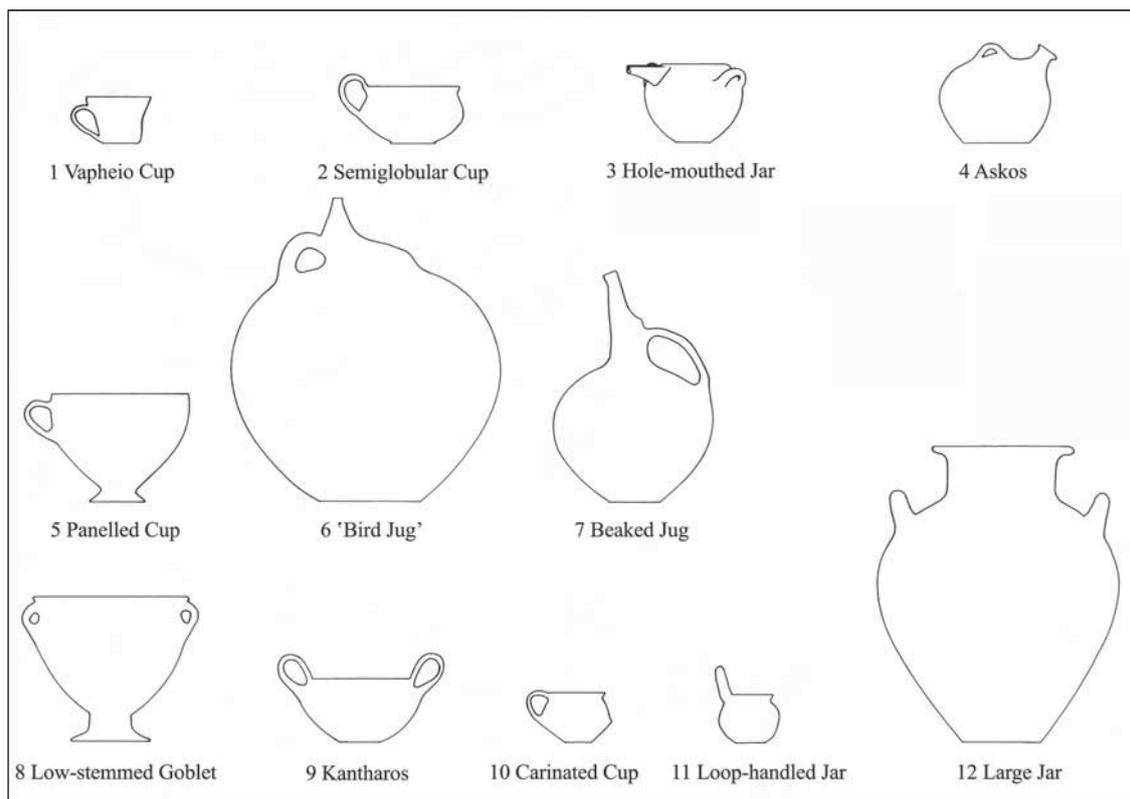


Fig. 2: Stylised drawings of common shapes of the transitional MH-LH period. Scale 1:8
(after Dickinson 1977, 22, fig. 3)

the occurrence of horned and wishbone handles and cutaway neck jugs; but the deposit assigned to LH I from Aigion shows much wider links, indicating contacts down the Gulf of Corinth.¹⁶

Given these marked differences between the Peloponnesian regions, one might expect that they followed different routes to becoming Mycenaean, as it is now accepted that Central Greece and Thessaly did. But this is not easy to demonstrate, because, although we have much more material than Furumark did to define the early Mycenaean phases, including some settlement deposits, it is still not easy to follow the transition from MH to Mycenaean stratigraphically anywhere in the Peloponnese. Sequences either have gaps, or are heavily weighted to one side or other of the transition: thus, at Ayios Stephanos LH I is not represented by a clear deposit in the best stratified sequence, in Area N, Dietz's sequence at Asine hardly gets into LH I proper, while at Nichoria the latest stages of the MH period are not well represented and the stratified sequence in Area IV begins in mature LH I, so that the transition remains rather obscure.¹⁷ Collating deposits of various kinds does make it possible to get some idea of the sequence at these sites and also at Tsoungiza and Aigion, but the picture is still incomplete, especially at Ayios Stephanos and Nichoria, which is frustrating when they are our principal sources for their respective regions.

Several trends that characterise the transition from MH to LH generally can be observed in the fine pottery, which to a great extent run concurrently, although an increasing preference for light-coloured wares seems to appear first. Such wares always made up a substantial proportion of total

¹⁶ For earlier comments on Achaia, see Dickinson 1977, 23, with references; see now Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 123–126, on Pagona and Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, 135–136, on Aigion.

¹⁷ The Ayios Stephanos Area N sequence is summarised in Rutter – Rutter 1976, 63–65, see also Dickinson 1979, 200; on Asine see summaries of the sources of material in Dietz 1980, 141–144, and Dietz 1991, 40–41, 103–104. The comments on Nichoria reflect my own experience with the pottery, see also Dickinson et al. 1992, 473–474.

pottery production; the change, which was perhaps influenced by the quality of imported wares like Aiginetan Matt-Painted and ‘Cycladic White’, is characterised by a greater concern to produce well-made, thin-walled and well-fired products. Some traditional MH shapes continued to be common, namely kantharoi and stemmed goblets (Fig. 2.8–9). But a second trend saw the production of new, typically small shapes, particularly cups but also small jugs and containers, drawing on both Cycladic (Fig. 2.5, also larger jug shapes Fig. 2.6–7) and Minoan traditions (Fig. 2.1–4).¹⁸ These vases might be plain – some were even made in Grey Minyan – or produced in traditional Matt-Painted style, but at least one class had burnished surfaces, some were decorated in lustrous or near-lustrous paint, and new motifs often derived from the Cycladic and Minoan traditions were adopted, notably spirals and related curvilinear patterns, some plant-derived patterns, and birds. In some of this, the mainland potters may have been following trends already established in Aigina,¹⁹ but much local innovation can be seen in the way that motifs were handled.

What might be considered a third trend is a liking for large and elaborately decorated vases, especially jars (cf. Fig. 2.12 for one type), surely intended as items of display, which again may reflect the earlier production of elaborately decorated jars on Aigina. Some of the mainland examples were probably ‘imports’ from the Cyclades, but others were local Matt-Painted,²⁰ and some that may be local were in Minoanising light-on-dark style.²¹

Thus, there seems to have been a development towards producing fine pottery wares for show, often as local specialities; for instance, Mainland Polychrome, one of the best known, probably had its centre of production in Boiotia. These wares were readily exchanged within the central area, as evident even at a small site like Tsoungiza, along with more mundane but obviously valued products like Aiginetan cooking pots, which became extremely popular in the transitional period.²² Examples could find their way to remoter parts like Lakonia, but on present evidence the trends that I have outlined had little impact on local production in the south Peloponnese. At Ayios Stephanos the Minoanising tradition had already come to dominate in a variety of fabrics, including a fine ware consisting principally of cups, which by this time were largely wheelmade and decorated in light colours on a lustrous dark coat. There are signs that this had some impact at Nichoria, where light-on-dark decoration is likely to indicate ‘imports’ or influence from Ayios Stephanos or Kythera rather than directly from Crete; but what is more striking, here and at Ayios Stephanos, is the early appearance in local production of those characteristically Minoan domestic types, the tripod cooking pot (FS 320) and conical cup (FS 204). The tripod cooking pot seems to have been adopted before the end of MH,²³ while the conical cup was being imported before LH I at Ayios Stephanos and was being made locally by LH IIA.²⁴ But at Ayios Stephanos these shapes seem to have remained rare, while at Nichoria they are well represented in the mature LH I deposit, along with lamps closely related in fabric and technique of manufacture to conical cups (Fig. 3).²⁵ Further north, these types were appearing on Aigina in Ceramic Phase I,²⁶

¹⁸ Cf. brief discussion in Dickinson 1977, 22–23.

¹⁹ See Gauß – Smetana 2007, 65, for the manufacture of Cycladic-style panelled cups in Ceramic Phase J and the development of curvilinear patterns in local Matt-Painted.

²⁰ The series of jars from Mycenae Grave N (Mylonas 1972/1973, 159–160) provides good examples. Those inside the grave (Mylonas 1972/1973, pls. 139β, 140) are Matt-Painted and probably local; comparable pieces have been found in other graves, e.g. Grave I. Those found outside the grave, on the roof (Mylonas 1972/1973, pl. 145), are either Cycladic, like the ‘bird jugs’ found with them (Mylonas 1972/1973, pl. 143; cf. Dietz 1991, 228–229), or closely inspired by Cycladic originals.

²¹ E.g. jars from Mycenae Graves I and E (Mylonas 1972/1973, pls. 95γ, 158α).

²² See e.g. Rutter 2015, 217, on Tsoungiza; Dietz 1991, 70, 92, on Asine.

²³ For early tripod cooking pots at Ayios Stephanos see Rutter – Rutter 1976, 45; Zerner 2008, 207 (maybe Kytheran); for examples in MH material at Nichoria see Howell 1992, 76.

²⁴ Zerner 2008, 282, considers some examples in early contexts Minoan. Rutter – Rutter 1976, 58, indicate local manufacture by LH IIA; for its relative rarity see Mountjoy 2008, 312 (LH IIA examples are noted on 355, 368).

²⁵ Dickinson et al. 1992, 478–479, 480.

²⁶ Gauß – Smetana 2007, 63–64, cf. 62 for the appearance of Cycladic and Cretan pottery imports in Phase H, thought equivalent to Lerna VA–B, i.e. early MH.

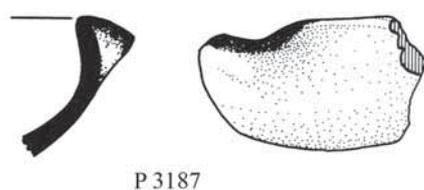


Fig. 3: Open lamp-spout from Nichoria mature LH I deposit. Scale 1:2 (Dickinson et al. 1992, 552, fig. 9.5, P3187. h. 0.035; University of Minnesota Press)

the Mycenaean decorated style traditionally called LH I. I do not propose to repeat in detail the argument that I have made elsewhere for the origins of the style.²⁸ It is enough to say that, while it surely began within the context of the Fine Minoanising style so well represented at Ayios Stephanos and Lerna, and was clearly adapted from Kytheran LM IA,²⁹ the full range of typical LH I shapes and motifs is not represented on Kythera or at Ayios Stephanos. Rather, there must have been a second stage, in which what might be called ‘classic’ LH I was created, by including small closed shapes which have no obvious ancestor in the Minoan or Cycladic traditions, principally the squat jug (FS 87), alabastron (FS 80) and small piriform jar (FS 27), and by further developing the range of motifs, including varieties of linked circles, foliate band, and alternating blooms; the hatched loop (FM 63), which was to become very popular on small closed shapes, could be a mainland innovation.³⁰ This second stage most probably developed in the Argolid,³¹ and from there the mature style spread back to Lakonia and to Messenia – where, to judge from the evidence of Nichoria, there is no trace of an independent or parallel LH I development. But the Mycenaean decorated style was adopted in Messenia with enthusiasm, and the Messenian potters show some independence, especially in the overwhelming popularity of the ripple-decorated Vapheio cup among open shapes, a local type that persisted well into LH II.³²

It is likely that larger and more elaborately decorated shapes, especially forms of piriform and pithoid jar, were also first produced in the Mycenaean decorated style in the Argolid, although there are some west Peloponnesian examples.³³ For their decoration the potters drew almost entirely on Minoan traditions, but they quickly developed a strong liking for plant patterns, so that the LH IIA ‘palatial’ style, which derived from these first large vessels, is quite distinct from the LM IB Special Palatial Tradition, although many LM IB types were later imitated competently in Mycenaean workshops.

It is noteworthy that the small Mycenaean decorated shapes, particularly cups, were evidently popular exchange items outside the mainland, reaching not only the major Cycladic sites, but

but examples in contexts prior to the appearance of Mycenaean decorated pottery in the northeast Peloponnesian are very rare and likely to be of Aiginetan or Minoan origin.²⁷ Here I would like to emphasise the importance of reporting examples of these and other domestic Minoan shapes when found in late MH or early Mycenaean contexts, for they surely represent a significant interest in Minoan fashions and practices at a social level below that of the real elite.

Ultimately the most significant development, part of the trend to small fine vases, was the evolution of

²⁷ An Aiginetan tripod foot is reported from a ‘MH IIIA’ deposit at Tsoungiza (Rutter 2015, 210). Blegen 1921, 31, mentions tripod feet among MH coarse domestic ware from Korakou, but these could in fact be LH I in date, cf. Davis 1979, 252. Most of the unburnished plain and coarse domestic pottery from the early Mycenaean deposits at Korakou seems to have been discarded (Davis 1979, 238); in 1968 I noted a single conical cup from Level XII in the East Alley sequence, and there were several examples in the LH IIA deposit (Dickinson 1972, 105). At Asine a few conical cups, thought to be Cretan, come from ‘MH IIIA’ and ‘MH IIIB’ deposits, Dietz 1991, 70, 92.

²⁸ Dickinson 2014.

²⁹ Lindblom et al. 2015, 233, with 234, fig. 7.

³⁰ Dickinson 2014, 11–12, with 8, fig. 1.2, for a more detailed discussion of the motifs of ‘classic’ LH I.

³¹ Rutter 2015, 221–222, has argued for the establishment of a major potting centre at Berbati in the Shaft Grave phase, but the earliest Mycenaean material that I know of from Berbati includes hardly anything that could be earlier than LH IIA.

³² Dickinson et al. 1992, 475, 481.

³³ Dickinson 2014, 12. RMDP, 80, 312, indicates that the jars from Shaft Grave V and Peristeria, Tholos 3, there referred to, are local imitations of Minoan if not direct imports; if local, they may be particularly influenced by elaborate East Cretan LM IA vases of the kind that certainly reached Kakovatos (RMDP, 372). Cf. also Davis 1979, 253, for LM IA or imitation jar fragments at Korakou.

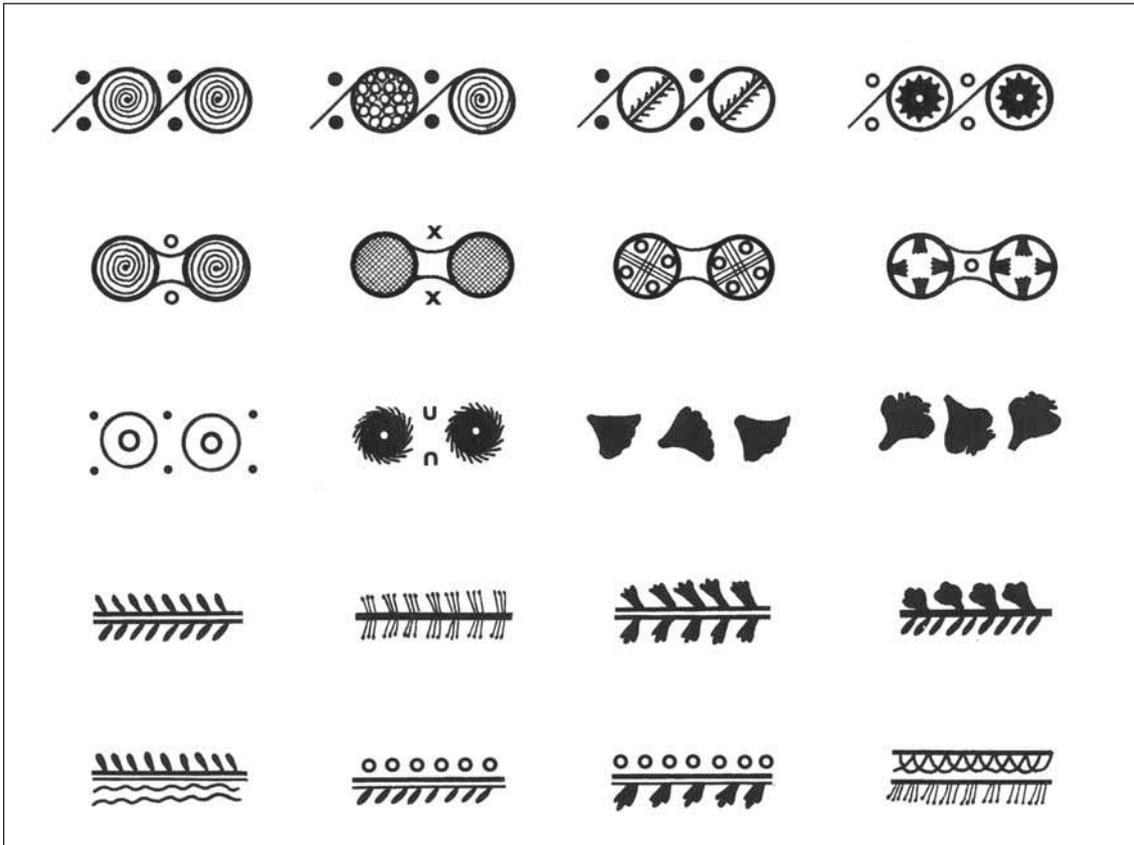


Fig. 4: Stylised drawings of typical mature LH I motifs. Various scales (Dickinson 1977, 26, fig. 4)

Miletus, Kommos in south Crete, Torone in Macedonia and the Lipari islands and Vivara in the central Mediterranean. Examples of other fine wares of the transitional period, especially Mainland Polychrome, also travelled, but in smaller quantities and mainly within the Aegean; almost all the decorated material from central Mediterranean sites is Mycenaean, both northeastern and southern Peloponnesian as analysis has shown.³⁴ By the end of LH I or not much later, Mycenaean decorated ware had largely driven other fine wares out of production in the Peloponnese, but LH I took longer to spread throughout Central Greece, including Euboia,³⁵ and Thessaly. With it there spread the use of the potter's wheel, an increasingly standardised group of fine plain shapes, especially forms of stemmed goblet, and tripod cooking pots. The Argolid seems to have remained the centre of stylistic innovation for most of the history of the Mycenaean style; there are few signs of significant innovation in other parts of the Peloponnese, although there is some evidence for local preferences. I suspect that Nichoria is characteristic of provincial pottery workshops, in that its potters concentrated on just a few of the shapes and motifs that were popular in the Argolid.³⁶

The salient impressions that have relevance to general development in the Peloponnese and on the mainland are the increasing readiness to emulate Aegean types and behaviour, which must

³⁴ For analyses, see Jones et al. 2014.

³⁵ Study of Roger Howell's unpublished manuscript and some preliminary study of my own in 1967–1968 indicates that only two or three decorated pieces from Lefkandi are likely to be LH I. LH IIA and IIB decorated material is more common, including whole vases from graves, and there is a little evidence for open vases in plain fine ware of 'Mycenaean' type; but in pottery terms, Phase VI, which must cover much of the early Mycenaean period, is dominated by wares continuing the late MH traditions. See Dickinson 2020.

³⁶ For example, in the early material at Nichoria framed spirals (FM 46.30–31) and hatched loops (FM 63.6) are quite common, but double axes (FM 35) and foliate bands (FM 64.1–5) are notably rare, as is the semiglobular cup shape (FS 211).

spring from growing knowledge of the Aegean world and is surely linked to a striving for status, and the growing influence of the Argolid in stylistic development, which very probably reflects the increasing prominence of the principality centred on Mycenae. Older traditions³⁷ focusing on the social importance of shared food and drink, especially drink, survived the considerable changes in social structure, as is evident from the major concentration on drinking vessels in the fine pottery wares. But while it is noticeable that for a while decorated drinking vessels were predominantly of the new, Minoan-derived shapes, in the plain ware forms the stemmed goblet retained the leading position, and once these too began to be decorated they, and their descendants, the kylikes, became clearly the most favoured drinking vessels, thus reasserting a mainland tradition. As happened in Crete during LM I, it became standard to produce decorated ware in a single style; but, again, the Peloponnesian potters showed considerable independence of the Minoan tradition almost from the start in establishing local preferences for favoured shapes and motifs. They adopted only a limited number of fine ware Minoan shapes and very few of the range of specialised domestic types that can be found in Minoan contexts, apart from the tripod cooking pot, perhaps adopted simply because it was better suited to boiling food. But the conical cup, so popular in the Aegean islands, never became more than a very minor component of the fine plain ware range, even at Nichoria; and I suggest that this is as good an indication as any of the limited degree to which the Peloponnesians, and the mainland more generally, became ‘Minoanised’ during the transition from MH to LH.

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³⁷ Cf. Maran 2007, 174 n. 40, on the potential uses of ring-stemmed goblets.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: The development of Minyan ware: 1. EH III 'Bass Bowl'; 2. Early MH two-handled bowl; 3. Developed MH two-handled bowl with regular grooved decoration; 4. Mature MH 'Argive Minyan' bowl; 5. Mature MH 'Lianokladhi' goblet; 6. Mature MH carinated bowl; 7. Mature MH carinated kantharos. Scale 1:6 (adapted from Dickinson 1977, 19, fig. 2)

Fig. 2: Stylised drawings of common shapes of the transitional MH–LH period. Scale 1:8 (after Dickinson 1977, 22, fig. 3)

Fig. 3: Open lamp-spout from Nichoria mature LH I deposit. Scale 1:2 (Dickinson et al. 1992, 552, fig. 9.5, P3187. h. 0.035; University of Minnesota Press)

Fig. 4: Stylised drawings of typical mature LH I motifs. Various scales (Dickinson 1977, 26, fig. 4)

An Explosion of Polychromy: Establishing Localised Ceramic Identities at the Dawn of the Mycenaean Era

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Abstract: Near or at the end of the MH era, a wave of polychromy swept over the ceramic repertoires of the central and southern Greek mainland. Beginning at the start of the period we term LH I (c. 1675–1600 BC) or just before and persisting for some four to five generations thereafter down to some point within the LH IIA phase (c. 1600–1550/1525 BC), this predilection for bichrome and trichrome approaches to the decoration of tablewares was a feature of several different regions within the first half of the Prepalatial Mycenaean era. What inspired this sudden popularisation of the use of multiple colours for ceramic ornamentation? As striking as its relatively sudden emergence is the seeming contemporaneity of its disappearance from the various regional styles within which it had flourished. Was the virtual extinction of polychromy around the middle of the 16th century somehow related to the circumstances of its rapid adoption a century or more earlier? How this decorative fashion was exploited by its numerous producers may provide some answers to the questions surrounding the peculiar history of this characteristically early Mycenaean mode of pottery décor.

Keywords: Middle Helladic, Mycenaean pottery, Bichrome, ceramic regionalism

Introduction: Ceramic Polychromy from the Neolithic to the Earlier Middle Bronze Age

The production of ceramic containers decorated with two or more differently coloured pigments or clay slips that Aegean prehistorians more commonly refer to as ‘paints’ has a very long history on the Greek mainland, beginning as early as the sixth millennium BC.³ But pottery decorated in this way was comparatively rare during most of the third millennium BC – that is, the EH era – with the exception of the light-on-dark pattern-painted class known as Ayia Marina ware, popular in central Greece in the EH III phase, in addition to small quantities of similarly ornamented vessels produced in the preceding EH II Argolid.⁴ These light-on-dark pattern-decorated pots exploited the pronounced colour difference between what was probably a kaolin clay slip for the white and an iron-rich clay slip for the moderately lustrous, red to black coating over which the white was added.

No EH pots decorated with two or more colours of dark-firing paint applied over a pale-firing clay ground in a dark-on-light style are known to us. The kinds of dark-on-light polychrome pots occasionally produced during the Late Neolithic era did not reappear on the Greek mainland until manganese-based paints once again became popular during the transition from the EH III to the

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³ For descriptions and assessments of the various ‘paints’ utilised by Peloponnesian potters during the lengthy Greek Neolithic era (c. 6500–3100 BC), Vitelli 1993, 8–9, 199–204, tab. 13; Vitelli 1999, 25–27, 31–33; Vitelli 2007, 5–7, 111–114, Groups 2–9. The distinctions made by Vitelli between iron-based and manganese-based ‘paints’ and their usage in various monochrome as well as polychrome-painted varieties of pottery are all transferrable to the Bronze Age ceramic groups treated here.

⁴ For light-on-dark pattern-painted pottery of the EH II period, see Wiencke 2000, 614–618, 743, fig. 2.101, tab. 32c; for equivalently decorated pottery of the EH III period, best known in central Greece as Ayia Marina ware, see Rutter 1995, 596–623, especially 619–623.

MH period,⁵ at which point it once again became possible to create bichrome dark-on-light decoration predictably by employing manganese oxide as well as iron oxide pigments in oxidising conditions.⁶

Although some mainland potters exploited the potential colour difference between manganese- and iron-based paints, to achieve the best results they would have needed good control over the firing atmosphere for the pigments they used as well as for the pale clay ground, whether slipped or unslipped, to look as distinct as possible by the end of the firing process. Perhaps for this reason, in addition to the extra work entailed in obtaining both kinds of dark-firing paints, the amount of dark-on-light bichrome or polychrome pottery remained only a minuscule portion of the pattern-painted pottery throughout the first couple of centuries of the MH era, even within those regions where matt-painted pottery was relatively common.⁷ There are a few exceptions, but most of the relatively small number of polychrome-decorated vessels from early MH I contexts in the eastern Peloponnese and from somewhat later MH I–II contexts in eastern central Greece take the form of large jars and bowls, containers that may typically have served as display pieces at communal or kin-based social events.⁸

Magnesian Polychrome Matt-Painted

This pattern of very sparing production and usage of dark-on-light bichrome-decorated pottery appears to undergo a significant change with the appearance of the class christened “Magnesian Polychrome Matt-Painted” by Joseph Maran on the basis of its concentration at Pefkakia and neighbouring sites around the Gulf of Volos. This class consists for the most part of belly-handled

⁵ Zerner 1978, 52–53, no. D563/7, pl. 7 (giant narrow-necked jar); 52, no. D563/5, fig. 1 (cup or kantharos); 59, no. D596/3–4, pl. 9 (kantharos or Bass bowl); 67, no. D600/4, fig. 4, pl. 10; 71, no. D594/7, fig. 5, pl. 11 (horizontal-handled bowls with incurving upper bodies and flattened lips); 77, no. D591/6, fig. 6, pl. 12 (biconical cup, kantharos, or bowl). All of these examples may be dated to either the highly experimental transitional IV/V phase at Lerna (Rutter 1986, 32) or to an early stage of Phase VA (Zerner 1978, 151, 153–155), after which this variety of bichrome with red paint described as “thick and grainy with shiny inclusions” disappears.

⁶ Vitelli 1999, 32; Vitelli 2007, 111–116. For additional bibliography on manganese oxide pigments, see Hale 2014a, 41 n. 31. The bichrome and polychrome, for the most part light-on-dark painted decorative class known as MH Lustrous Decorated (Zerner 1993, 45–47; Zerner 2008, 201–206; Whitbread – Jones 2008; Kiriati 2010), produced in fabrics variously described as ‘mudstone and chert’ or ‘sand-tempered’, belongs to a ceramic tradition clearly derived from central and western Crete. Vessels of this class are omitted from consideration in what follows, notwithstanding their incorporation of some mainland Greek characteristics during the course of the MH period, since the class is considered Minoan rather than Helladic. Likewise omitted are all varieties of Minoan polychrome-decorated pottery imported to the mainland.

⁷ These regions would have included the northeast Peloponnese (Argolid and Corinthia) and presumably at least parts of central Greece (Attica, Boiotia, Phokis, and Euboia), the Spercheios Valley, and coastal Thessaly. In Lakonia and perhaps also Messenia, Dull-Painted pottery making use of an iron-based rather than manganese-based pigment was more common than true Matt-Painted in the earlier MH phases (Rutter – Rutter 1976, 13; Zerner 2008, 179–182, 193–195; Hale 2014a, 48–50). Recent careful analysis of the pattern-painted pottery throughout the long, seven-phase MH sequence at Mitrou in east Lokris has shown that Dull-Painted also preceded Matt-Painted in at least some areas of central Greece. As at Ayios Stephanos, Dull-Painted at Mitrou was only displaced by Matt-Painted in the local Phase 7 at the very end of MH II (Hale 2014a, 40–48, tabs. 1–2, fig. 3, pls. 1–3). As Hale points out, the implications of a consistent distinction between Matt-Painted and Dull-Painted (the latter previously often viewed as simply a variant of Matt-Painted) have yet to be worked through in regions such as central Greece (including perhaps the Spercheios Valley and parts of coastal Thessaly) as well as the central and northwestern Peloponnese.

⁸ Large jars, jugs, and bowls are the rule at MH I (late)–III Pefkakia (Maran 2007) as well as at contemporary Mitrou (Hale 2014b, Vol. I, 66–67, 143, 161–162, 180, 203, Vol. II, 109 MH-P59, pl. 6 [Phase 4]; 125–126 MH-P112–115, pl. 11 [Phase 5]; 138–139 MH-P156–157, pl. 14 [Phase 6]; 158 MH-P217–219, pl. 20 [Phase 7]; 178–179 MH-P282–284, pl. 27). Much the same appears to have been true at Lerna (above n. 5, but note also a certain number of smaller to mid-sized drinking vessels at that site) and for the much rarer examples of dark-on-light bichrome in use at MH I Ayios Stephanos (Zerner 2008, 194, 220, nos. 1069, 1074, fig. 5.5). The horizontal-handled bowl no. 1069 from Ayios Stephanos looks enough like some of the examples of the same shape from Lerna cited above in n. 5 to be a possible product of the same workshop.

amphoras,⁹ large beaked jugs,¹⁰ small barrel-jars,¹¹ and large horizontal-handled basins.¹² Maran reported finds of this class from several sites further to the south in central Greece (Kirrha, Eutresis, Lefkandi, Orchomenos)¹³ and suggested that other pieces he knew only from photographs might come from as far afield as Koukonisi on Lemnos.¹⁴ Since his publication, other probable examples of this class have been identified at Mitrou.¹⁵ Neutron activation analyses of seven samples of this class from Pefkakia showed that the pots represented by five had closely comparable chemical composition patterns and thus were likely produced at a single location, very possibly Pefkakia itself,¹⁶ while the other two samples exhibited singleton compositions and may thus represent two additional production centres.¹⁷ This class features distinctive shapes and a spare decorative syntax that have no local antecedents in coastal Thessaly. Maran has argued that both its shape range and decorative style are modelled after the matt-painted pottery of MH I–II Aigina¹⁸ on which, however, the painted ornament is invariably monochrome rather than bichrome and is applied on an unburnished and hence rather dull, albeit very pale clay ground. He has therefore interpreted the appearance of the ‘Aigineticising’ Magnesian Polychrome class as a purposeful act of emulation on the part of potters resident in coastal Thessaly. In his view, these potters are likely to have been motivated not only by the prolific ceramic output and first-class distribution network of Aigina, but even more by the interest of local Thessalian elites in patterning their behaviours after those of an Aiginetan elite whose socio-political prominence in MH Greece was recognised throughout the central Aegean as much from the imposing architecture of the site as from the widespread distribution of its pottery (with its associated marking system) and its andesite grinding stones.¹⁹ In support of such a motivation, Maran drew attention to the peculiarly localised distribution of Aiginetan and Minoan ceramic imports to major Thessalian sites around and just inland from the Gulf of Volos, a phenomenon suggesting that inter-site competition among elites in this region may have included showing off the external contacts of a particular kin group by way of the categories of imported ceramic containers it was successful in accumulating.²⁰

Aiginetan and Boiotian (‘Mainland Polychrome’) Bichrome

Maran’s reconstruction of the genesis of the Magnesian Polychrome class may be viewed as mildly ironic in that the most recent analyses of Aiginetan Bichrome Matt-Painted pottery have concluded that the large-scale production of this widely distributed class begins no earlier than

- ⁹ Maran 1992a, pls. 80.1–2 (= Maran 2007, fig. 3.5), 4; 81.2; 92.20; 105.8; 110.5 (= Maran 2007, fig. 3.3); 111.3.
- ¹⁰ Maran 1992a, figs. 78.9 (= Maran 2007, fig. 3.4), 79.1–2, 87.10. The jug illustrated as Maran 1992a, fig. 111.6, is markedly smaller, comparable in size to an atypically small closed bichrome shape from Mitrou (Hale 2014b, Vol. II, pl. 27: MH-P284).
- ¹¹ Maran 1992a, pls. 81.1, 102.21.
- ¹² Maran 1992a, pls. 78.1 (= Maran 2007, fig. 3.6), 78.2.
- ¹³ Maran 2007, 172 n. 32.
- ¹⁴ Maran 2007, 172 n. 33.
- ¹⁵ Hale 2014b, Vol. I, 203, Vol. II, 158 MH-P217, pl. 20 (Phase 7); 179 MH-P283, pl. 27.
- ¹⁶ Maran 2007, 172–173, tabs. 1, 4, fig. 3.1–5.
- ¹⁷ Maran 2007, 172–173, fig. 3.6–7.
- ¹⁸ Maran 2007, 174 and n. 36. For the Middle Bronze Age chronostratigraphy of Pefkakia relative to that of Kolonna on Aigina and other major MH sites, see Maran 1992a, 370, fig. 25; Hale 2016, 263, tab. 2. The floruit of Magnesian Polychrome extends from Pefkakia Phase 5 through Phase 7 (Maran 1992a, 162–169), roughly equivalent to MH ceramic Phases 4–7 and LH I at Mitrou and to ceramic Phases I, J, and K at Kolonna.
- ¹⁹ Zerner 1993, 56 n. 63; Rutter 2001, 125–130, fig. 12; Lindblom 2001; Maran 2007, 175 and n. 42; Gauß et al. 2011.
- ²⁰ Maran 1992, 246–247; Maran 2007, 176. Note the discovery in Phase 6 early at Pefkakia in House 311B of no fewer than nine Magnesian Polychrome jars, large jugs, and basins in a single room where they had evidently been used to mix and transport liquid contents (presumably wine and water) from storage pithoi kept in this room to nearby household spaces where the liquid was dispensed and consumed: Maran 1992a, 24–26, pls. 78.1–2, 4, 9; 79.1; 80.1–2, 4; 81.2; VIIA; Maran 2007, 172 n. 29, fig. 4.

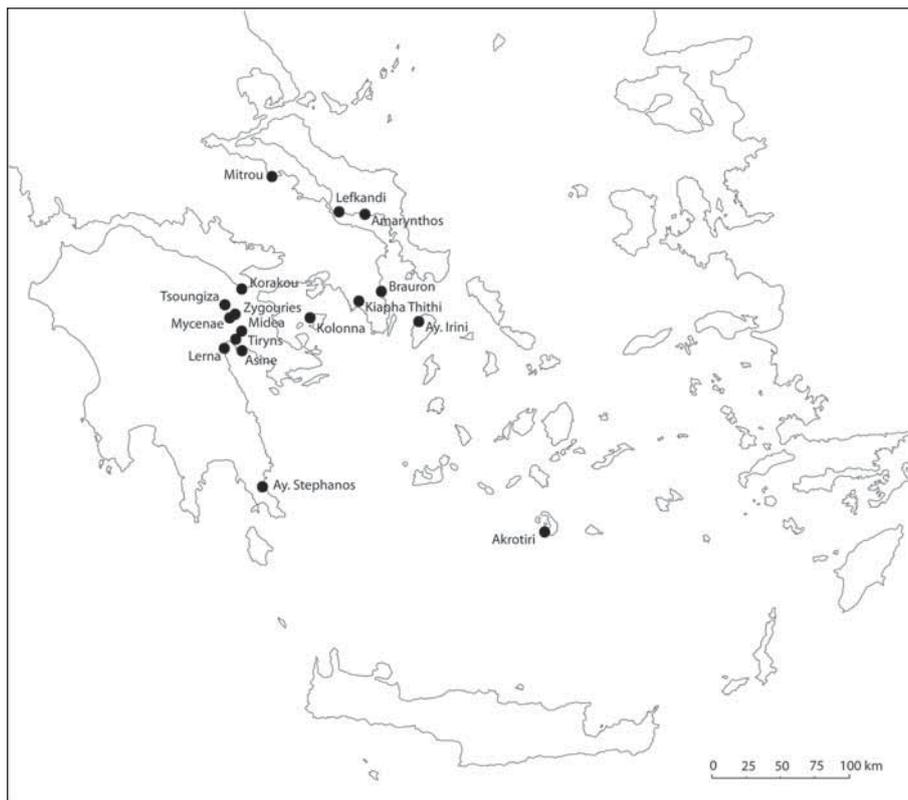


Fig. 1: Distribution map of Aiginetan Bichrome (map: M. Lindblom)

the LH I period.²¹ Aiginetan Bichrome may thus owe its inspiration to the unmistakably earlier Magnesian Polychrome class, itself supposedly inspired by Aiginetan monochrome matt-painted products.

Unlike the most popular class of bichrome matt-painted pottery produced in the Cyclades in later stages of the Middle Bronze Age – the so-called ‘Black-and-Red’ class of Melos and Thera²² – both Magnesian Polychrome and Aiginetan Bichrome feature almost exclusively abstract motifs²³ distributed very sparingly in a light-ground style on a comparatively small number of distinct shapes. Intermediate in many ways between the southern Cycladic ‘Black-and-Red’ class and Magnesian Polychrome but roughly contemporary with both is the ‘Yellow-Slipped Polychrome’ of Keos²⁴ which, though less austere than the Thessalian bichrome class and represented on a broader range of shapes, nevertheless lacks any naturalistic motifs in the same way as does Magnesian Bichrome and most Aiginetan Bichrome. Significantly, this Keian variety of Bichrome

²¹ Davis 1979, 241, nos. 29–51; 243, no. 69, pl. 73c–d; Lindblom 2001, 25–27, tab. 3; Lindblom 2007, 124–125, figs. 14–17; Pruckner 2011, 243–244, 246–248; Lindblom et al., forthcoming, figs. 5–6.

²² Marthari 1998; Papagiannopoulou 2008; Lindblom et al., forthcoming, figs. 2–3.

²³ As opposed to the floral motifs, birds, griffins, and even some cattle, goats, agrimia, and human beings are characteristic of Theran and Melian Bichrome. Note, however, the small number of floral motifs (ivy leaves, rosettes, and even one case of Minoanising foliate band) recently added to the repertoire of Aiginetan Bichrome motifs by Pruckner (2011, 246–248, figs. 25, 29–32), as well as a single rare example of birds (Mylonas 1972/1973, 133, no. Λ-116, pls. 113, 220, 243β; Lindblom 2001; Pruckner 2011, 247 n. 58). A second Aiginetan Matt-Painted jar decorated with birds (Mylonas 1972/1973, 194, no. O-200, pls. 171b, 219, 243β; Dietz 1991, 224–227, Shape KB-2, fig. 71), though considered bichrome-painted by Lindblom (2001, 36 n. 126; also Pruckner 2011, 247 n. 58), appears to bear only a single colour of paint. But a third matt-painted fragment with a bird, from Circle A at Mycenae, may be both bichrome and Aiginetan (Crouwel 1989, pl. 34b; Pruckner 2011, 247 n. 58).

²⁴ Overbeck 1989, 10; Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 4.

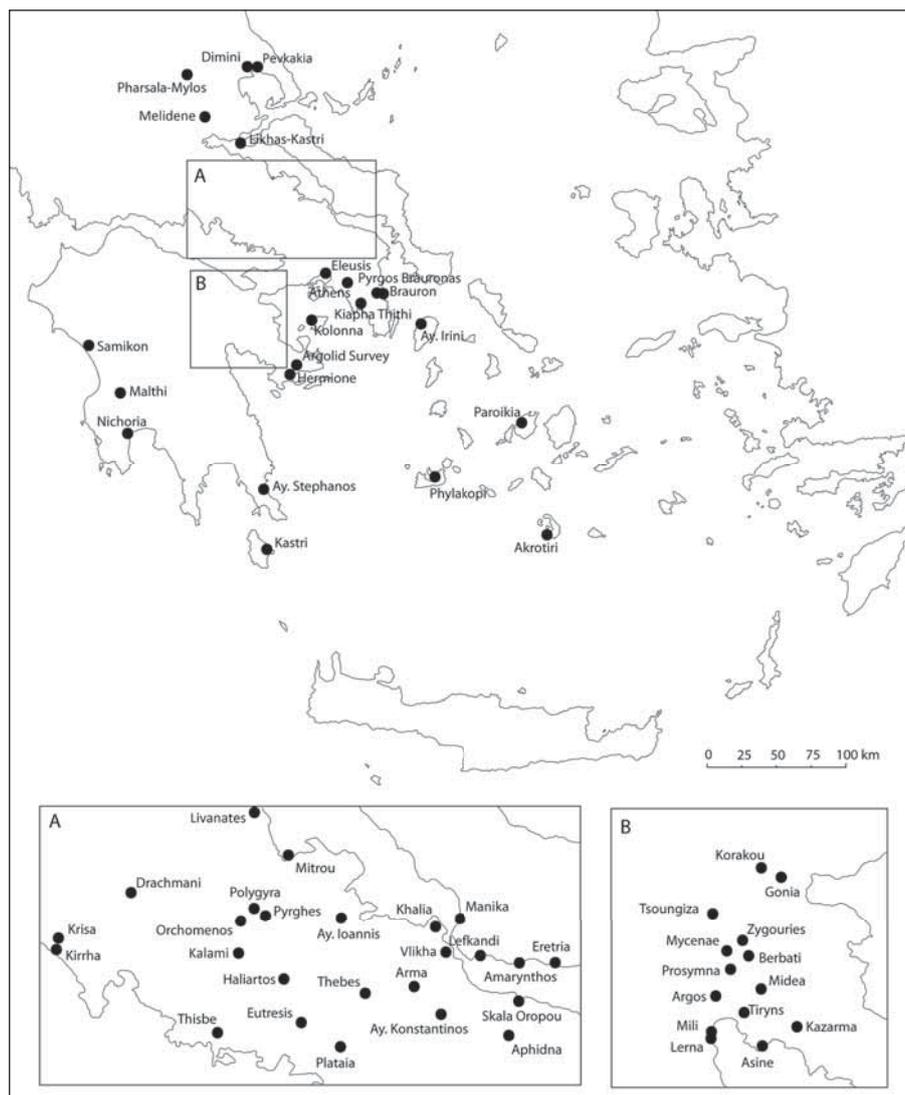


Fig. 2: Distribution map of Boiotian Bichrome (map: M. Lindblom)

Matt-Painted is very narrowly distributed outside the island²⁵ and seems no longer to have been produced by the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The ‘Black-and-Red’ class of Thera and Melos declined in frequency during LC I and was evidently also no longer being produced by the early LC II phase, in all likelihood because of the Santorini eruption and the total abandonment of Thera. In other words, when Aiginetan Bichrome was becoming popular throughout the central Aegean during LH I, its two closest Cycladic analogues had either already disappeared (Keian) or were on the decline (Theran and Melian).

As far as we are presently able to tell, at just about the same time as the long-established Aiginetan ceramic industry began churning out large numbers of bichrome-painted kraters and jars and exporting them to at least 15–20 different sites so far identified in the northeast Peloponnese, central Greece, and the Cycladic islands of Keos and Thera (Fig. 1),²⁶ a number of different sites in Boiotia began producing an altogether different class of bichrome matt-painted pottery that, since the pioneering work of David French in the late 1960s and early 1970s, has been termed

²⁵ Aside from the examples found in some numbers at Aya Irini, a recent review (Lindblom et al., forthcoming) identifies only a few sherds of this class from MH II–III contexts at Kolonna and Lerna.

²⁶ Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 6.

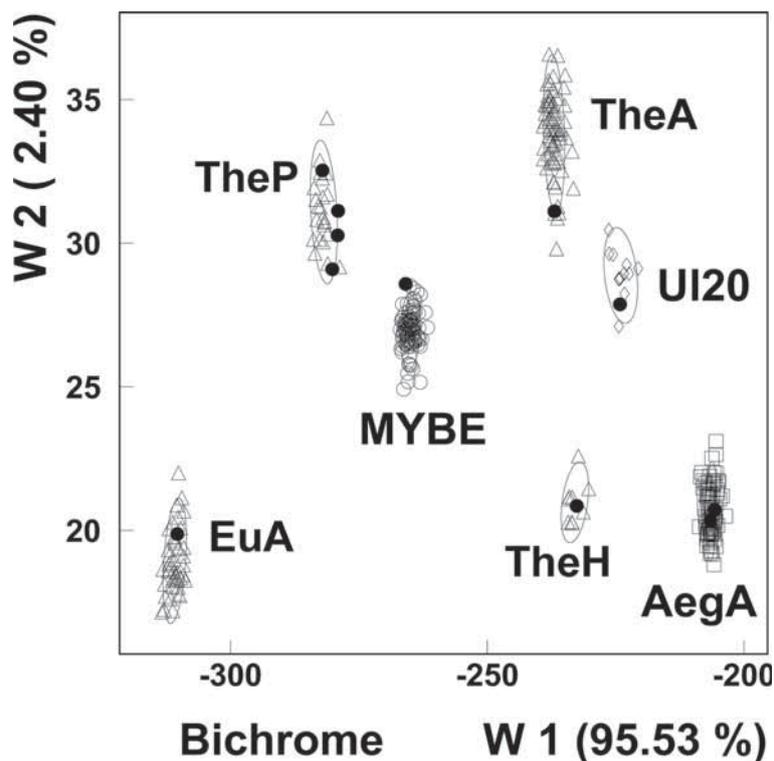


Fig. 3: Result of a discriminant analysis of 249 samples, corrected for dilution and assuming seven clusters using all 29 elements measured except As, Ba, Na and Zr. Plotted are the discriminant functions W1 and W2, which cover 95.5% and 2.4% of the between-group variance. The ellipses drawn are the 2σ boundaries of the groups. Ten bichrome samples from the Lerna VI shaft graves are shown as filled symbols (the single Aiginetan bichrome sample was measured twice, hence two filled dots in the AegA ellipse). All are good members of their respective groups. The different chemical groups originating from Aigina (AegA), Boiotia (TheA, TheH, TheP), Euboia (EuA), the NE Peloponnese (Mycenae/ Berbati: MYBE), and the unlocated but suspected Argive group UI20 are well separated (data and caption courtesy of H. Mommsen)

‘Mainland Polychrome’ (Fig. 2).²⁷ Michael Lindblom, Hans Mommsen, and Ian Whitbread have argued that French’s geographical descriptor ‘Mainland’ should be replaced by ‘Boiotian’ (Fig. 3).²⁸ Iro Mathioudaki, the author of a 2011 dissertation at the University of Athens devoted to this ceramic class,²⁹ agrees that it is a product of this region. Documented from surface surveys and excavations at some 60 different sites (almost half of them located in Boiotia, Attica, Phokis, and Lokris), the class that we will henceforth refer to as ‘Boiotian Bichrome’ is even more widely distributed than is Aiginetan Bichrome, although the two are frequently found at the same sites and quite often in the same deposits at those sites.³⁰ Yet as Table 1 shows, these two extremely popular bichrome-decorated tablewares are very different.

Aiginetan Bichrome pots are invariably handmade and typically have dull, wiped surfaces; light and patchily applied burnishes do occur, but these are rare. The shape and pattern ranges

²⁷ French – French 1971, 27; French 1972, 33; Mathioudaki 2010, 622 and n. 3; Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 8 and n. 1.

²⁸ Among other evidence, these authors cite the NAA work done by Hans Mommsen on eight samples of this class from the Lerna shaft graves. These represent four different chemical composition patterns, two of which can be convincingly identified as products of Tanagran and Theban workshops, while the other two may derive on the one hand from eastern Boiotia or even Euboia and on the other, possibly from Orchomenos: Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 11 (reproduced here as Fig. 3).

²⁹ Mathioudaki 2011a.

³⁰ For example, Tsoungiza, Korakou, Ayia Irini, Kiapha Thiti, Lefkandi, Asine, and Lerna. For full distributions of Boiotian Bichrome, see Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 8; Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. II, 177–180.

are narrow. Forms other than bridge-spouted, horizontal-handled kraters and narrow-necked jars featuring either two belly handles or two such handles plus two additional shoulder handles are exceedingly unusual.³¹ Patterns are almost exclusively abstract and consist largely of horizontal wavy bands, opposed or intersecting diagonal band groups, and combinations of upright and pendent concentric semicircle groups, plus a few pendent triangles and band-framed vertical zig-zags.³² All chemically analysed samples of this class exhibit a single compositional pattern that is consistent with an Aiginetan origin. Although no kilns for the production of this class have yet been positively identified, there is universal agreement among specialists that this class was produced in the immediate vicinity of the site of Kolonna, if not necessarily within that settlement's fortifications.

By contrast, Boiotian Bichrome pots are usually wheel-finished (and perhaps even wheel-thrown, if small), and routinely have highly burnished and lustrous surfaces. The shape range of Boiotian Bichrome is extensive: Søren Dietz lists no fewer than eleven different shapes imported for deposition in graves in the Argolid, and Mathioudaki has identified eleven different shape categories encompassing sixteen distinct shapes.³³ Although by far the most common of these are narrow-necked jars, jugs, and kraters,³⁴ there are also substantial numbers of cups of three different types (semiglobular, Vapheio, and panel)³⁵ in addition to some flat-based as well as pedestal-footed goblets,³⁶ high-handled kantharoi,³⁷ ring-handled shallow bowls on low pedestal feet,³⁸ and deep bowls.³⁹ In other words, Boiotian Bichrome encompasses a complete tableware assemblage rather than the much narrower subset of shapes characterising Aiginetan Bichrome.⁴⁰ Boiotian Bichrome's repertoire of patterns is also far larger, consisting of some twenty different motifs,⁴¹ of which at least two are recognisably floral (palm, ivy), two more are faunal (bird, griffin), and one consists of manmade artefacts (ship⁴²). Aside from all the other differences between the two classes under review, there is also one very basic contextual difference: Boiotian Bichrome vessels were considered appropriate as grave goods and are often found in tombs, especially in the Argolid,⁴³ whereas Aiginetan Bichrome is almost never found in tombs, although all other major classes of Aiginetan pottery appear at least occasionally in early Mycenaean tomb assemblages, even cooking pottery.⁴⁴ Finally, the variable chemical compositions of a number of

³¹ Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 5, cite two different cup types (panel and carinated), a beaked jug, a deep bowl, and a handleless bridge-spouted jar, each attested by very few examples. To these Pruckner (2011, 246–248, figs. 27–33), would add a ring-handled shallow carinated bowl, and perhaps differentiate between two different kinds of feet on the panel cups.

³² Lindblom 2007, figs. 14–17; Pruckner 2011, 246–247, figs. 2–4, 24–34. The pattern ranges of Aiginetan Monochrome and Bichrome Matt-Painted seem to be very similar, if not altogether identical (see, e.g. Pruckner 2011, 247 n. 57; above n. 23).

³³ Dietz 1991, 217–223, fig. 69 (three cup types, two jug types, a juglet, an askos, and four types of narrow-necked jars); Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 56–85, 159–160, pls. 2 α – β (eight open shapes, six closed, pithoi, and lids).

³⁴ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 56, diagram 10.

³⁵ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 69–74.

³⁶ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. II, 185 OPX7, 186 OPX23.

³⁷ Goldman 1931, 169, 172, fig. 239 (Eutresis); Schofield 2011, 70, no. 801, pl. 51 (Ayia Irini).

³⁸ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. II, 183 EYTP31.

³⁹ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. II, 182 EYTP23.

⁴⁰ Mathioudaki 2010, 625; Mathioudaki 2015, 49.

⁴¹ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 23–55, 157–158, pls. 1 α – β .

⁴² Immerwahr 1987, 86–87, fig. 1a–b; Maran 1992a, 221 and n. 246; Adrymi-Sismani 2010, 307, fig. 11.

⁴³ Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 192–194; Mathioudaki 2011b; see also Dietz 1991, 217–223, fig. 69.

⁴⁴ Dietz 1991, 224–227. The Aiginetan classes in question included colour-coated and burnished (goblets), monochrome matt-painted (hydrias and narrow-necked jars), and plain coarse kitchenware (wide-mouthed jugs). As Michael Lindblom has argued (2007), the large quantities of fragmentary Aiginetan Bichrome vessels recovered from the fill of the Lerna shaft graves do not represent grave goods, but rather part of an enormous corpus of ceramic debris from one or more episodes of large-scale feasting behaviour. For two examples of Aiginetan Bichrome vessels from Mycenae, one from Circle B, Tomb A, and one probably from a tomb in or near to Circle A, see n. 23 above.

Boiotian Bichrome samples subjected to NAA have demonstrated that this class of pottery was probably produced at a substantial number of different locations within Boiotia (and perhaps beyond, but still within central Greece), in marked contrast to the highly nucleated production zone of Aiginetan Bichrome.⁴⁵

Additional Polychrome Ceramic Classes from Early Mycenaean Contexts

The astonishing and rather suddenly achieved popularity of both the Aiginetan and Boiotian Bichrome classes of pottery might lead one to conclude that these were the only two classes of such eye-catching tableware to have been produced on the mainland in LH I as well as LH IIA times, but this was clearly *not* the case. Several other varieties of early Mycenaean Bichrome or even Polychrome-Painted pottery exist (Tab. 1). Reasonably common at sites in the Corinthia such as Korakou and Tsoungiza but also occurring in graves at Eleusis, Argos, and Mycenae as well as in the fill of the shaft graves at Lerna and in settlement debris at numerous other Argive and Corinthian sites as well as further afield on the islands of Aigina and possibly Keos (Fig. 4) are small open and closed pots coated on the exterior with red or black iron-based paint that has been burnished to moderate lustre and then overpainted in matt white with neatly executed running spiral patterns (either tangent-linked or retorted), panelled patterns, concentric semicircle groups, or fringed concentric circle groups ('rosettes').⁴⁶ Various terms 'White on Burnished Dark Ware' or 'Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished', vessels in this class often have subsidiary banding on the interior rim in a matt, dark brown, manganese-based paint, thus creating a trichrome scheme of decoration (Fig. 5). As long ago theorised by Carl Blegen when he first recovered examples of this class at Korakou, its source of inspiration was presumably MM III or earlier Cretan pottery. The Minoan connection is perhaps clearest from the particular emphasis in this class on a lustrous dark-painted ground for its patterned ornament in matt white as well as on spiraliform and other curvilinear motifs. But the pots in this class were exclusively handmade, in contrast to the largely wheelmade manufacture of such small decorated vessels on Crete at this time, and the solidly coated exterior surfaces were always carefully burnished in contrast to the treatment of most MM III pottery. Perhaps a closer source of inspiration for this light-on-dark bichrome or trichrome mainland class were the smaller shapes of the Lustrous Decorated class being produced somewhere in southern Lakonia or on Kythera throughout the Middle Bronze Age. What is perhaps most remarkable about the Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class is how closely its shape repertoire corresponds to that of the earliest lustrous decorated dark-on-light pottery that we recognise as Mycenaean, the pottery of Arne Furumark's Myc. I style.⁴⁷ On the

⁴⁵ See n. 28 above and Fig. 3.

⁴⁶ Blegen 1921, 32–33, figs. 47.1–17, 48.1; pls. 2.2, 4, 6, 8; 3.8 (= fig. 47.16); Blegen 1928, 134, fig. 127.11; Kourouniotis 1932, 88, fig. 65; Frödin – Persson 1938, 278, fig. 192, bottom middle and right; Gercke – Hiesel 1971, 8, pl. 10.6, middle; French 1972, 36, q; Mylonas 1972/1973, 25–27, nos. A-6, A-8, pls. 13δ, 15β–γ, 225; Döhl 1975, 139–140, nos. 20–23, pl. 73.4; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, 51–52, 60, 79, pls. Γ31.5–6, Γ36.3–6, Γ52.5; Cummer – Schofield 1984, 85, pl. 64f–g; Dietz 1991, 212–213, fig. 66 (except for shape FC-1, the single examples of which from Circle A, Grave V at Mycenae and the tumulus at Samikon lack an overall dark slip on the exterior: Karo 1930/1933, 149, no. 858, pl. 172); Yalouris 1966, 29, no. 86, pl. 20α; Lolos 1987, 217, 370, fig. 492; Dietz 1991, 213 and n. 478; Alden 2000, 388, no. 9; 546, no. 52.26; 680, no. 6; 694, no. 53.798; Wohlmayr 2000, 135, no. 18, figs. 6.18, 73; Kramer 2004, 174–177; Lindblom 2007, fig. 6.9–14; Walberg 2007, 212, nos. 1181–1189, fig. 109, pl. 17; Schofield 2011, 62, no. 631, pl. 48; Cosmopoulos 2014, 99, no. 713, fig. 30, pl. 54; Rutter 2015, 219, nos. D145–149, fig. 5; Piteros 2015, 248, fig. 8. A previously unpublished ring-handled juglet or cup fragment is illustrated here (Fig. 5a–b) to show the three distinct colours of paint occurring on some Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished vessels. An unpublished juglet from Berbati (Grave 20, no. 6) exemplifies the class at this site (Fig. 4). The shape range of the Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class includes at least four types of cups (semiglobular, carinated, straight-sided, and ring-handled), a squat jug, a beaked jug, and a small horizontal-handled jar or alabastron. Note the absence of large shapes, whether open or closed.

⁴⁷ Furumark 1972 [1940/1941], 472–477; Dickinson 1974; Mountjoy 1986, 9–16; Dickinson 2014.

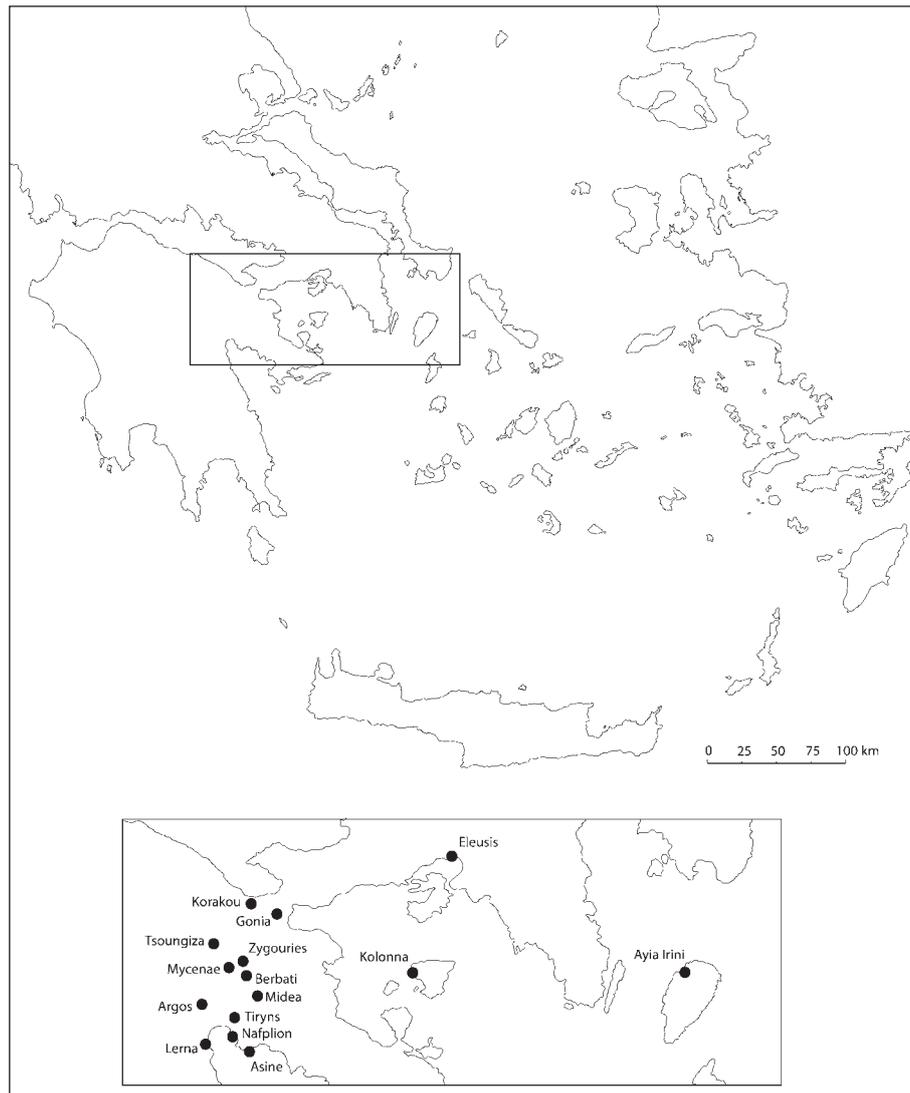


Fig. 4: Distribution map of Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished (map: M. Lindblom)



Fig. 5: Rim and handle fragment of trichrome Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished ring-handled juglet or cup from Excavation Unit Q6/17 at Kolonna on Aigina: a. Exterior; b. Interior (photos: W. Gauß)

basis of its distribution, the home of this class may have been the Corinthia. On present evidence it is more abundantly represented at Korakou than at any other single site, and its shape and decorative repertoire are likewise broader there than anywhere else. Production of this stylistically very homogeneous class appears to have ceased before the end of the LH I phase.

Two classes of bichrome-decorated fine ware from Ayios Stephanos provide a similar picture in most respects (Tab. 1). The earlier, termed ‘Fine White-Slipped Matt-Painted’, features a highly burnished, hence lustrous, ivory-white slip over a pink to light red fabric. Banding over this slip may be red or dark reddish brown to dark brown, or a combination of both, with very simple patterns such as dots or a horizontal wavy line or two in added white sometimes applied over the dark brown banding. Shapes are invariably small, but may be either open forms (such as round-bodied kantharoi, ring-handled and perhaps other cup types, and goblets) or closed ones (such as juglets or small narrow-necked jars).⁴⁸ Though it may not have been made before early LH I, already by LH IIA it may have ceased being produced. White-slipped analogues in Matt-Painted fabrics exist at a number of other sites as far away as central Greece,⁴⁹ but no examples of this particular southern Lakonian monochrome, bichrome, and trichrome class have thus far been securely identified to our knowledge anywhere except at Ayios Stephanos.⁵⁰ Yet a few samples of the class analysed by way of Optical Emission Spectroscopy long ago suggested that this class may not have been locally produced.⁵¹

During the LH IIA phase, the preceding white-slipped class appears to have been supplanted at Ayios Stephanos by a quite different series of small round-bodied cups or goblets featuring dense red and dark brown banding along with a very few simple patterns such as horizontal zigzag and wavy lines as well as upright and pendent concentric semicircle groups.⁵² Unlike the white-slipped predecessor that may have been wheel-finished,⁵³ the later Bichrome class of small cups or goblets may have been entirely handmade.⁵⁴ Like its predecessor, it has been recognised only at Ayios Stephanos. Since Aiginetan kraters first appear at this site only in LH IIA, and since horizontal wavy bands and concentric semicircle groups are both common patterns on Aiginetan Bichrome kraters, it is possible that the *decorative* repertoire of this later of two bichrome classes at Ayios Stephanos, although certainly *not* its shapes, were inspired by imported Aiginetan models. Like its predecessor, however, this local southern Lakonian class enjoyed only a short life-time: there is no evidence for its continued production after LH IIA.

Fragments from large closed (narrow-necked jars and jugs or amphoras) and also open (basins or kraters) shapes bearing both linear and occasional patterned decoration in matt white painted over broad dark bands on interior and exterior rims as well as exterior shoulders are known from

⁴⁸ Rutter – Rutter 1976, 10; 39, nos. 297–308; 51, nos. 726–729; 61, nos. 989–991, ills. 11, 16, 19, figs. 10, 26, 33; Jones 1986, 424; Zerner 2008, 253, no. 1606, fig. 5.27.

⁴⁹ Rutter – Rutter 1976, 10 n. 12. Similar in its external appearance, though seemingly produced in a coarser fabric and in different shapes, is the so-called ‘Pink and White Fabric’ or ‘Strawberries and Cream’ of late MH Lerna (Zerner 1978, 68; Zerner 1993, 48, 55 n. 51; Kramer 2004, 177–178).

⁵⁰ A medium-sized four-handled narrow-necked jar from Grave V in Circle A at Mycenae (Karo 1930/1933, 149, no. 858, pl. 172; Dietz 1991, 212–213, Shape FC-1, fig. 66) and a closely comparable jar from the tumulus at Samikon (Yalouris 1966, 29 no. 86, pl. 20a; Lolos 1987, 217, 370, fig. 492) resemble in their shape and overall decor a smaller trichrome jar from Ayios Stephanos (Zerner 2008, 196–197, 253, no. 1606, fig. 5.27) but lack the white slip that is probably a feature of the Lakonian piece. Nevertheless, the Circle A and Samikon jars are closer in their decorative schema to the Fine White-slipped Matt-painted class from Ayios Stephanos than to any other known group of Bichrome Matt-Painted vessels so far identified in the Peloponnese. A single white-slipped body sherd found at Malthi from a wheelmade open shape decorated with spaced red and chocolate-brown bands may possibly be an example of the Fine White-Slipped Matt-Painted class imported to nearby Messenia: Valmin 1938, 302–303, pl. 4.21.

⁵¹ Jones 1986, 424; Whitbread – Jones 2008, CD-89, CD-115.

⁵² Rutter – Rutter 1976, 9; 51, nos. 714, 718, 720; 61, nos. 985–988, ills. 16, 19, figs. 26, 33; Zerner 2008, 196; 243, no. 1428; 252–253, nos. 1594–1604; 288, nos. 2246–2247, figs. 5.22, 5.27, 5.52.

⁵³ Rutter – Rutter 1976, 10.

⁵⁴ Zerner 2008, 196.

Bichrome or Trichrome Class	Production Site or Region (number)	Date Range	Distribution [Chief areas in BOLD]	Shape Range [rare examples within brackets]	Pattern/Motif Range [rare examples within brackets]	Pot-marks	Contexts
AIGINETAN BICHROME	Kolonna (1?)	LH I–II(B?)	c. 20 sites [Argolid ; Corinthia ; Attica ; Euboa ; Lokris; Lakonia; Keos ; Thera]	narrow-necked jars (2- or 4-handled); krater [panel cup; carinated cup; jug with cutaway neck; handleless spouted jar; deep bowl; ring-handled bowl]	horizontal or vertical wavy bands; opposed or intersecting diagonals; concentric semicircle groups, vertical or horizontal; panels [pendent triangles; running spirals; ivy leaves; foliate band]	Yes – many	Settlement debris (fill of Lerna shaft graves = feasting debris); only rarely in tombs (Mycenae, Circle B)
BOIOTIAN BICHROME	Boiotia and perhaps Euboa (at least 4 and possibly many more)	LH I–II(A?)	c. 50–60 sites [Boiotia ; Euboa ; Lokris ; Corinthia ; Attica ; Argolid ; Lakonia; Kythera; Messenia; Elis; Thessaly ; Keos ; Melos; Paros; Thera]	16 shape categories (6 closed, 8 open, pithoi, lids). A complete tableware assemblage ... but most common are narrow-necked jars, jugs, kraters, and cups	c. 20 different patterns (including pictorial motifs: plants; birds; griffin; ships; only birds are common)	No	Settlement debris; tombs
LIGHT ON DARK-SLIPPED AND BURNISHED	Corinthia (?)	LH I	c. 20 sites [Argolid ; Corinthia ; W. Attica; Phokis; Messenia; Keos; Melos]	carinated, straight-sided, semiglobular, and ring-handled cups; rim-handled juglet; squat jug; alabastron [goblet (?)]	running spirals (tangent-linked and retorted); panelled patterns; concentric semicircle groups; fringed concentric circles	No	Settlement debris; tombs
LAKONIAN WHITE-SLIPPED MATT-PAINTED	southern Lakonia (?)	LH I(–IIA?)	Ayios Stephanos only (as so far known ...)	kantharos; ring-handled cup; squat jug or small jar; goblet or semiglobular cup (?); jug (?)	light-on-dark horizontal wavy line(s); banding only in dark-on-light bichrome	No	Settlement debris only
LAKONIAN BICHROME	southern Lakonia (Ayios Stephanos?)	LH IIA	Ayios Stephanos only (as so far known ...)	semiglobular cup or small goblet	horizontal zigzag or wavy line; upright and pendent concentric semicircles	No	Settlement debris only
MESSENIAN LIGHT ON DULL-PAINTED	Messenia (?)	LH I–IIA (?)	Malthi; Nichoria; Ayios Stephanos (?)	large closed (narrow-necked jars, jugs/amphoras) and open (basins/kraters) shapes	light-on-dark horizontal wavy line(s); quirk; pendent concentric semicircles; groups of vertical bars (on interior rim)	No	Settlement debris only

Tab. 1: Bichrome and Trichrome Classes of Pottery produced on the LH I–II Greek mainland (including Aigina)

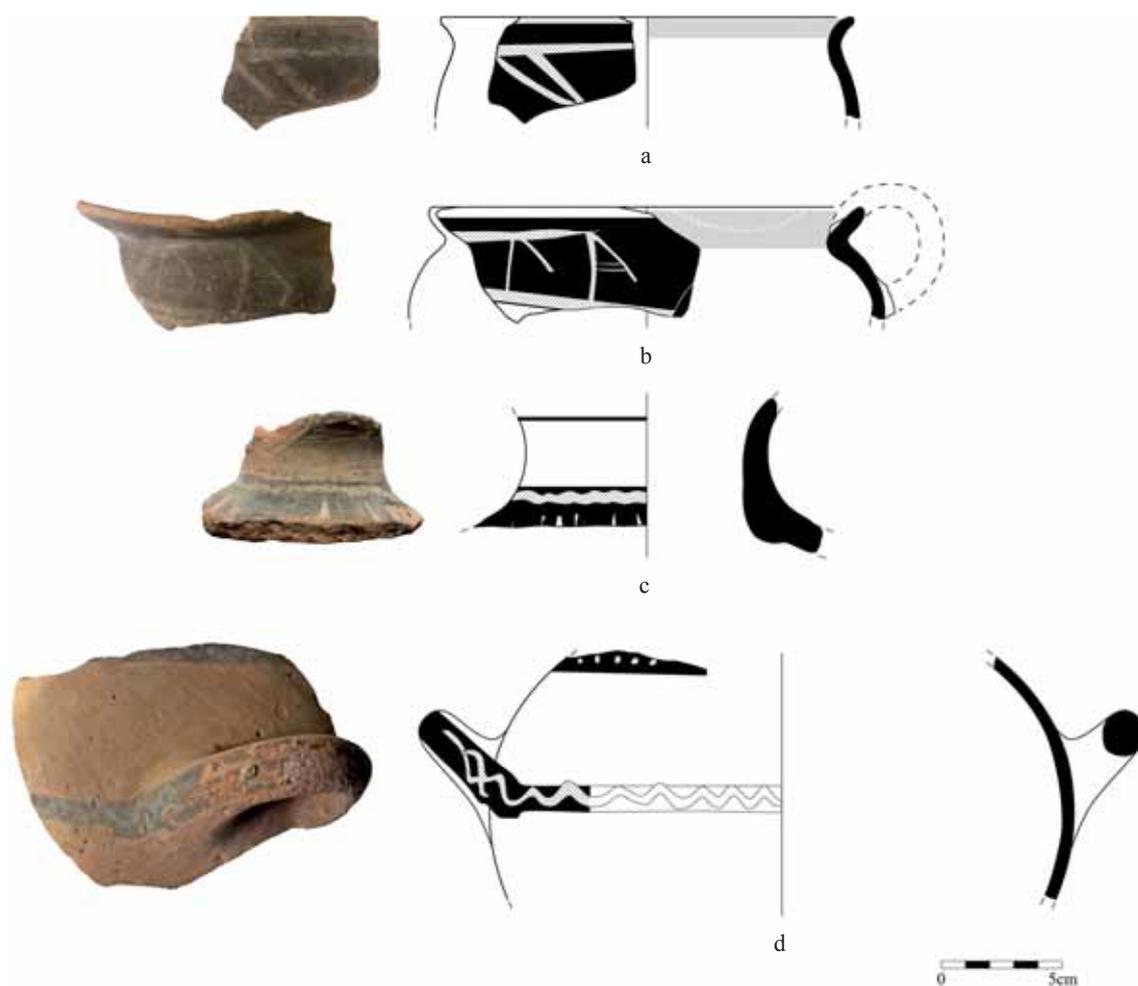


Fig. 6: Fragments of bichrome Light on Dull-Painted rounded cups (a–b), and narrow-necked jars (c–d) from Malthi in Messenia. Three fragments were originally illustrated by Natan Valmin (1938, pl. 23:D1 [c], D7 [b], and D10 [d]) and three were recovered in his Rooms A14 (d), A17 (a), and A18 (c) on the central terrace of the settlement (drawings: T. Ross, photos: M. Lindblom)

early LH contexts at both Malthi and Nichoria in Messenia.⁵⁵ The dark paint on these vessels appears to be dull rather than genuinely matt, and is thus presumably iron-based. The patterns in matt white are simple, consisting of a horizontal wavy line or two, horizontal quirk, and pendent concentric semicircle groups, in addition to spaced groups of vertical bars at the interior rim. Distinctive features of this particular light-on-dark decorated class, aside from its dull rather than matt dark paint and its restricted range of large shapes, is the application of the dark paint in broad bands rather than as a solid coating. We suggest terming this class Light on Dull-Painted. On the basis of its limited distribution, we are inclined to identify it as a regional product of Messenia.⁵⁶

Aside from the Aiginetan, Boiotian, Lakonian, and potentially Corinthian and Messenian classes of bichrome or trichrome pottery just surveyed, there also exist examples of other classes of such elaborately decorated pottery from a variety of MH III through LH I contexts in Lako-

⁵⁵ Valmin 1938, 303–304, pl. 23D1–D3, D6, D9–D11; Dickinson 1992, 477, 524, nos. P3131–P3132, fig. 9.3, pl. 9.8. A small squat jug from the tumulus at Samikon bears banding in brownish gray and white at the rim, base of the neck, and base, in addition to a dark-painted pattern on the shoulder and may be an additional example of this class from nearby Triphylia: Yalouris 1966, 13–14, no. 10, pl. 9a.

⁵⁶ A narrow-necked jar rim from an early Mycenaean context at Ayios Stephanos may be an example of this class imported to Lakonia: Zerner 2008, 258, no. 1696, fig. 5.31.

nia, the Argolid, and the Corinthia.⁵⁷ Most of these feature burnished surfaces and are likely to be local or at least regional products, but none represent workshops or industries that made particularly noteworthy contributions, either quantitatively or qualitatively, to the constellation of classes we have already examined. The overall picture of small-scale local production of occasional bichrome-decorated pots in the Peloponnese is echoed by the finds of small numbers of bichrome-decorated sherds at coastal central Greek or Thessalian sites such as Mitrou and Pefkalkia that cannot be attributed to the large-scale producers of Aiginetan and Boiotian Bichrome or the medium-scale output of Magnesian Bichrome or Corinthian Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished. Most of these local products should probably be identified as imitations of better-known imported classes, including imports from the Cyclades.

Discussion

The preceding review of the major as well as some minor classes of bichrome pattern-decorated pottery produced on the Greek mainland and the nearby offshore island of Aigina in the MH and early LH periods indicates that the production of such ceramics varied considerably through time and space. During the roughly four to five centuries surveyed, only rarely was such polychrome pottery produced in large quantities or in a single style that was widely distributed outside of its single site or wider region of production. Moreover, in virtually all cases, pots decorated with two or more colours of paint represent comparatively simple elaborations of morphologically and decoratively similar classes of pottery that bear painted ornament in just a single colour, what we call Monochrome Matt-Painted.⁵⁸ Indeed, only Maran's Magnesian Polychrome along with the class we have here called Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished *cannot* be viewed as mere variants of more simply decorated products of a single site or region.⁵⁹

We have been at pains to point out how these bichrome or polychrome classes differ from each other in terms of their modes of manufacture (whether handmade or wheel-finished, either with or without burnished surfaces), their shape ranges, and their pattern repertoires (Tab. 1). But of course these are also the same characteristics that differentiate their more simply decorated monochrome variants. The addition of one or two additional paint colours certainly makes the polychrome classes more visually distinctive, but do these colours really make the polychrome classes all that much more striking than their more plainly decorated analogues? After all, we can easily enough distinguish between Aiginetan and Boiotian Matt-Painted products without needing to rely on the colour of an added iron-based paint. And surely if the makers of these polychrome classes were seeking to differentiate their product lines more sharply but were reluctant to do so by way of their shapes, they could have done more to vary their patterns? It strikes us as *very odd* that the creation of altogether novel motifs, or even the adoption from other regions of already existing and truly distinctive motifs, is as limited in MH pottery as it is. The potters of Thera at the very beginning of the Late Bronze Age, for example, show how quickly an astonishing range

⁵⁷ E.g. Rutter – Rutter 1976, 61, nos. 981–984, ill. 19; Davis 1979, 243, nos. 70–71, fig. 6, pl. 74a; Dietz 1991, 78–80, nos. 189–191, 193–195, fig. 22; Philippa-Touchais 2002, 12–14, no. 35, figs. 7–8; Zerner 2008, 258, no. 1695; 279, no. 2059; 288, no. 2267, figs. 5.31, 5.46, 5.53; Rutter 2015, 219, nos. D42–44, D209, fig. 5; Lindblom et al., forthcoming, fig. 9.

⁵⁸ Mathioudaki 2015.

⁵⁹ Note, however, that the Magnesian Polychrome class does qualify as a bichrome-decorated variant of an altogether plain (i.e. unpainted) local or regional product: Maran 2007, 172. It may be worth noting at this point that the term 'Bichrome Matt-Painted' is a probable misnomer in that only one of the two colours in question is actually manganese-based and hence genuinely 'matt' in its appearance. The pigments that fire red or reddish-brown are presumably iron-based and thus might be better identified as *dull* rather than *matt* paints. The dark paint used for our Light on Dull-Painted class ranges from black to dark grey at Malthi, but can also be red or brown at Nichoria (see n. 55 above).

of new naturalistic motifs could become part of the decorative repertoire of a ceramic industry.⁶⁰ But on the Greek mainland, only a few Aiginetan and Boiotian Bichrome artisans made use of such motifs, in the process limiting themselves to floral, faunal, and artefactual patterns that had already been exploited for some time by southern Cycladic artists on Thera and Melos. Even in their choices of abstract motifs, the Bichrome pot-painters of Aigina, Thessaly, and Lakonia were oddly reluctant to spice things up a bit. There must have been a virtual taboo in Helladic culture on creative artisanal expression that only the craftsmen imported into the service of Mycenae's shaft-grave elite at the end of the MH period were ultimately able to break up with their amazingly innovative forays into metallurgy, various inlaying techniques, the small-scale carving of stone and ivory, and the combination of multiple materials.

The differential use and shape preferences of the various classes of bichrome pottery, however, offer clear insights into what was important to the consumers of these exceptionally decorated containers. The frequency of large narrow-necked jars with a fairly narrow range of different handle arrangements and of large horizontal-handled kraters, most of them furnished with bridged spouts, in both Aiginetan and Boiotian Bichrome argue for the desire to transport and mix large quantities of liquids – presumably wine and water – as part of highly visible ceremonies of display. The enormously large storage vessels we call pithoi were not ostentatiously decorated in the same way as the narrow-necked jars were – they, after all, did not have to move. Vladimir Milošević's excavation of House 311B at Pefkakia, as Joseph Maran has shown, has provided us with the evidence of how bichrome-decorated jars and large jugs of his Magnesian Polychrome class would have been used to bring the contents of pithoi 'to the party'.⁶¹ The producers of Aiginetan Bichrome, either accepting the limitations of their local clays or perhaps more simply deciding to leave the choice of drinking vessels up to local consumers,⁶² opted not to market for off-island consumption a line of bichrome-decorated drinking cups, although they apparently crafted a fair number of bichrome panel cups for local Aiginetan consumers. Not so the producers of Boiotian Bichrome, who provided large numbers of different drinking shapes with Helladic, Cycladic, and even Minoan ancestries along with plenty of jugs from which the cups could be filled. The smaller-scale producers of bichrome pottery at Ayios Stephanos and in the Corinthia did not produce the large pots – jars or kraters – in their local styles, but only rather narrow ranges of drinking cups and small closed shapes – juglets and alabastra – that probably served as either individual or two-person pouring vessels like our modern *karafakia* for ouzo and tsipouro. Perhaps these last were designed to hold small quantities of undiluted wine rather than the larger volumes of wine mixed with water in a krater?

The development of the deeper-bodied krater from the earlier and shallower basin at the MH III/LH I transition in the Aiginetan ceramic industry and its rapid popularisation as by far the most common open shape in the Bichrome Matt-Painted class, in addition to its frequency in contemporary colour-coated and burnished as well as monochrome matt-painted forms,⁶³ parallels a similar popularisation of a related but rather different krater shape in the Boiotian Bichrome class.⁶⁴ This phenomenon together with the contemporary spread of Minoanising and Cycladicising one-handled cup shapes (straight-sided or Vapheio, semiglobular, and panel) surely bear

⁶⁰ E.g. Papagiannopoulou 2008.

⁶¹ See above n. 20.

⁶² Unless, of course, these local consumers chose to drink out of Aiginetan colour-coated and burnished goblets, significantly more capacious drinking vessels (Pruckner 2011, 245–246 and n. 47, figs. 9–11) than the one-handled cups of various kinds that were common products of the Boiotian Bichrome and Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished industries.

⁶³ Davis 1979, 241, nos. 29–50; 243, no. 69, figs. 5–6, pl. 73c; Lindblom 2007, 123–125, figs. 11, 13–15; Pruckner 2011, 243–244, figs. 2–7.

⁶⁴ Davis 1979, 243, nos. 52–53, fig. 5, pl. 73d; Mathioudaki 2011a, Vol. I, 66–69. For the shape in plain ware at early LH I Tsoungiza, Rutter 2015, 215–217, nos. D304–D306, E-51, figs. 3–4.

witness to a fundamental change in mainland Greek drinking habits at the close of the MH era.⁶⁵ While mainlanders in the Argolid and east-central Greece made extensive use of the krater in either imported Aiginetan or locally produced Boiotian forms, some regions either largely did without kraters (at least until LH IIA) and developed bichrome drinking assemblages that continued to rely upon traditional Helladic forms like the kantharos and goblet (e.g. southern Lakonia) or alternatively adopted a bichrome drinking assemblage that incorporated the new Minoanising and Cycladicising cup types but substituted juglets and alabastra for the kraters, large jars, and large jugs of the Aiginetan and Boiotian industries (e.g. the Corinthia with its Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class).⁶⁶

Very similar in its shape assemblage to Corinthian Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished is the decoratively altogether different LH I Lustrous Decorated repertoire that we conventionally recognise as the earliest Mycenaean painted pottery.⁶⁷ The only large shapes in the latter are small numbers of Minoanising pithoid and bridge-spouted jars, respectively the functional equivalents of the large storage jars (pithoi and narrow-necked transport jars) and spouted pouring vessels (jugs as well as kraters) of Boiotian Bichrome. Contextualising the appearance of LH I Lustrous Decorated pottery in this way allows us to recognise it at its birth as essentially a Minoanising dark-on-light Argive variant of a light-on-dark bichrome or trichrome matt-painted assemblage that was also at home in the northeast Peloponnese, namely the class termed Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished here.

Excavations at the small site of Tsoungiza during the 1980s yielded a series of spatially discrete groups of late and terminal MH, LH I, and LH IIA pottery. Tsoungiza lies just a three-hour's walk north of the far wealthier and better-connected site of Mycenae, at which contemporary tombs in Grave Circles B and A were being furnished with extraordinarily lavish assemblages of grave goods including a good number of examples of the bichrome-decorated ceramic classes discussed above. The Tsoungiza evidence has shown that the major bichrome-decorated classes – Aiginetan, Boiotian, and Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished – as well as several examples of miscellaneous bichrome matt-painted vessels all made a sudden appearance at the site at the very beginning of LH I.⁶⁸ Contemporary and somewhat later corpora of LH I pottery from the East Alley at Korakou and Shaft Graves 1 and 2 at Lerna, in which similar ranges of bichrome-decorated pottery occur, unfortunately cannot provide confirmation as to how swiftly these polychrome classes were being distributed throughout the Argolid and the Corinthia, for the simple reason that substantial deposits of chronologically homogeneous MH III pottery from those sites have yet to be published. Dietz claimed that fragments of Aiginetan Bichrome and Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished vessels appear in deposits of his MH IIIB phase at Asine, but his grounds for dating these deposits earlier than the beginning of LH I are inadequate.⁶⁹ Thus the evidence published to date suggests that all of these bichrome-decorated classes made their initial appearance in the Peloponnese no earlier than the beginning of LH I, at the same time as the earliest dark-on-light pottery decorated with lustrous paint in the LH I style began to circulate. Determining *why* so many distinct categories of bichrome-decorated pottery should have come into being contemporaneously is a continuing problem. But it is a striking fact that they became popular at essentially the same time as the appearance of LH I Lustrous Decorated pottery and the

⁶⁵ This shift in drinking behaviour is well documented in a series of closely dated settlement deposits at Tsoungiza in the differences noted between Groups A–C of MH IIIA–B and Groups D and E of LH I: Rutter 2015.

⁶⁶ The two different strategies appear to overlap at Tsoungiza in the southern Corinthia where Corinthian Trichrome as well as both Aiginetan and Boiotian Bichrome vessels are found in the same settlement deposits. The same kind of overlapping can also be observed at Korakou (Davis 1979) and in the shaft grave fills at Lerna (Lindblom 2007), so perhaps such overlapping is characteristic of much of the northeast Peloponnese in a way that it is not in Boiotia, Lokris, and Thessaly to the north or in Lakonia and Messenia to the south.

⁶⁷ Blegen 1921, 32–35; Mountjoy 1986, 9–16; RMDP, 80–85; Lindblom et al. 2015, 232–234. Early piriform jars of FS 27 type presumably played a functional role closely comparable to alabastra of FS 80 type.

⁶⁸ Rutter 2015, 213–220, Group D and parts of Group E.

⁶⁹ Rutter 1993.

first examples of horizontal-handled kraters in a broad range of decorated as well as plain ceramic classes.⁷⁰ Another striking novelty of the LH I period is the initial appearance of vessels in precious metals – silver, gold, and electrum – in the shaft graves at Mycenae.⁷¹ It may well be that the explosion of polychromy in ceramics was conditioned to some degree by the combination of silver with gold, as well as with other materials in such colours as blue, white, and black in metal drinking vessels.⁷² The shape range of the earliest Mycenaean vessels in precious metals, both open and closed forms, is quite similar to that of the Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class, as well as to that of the LH I Lustrous Decorated class. The small sizes of the bichrome- and tri-chrome-decorated containers in the former would certainly make sense if they had been inspired by precious metal vessels, especially in the early years of the production of gold and silver vessels on the mainland when access to substantial quantities of the metals in question was limited.

Potentially of equal significance are the seeming disappearance of the Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished class before the LH IIA period begins and the failure of both the Aiginetan and the Boiotian Bichrome classes to survive into the LH IIB period. The floruit of most categories of bichrome-painted pottery during the early Mycenaean era was short-lived. Not only do we need to explain why it suddenly became such a fad, but we also need to account for its relatively rapid decline in popularity. This, too, may be connected with developments in metallurgy, in the sense that rivalry for status among early Mycenaean elites appears to have shifted rather abruptly in LH IIB and LH IIIA1 to non-portable forms of material culture (e.g. monumental building projects) other than the metalwork that had played so prominent a role in such competition during the LH I–IIA era.⁷³

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⁷⁰ See n. 68 above.

⁷¹ Davis 1977, 125–137 (Circle B, Graves N, Γ, I, A, Δ), 137–251 (Circle A, Graves I–VI); Wright 2004, 17–25, figs. 2–3, tabs. 4–5. For the dramatic change in societal concepts of value at this time, see Voutsaki 2012 (especially 179–182 with respect to objects) and also Voutsaki 2016 for a diachronic overview of the shift away from reciprocity that undoubtedly plays a role in the popularisation of polychrome-decorated tablewares in the LH I period.

⁷² E.g. Davis 1977, 204–219, nos. 82–83 (NM 351, NM 390), figs. 169–173; Rutter 2012, 80–82.

⁷³ Rutter 2012, 81.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Distribution map of Aiginetan Bichrome (map: M. Lindblom)

Fig. 2: Distribution map of Boiotian Bichrome (map: M. Lindblom)

Fig. 3: Result of a discriminant analysis of 249 samples, corrected for dilution and assuming seven clusters using all 29 elements measured except As, Ba, Na and Zr. Plotted are the discriminant functions W1 and W2, which cover 95.5% and 2.4% of the between-group variance. The ellipses drawn are the 2σ boundaries of the groups. Ten bichrome samples from the Lerna VI shaft graves are shown as filled symbols (the single Aiginetan bichrome sample was measured twice, hence two filled dots in the AegA ellipse). All are good members of their respective groups. The different chemical groups originating from Aigina (AegA), Boiotia (TheA, TheH, TheP), Euboea (EuA), the NE Peloponnese (Mycenae/Berhati: MYBE), and the unlocated but suspected Argive group Ul20 are well separated (data and caption courtesy of H. Mommsen)

Fig. 4: Distribution map of Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished (map: M. Lindblom)

Fig. 5: Rim and handle fragment of trichrome Light on Dark-Slipped and Burnished ring-handled juglet or cup from Excavation Unit Q6/17 at Kolonna on Aigina: a. Exterior; b. Interior (photos: W. Gauß)

Fig. 6: Fragments of bichrome Light on Dull-Painted rounded cups (a–b), and narrow-necked jars (c–d) from Malthi in Messenia. Three fragments were originally illustrated by Natan Valmin (1938, pl. 23:D1 [c], D7 [b], and D10 [d]) and three were recovered in his Rooms A14 (d), A17 (a), and A18 (c) on the central terrace of the settlement (drawings: T. Ross, photos: M. Lindblom)

Table

Tab. 1: Bichrome and Trichrome Classes of Pottery produced on the LH I–II Greek mainland (including Aigina). Principal sources in alphabetical order: Dickinson 1992; Dietz 1991; Kramer 2004; Lindblom 2001; Lindblom 2007; Lindblom et al., forthcoming; Maran 1992a; Maran 1992b; Maran 2007; Mathioudaki 2011b; Pruckner 2011; Rutter 2015; Rutter – Rutter 1976; Valmin 1938; Zerner 2008

The Construction of Metaphysical Space: The Adoption of Minoan Cult Symbols and the Development of Mycenaean Religious Iconography

Jörg Weihartner¹

Abstract: From the beginning of the Shaft Grave period, leading people on the mainland were in the position to acquire foreign luxuries and valuable raw materials in growing quantities. Some of these prestige goods clearly served as cult equipment in Minoan Crete; others display a complex system of religious figurative scenes and motifs of undoubtedly Minoan inspiration. Such scenes and motifs were virtually unknown in the preceding periods of MH Greece. Despite their foreign background, these objects had some impact on the formation of Mycenaean cult practices. It is argued that within this process of appropriation mainland inhabitants made a deliberate choice of the available ceremonial equipment and cult symbols. It seems that only those cult implements such as rhyta and tripod offering tables were borrowed from Crete, which could be incorporated in indigenous MH religious traditions. Significantly, such objects were produced until the end of the Palatial period. Correspondingly, Mycenaean were interested in only those representations of ritual actions and symbols which had a meaning in terms of their own religious conceptions. Along these lines, Minoan forms of artistic expression had a strong impact on the development of Mycenaean religious figurative art and symbolism.

Keywords: rhyta, tripod offering tables, double axe, fenestrated axe, processions, crocus, lily

Introduction

Among the many aspects of Minoan material culture and cultural traditions that were adopted and subsequently adapted by the people of the Mycenaean mainland is religious iconography in art.² While the significance of the indigenous MH religious tradition for some features of Mycenaean cult practice is now much better appreciated than thirty or forty years ago,³ the strong impact of Minoan forms of artistic expression on the establishment of Mycenaean religious figurative art is beyond doubt. According to the basically non-figurative character of Middle Helladic art in general,⁴ the inhabitants of Middle Bronze Age Greece did not express their religious conceptions in figurative terms. This virtual lack of a pronounced artistic tradition of pictorial representations on the mainland forms the basis not only for accepting a large number of religious motifs and symbols known from Minoan iconography but also for using them in the construction of a religiously based elite identity in the early Mycenaean period.⁵ Early Mycenaean elites can be characterised as rulers in search of religious symbols, which they could use to legitimate and consolidate their power by promoting connections with the divine sphere.⁶ Whether they observed

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² Vermeule 1975, 47–48.

³ See, in particular, Tranta-Nikoli 2010; Whittaker 2010; Whittaker 2014. Despite its provocative title (*Did the Middle Helladic people have any religion?*) Hägg 1997 brings together those archaeological remains that suggest religious activities of some kind in the MH population on the Greek mainland. For a much more negative attitude, see Dickinson 1977, 38: “Nor are there any signs of cult-centres which might have served a wide area; indeed, the evidence for religious activity is almost nil”. See also Platon 1981, 210.

⁴ However, on some possible traces for an indigenous tradition of figurative art on the Greek mainland in images of the Shaft Grave period, see Blakolmer 2010.

⁵ Heitz 2008, 21–31; Maran 2013, 159.

⁶ Heitz 2008, 1, 29–30; Whittaker 2011, 137, 144.

these symbols primarily on objects imported from Crete or on objects seen in Minoan palaces is under discussion. In any case, crafts(wo)men who came from abroad are likely to have played a crucial role in the development of Mycenaean religious iconography.⁷

Cretan Prestige Goods in Mainland Graves

In archaeological terms, the growing interaction between Crete and the Greek mainland becomes most clearly manifest in prestige goods⁸ that were deposited in shaft graves, built tholos tombs and rock-cut chamber tombs of high status persons during the 17th to the 15th centuries BC. Before that period, archaeological evidence for interrelations between Crete and the Greek mainland had mainly consisted in rather small amounts of Minoan pottery found at mainly coastal sites and, to a much lesser degree, Minoan stone vases.⁹ As James Wright has stated, the rich finds from graves of men and women of elevated status may be viewed as manifestations of the “transformation of traditional subsistence oriented agro-pastoralists communities to a more cosmopolitan and craft-oriented political economy”.¹⁰ In any case, due to wide-reaching changes in the structure of Hellenic society, members of the emerging Mycenaean elites were in the position to acquire valuable raw materials and foreign luxuries in growing quantities.¹¹

Such luxuries are best known through the material evidence of the Shaft Graves of Grave Circle A in Mycenae, which are characterised by prestige goods of great symbolic significance displaying the wealth and status of the deceased.¹² A number of items illustrate the borrowing of cult equipment and symbols, which clearly served a religious purpose in Minoan Crete. Most impressive are rhyta of various materials and large ‘sacral knots’ made of faience.¹³ Among the motifs, which formed part of the Minoan set of religious symbols, one may refer to cut-outs of thin gold foil in the shape of a tripartite shrine with birds and horns of consecration, a double axe between the horns of a bull’s head, and a running or recumbent griffin.¹⁴ Other motifs of eminent

⁷ In some instances the borrowing of motifs from Minoan imagery seems misunderstood. This clearly speaks in favour of an adoption of imported objects, see, e.g. Blakolmer 2010, 516. However, most objects of art that show Minoan inspiration point either to the presence of immigrant Minoan crafts(wo)men at major centres on the Greek mainland or even to some Mycenaeans who had access to the inner parts of a Minoan palace.

⁸ For a definition of prestige goods, see Haselgrove 1982, 81–82, who states that prestige goods are objects that “require rare materials, considerable technical skills or a high labour investment, or are only available from outside the local system, e.g. foreign trade goods”.

⁹ Rutter – Zerner 1984, 77–80. This paper refers also to the occasional presence of small objects of Minoan origin or type such as a zoomorphic stone figurine and three terracotta loom weights, all from MH Lerna. On a more recent evaluation of interactions between mainland Greece and different regions of Crete in the Middle Bronze Age, see Cadogan – Kopaka 2010, 848–853. Next to pottery they refer to shoe-socket spearheads, the sword of the Aigina ‘Shaft Grave’ and some isolated more ‘personal’ items. On the special relationship between Aigina and Crete during the MH period, see Gauß – Weilhartner 2020, 129–133; Weilhartner, in press. On the origin of seven bronze pendants in the shape of a double axe from two different graves at Antheia-Kastroulia in Messenia, see below n. 40.

¹⁰ Wright 2010, 815.

¹¹ Hägg 1982, 35, building on Dickinson 1977, 107–108, and Matthäus 1980a, 42.

¹² See, e.g. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986; Voutsaki 1999. For the particular role of objects made of gold in burial contexts see Whittaker 2006, 283, who states “it can be maintained that in a funerary context the social expression of status and wealth is of a necessity intermixed with eschatological and cosmological concepts”.

¹³ Rhyta: Karo 1930, 64, no. 166, pls. 148–149; 70, no. 221, pl. 170; 77–78, no. 273, pls. 107–108; 93, no. 384, pls. 119–121; 94, no. 388, pls. 115–116; 94, no. 389, pls. 138–139; 106–110, nos. 477, 481, 504, pl. 122; 114, no. 552.2, pl. 142; 114–116, nos. 552.1, 567, 573, pls. 141–142; 120, no. 608, pls. 132–133; 125, 139, 147, nos. 648, 774, 832, pl. 142; 125, 146, nos. 651, 828, pls. 141–142. See Whittaker 2014, 156, tab. 3; Petrakis 2016, 50–51, tab. 1. ‘Sacral Knots’: Karo 1930, 114–115, nos. 553–554, 557–564, 569–571, pls. 151–152.

¹⁴ See Karo 1930, 48, no. 26, pl. 27; 48, no. 29, pl. 27; 51, no. 47, pl. 26; 74–75, nos. 242–244, pl. 18; 91–92, nos. 353–354, pl. 44. See Whittaker 2014, 153, 155, tab. 2. At least most of those gold foil applications, first found in Grave Circle A on the mainland, had probably been sewn or glued to the deceased’s clothing, see Whittaker 2011, 143; Whittaker 2014, 154, with earlier literature.

symbolic value such as the lion, butterfly, or octopus appear as well.¹⁵ However, some of the central motifs and scenes of Minoan religious iconography are missing, either nearly or altogether: as I shall argue, this points to a deliberate selection by mainland groups rather than to a random accumulation of exotic luxury imports.

These objects of value visibly indicate that Minoan religious symbolism and imagery not only appealed to early Mycenaean elites, but were also used for the expression (as well as legitimation) of their elevated status. However, there is some discussion with regard to the precise perception of these symbols.¹⁶ Several scholars have argued that early Mycenaeans were interested in these symbols primarily as a means to express their authority, to enhance their standing or to reinforce their claims to political power without worrying much about their religious meanings.¹⁷ This may apply especially to those elements of Minoan religious expression, which on the Greek mainland are more or less confined to the Shaft Graves. For example, six large ‘sacral knots’ made of faience from Shaft Grave IV have no actual later parallels on the mainland,¹⁸ and whether this motif does appear on LH seals found on the mainland is under discussion: all of those representations that have been termed ‘sacral knot’ seem to represent a different item, better identified as a ‘sacral garment’.¹⁹ It seems that the ‘sacral knot’ was not incorporated into regular mainland cult practices. Their religious significance was apparently not compatible with religious conceptions on the mainland. The knots made of faience from Grave Circle A may indeed have functioned primarily as expressions of status and power by means of their foreign origin and exotic material.²⁰

Prestige Goods with Religious Significance: Minoan Animal-head-shaped Rhyta, Minoan Double Axes and Near-eastern Fenestrated Axes

However, the adoption of other prestige goods with symbolic significance had a more permanent effect. In my view, the special attraction of these objects lies in their capacity to enhance conscious efforts to promote a process of institutionalisation of existing cult practices. The offering in form of libations, i.e. the pouring out of a liquid as an offering to a divine recipient, forms a case in point. As there is some, albeit scanty, archaeological evidence that this cult practice was performed in MH Greece,²¹ it appears unlikely that this wide-spread custom, which is a well-known standard cult practice in many ancient civilisations,²² was introduced to the mainland at the beginning of the Shaft Grave period from Crete. Another piece of evidence, which speaks against a wholesale adoption of this practice from Crete, is of a linguistic nature: on linguistic

¹⁵ Karo 1930, 43, no. 2, pl. 28; 44, no. 4, pl. 28; 46, no. 18, pl. 28; 48–49, nos. 30–31, pl. 27; 49, no. 32, pl. 27; 50, nos. 39–40, pl. 26; 51, no. 49, pl. 27; 51, no. 51, pl. 26; 62, no. 138; 94, nos. 386–387, pl. 24. See Whittaker 2014, 153, 155, tab. 2.

¹⁶ See recently, Kalogeropoulos 2015 with further bibliography.

¹⁷ E.g. Hägg 1984, 121; Hägg 1985, 213; Whittaker 2014, 154–156.

¹⁸ Karo 1930, 114–115, nos. 553–554, 557–564, 569–571, pls. 151–152; Foster 1979, 140, pls. 45–46.

¹⁹ For seals found on the mainland with this motif, see Foster 1979, 140–141; Boloti 2016, 506–508. For the differentiation between the terms ‘sacral knot’ and ‘sacral garment/dress/skirt’, see Warren 2000, 460 n. 21; Crowley 2012, 231–232. Instead of employing the traditional terms Janice Crowley speaks of ‘scarf knot’ and ‘cloak knot’. All examples on seals from the mainland represent the heavier fabric with no discernible loop, i.e. they are to be identified as ‘sacral garment’ or ‘cloak knot’ respectively. According to Crowley 2012, 235–236, the ‘scarf knot’ belongs to the female sphere, whereas the ‘cloak knot’ regularly features as a symbol of the male warrior/hunter. Is it for that reason that the depiction of ‘cloak knots’ enjoyed much more popularity on the mainland?

²⁰ See Voutsaki 1999, 114.

²¹ Whittaker 2014, 82–89, 156–157. See already Hägg 1990, 184; Hägg 1997, 17–18. Because no rhyta are known from MH contexts Hägg 1985, 210, 221–222 n. 34, tentatively argued for an introduction of the custom of libation from Crete at an early stage in the Mycenaean period. See also Tranta-Nikoli 2010, 547, who only refers to Hägg’s 1985 paper.

²² Hägg 1990, 177; Davis 2008, 47–55.

grounds, the ritual practice of libation clearly forms part of the Indo-European religious heritage of the Greeks.²³

On present evidence, no specific cult equipment for libations existed in MH Greece. Rather, libations seem to have been performed with domestic pouring or drinking vessels, whose shape does not indicate their function in cult practice.²⁴ In the Shaft Grave period elites from the mainland borrowed a specialised vessel shape in order to enhance the symbolic display of performing a libation: all types of rhyta that have been found on the mainland – besides the rich assemblages from Grave Circle A, examples of LH I date are reported from a few sites only – appear earlier in Crete.²⁵ In particular, the animal-head-shaped rhyta are viewed as a typical feature of Minoan ritual practice.²⁶ Since these vessels are usually made of stone or clay in Crete, it has been suggested that the Shaft Grave rhyta are mainland versions in metal.²⁷ If true, these objects were made on the mainland. Conversely, rhyta in limestone or made of ostrich eggshell (with attachments in faience or some other material) are generally viewed as direct imports from Crete.²⁸ No matter whether these rhyta found on the mainland are of Cretan manufacture or inspiration, the idea of performing a libation by means of specialised cult equipment was clearly borrowed from Crete. A custom that had existed on the mainland in a not yet formalised way underwent some modification in terms of symbolic display.²⁹ Minoan influence resulted in the institutionalisation of what had previously been performed in a more informal way. As terracotta animal-head-shaped rhyta dating to LH IIIA from Ayios Konstantinos, Methana, and Ayios Vasileios, Lakonia, as well as fragments of two or three animal-head-shaped rhyta made of stone dating to LH IIIB from Mycenae, Argolid, demonstrate,³⁰ this borrowing was of long-lasting effect. In fact, a pictorial style conical rhyton, fragments of two Mycenaean fish rhyta, and three fragments of a large, hollow, wheelmade, ithyphallic terracotta figure found in the Tirynthian Epichosis provide

²³ Casabona 1966, 231–298; Benveniste 1969, 209–221.

²⁴ Hägg 1997, 18.

²⁵ Hägg 1985, 209–212, fig. 3, building on Koehl 1981, 179–180, fig. 1; Hägg 1990, 182–183, fig. 8. Although some of the Shaft Grave rhyta, such as the golden lion's head rhyton or the silver rhyton in the shape of a figure-of-eight shield, are without exact parallels, the general idea of shaping such vessels is clearly Minoan in origin. The single exception is a silver drinking vessel of Anatolian type in the form of a stag (which has been converted – without success – into a rhyton by means of a secondary circular hole on the stag's snout) from Shaft Grave IV of Circle A, which is commonly considered as an import from Anatolia, see Koehl 2006, 14; Petrakis 2016, 53–55, fig. 1r. On the popularity of rhyta in Grave Circle A, where the earliest examples of these vessels are found on the Greek mainland, see recently Petrakis 2016. Petrakis 2016, 50–51, tab. 1, provides the basic information on all rhyta found on the Greek mainland. For a list of (probable) LH I rhyta outside Grave Circle A, see Petrakis 2016, 48–49. Two fragmentary stone rhyta with relief decoration (Koehl 2006, 185, nos. 818–819) and a possible bronze animal-headed rhyton (Lambrinudakis 1981, 62–63, fig. 9; Steinhart 2002, 9, fig. 1; 16–20), to which Vasileios Petrakis does not refer, come from the sanctuary site on Mount Kynortion near Epidauros. In terms of style, technique of relief carving, and material of manufacture, all three examples are almost certainly of LH I/IIA date. On the arguments for the LH I date of the two fragments of stone rhyta, see Morgan 1988, 151, pls. 193–194.

²⁶ Koehl 2006, 32–43; Kalogeropoulos 2015, 174–175. On the various domestic and ritual uses of rhyta, see Koehl 2006, 277–342.

²⁷ Dickinson 1977, 81–82; Dickinson 1984, 116. However, there is no general agreement whether the rhyta made of silver and/or gold are of Helladic or Cretan manufacture, see Koehl 2006, 34, 115, no. 294; 36, 121–122, no. 328; 38, 125, no. 343; 48–49, 138–140, no. 425. On the problem of the exact provenance of these vessels, see Petrakis 2016, 56–57.

²⁸ Dickinson 1977, 81–82; Sakellarakis 1990, 286, 306. Whether the ostrich-eggshell rhyton with a silver neck piece from the tholos tomb of Dendra is a LH IIIA1 vessel of mainland origin or a LM I Minoan heirloom is a matter of discussion, see Sakellarakis 1990, 306; Koehl 2006, 27, 100, no. 186.

²⁹ See Whittaker 2014, 156–157.

³⁰ Ayios Konstantinos: Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2001, 214–215, pl. 68b–d; Ayios Vasileios: Petrakis 2012, 30–31, fig. 19; Mycenae: Koehl 2006, 32–33, 120–121, nos. 323–325. For more examples of different types of rhyta of LH III date, see the catalogue in Koehl 2006, 71–238. On the LH IIIA2/IIIB fox-head rhyton allegedly from Tiryns, see Doumas 1968, 384–386, fig. 19. – I thank Elina Kardamaki for discussing the exact date of the animal-headed rhyton from Ayios Vasileios with me (LH IIIA2).

evidence for libation practices performed with specialised cult equipment at the very end of the Late Palatial period.³¹

Along with rhyta, tripod offering tables were also introduced from Crete.³² Two probable LH I examples were found at Mycenae.³³ Other early examples are reported from Tiryns, Prosymna and Routsis.³⁴ Like the rhyta, these cult implements remained a common feature for centuries: a fragmentary offering table, which was found close to the hearth in the throne room in the palace of Pylos, and another one from Room 18 of the so-called Temple Complex in the Cult Centre of Mycenae provide evidence from the Final Palatial period.³⁵ As rhyta and tripod offering tables at times occur together in sets, one function of these offering tables apparently seems to have been their use as a receptacle for the liquid poured from libation vessels.³⁶ On other occasions, these objects obviously served as trays for food offerings.³⁷

The adoption of the Minoan form of the double axe, one of the most important cult symbols of Minoan Crete, could also be explained by its integration into already existing cult practices. In contrast to rhyta and tripod offering tables, there is scanty evidence for the use of this symbol in MH Greece. In this period, however, the link to the Minoan form of the double axe is questionable. Among the rare objects found on the MH mainland there are seven bronze pendants in the shape of a double axe from two different graves of two tumuli at Antheia-Kastroulia in Messenia from the earliest phase of this period.³⁸ It has been suggested by Helène Whittaker that these bronze pendants may have functioned as a marker of Minoan identity of the deceased.³⁹ However, as there is no strong evidence for direct or indirect contacts between Crete and Messenia before the Shaft Grave era⁴⁰ these pendants may indicate a mainland tradition instead. Two terracotta double axes have been found at Lerna in the Argolid. One, whose faces are decorated with incisions, but of which only one half is preserved, presumably dates to the latest phase of the MH period. The other one is intact and served as a burial offering.⁴¹ Significantly, the shape of these double axes does not correspond to double axes of Cretan Neopalatial date and Minoan influence

³¹ On this assemblage as well as the dating of the so-called Epichosis, see Veters – Weilharter 2017, with further bibliography.

³² Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984, 20–21, 30–31; Hägg 1985, 210–212, fig. 4; Hägg 1990, 183.

³³ Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984, 22, nos. 2–3; Whittaker 2014, 204.

³⁴ Tiryns: Kilian 1992, 11; Whittaker 2014, 204. Prosymna, Tomb 44: Dickinson 1977, 84; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984, 21 n. 2. Routsis, Tholos 2: Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984, 24–25, no. 33; Kilian 1992, 12; Whittaker 2014, 203.

³⁵ Pylos: Blegen – Rawson 1966, 91, figs. 271.11, 272.5; Hägg 1990, 182–183, fig. 9. Mycenae: Moore – Taylour † 1999, 21, fig. 6; 26, fig. 9; 29, pl. 9b; 30–31, 98. For a list of tripod offering tables found on the mainland, see Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984. Since this publication many more examples have come to light. For a recent find at Iklaina, see Cosmopoulos 2015, 46.

³⁶ Hägg 1990, 183; Davis 2008, 50 n. 36.

³⁷ Cosmopoulos 2015, 46. See Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1984, 31–33.

³⁸ MH I: Rambach 2007, 145, fig. 23; 148; Rambach 2011, 470, 472, fig. 13. See Davis – Stocker 2010, 104.

³⁹ Whittaker 2014, 74.

⁴⁰ Hägg 1982, 28–29; Korres 1984, 144–145; Dickinson 1996, 69–70; Voutsaki 1999, 104; Rutter 2005, 19; Davis – Stocker 2016, 636. For some fragmentary sherds of Minoanising wares and a single actual import from Crete, dated to the Old Palace period, found at Pylos, see Davis – Stocker 2010, 104. Among the grave gifts of Grave 2 of the MH I Tumulus II at Antheia-Kastroulia one jug has been considered as a possible Minoan import, see Rambach 2007, 146 n. 32, fig. 32. – According to Jörg Rambach, the excavator of the tumulus, the question whether the bronze pendants in the shape of a double axe indicate influence from Crete or point to a mainland tradition has to be left open, see Rambach 2007, 148. Since he refers to the large hearths in buildings at EH II Lerna and Berbati with a central cavity in the shape of a double axe head, as well as to bronze pendants in the shape of double axes from the Mycenaean and Geometric period, he seems to favour the latter interpretation. One may add the double axe-shaped beads of silver from the EH III jewellery hoard from Aigina-Kolonna, see Reinholdt 2008, 27–29, pls. 12.1–3; 16.1, cat. nos. 26–28 (with references to Anatolian and Near Eastern examples from the Early Bronze Age).

⁴¹ Caskey 1957, 146, fig. 2; Banks 1967, 656–658, pl. 21; van Leuven 1981, 40; Hägg 1997, 14, fig. 1; Whittaker 2014, 72–77, fig. 3.

is difficult to prove.⁴² By virtue of size or material, the objects found in Antheia-Kastroulia and Lerna are not meant to serve any practical purpose, and a symbolic function – whether as votive or cult symbol – is therefore to be assumed. As the symbolic significance of the double axe in MH Greece is substantiated only by these isolated finds (mostly from graves), it is impossible to come to any conclusions concerning specific connections with ritual practices.⁴³ It does not seem too far-fetched that they may have functioned as a visual symbol for animal sacrifice (although this assumption is solely based on later evidence). In any case, archaeozoological remains indicate that the ritual practice of animal sacrifice has been performed in MH Greece.⁴⁴

The double axe in its characteristic Minoan form is clearly attested in the Shaft Grave period. A substantial number of golden cut-outs from Grave IV of Circle A in Mycenae form well-known early examples of this ubiquitous symbol of Minoan culture,⁴⁵ and large bronze double axes and smaller double axes made of thin bronze foil have been found in early Mycenaean cult deposits in the later sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas on Mount Kynortion near Epidauros.⁴⁶ In addition, the double axe is one of the characteristic motifs of LH I and LH IIA pottery⁴⁷ clearly copied from Minoan pottery (and maybe representations on other works of art).⁴⁸ As a general rule, the – rather few – instances on LH I pottery show a single straight haft and closely resemble Minoan examples.⁴⁹ LH IIA pottery prefers wavy double stems and a more stylised shape of the blade. A series of jars from the Shaft Graves of Circle A illustrates this variation.⁵⁰ Other examples have been found from all over the mainland. By LH IIA the double axe is among the most common motifs: pottery with double axes was almost mass-produced.⁵¹ Although it has been argued by Penelope Mountjoy that pictorial motifs which had been transferred from Crete to the mainland had no

⁴² On the basis of imported Minoan and Minoanising pottery as well as a few small objects of Minoan origin or type found at Lerna – which point to a possible presence of Minoan residents (see Rutter – Zerner 1984, 77–79) – Whittaker 2014, 73–74, tentatively associates the double axes made of clay with Minoan residents at Lerna. In particular, she wonders whether these axes “could therefore have functioned in some way as a marker of cultural and religious identity that was separate from that of the majority population.” If true, one would expect a closer affinity to Cretan Neopalatial ceremonial double axes. In any case, as Whittaker clearly points out, other possibilities of interpretation also exist, see Whittaker 2014, 77.

⁴³ Whittaker 2014, 77.

⁴⁴ For a summary of the evidence, see Whittaker 2014, 78–81.

⁴⁵ Nilsson 1950, 194–235. See more recently Dietrich 1988, 12–14; Pötscher 1990, 17–66; Nikolaidou 2016, 97–99, 103–106; Whittaker 2016, 109–110. All four authors provide many references to earlier bibliography.

⁴⁶ For the small golden double axes with and without a bull’s head, see Karo 1930, 91–92, nos. 353–354; 364, pl. 44. On the early Mycenaean cult place on Mount Kynortion, see Lambrinudakis 1981; Whittaker 2014, 189–194.

⁴⁷ Furumark 1941, 145, 329–330 (FM 35); Niemeier 1985, 118–120, fig. 57; Mountjoy 1993, 42–44, 50.

⁴⁸ If the blade of a double axe is to be recognised in the so-called ‘butterfly motif’, double axes are portrayed on Minoan pottery from EM II onwards, see Betancourt 1985, 43, fig. 24; 44, fig. 26c; 80, fig. 56H, L, pls. 5I, 6F; Nikolaidou 2016, 104–106, pls. 41–42. In LM I the double axe (with haft) was a popular motif, be it alone, in combination with a long scarf or set between the horns of a bull’s head, see, e.g. Nilsson 1950, 199–213; Betancourt 1985, 137, fig. 103D; 139, pl. 19D; 141, fig. 105K; 147–148, pls. 18A, 22F; Niemeier 1985, 116–120, fig. 57; Whittaker 2014, 154.

⁴⁹ See, e.g. RMDP, 202, fig. 62.2 (cup FS 211 from Korakou, Corinthia); 253–254, fig. 82.13 (straight-sided cup from Kastro, Kythera). Some vessels of LH I date are decorated with the double axe with wavy double stems, typically found on LH IIA vessels, see, e.g. RMDP, 501–502, fig. 178.10 (cup FS 211 from Eleusis, Attica). Conversely, few vessels of LH IIA date are decorated with a single-hafted double axe, usually found in LH I, see RMDP, 875–876, fig. 357.40 (cup FS 211 from Ayia Irini, Keos).

⁵⁰ Karo 1930, 66–67, nos. 190–192, pl. 167; RMDP, 87, fig. 12.24–26.

⁵¹ Mountjoy 1993, 44. See RMDP, 93–94, fig. 15.55 (pear rhyton FS 202 from Prosymna, Argolid); 202–203, fig. 62.4 (piriform jar FS 27 from Tsoungiza, Corinthia); 256–258, fig. 84.28 (cup FS 211 from Ayios Stephanos, Lakonia); 501–502, fig. 178.13 (piriform jar FS 27 from Attica); 503–504, fig. 179.20 (squat jug FS 87 from Eleusis, Attica); 507–508, fig. 180.35 (cup FS 211 from Ayios Kosmas, Attica); 650–651, fig. 247.4 (alabastron FS 80 from Thebes, Boiotia); 875–876, fig. 357.39 (cup FS 211 from Ayia Irini, Keos); 894–895, fig. 363.13 (jar FS 20 from Phylakopi, Melos). For examples of the motif (of varying design) on LH I/IIA vessels from Aigina, see Hiller 1975, pls. 4.47–50; 6.84–95. For examples of this motif on (partly unpublished) LH I/IIA vessels from Messenia, see Lolos 1987, 457–458; Vlachopoulos, this volume. On cups of LH II date found in Cyprus, but produced in the Argolid, which show double axes with straight double stems crowned by a small ‘orb’, see Buchholz 1999, 402, fig. 71e–j.

particular meaning for Mycenaeans,⁵² I doubt that the double axe as a motif on pottery was free of any religious connotation. Notably, it not only appears on pottery and – on a much-reduced scale – on metal cups,⁵³ but also on early seals and signet rings from mainland contexts, where the double axe is regularly imbedded in unambiguously religious scenes.⁵⁴ Later representations of the double axe on fresco fragments from the Palatial period⁵⁵ as well as its occurrence on pottery and *in corpore* in LH IIIB/C⁵⁶ bear witness to the incorporation of this object into actual Mycenaean cult practice.

According to traditional interpretation, the symbolic meaning of the double axe was derived from its use as a functional tool associated with animal sacrifice.⁵⁷ Although this interpretation has been challenged,⁵⁸ the well-documented representation of the double axe between the horns of a bull proves the case.⁵⁹ Well-known examples are the aforementioned golden cut-outs from Shaft Grave IV of Grave Circle A. This combination of double axe and horns of a bull clearly derives from earlier Cretan prototypes: along with the representation of the double axe between the horns of a bull's head on a MM IIIB jar from Palaikastro and on a LM IA jar from Pseira one may think of functional metal double axes of LM I date with an engraved bull's head *en face*, found in the Amari Valley and in the Knossos region respectively.⁶⁰ The double axe between the horns of a bull also appears on seals (Fig. 1) and sealings of various date from both Crete and the Greek mainland.⁶¹ A Mycenaean krater of LH IIIA date found at Enkomi on Cyprus illustrates that this motif is not unknown in Mycenaean vase painting.⁶² A late example offers explicit evidence for the sacrificial use of the double axe: a sherd of a LH IIIC Middle pictorial krater from Kynos in East Lokris shows a double axe above the head of a goat and represents an animal sacrifice on board a ship (Fig. 2).⁶³ Most interestingly, a functional bronze double axe was discovered in a LH IIIB2



Fig. 1: Seal from Argos, LBA I/II (CMS XI, no. 259)

⁵² Mountjoy 1993, 43–44.

⁵³ On a fragmentary silver cup of the Vapheio type inlaid with gold in the form of a double axe beneath a bull's head found outside Chamber Tomb 12 at Dendra, see Verdelis 1967, 52–53, Beilage 30.1–2; Åström 1977, 54–55, no. 11, pl. 9.1–3; Davis 1977, 263–266, figs. 210–211, no. 109. For a similar example, see Davis 1977, 118–123, figs. 95–96, no. 24.

⁵⁴ Such seals and rings were found at Mycenae (CMS I, nos. 17, 144, 145: all LBA I/II), Argos (CMS XI, no. 259: LBA I/II), Vapheio (CMS I, no. 219: LM I) and Pylos (CMS I, no. 379: a LH IIIB sealing from an LBA II/IIIA1 'heirloom' seal). On other seals, double axes are depicted with animals (see, e.g. CMS V.S1B, no. 140: LBA I/II [from Antheia]), with a scarf (see, e.g. CMS V.S1B, no. 138b: LBA I/II [from Antheia]) or without context (see, e.g. CMS V, no. 578: LBA I [from Kazarma]).

⁵⁵ For a fresco fragment from the palace of Tiryns, which shows two double axes with a floral motif but without clear narrative context, see Rodenwaldt 1912, 157–158, pl. 16.6. For a fresco fragment from Mycenae with women looking out of windows, which are decorated with small white double axes, see Rodenwaldt 1911, 222–223, pl. 9.2; Immerwahr 1990, 110, 190, pl. 54 (My No. 1a).

⁵⁶ On actual double axes of LH IIIB/C date see below.

⁵⁷ Nilsson 1950, 195–235, esp. 227–231; Dietrich 1988, 15; Maran 2015, 251.

⁵⁸ Pötscher 1990, 20–24; Buchholz 1999, 494–495, 612. See Haysom 2010, 38. This paper puts the religious associations of the double axe in Neopalatial Crete into perspective.

⁵⁹ Mavriyannaki 1978, 204–208; Kalogeropoulos 2015, 175; Whittaker 2016, 109–110.

⁶⁰ On representations on vases, see Mavriyannaki 1978, 200, 205, figs. 4–5; Crouwel – Niemeier 1989, 6–7, figs. 3–4; Rehak 1995a, 452, pl. 53d; Kalogeropoulos 2015, 175. On functional double axes with engraved representations of a bull's head, see Mavriyannaki 1978, 198–204, figs. 1–3; Mavriyannaki 1983, 211–212, fig. 16; Rehak 1995a, 437, pl. 50c; Whittaker 2016, 109, pl. 43b.

⁶¹ CMS II.3, no. 11 (Knossos: LM I/II); CMS V.S1A, no. 141 (Chania: LM IIIA1?); CMS XI, no. 259 (Argos: LBA I/II); CMS XII, no. 250 (unknown: LBA II/IIIA1), CMS XIII, no. 15 (unknown, talismanic). See Mavriyannaki 1978, 202–203, 205–206, figs. 7–8.

⁶² Furumark 1941, 247–248, fig. 28.4.1 (FM 4); Mavriyannaki 1978, 201, 205, fig. 6. Furumark 1941, 247, assigns a LH IIIB date to this krater, however, an earlier date is more likely, see the discussion in Crouwel – Niemeier, 1989, 6 n. 6.

⁶³ Dakoronia 2016, 388–390, pl. 119a–b.



Fig. 2: Sherd of a LH IIC Middle pictorial krater from Kynos (after Dakoronia 2016, pl. 119b)



Fig. 3: Bronze double axe from Kakovatos (photo: B. Eder; Kakovatos project)

context of the same site, associated with a bronze one-edged knife as well as burnt ashes and animal bones. This assemblage clearly indicates the practice of animal sacrifice.⁶⁴

Returning to the early phase of the Mycenaean period, real specimens have come to light at a few sites only.⁶⁵ Recently, a (functional?) bronze double axe has been found in the Grave of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos, which is dated to LH IIA, another early functional example has come to light at Kakovatos (Fig. 3).⁶⁶ Examples with a non-utilitarian function, which are closely comparable to Cretan types, were found at the early Mycenaean cult deposits on Mount Kynortion already mentioned above.⁶⁷ These double axes, which are either made of thin foil or show features that make no sense for practical use, are usually considered votives.⁶⁸ However, according to Robin Hägg they “functioned as symbols, put up on display during the ritual”.⁶⁹ If true, it was their non-functional, symbolic value that was significant for the participants in early Mycenaean cult practices. Accordingly, this cult symbol, which is easily connected with animal sacrifice, may have gained importance on the mainland as a means to enhance the symbolic significance of the indigenous cult practice of animal sacrifice. Overall, there is neither strong evidence to support the view of the double axe as a symbol of rebirth and renewal (whether in Minoan Crete or

⁶⁴ Dakoronia 2016, 389, pl. 120a–b; Kounouklas 2016, 527–529, pl. 151a.

⁶⁵ Hägg 1985, 207; Dietrich 1988, 20.

⁶⁶ Davis – Stocker 2016, 634. The double axe, the dimensions of which have not yet been published, is compared to two LH bronze double axes that were found at the site Metaxada-Kalopsana, Messenia, see Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 135 (D22). On the rather small example from Kakovatos, which was deposited beneath a LH IIB-floor of a storeroom in the basement of the main building of the site, see Eder 2012, 93, fig. 7. I owe this reference and the photograph to Birgitta Eder.

⁶⁷ Lambrinudakis 1981, 62–63, fig. 10. Along with bronze double axes of larger size small bronze double axes of unpretentious design were also found, see Lambrinudakis 1981, 62–63, fig. 12. In general, see Hägg 1984, 120–121; Sakellarakis 1996, 97 n. 187. *Contra* Whittaker 2014, 189, more than one example of larger bronze double axes have been found, see Lambrinudakis 1977, 173, pl. 149γ; Lambrinudakis 1981, 62–63, fig. 10.

⁶⁸ Lambrinudakis 1981, 62–63, fig. 10. See Hägg 1981, 36. The same is true for double axes from Crete: although some of the LM examples are functional, most of the double axes known from the archaeological record – including votive replicas of gold, silver, bronze, steatite and ivory – served for display only. Notably, they have been found in cave sanctuaries and peak sanctuaries, see Mavriyannaki 1983, 197–199, 207–211; Haysom 2010, 42–49; Whittaker 2014, 191–192. For a small bronze votive double axe from a LM I peak sanctuary at the site Ayios Georgios sto Vouno on Kythera, see Sakellarakis 1996, 86, pl. 19d.

⁶⁹ Hägg 1997, 17.

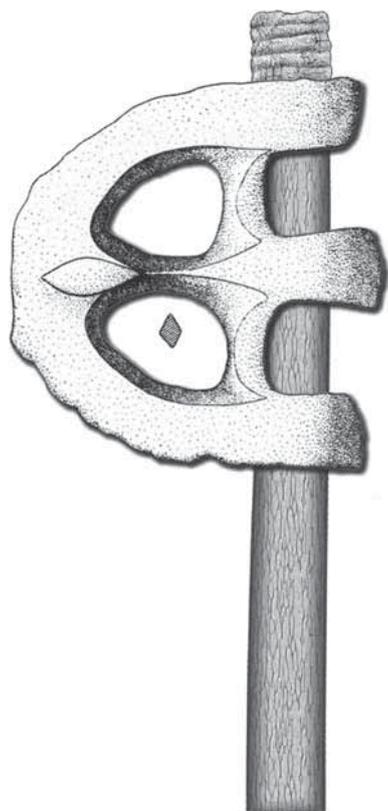


Fig. 4: Reconstruction of the hafted fenestrated axe-head from Vapheio (after Maran 2015, 266, fig. 2; graphics: M. Kostoula)



Fig. 5: Seal from Vapheio, LBA I/II (CMS I, no. 225)

fenestrated type,⁷³ which was found in an untouched cist grave inside the robbed tholos tomb of Vapheio,⁷⁴ is another example of the appropriation of non-local cult equipment by early Mycenaeans (Fig. 4). A sealstone (Fig. 5) from the same context illustrates a person in a long garment with diagonal bars carrying the same type of axe.⁷⁵ According to this representation, the person who owned this peculiar axe will have derived benefits from carrying it at public events as a means to express social prestige. The bronze axe-head from the Vapheio cist grave is the only actual find of this kind of object in the Aegean. Its weight and dimensions indicate that it was, in fact, fully functional.⁷⁶ Interestingly, such axes may have played a more important role within Mycenaean cult practice than has been previously recognised.

on the Greek mainland)⁷⁰ nor for the opinion that the symbol had no significance in Mycenaean religion at all.⁷¹ Rather, the double axe of Minoan shape seems to have been accepted as a religious symbol because it could easily be associated with the indigenous ritual of animal sacrifice and built on a symbol of similar shape already in use.⁷²

The semicircular axe of the Near Eastern

⁷⁰ Dietrich 1988.

⁷¹ Mylonas 1977, 119–123.

⁷² For a similar view, see Hägg 1985, 207–210.

⁷³ On this kind of axe, see Buchholz 1999, 489–490, 611, fig. 100b–d.

⁷⁴ On the tholos tomb at Vapheio and its archaeological finds, see, e.g. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987; Banou – Hitchcock 2011. For a detailed analysis of the fenestrated axe, see Maran 2015, 244–251, fig. 2.

⁷⁵ CMS I, no. 225. This seal forms part of an extraordinary large number of seals deriving from a single grave (total of twenty-eight sealstones and three metal rings), only recently outnumbered by the unique large number of about fifty seals and four gold rings from the Grave of the Griffin Warrior, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 632. The subject as well as the craftsmanship seem to suggest that the sealstone in question was made in Crete (like most, at least, of those which were found with it) or by a Cretan craftsman, see Banou – Hitchcock 2011, 5–6, 13. Another fourteen seals and two gold rings were found on the floor of the plundered tholos (along with other objects missed by the tomb-raiders). NB: the numbers of seals and rings given above are based on Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987, 197–200, who refers to the original publication of the finds by Christos Tsountas. These numbers do not reconcile with those arising from CMS I (Cist grave: one ring, thirty seals. Tholos: one ring, eleven seals).

⁷⁶ Davis 1995, 16; Maran 2015, 245 with n. 20: height: 14.5 cm, weight: 479.16 grams.

Some peculiarities in the design of the actual axe – such as the three separate socket loops which protrude from the blade and enfold the haft – and a seal from Crete showing a person in the same dress and with the same type of axe as on the seal from Vapheio,⁷⁷ have led Arthur Evans to suggest that the axe from Vapheio was of Cretan origin and served as a ceremonial implement or sacrificial instrument in Late Bronze Age Crete.⁷⁸ On the contrary, a detailed analysis of the morphological features of the Vapheio-axe by Joseph Maran speaks in favour of its Near Eastern origin.⁷⁹ Whether the axe is a Near Eastern import or an Aegean product, it was most likely used in Crete from where it was transferred to Lakonia. The combination of the actual axe and the depiction on the seal suggests that this happened on purpose.⁸⁰ Although it cannot be confirmed that the deceased assigned a ritual significance to this object, its unusual shape fulfilled the requirements for ceremonial use;⁸¹ it may well have functioned both as a religious and a status symbol at the same time.⁸² Based on the grave goods of the cist it is indeed highly likely that the deceased possessed political as well as religious power. The finds include a Type A sword, two daggers with inlaid decoration and two spearheads, which point to a high status warrior.⁸³ Other finds such as a bronze incense burner, a bronze shaft-hole hammer axe with reliefs of a figure-of-eight shield on each of its sides and the famous gold cups with scenes of bull capture had (or may have had) some ritual significance. The same holds true for the collection of seals made of semi-precious stones and metal rings, a substantial number of which show scenes of a religious character.⁸⁴

For a long time this axe has been regarded as a unique example without a successor. Recently, however, Maran has pointed out that a semicircular axe-shaped pendant of lapis lazuli from Mycenae (Fig. 6) and a group of similar lapis lazuli pendants or beads from Thebes, which date to the Palatial period, indicate that the artisans who manufactured these objects, had some knowledge of semicircular Near Eastern axes.⁸⁵ The three-dimensional mode of representation and the precise

⁷⁷ CMS II.3, no. 198. *Pace* Evans 1935, 413–414 (and by implication Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987, 203–204, Davis 1995, 15, and Koehl 1995, 30, who all had to rely on the illustration published by Evans 1935, 414, fig. 343b) the axe carried by the long-robed person on CMS II.8, no. 258, seems to be of a different type. According to the illustration in CMS II.8, published in 2002, it resembles the hammer-axe carried by another long-robed person on CMS II.3, no. 147. Curiously, in the description of this sealing in CMS II.8 the axe is still viewed as ‘syrische Axt’. On another seal from this cist grave (CMS I, no. 223) a person with an identical robe is leading a griffin, which suggests to some scholars that persons who wear this kind of garment belong to the religious sphere, see e.g. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987, 203–204; Davis 1995, 15–17; Koehl 1995, 29–31. Others prefer to view these people as profane authorities, see, e.g. Rehak 1995b, 110–111, 114; Dubcová 2010, 23–24. In general, they are described as individuals of high rank (with or without an explicit religious function) and considered male. However, their sex cannot be determined on a secure basis, see Weilhartner 2014, 448–450.

⁷⁸ Evans 1935, 413–418. On this peculiar feature, which does not appear on Near Eastern examples of the fenestrated axe, see Aruz 2008, 176. For a detailed discussion on the morphological features of the Vapheio axe-head, see Maran 2015, 246–249, 251.

⁷⁹ Maran 2015, 246–249. See p. 246 n. 27 for a list of authors who also regard the axe as a Near Eastern import to the Aegean.

⁸⁰ Other examples of an interrelationship between grave goods and iconographical representations on objects found in the same tomb are provided by the findings of the Grave of the Griffin Warrior, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 649–652. This clearly indicates that the collection of rings and seals was not arbitrary. However, the symbolic meaning ascribed by mainlanders to iconographical scenes and motifs may have (sometimes substantially) differed from the original meaning ascribed by those who lived in Minoan Crete. On possible semantic linkages between details of the cult scene on the gold signet ring (CMS I, no. 179) and actual objects from the so-called Tiryns treasure, see Maran 2013, 159–160.

⁸¹ Maran 2015, 250.

⁸² Banou – Hitchcock 2011, 5–6, 9; Maran 2015, 251, 256 n. 106.

⁸³ Category 1.2 according to the evaluation of contemporary tomb contexts by de Vreé, this volume.

⁸⁴ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1987, 198–208, figs. 2, 5, 9; Banou – Hitchcock 2011, 2–6, fig. 3.

⁸⁵ Maran 2015, 251–254, figs. 9–11. On the possible appearance of a stylised version of the head of the semicircular axe as a motif on LM pottery of the so-called Palace Style and Mycenaean pottery of the Palatial period, see Maran 2015, 243–244, 252. However, as Maran clearly states, there is no general agreement on the identification of this motif. For example, Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier (1985, 112–115, fig. 53) prefers to use the neutral designation ‘Schirmchen’ for this motif on Palace Style vase painting. In the form of pendants and relief beads of valuable materials this motif is regularly referred to as ‘wallet’, see, e.g. Effinger 1996, 39; Hughes-Brock 2008, 131.

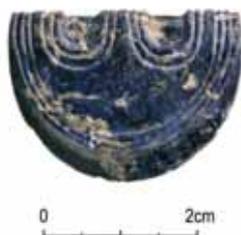


Fig. 6: Semicircular axe-shaped pendant made of lapis lazuli from Mycenae (after Maran 2015, 269, fig. 9; photo: M. Kostoula)

rendering of morphological details of the example from Mycenae have suggested to Maran that some axes of this type were still circulating in the Mycenaean Palatial period. If true, this ceremonial implement played a more permanent role in Mycenaean cult practice than hitherto acknowledged.

As animal-head-shaped rhyta, tripod offering tables, Minoan double axes and single-bladed Near Eastern axes demonstrate, early Mycenaean elites borrowed actual cult implements from Crete. In view of how these cult implements were used (as actual objects or in representations) early Mycenaean had at least some knowledge of the function of these objects during the performances of rituals on Crete. Since these cult objects were manufactured/depicted until the end of the Mycenaean Palatial period, it seems likely that early Mycenaean managed to integrate sophisticated cult implements of Minoan ritual practices into their own religious traditions. In addition to the objects dealt with above, a few more paraphernalia of Minoan cult and elements of Minoan religious imagery are found on the Greek mainland from the Shaft Grave period onwards until the Palatial period. The most prominent examples are ‘horns of consecration’ and the figure-of-eight shield, both of which would deserve a study of their own.⁸⁶ Such symbols (either in the form of actual cult equipment or as elements of religious iconography) may have incorporated existing local semantic associations, which would have favoured their acceptance.

Religious Glyptic Iconography: Epiphany versus Processions

With the adoption of Minoan cult equipment the Shaft Grave period saw the beginnings of religious iconography on the mainland. Of particular interest in the development of this iconography are gold rings that display a complex system of religious figurative scenes and motifs of undoubtedly Minoan inspiration, irrespective of whether these objects were imported from Crete or produced by Mycenaean craftsmen on the mainland on the basis of Cretan objects or under the guidance of Cretan masters. As these objects are buried in graves, some scholars are inclined to regard them as symbols of status and prestige rather than as objects of religious significance to their owners.⁸⁷ However, as Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier has demonstrated by an analysis of the cult scenes on gold rings found in the Argolid, early Mycenaean elites seem to have been interested first and foremost in those representations of ritual actions, which had a meaning in terms of their own religious conceptions,⁸⁸ such as depictions of human individuals or, occasionally, supernatural beings, carrying cult equipment or objects of various kinds and approaching in linear movement a seated female figure (regularly considered a goddess) or some form of architectural structure (usually viewed as a cult building or altar). These scenes of ritual processions not only appear on a substantial number of gold rings and seals of Neopalatial date found in Crete but also on early Late Bronze Age rings and seals (Fig. 7) found on the Greek mainland.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ The literature on the iconography as well as the symbolic role of the figure-of-eight shield and the ‘horns of consecration’ in Minoan and Mycenaean religion is quite impressive. For a start, see Niemeier 1985, 120–124, figs. 58–59; D’Agata 1992; Warren 2000; Simon 2002; Banou 2008; Rethemiotakis 2012.

⁸⁷ See, e.g. Hägg 1985, 213.

⁸⁸ Niemeier 1989, 184; Niemeier 1990, 165–170.

⁸⁹ Niemeier 1989, 167–169, 173–174, figs. 1, 4; Niemeier 1990, 166, 170; Wedde 2004; Krzyszkowska 2005, 142, 253–254. Due to the small size of rings and seals, which favours pars pro toto compositions, the goal of a procession is regularly not shown, see Wedde 2004, 163–169.

On the other hand, representations of ecstatic or envisioned epiphany are almost completely missing among the gold rings found on the Greek mainland.⁹⁰ Epiphany, however, is a key element in Minoan religion.⁹¹ The representation of this momentary visual experience is associated with various rites such as the ritual dance of ecstatic character, the shaking of a tree or the clasping of/leaning upon large baetylic objects.⁹² None of these cult rituals are prominent features on objects found on the mainland.⁹³ Other symbols, which have been associated with epiphany, like the human ear and the human eye, do not appear on seals or rings found on the mainland at all, neither during the Shaft Grave period nor during the Palatial period.⁹⁴

Conversely, representations of ritual processions continued on the mainland in other media such as fresco painting. Apart from the repertoire of pictorial representations there is also much archaeological and textual evidence from the Palatial period that clearly document the importance of processions in Mycenaean ritual practice.⁹⁵ Without doubt, processions played a fundamental role in Minoan cult practice as well.⁹⁶ This may be another case of ritual practice that had been performed in MH Greece in a comparably simple manner and was enhanced and institutionalised by early Mycenaeans on the Cretan model.

Floral Symbols of Religious Significance: Lily and Crocus

The phenomenon of selective adoption that Niemeier observed in the case of religious scenes in Minoan-Mycenaean glyptic is also confirmed by the selective adoption of Minoan symbols of religious significance, which may appear on pottery and other objects found on the Greek mainland. A case in point is the representation of the lily. In Crete, this motif is particularly well known from MM III/LM IA frescoes and contemporary large jars, but it occurs on LM II and LM IIIA pottery as well.⁹⁷ Representations of this flower also occur frequently on objects found on the

⁹⁰ Niemeier 1989, 169–171, fig. 2; Niemeier 1990, 167–170. Representations of ecstatic epiphany are characterised by small figures ‘in the air’, see Crowley 2016, 91, pls. 36, 38.54, 39.64. Such figures appear on the mainland only on the eclectic Acropolis Treasure ring from Mycenae (CMS I, no. 17), on a gold ring from Tholos Tomb IV at Pylos (CMS I, no. 292), and on a gold ring from the Elateia cemetery (CMS V.S2, no. 106), which is usually regarded as of Minoan origin, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 256 n. 88, 305. Other mainland examples of ecstatic epiphany may be provided by one of the gold rings of the Grave of the Griffin Warrior (Davis – Stocker 2016, 643–645) and a gold ring from the tholos tomb at Vapheio (CMS I, no. 219). However, on both examples the figure in question is represented in full size. For that reason, it is difficult to decide whether these scenes represent ecstatic or enacted epiphany. On the differentiation between ecstatic epiphany, where divine presence is seen or felt by the worshippers, and enacted epiphany, where the appearance of a deity is performed by a human, see Hägg 1986, 46, 55–62; Niemeier 1989, 170–171, 174. Other examples like the gold ring from Chamber Tomb 91 at Mycenae (CMS I, no. 126) show comparable features, with the central figure apparently representing a human being, see Niemeier 1990, 169.

⁹¹ Nilsson 1950, 330–388; Furumark 1965, 91–92; Hägg 1986; Morris – Peatfield 2002, 113–115; Soles 2016, 249–250, pls. 81–82.

⁹² Furumark 1965, 91–92; Niemeier 1989, 174–177, fig. 5; Niemeier 1990, 168–169; Crooks et al. 2016.

⁹³ One of the very rare exceptions is the famous gold ring of Vapheio (CMS I, no. 219), which is generally regarded as an import from Crete, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 305. As she notes, only three golden signet rings found on the mainland have been identified as Cretan with certainty. Apart from the Vapheio ring, this group includes rings from Elateia (CMS V.S2, no. 106) and from Kalapodi (CMS V.S3, no. 68).

⁹⁴ Hägg 1986, 58; Crowley 2016, 91–92. See, e.g. CMS II.3, no. 51; CMS III, no. 502; CMS VI, no. 278. For a similar observation, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 256, who notes that signs such as birds, butterflies and shooting stars, which herald epiphanies, are mostly absent on examples from the mainland. For a possible interpretation of eye and ear in the context of representations of epiphany, see Steinhart 2002, 16: “Die Darstellung von Auge und Ohr [sc. on CMS II.3, no. 51] weist damit in Entsprechung zu mehreren anderen Ringbildern auf die Intensität des dargestellten Moments der Göttererscheinung hin”.

⁹⁵ See, e.g. Hägg 2001; Weilhartner 2013; Maran 2016, 588–590.

⁹⁶ See, e.g. Warren 2006.

⁹⁷ Furumark 1941, 136, 142, 155, 188–189, 257–260 (FM 9); Niemeier 1985, 57–60, fig. 18; Negbi – Negbi 2000, 596–597. On lilies in Thera wall painting, see Angelopoulou 2000, 549–550.

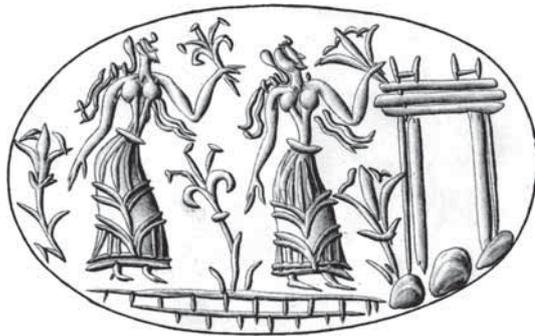


Fig. 7: Gold signet ring from Aidonia, LBA I/II
(CMS V.S1B, no. 113)



Fig. 8: Seal from Routsis, LBA II
(CMS I, no. 279)

mainland. Notably, lilies form the motif of the electron inlays on the blade and the gold relief on the hilt cover of the so-called lily dagger from Shaft Grave V⁹⁸ and of golden cut-outs from Shaft Graves III and IV.⁹⁹ In addition, lilies appear in various cult scenes on seals found on the mainland.¹⁰⁰ Among them is the golden signet ring from Aidonia (Fig. 7), which depicts two women as part of a processional scene carrying flowers towards a small cult building or altar marked by a pair of horns of consecration. One of the women carries a lily, another lily is depicted in front of her. A seal from Tholos 2 at Routsis (Fig. 8) provides another example of a woman with lilies moving towards an altar.

In the ceramic repertoire the lily appeared from LH IIA onwards and became popular in LH IIB when it is found as a central motif on Ephyraean goblets.¹⁰¹ In addition, it appears on a wide range of other vessel shapes from different regions and occurs regularly until LH IIIA1.¹⁰² As regards examples of the Mycenaean Palatial period, one may refer to fresco fragments illustrating female lily bearers from Mycenae and Thebes (thus picking up a motif attested on seals from the beginning of the Late Bronze Age), cut-out inlays for furniture made of ivory in the form of lilies from the West Houses at Mycenae, as well as glass and gold relief beads featuring this motif.¹⁰³ I refrain from speculating about what meaning the lily had for Mycenaeans but just want to emphasise that some of the polyvalent layers of meaning which the lily had in Minoan iconography appealed to Mycenaeans. For reasons unknown, this does not apply to the motif of the crocus.

⁹⁸ Karo 1930, 137, no. 764, pls. 91–92; Vermeule 1975, 46.

⁹⁹ Karo 1930, 55, no. 79, pl. 27; 92, no. 378, pl. 44. A necklace of separate pieces made of gold in the shape of lilies was found in an unlooted cist grave under the peribolos of Tholos 1 at Peristeria, dating to the transition from the MH to the LH period, see Korres 1979, 493, pl. 263γ.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g. CMS I, no. 17 (Mycenae, Argolid); CMS I, no. 279 (Routsis, Messenia); CMS V.S1B, no. 113; CMS V.S3, no. 243 (both from Aidonia, Corinthia). A sealing from the palace of Knossos (CMS II.8, no. 285), which shows a hand holding a lily, may be viewed as representing a detail of such scenes.

¹⁰¹ Niemeier 1985, 60–61, fig. 19; Mountjoy 1993, 46, 57–59, fig. 93; RMDP, 212–215, fig. 67.79; 515–516, fig. 183.77; 901–903, fig. 366.45–46.

¹⁰² RMDP, 101–102, fig. 18.88 (cup FS 219 from Argos, Argolid, LH IIB); 102–103, fig. 18.92 (cup FS 237 from Prosymna, Argolid, LH IIB); 405–406, fig. 142.1 (piriform jar FS 33 from Aigion, Achaia, LH IIB); 510–511, fig. 181.51–52 (piriform jar FS 31 from Athens, Attica, LH IIB); 523–524, fig. 187.119 (conical cup FS 230 from Athens, LH IIIA1); 655–657, fig. 249.43 (cup FS 237 from Thebes, Boiotia, LH IIB); 699–700, fig. 268.8 (piriform jar FS 28 from Chalkis, Euboia, LH IIB); 701–702, fig. 269.16 (jug FS 132 from Chalkis, LH IIB); 702–704, fig. 269.20 (piriform jar FS 31 from Chalkis, LH IIIA1); 703–705, fig. 270.34 (jug FS 144 from Chalkis, LH IIIA1); 748–749, fig. 288.11 (goblet FS 254 from Krisa, Phokis, LH IIB); 812–813, fig. 323.8 (piriform jar FS 31 from Livanates, Phthiotis, LH IIIA1); 1082–1085, fig. 442.12 (alabastron FS 84 from Eleona, Kos, LH IIIA1).

¹⁰³ For fresco fragments, see Immerwahr 1990, 115–117, pl. 21 (Th No. 1); 119–120 (My No. 5). For ivory inlays, see Tournavitou 1995, 145–149, fig. 28, pls. 17–18. For glass and gold relief beads, see Higgins 1980, 78, 81, fig. 13.12–15; Eder 2015, 228–233, with further bibliography.

The crocus represents another floral motif from the Minoan repertoire with clear religious associations. It has long been recognised as a popular motif in Minoan art from the Protopalatial period onwards until LM II.¹⁰⁴ Frescoes and ceramics offer the most striking depictions of this flower, but representations of crocuses also occur on faience objects, stone vessels, jewellery, and seals. The prominence of this floral motif is linked to its role in religious ceremonies: crocuses appear in representations of offerings to deities and occur on objects which had a religious function, such as tripod offering tables and faience votive robes.¹⁰⁵ Obviously, this motif serves as a symbol with a special meaning that helps to accentuate the setting for ritual compositions.¹⁰⁶

Contrary to the lily, the crocus does not appear in depictions of nature on the Greek mainland; there are no scenes with crocuses growing from the ground. In mainland frescoes, possible representations of this flower are restricted to stylised versions of an isolated element: they may appear as a motif on textiles.¹⁰⁷ As regards pottery, Arne Furumark lists only four instances, when this motif occurs, all from LH I or LH IIA/B respectively.¹⁰⁸ Yannis Lolos – in his monumental work on early Mycenaean pottery of the southwestern Peloponnese – adds a LH I rounded cup decorated with isolated crocus blooms from Volimidia.¹⁰⁹ These and the few examples published in Mountjoy's comprehensive compilation of Mycenaean decorated pottery¹¹⁰ show variations in the design of the crocus, which seem to suggest that Mycenaean potters were not familiar with that motif. If crocus blooms appear on pottery produced on the mainland, the execution and the arrangement of this motif stand apart from conventional Minoan compositions. As Linear B evidence of the Palatial period demonstrates, saffron, the spice produced from the dried stigmas of some species of crocus, was much valued in Mycenaean Crete and – by implication – on the Greek mainland, whether as a dye, medicine or for culinary purposes.¹¹¹ However, the general

¹⁰⁴ Niemeier 1985, 61–62, fig. 20; Day 2011a. This article presents a detailed survey of the crocus motif in Aegean art from the Early Bronze Age to the Mycenaean period. Interestingly, after LM II one observes a general disappearance of the crocus motif from all media, see Day 2011a, 356, 370–371. On the crocus in Thera wall painting, see Angelopoulou 2000, 548–552; Porter 2000, 614–623.

¹⁰⁵ On its assumed role as a sacred plant, see Day 2011a, 369–373, with some cautious notes. The observation that the crocus is a flower of religious significance goes back to Evans, see, e.g. Evans 1921, 265, 506.

¹⁰⁶ However, the symbolic character of the crocus does not exclude its presence as a more or less decorative element, see, e.g. Angelopoulou 2000, 552: “Hence, the symbolic use of individual elements, such as the lilies or crocuses in religious scenes, does not justify the connection and identification of an analogous meaning in all scenes where these are present”.

¹⁰⁷ For a trifoliate motif resembling crocuses on the left shoulder of the garment of the ‘Lily Bearer’ from the Cult Centre at Mycenae, see Day 2011a, 346–347, fig. 5. The red and yellow pendants of the necklace worn by the ‘Mykenaia’ on another fresco fragment from the Cult Centre at Mycenae are also taken to resemble crocuses by Day (2011a, 348). This interpretation, however, is not justified. On two fresco fragments from Pylos and one fragment from Tiryns the flowers depicted bear some resemblance to crocuses. However, their stylised shape leaves it unclear whether the fresco painter intended to portray a particular species (i.e. a crocus) or to adorn the wall with a generic floral decoration, see Day 2011a, 349.

¹⁰⁸ Furumark 1941, 260 (FM 10).

¹⁰⁹ Lolos 1987, 448, figs. 375i, 379, 667.5. A LM IB/LH IIA saucer from Routsis, Tholos 2, with growing crocuses is considered an import from Crete, see Lolos 1987, 209, fig. 410. Other examples are too schematic to allow clear identification as crocus, see, e.g. Lolos 1987, 139, figs. 168, 665.5; 200, fig. 345; 436, fig. 225. Significantly, lilies appear regularly on LH I and LH IIA pottery of the southwestern Peloponnese, see Lolos 1987, 447–450.

¹¹⁰ RMDP, 83–84, fig. 11.20 (Prosymna, Argolid, LH I); 98–99, fig. 17.77 (Kazarma, Argolid, LH IIB); 507–508, fig. 180.33 (Kolonna, Aigina, LH IIA); 748–749, fig. 288.4 (Kirrha, Phokis, LH IIB); 800–801, fig. 319.8 (Ayios Ilias, Aitolio-Akarnania, LH IIB). Significantly, the crocus is not among the LH IIA floral motifs discussed in Mountjoy 1993, 46–48. Within the whole monograph the crocus is mentioned only once, as a motif on a LH I squat jug from Samikon, Elis, see Mountjoy 1993, 36, fig. 32. This evidence is not easily reconciled with Maria Marthari's view that a LH I panelled cup decorated with crocuses found at Thera is an import from the mainland, see Marthari 1982, 194–196, pl. 71γ; Marthari 1993, 249, 255 n. 11. Neither the rendering of the flower, which resembles Minoan prototypes, nor the motif of crocuses growing from the ground has any parallels on pottery or other objects from the mainland. For doubts on the assumed mainland origin of this cup, see Dietz 1991, 230, 311. For pottery decorated with crocuses found at Akrotiri on Thera and imported from Crete, see Niemeier 1980, 57–59, fig. 33.1–3; Lolos 1987, 448.

¹¹¹ Day 2011b.

lack of this motif on mainland pottery and in other media¹¹² suggests that the special symbolic value of this flower had no significance for the Mycenaeans. Rather, the rare appearance of the crocus may point to a deliberate rejection of the meaning it had in Minoan Crete. Anyway, the difference identified in the transfer of lily and crocus is one more argument for a deliberate selection of Minoan symbols by early Mycenaeans.

Results

The selective adoption of Minoan cult paraphernalia seems to indicate the following: there is no question of a wholesale adoption of Cretan cult practices or religious beliefs. However, there are some traits, which suggest that actual cult practices current in Middle and Late Minoan Crete had an impact on the performance of cult practices on the mainland. Minoan cult practices (and maybe some religious ideas) seem to have been adapted in terms of indigenous religious concepts i.e. by means of an *interpretatio Mycenaea*. Rhyta, tables of offerings and double axes of LH IIIB date provide clear evidence for their appropriation and lasting acceptance as paraphernalia for Mycenaean cult practice after they have been taken over at the beginning of the Shaft Grave period. Fenestrated axes, if still used in the Palatial period, may provide another piece of evidence. Along with the adoption of cult paraphernalia, the selective borrowing of significant elements of Minoan religious motifs and symbolism led to the creation of a Mycenaean religious iconography. In view of the ritual scenes on four golden signet rings of LM I date used as burial gifts in a LH IIA stone-built tomb near the palace of Pylos (the so-called Grave of the Griffin Warrior),¹¹³ it seems difficult to accept that this religious iconography was developed at a single centre (Mycenae) or region (the Argolid) and spread to other parts of mainland Greece afterwards.¹¹⁴ Rather, various sites along the major trade routes seem to have played different roles in the dissemination of religious symbols,¹¹⁵ and the almost uniform symbolism of the Mycenaean Palatial period seems to be preceded by a formative phase, which is characterised by the appropriation of particular motifs of Minoan religious iconography in various regions of the mainland.

Summing up, I do not see any “radical changes in the religious worldview of the inhabitants of the Greek mainland,”¹¹⁶ but rather argue for a fundamental change in the way that religious ideas

¹¹² Among the numerous examples of the motif across different media listed by Day 2011a, passim, only beads morphologically similar to the pendent crocus on LM IB ceramics are mentioned as objects found on the mainland, see Day 2011a, 360. The stylised shape of these beads found in various contexts does not allow classifying these objects as representations of crocuses; they are known as beads of ‘bee type’, see Higgins 1980, 79, 82, fig. 13.31.

¹¹³ Davis – Stocker 2016.

¹¹⁴ Although Oliver Dickinson (1977, 110; 1989, 133) is at pains to stress that many of the characteristic Mycenaean features were *not* developed at and disseminated from a single centre, within the field of religion he tentatively argues that “on present evidence [...] these [sc. Minoanising] influences were confined to the Argolid at the beginning” (citation from Dickinson 1989, 136). A comparable view is expressed by Dickinson (1977, 82) on behalf of early metal vessels: he takes early vessels found in Messenia “to be ‘imports’ from Mycenae rather than products of a local school, or at the least to represent an industry introduced from the Argolid”. By contrast, Hartmut Matthäus (1980b, 156, 341–342) tentatively argues for a “lokales messenisches Produktionszentrum” by referring to three (presumably) early kraters of similar manufacture from Pylos, Chandrinou and Charokopeio. The gold, silver and bronze vessels found in the grave of the Griffin Warrior may help to settle the matter. On these vessels, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 632–635.

¹¹⁵ For a similar observation concerning the repertoire of motifs on early Mycenaean decorated pottery, see Lolos 1987, 523: “[T]he local [i.e. in the south-western Peloponnese] LH I lustrous-painted decoration is characterized by [...] the presence of a series of patterns (spiraliform, floral, linear and other) and other decorative elements (e.g. groups of bars acting as dividing motifs) which are completely absent from, or are extremely rare on, the LH I fine pottery of the Argolid-Corinthia”. See also Mathioudaki 2014, 15–16. For the remarkable diversity in tomb-types between regions and sites in the early Mycenaean period, see Dickinson 1989, 133–135. As Birgitta Eder (pers. comm.) reminded me, another case in point may be provided by the regional difference in the motifs of gold foil ornaments, see Dickinson 1989, 134. On various trade routes from Crete to the mainland, see Graziadio 1998.

¹¹⁶ As has been argued by Whittaker 2014, 208.

were expressed and how actual ritual practices were performed. Therefore, I do not think that symbols of religious significance were borrowed from Crete by Mycenaean elites “as a means of removing themselves from the common beliefs [...] of Helladic custom, thus symbolically elevating themselves above the commoners”.¹¹⁷ Nor do I think that they intended to distance themselves from ritual practices that were performed by the majority of the population. Rather, I would like to suggest that due to close contacts with Minoan palatial culture they dressed existing cult practices in new, much more elaborated clothes.

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¹¹⁷ Wright 1994, 51–54 (quotation from p. 54).

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Ma(r)king Places: The Monumental Mortuary Landscapes of Early Mycenaean Greece

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Abstract: This paper assesses the relationship of early Mycenaean tholoi with rock-cut chamber tombs, especially at the level of funerary monumentality from LH I to LH IIIA1. Studies on this subject in the Late Bronze Age tend to focus on particular sites or just on tholos tombs. The extant monumental chamber tombs, however, help bring to light some significant, and hitherto little observed, patterns with wider social implications at a regional and at an Aegean level. There is now good data to suggest that chamber tombs may not have been complementary to tholoi within a notional hierarchy of ‘funerary types’ or ‘burial styles’ in the early Mycenaean period. Funerary structures and their associated burials, whether in tholoi or chamber tombs, suggest complex social strategies on behalf of the tomb-using groups in a politically dynamic period for Aegean affairs. It is argued that funerary monumentality in tholos and chamber tomb architecture helped to create competing and complementing social narratives and long-lasting mnemonic landscapes that were important for materialising ideology and negotiating power in the early Mycenaean period.

Keywords: Monumentality, funerary archaeology, chamber tombs, tholos tombs, Mycenaean Greece

Introduction

From the early days of archaeological exploration, monumental architecture has played a crucial role in attracting scholarly interest and setting the foundations for the systematic study of the pre-classical past of Greece. Marvelled at as engineering wonders, interest in these structures soon shifted to the burials and particularly the, often precious, objects with which they were associated. However, in the last forty years, new approaches to the study of ancient architecture have developed alongside several period-, region-, site-, or artefact-specific studies, all of which have contributed significantly to developing a sharper resolution of regional attitudes to tombs and burials in the Late Bronze Age Aegean.²

As many papers in this volume highlight, the early Late Bronze Age (i.e. from the 17th to the early 14th century BC) was transformative socially, politically and culturally for the communities of the southern Aegean.³ It is also at this time that tombs and burials underwent a significant transformation, which is characterised by architectural experimentation, the introduction and spread of new tomb types – most prominently the tholos and chamber tombs that form the focus of this paper – and new funerary practices.

Two are the most striking phenomena of this transformation: an interest in progressively increasing tomb size, which is also accompanied by an increase in the tomb’s elaboration and the complexity of the layout; and the spiralling investment on behalf of those performing the funerals in the, often astonishing, quantity, quality, and diversity of objects with which they furnished certain burials. While the latter is not always easy to appreciate, not least because of extensive looting or disturbances to the assemblages from antiquity to the present day, the former – that I describe here as architectural monumentality – is a far more enduring reminder of the ‘arms race’ competition between communities across the Aegean to build larger and more elaborate funerary

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² For two recent reviews on Late Bronze Age burials, see Galanakis 2018 and Papadimitriou 2018.

³ Wright 2004; Wright 2006; Wright, this volume.

structures to house their dead. Such a systematic and prolonged architectural monumentalisation is unparalleled in its geographical spread in the Bronze Age Aegean.⁴

A number of recent discussions have highlighted the social significance of architecture, and of the built space in general,⁵ with tombs interpreted as material manifestations of social relations. This paper, inspired by these recent discussions, considers funerary monumentality as a proxy for identifying the development of shared cultural codes and craft practices and as another way for reconstructing multi-scale networks of interaction in the Late Bronze Age Aegean. In this paper I would like to compare chamber tombs to tholoi in early Mycenaean Greece – perhaps a rather odd choice for a topic, since a lot of the knowledge we have about chamber tombs derives from the later part of the Late Bronze Age, when this type spread widely, though unevenly, across the Aegean. Only a mere 2% of all known chamber tombs actually appear at present to have been built in LH I–IIA. On top of that, most of these tombs continued to receive burials in LH III, a practice that limits significantly our knowledge on how these early burials were treated and furnished. A better way to compare these tombs is actually afforded by their architecture and location in space – often the two best preserved features for tombs of this period.⁶ In order to achieve a better comparison, I will focus on the most monumental tholoi and chamber tombs from LH I to LH IIIA1 and their connections – or not – in terms of form and elaboration, their location in space and their clustering patterns with each other.⁷

Properties of the ‘Monumental’

Before moving to answering this question, it is worth assessing briefly the properties of the ‘monumental’. The word ‘monument’ derives from the Latin *monumentum/monimentum*, which in turn comes from the verb *monere* (to remind). Sharing the same Indo-European stem, in Greek we find the word *μνημείο*, deriving from the verb *μνάομαι/μυμνήσκω* (to remember), the same as *μνήμη* (memory). In both Greek and Latin, the words *μνημεῖο/μνημα* and *monumentum* progressively became synonymous with the tomb itself.⁸ Thus, in practical terms, the word ‘monument’ has a more flexible application referring to anything that can evoke memories (a memorial) and it need not be monumental in scale, magnitude and elaboration.

This powerful, though less tangible, element of the monumental lies in its ability to construct memories and subsequently mnemonic landscapes, as I have argued elsewhere.⁹ Monuments encapsulate meaning and can bring to mind past lives, emotions, concepts, associations and experiences. This fusion of the natural and social landscape, of the past with the present, the interaction between individuals, communities and the land, is more vividly marked by the construction of monuments. As products of human workmanship, they serve as witnesses to and reminders of something memorable. In the funerary context, this aspect would have been most

⁴ Architectural monumentality in the Aegean is certainly not restricted to the Late Bronze Age as several tombs and the palaces on Crete make clear. The Middle Bronze Age tumuli in mainland Greece were also impressive in size and, occasionally, in elaboration, enclosing an area of up to 500 m².

⁵ E.g. the proceedings of two international conferences (Maran et al. 2006; Bretschneider et al. 2007) and a series of independent studies, e.g. Galanakis 2009; Fitzsimons 2011; Brysbaert 2013.

⁶ The important work of Boyd 2014; Boyd 2015; Dabney 2016; Papadimitriou 2016, and Efkleidou 2019, has already covered some ground on this topic; see also Wright 2008 specifically on chamber tombs.

⁷ We must keep in mind that the appearance of these monuments has deteriorated significantly since they were built and there is also some uncertainty with regard to environmental and topographic changes that may affect the visibility of these monuments in antiquity (i.e. how they were actually seen in antiquity).

⁸ For references, see e.g. Liddell – Scott – Jones, s.v. *μνημεῖον* <<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsg/#eid=70385>>, and Thesaurus linguae Latinae, s.v. *monumentum (monimentum)* <<http://publikationen.badw.de/de/thesaurus/lemmata#60245>> (last access 11 Dec. 2020).

⁹ Galanakis 2011; The term ‘landscape’ is here understood as the engagement of people in particular places – ‘meaningful, socially constructed places involving bodily and cognitive experience’ (Wilson – David 2002, 6); on definitions of ‘landscapes’ see Taçon 2002.

clearly displayed during the construction of the tomb and its use for the funeral and post-funeral rites. In this respect, all tombs can be understood as monumental as they are able to set and keep individual and collective memories in motion, to evoke and maintain ideas and emotions, and to instigate collective attitudes and actions.

When examining monumental architecture in the Late Bronze Age Aegean, however, it is another popular definition that is commonly employed to identify and assess this phenomenon: ‘grandly imposing’.¹⁰ Several scholars have written about monumental architecture, following this definition, and its association with power – and the concept is not limited to one period or the Aegean for that matter.¹¹ Size and architectural elaboration¹² are the two most immediately and powerfully experienced properties of the monumental, especially when they “exceed the requirements of any practical function that a building is intended to perform” to use Bruce Trigger’s oft-quoted definition.¹³ The size and elaboration of monuments may instil awe, admiration and fear in the onlooker. In addition, the labour investment required for the construction of monumental tombs would have transformed the building site into a stage for the performance of power.¹⁴ Specifically in the case of tholos and chamber tombs, the amounts of soil that would have come out during their excavation would have required management, which in its own right would have formed a ‘grandly imposing’ spectacle. At the same time, the impressive size of some of the most monumental examples would have continued to do so, during the performance of the funeral rites and probably also long after.

The element of reuse brings us to another important property of the monumental, that of endurance, which in the case of most Late Bronze Age tombs appears to be reflected in their successive use, over many decades and sometimes centuries, for multiple burials. Although visibility is often combined with size and elaboration as an important parameter for identifying architectural monumentality, this is hardly the case in Late Bronze Age Aegean funerary architecture. With a few notable exceptions, the fragmented geomorphology of Greece often hinders attempts to elevate the prominence of monuments outside their immediate vicinity. This is not to say that the location they occupied was accidental or unimportant. Tombs may have taken up a special place in the socio-political, natural, religious or even legendary/eschatological landscape. In this respect, location and landscape associations, rather than visual prominence in its own right, may have been more important in dictating the setting of a tomb, at least for the most part in the Late Bronze Age Aegean.¹⁵ It is during the construction, initial use and perhaps certain post-funeral performances of and in the tomb that the community would have experienced the making of monumentality.

Like all aspects of architecture, monumentality is a social action. It needs builders and commissioners as much as it needs an audience. It thus depends largely on the experiences of the viewer and the participants, which may differ considerably through space and time, i.e. it is difficult to apply an absolute numerical value to monumentality since it is culturally specific and often based on the viewer’s experiences.¹⁶ Therefore, to consider a structure from an archaeological perspective as monumental is, to a large extent, a subjective, modern, analytical approach that depends on the existing data and the average size of tombs per period and per region. I would argue, however, that the examination of certain elements for identifying monumentality in Aegean Late Bronze

¹⁰ As, e.g., given in a common reference work like the Oxford English Dictionary.

¹¹ E.g. Renfrew 1973; Trigger 1990; Sherratt 1990; Bradley 1998; Scarre 2002; Thomas 2007; Scarre 2011; Thomas – Meyers 2012; Osborne 2014a (edited volume with numerous excellent papers on the topic of monumentality).

¹² By ‘architectural elaboration’, I refer here to the employment of sophisticated building techniques (e.g. ashlar masonry) and the presence of additional features to the main core of the tomb (e.g. finely cut or built doorways, side chambers, benches, deep façades, and long dromoi).

¹³ Trigger 1990, 119.

¹⁴ Along the lines described for Mycenae by Santillo Frizell 1997; Santillo Frizell 1999; Mason 2007.

¹⁵ As I have argued elsewhere, Galanakis 2011.

¹⁶ Osborne 2014b, 3–4 and 13, where he advocates a relational approach to monumentality: “to see monumentality [as] an ongoing, constantly renegotiated *relationship* between thing and person, between the monument(s) and the person(s) experiencing the monument”.

Age funerary architecture, such as the chamber area, the dromos length and the depth on the façade of a tomb, allows us to appreciate the scale of competition, the behaviour of different tomb types beyond our modern analytical boundaries and, perhaps more importantly, the role of form in shaping group identities.

Obviously, grasping the meaning of monumentality in antiquity is very difficult, as already mentioned. There can be no absolute definition of this term, only a relative one in the relationship that exists between a monument and the people experiencing it. One such relational viewpoint is afforded by the interest of, originally a few and progressively many more, tomb-using groups across the Aegean in increasing the size and elaboration of their funerary structures. As aptly phrased by Colin Renfrew, “competitive emulation is another form of interaction where neighbouring polities may be spurred to ever greater displays of wealth or power in an effort to achieve higher inter-polity status [...] The magnitude of these gestures has to be measured along some scale, and the gestures are thus similar in kind.”¹⁷ Following this line of thinking, funerary monumentality in early Mycenaean Greece can be understood as providing one such standard of measurement encouraging competitors to make their efforts similar to facilitate comparison with those of others.¹⁸ Monumentality can therefore be seen both as a social craft practice that produced and shaped shared cultural codes and common social values in early Mycenaean Greece, and a by-product of the competitive emulation that described the early Late Bronze Age societies in the Aegean.

Of Monumental Tholos and Chamber Tombs

As is well-known, chamber tombs share a close relationship with their built counterparts – the tholoi. Both emerged at a time of architectural experimentation and formed features of the wider changes that took place in mortuary practices, including the progressive separation of tombs from settlements.¹⁹ They share a similar layout that served practical as well as social purposes and facilitated or created additional space for ritual action. Both types also evolved into the containers par excellence for collective burials and exhibit considerable diversity in terms of size, quality of construction and burial furnishings, which appears to suggest that – from the very beginning – they were employed by groups with uneven access to resources, materials, manpower, contacts and also display strategies.

Yet chamber tombs, because of their rock-cut nature, their overall smaller size to tholoi, and their development, especially in LH III when they vastly outnumbered their built counterparts, often take a back seat, as it were, in discussions about monumentality and its uses in the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean. As a result, we miss an important point in the transformation of mortuary practices: namely, how people chose to represent themselves and why – and the impact this representation had on the landscapes in which they lived. Despite some recent efforts, also in this conference, I feel that Pascal Darcque’s plea in the *Thanatos* volume, to give more prominence to chamber tombs, should be followed more systematically if we are to better understand the multiplicity of uses built and rock-cut tombs served in the Late Bronze Age.²⁰ This plea is particularly important, in my view, in the early Mycenaean period when tholoi and chamber tombs competed well in the ‘arms race’ for architectural monumentality.

There are about 300 known Late Bronze Age tholoi in the Aegean, excluding the numerous LM IIIC examples. The average chamber area of all measurable Late Bronze Age examples is 23.50 m².²¹ (Fig. 1) For the purpose of my discussion here, I will use this average as significant

¹⁷ Renfrew 1986, 8.

¹⁸ Standardisation in material culture may also be understood as a social strategy that encourages comparison.

¹⁹ With the exception of Volimidia perhaps, prior to LH IIB, it is even difficult to speak of chamber tomb cemeteries.

²⁰ Darcque 1987.

²¹ The median of all measurable Late Bronze Age examples is 12.56 m². For the early Mycenaean period, both the average (31.60 m²) and the median (20 m²) of measurable tholoi is higher than the whole Late Bronze Age measur-

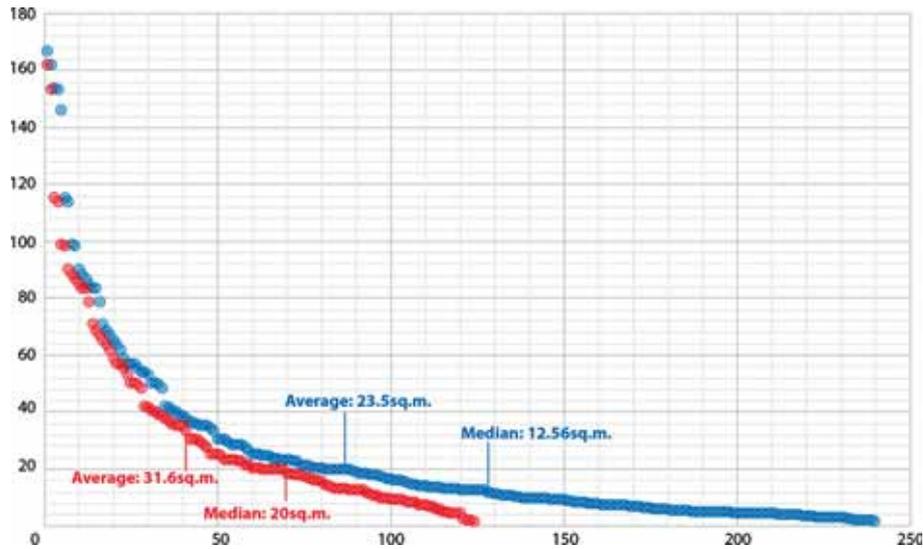


Fig. 1: Graph showing all measurable Late Bronze Age tholos tombs (in blue), excluding LM IIIC examples. The y-axis gives the chamber area in m². A blue dot refers to each of the 246 measurable examples (82% of all known tholoi). Red dots represent only the early Mycenaean examples. Average and median chamber areas are also indicated (Y. Galanakis)

in defining monumentality in tholos architecture cross-regionally and also across the Late Bronze Age acknowledging, however, the obvious limitations and dangers this broad-stroke approach entails, not least as size is one of many elements in the construction and elaboration of a monument, and there are also significant chronological and geographical fluctuations. Of all known tholoi, 67 examples are above 23.50 m² – almost one out of every four extant tholoi. Most of them were built in the early Mycenaean period with a peak in LH IIA, when the average size of all new examples was 53.33 m². (Fig. 2)

Although the interest in building large tholoi continued in LH IIB–IIIA1, especially outside the core palatial areas, the increase that is observed in the overall numbers of new tholoi contrasts sharply with the drop observed in both the numbers of new monumental examples and, more importantly, with the general drop in the chamber area of new tholoi built in this period. In short, in LH IIB–IIIA1, we may have more new tholoi built than ever before, but they are, overall, smaller in comparison to their LH IIA predecessors and there are now fewer monumental examples amongst them. With the exception of Atreus, Clytemnestra and Minyas, monumentality in tholos architecture dropped significantly across the Aegean in LH IIIA2 and early in LH IIIB, and appears to have disappeared completely by 1250 BC.

Apart from the hybrid Thorikos Tomb IV, which appears to blend elements of tholos and built chamber tomb architecture, all other known monumental tholoi dating to the end of the Middle Bronze Age or LH I are found exclusively in the southwest Peloponnese. It is during LH IIA that we see a spread of tholos monumentality to Analipsis in Arkadia, several sites in the northeast Peloponnese, and possibly also other Aegean regions. The regions added to this group in LH IIB–IIIA1 are Crete (mainly around Knossos), Achaia, Lakonia, Aitolo-Akarnania and Thessaly (mainly around the bay of Volos). Obviously a lot of these early monumental examples have been found looted, so it is very difficult to compare their assemblages and burial practices – yet in the vast majority of cases, what remains of their original assemblage suggests a good correlation between the size of these structures and the funerary elaboration of the burials they once

able corpus. The measurements shown here in Figs. 1–2 do not include the two recently discovered Tholoi VI and VII at Pylos.

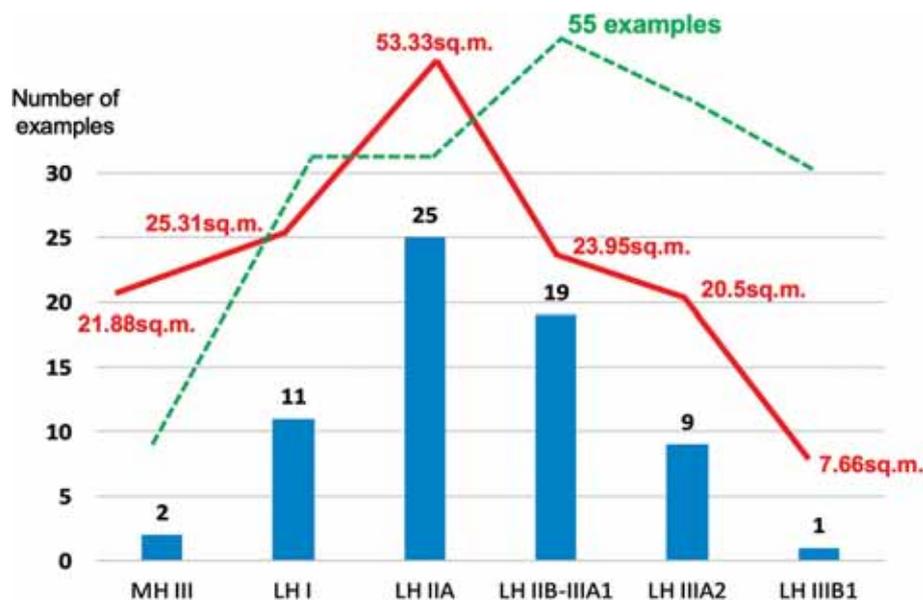


Fig. 2: Graph showing the number of examples of monumental tholoi (i.e. with a chamber >23.50m²) per period in columns. These columns are juxtaposed to overall examples of measurable tholoi per period (in green) and their average chamber area in m² (in red) (Y. Galanakis)

housed,²² with all the different social gradations as the papers in this volume by Christine de Vree and Michaela Zavadil make clear.

Chamber tombs are far more numerous than tholoi and this element has of course contributed to identifying this type as the burial receptacle par excellence for ‘ordinary people’, however one defines this term, from Christos Tsountas’ day to the present. The c. 4000 known chamber tombs are attested in 18 Aegean regions and around 350 sites, though 82% are actually concentrated in just seven of these regions, with the top-20 largest cemeteries yielding 53.50% of the total number of all known examples.²³ The vast majority (97.50%) were built during LH IIB–IIIC (and especially LH IIB–IIIA2). For c. 1500 of these examples (c. 40% of the total), we have measurements available, mostly of the chamber area (significantly smaller when compared to the 82% of tholoi, the measurements of which are more frequently given in preliminary reports). Despite noteworthy regional variations (e.g. in terms of number of chamber tombs per region and per site, and their size and quality of construction), no Aegean region has yielded an average chamber area >15m², with the average in the Aegean being 7.86m², i.e. three times smaller than the average of the Late Bronze Age tholoi (Fig. 3).²⁴ If we expand this analysis to the averages per site, this discrepancy is even more prominent.²⁵

²² Although smaller tombs may occasionally have been built in anticipation of fewer burials or for accommodating burials of children, there is enough data to suggest that the size of a chamber tomb was not limited by these two criteria: e.g. at Prosymna, while Tomb 52 was indeed small (3.85m²) and apparently yielded only two burials, the more sizeable Tomb 10 (11.57m²) also had two burials. Tomb 26 (24.21m²) apparently contained only five burials, whereas Tombs 45 (6.55m²) and 46 (5.31m²), though four and five times smaller, contained respectively 26 and 19 burials. These numbers are based on Blegen’s skulls and skeleton counts (Blegen 1937, 93–97 [T 26], 116–117 [T 52], 197–200 [T 10], 218–220 [T 45], 221–223 [T 46]).

²³ For the tholos tombs, I rely on my PhD work (Galanakis 2008) with updates. For chamber tombs, I started my own research by consulting the work of Spyridoula Kontorli-Papadopoulou (Papadopoulos 1975), the last major study in Aegean archaeology on chamber tombs across the whole of the Late Bronze Age Aegean. I have significantly updated this work with my own data collected as a Tytus Fellow at the University of Cincinnati.

²⁴ Given that preliminary reports tend to record large(r) rather than small(er) chamber tombs, we must expect that the average per region and the Aegean as a whole is <7.86m².

²⁵ Certain clusters of chamber tombs at Mycenae feature averages significantly higher than the Aegean or regional average: e.g. Alepotrypa-Ayios Georgios: 37.84m²; Panagia-Epano Pigadi: 23.60m²; Kato Phournos: 23.42m².

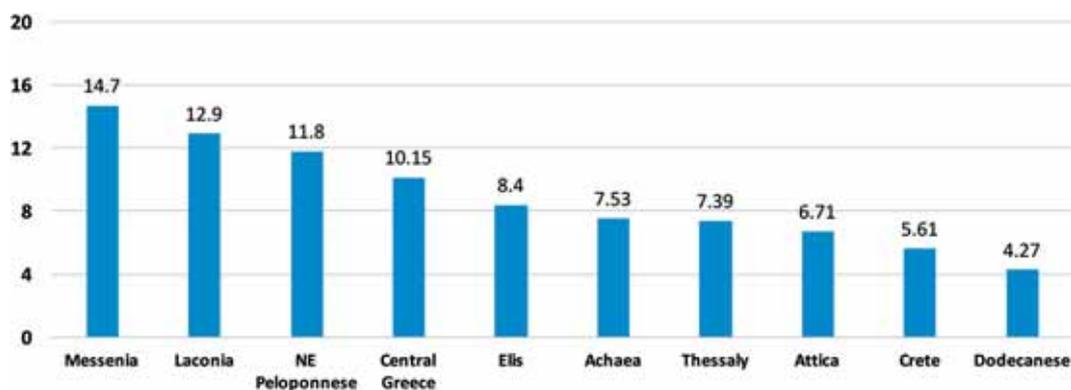


Fig. 3: Averages of chamber area in m² of measurable Late Bronze Age chamber tombs in the Aegean (c. 40% of all known examples) (Y. Galanakis)

Can a cross-regional cut-off point, as it were, be identified for monumentality in rock-cut architecture? We could use the average of tholoi as a common standard – or the chamber tombs average that I have just mentioned. However, the observation made, some time ago, by William Cavanagh and Christopher Mee,²⁶ that there seems to be a distinct upper echelon of chamber tombs that most frequently display good quality of construction and elaboration is, I think, more useful for understanding monumentality in rock-cut architecture. Most of these upper echelon examples feature a chamber larger than 15 m², which in LH II–III A may indeed have formed one such ‘common standard of measurement’. Yet as with tholoi, this 15 m² cut-off point should be treated cautiously and as a number of convenience for the purpose of a broad-stroke cross-regional comparative discussion on monumentality rather than as an absolute value.

From the corpus of chamber tombs for which measurements exist, some 210 examples are equipped with chambers with an area larger than 15 m².²⁷ These examples are attested in 69 sites in the Aegean in 14 different regions (Fig. 4). Very large chamber tombs tend to make an appearance early on, already in LH I, with almost twenty more examples added in LH IIA, including the largest chamber tomb known to date – Pellana Tomb 2 in Lakonia (c. 80 m²). Interestingly, most of these early examples are tholoid in shape; that is, they look like a tholos in cross section,²⁸ a practice that may well relate to the social prominence afforded to this form by the built tholoi. It is, however, during LH IIB–III A1 that the construction of monumental chamber tombs gathers momentum (71 examples), by comparison to that of tholoi, with a good number of rock-cut examples across the Aegean now featuring very large chambers. Most of these LH IIB–III A1 monumental chamber tombs are equipped with rectilinear chambers with flat or pitched roofs, though tholoid tombs continue to be built. The construction of large chamber tombs continues in LH III A2 and early in LH IIIB, until in the 13th century BC architectural monumentality, as a whole, becomes a thing of the past in the funerary realm.²⁹

While in Messenia the appearance of chamber tombs may have constituted an emulative reaction to tholoi,³⁰ outside the southwest Peloponnese these tombs are found – in limited numbers – before the earliest known tholoi were built: e.g. at Mycenae, Prosymna, and Kokla in

²⁶ Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 66, describe chamber tombs with an area >16 m² as belonging to a “distinct upper echelon”.

²⁷ At present these 210 examples stand for c. 14% of all known chamber tombs for which measurements exist. However, as mentioned in n. 24, preliminary reports more often indicate the size of large(r) tombs than the size of small(er) tombs. This percentage may well be distorted, i.e. large(r) tombs across the Aegean stand for <10% of all extant examples.

²⁸ Iakovidis 1966.

²⁹ For the recently discovered LH III A monumental tomb at Prosilio near Orchomenos in Boiotia see <<https://chronique.efa.gr/?kroute=report&id=6170>> (last access 19 Nov. 2020). The Prosilio tomb is not included in the graph shown in Fig. 4.

³⁰ Wright 2008, 147.

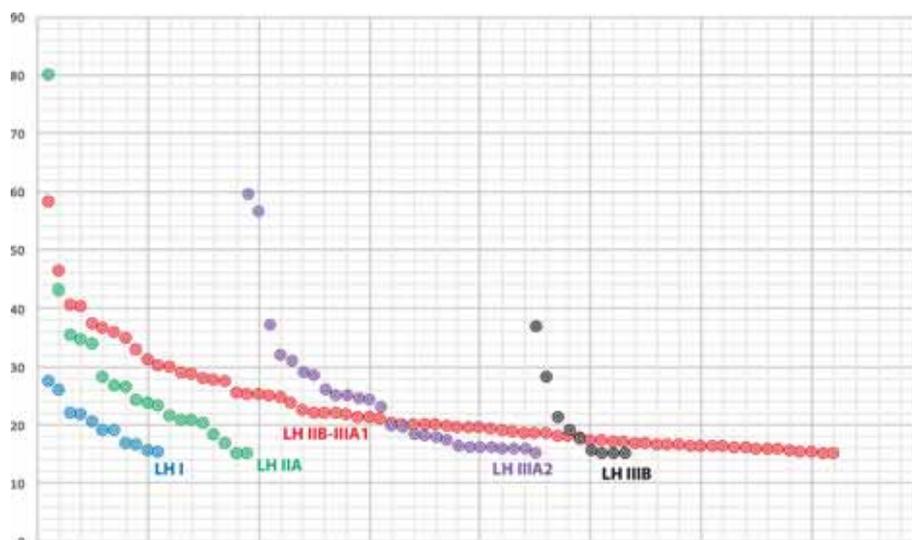


Fig. 4: Graph of monumental chamber tombs (i.e. with a chamber area $>15\text{ m}^2$) per period. Each dot represents an individual measurable and datable example (only 138 of the c. 210 extant monumental chamber tombs can be dated with any certainty). The y-axis refers to chamber area in m^2 with Pellana Tomb 2 marking the largest known example (c. 80 m^2) (Y. Galanakis)

the Argolid – and also at sites where no tholoi are as yet attested (e.g. at Epidauros Limera and Thebes and now also Spata).³¹ With the exception of Pellana and Thebes, monumentality in LH IIA chamber tombs actually appears to become a trend of the northeast Peloponnese. Of the 45 LH IIA monumental tholoi and chamber tombs that we can assign to this period, 30 of them were built in the northeast Peloponnese. All in all, chamber tombs could do monumentality as much as tholoi in LH IIA – and there is reason to believe that at certain sites and regions, the monumental chamber tombs of LH IIB–III A1 represent expressions of power as much as tholoi did elsewhere. By LH IIB–III A1, monumental chamber tombs appeared in Achaia, Crete and Antheia in Messenia, while numbers also increased in the Argolid, Attica, Boiotia, Elis, and possibly also central Greece. Examples constructed during this period can also be elaborate, featuring fascias on the doors, side chambers and equipped systematically with long dromoi ($>20\text{ m}$ long) and very deep façades (up to 10 m deep).

Similarly to tholoi, most of these monumental chamber tombs are frequently found pillaged. Despite this shortcoming, however, some general observations can be made: e.g. large chamber tombs that were built in LH I or in LH IIIB appear to display little correlation between the size of their chamber and its burial furnishings, whereas large chamber tombs built during LH II–III A show a stronger correlation between the quality, quantity and diversity of objects they once accommodated and their architectural elaboration (again with notable gradations in the wealth of these assemblages as noted above).

Although my discussion so far has been about the chamber size, the most visible part of these monumental tombs, for whatever length of time they stayed open, was not actually the chamber but the façade and the dromos that preceded it – both elements that in LH IIA, and in subsequent periods, became essential components of the most elaborate and monumental examples. For the rock-cut chamber tombs, a long dromos could indeed provide the necessary depth for the creation of a keyhole shaped passageway and of a deep façade equipping the tomb with an extra element of theatricality and the participants with a stronger transformative transition from the world of the living to the world of the dead. While these elements were not universally adopted, several

³¹ Gallou 2009 (Epidauros Limera); Tzavella-Evjen 2014 (Thebes); for Spata: Stathi – Psallida 2020. I would like to thank Prof. Sevi Triantaphyllou for bringing the new Spata tombs to my attention.

tomb-using groups made use of them, achieving impressive results (especially in LH II–III A), from Tombs 15 and 505 at Mycenae to the Kastelli tombs at Thebes, to name but some of the most famous examples with impressive rock-cut dromoi, up to 35 m in length, and dramatic façades, up to 10 m deep.

In tholos architecture there is, frequently, a structural correlation between the height of the façade and the size of the chamber – that is to say, the bigger the diameter of a tholos, the taller its chamber and also the taller its stomion and façade. As a result, those who might not have been eligible to go inside a tholos could still get a pretty good idea of its monumentality by looking at its façade. What appears to be of no structural correlation in tholoi is the length of the dromos, a point to which I return below.³²

In rock-cut architecture, however, there is no such structural inter-dependency: the size of the chamber is not *structurally* tied to the depth of the façade or the height of the stomion. Yet, in the most monumental rock-cut examples built in LH II and III A, we frequently find sizeable chambers being combined with deep façades and long dromoi, a correlation that resulted in these tombs achieving a similar visual effect to that of tholoi (especially if we take into account that some of these early tholoi also appear to have had their façade originally covered with plaster). Should we then interpret this effort to correlate these elements in rock-cut architecture as an attempt to emulate tholoi in LH II?

In my view, the key to answer this question lies in the dromoi of these tombs, which in rock-cut architecture do appear to correlate well with the depth of the façade; one such example is Tomb 505 at Mycenae, which was probably built in LH III A. That is to say that if the builders of monumental rock-cut tombs were to achieve a similar effect to that of tholoi from outside, they had to provide the tomb with a rather long dromos. I agree with Nikolas Papadimitriou³³ that the addition of the dromos to Late Bronze Age tomb architecture did not just fulfil practical concerns, but also provided the necessary space for ritual action and for the culmination of the funeral procession – both of these elements, practical and ritual, supported the social concerns of the tomb-using groups, who, by constructing deep façades and long dromoi, found another way to advertise power.

In this respect, tholoi and chamber tombs should be understood as mutually reinforcing types – similar groups of builders may have even been used in the construction of both; and occasionally expertise and knowledge from the building of one tomb may have been transferred to the construction of another (with the obvious disclaimer that tholoi are built, and require extra work, and chamber tombs are rock-cut). To use a phrase recently coined by Michael Boyd, some early tholoi at least may have indeed behaved as ‘chamber-tomb imitating’ in the early Mycenaean period – not only on a symbolic level, but also on a spatial, ritual and architectural level.³⁴ After all, architectural experimentation is one of the characteristic elements of the early Mycenaean period – and nowhere is this blending of tholos and chamber tomb architecture better exemplified than in the case of the Kokla tholos – a “hybrid between a tholos and a chamber tomb”.³⁵

³² There appear to be, however, some notable regional ‘traditions’: e.g. a long and deep stomion was not of interest to the tholoi-using groups in Achaia and Aitolio-Akarnania where low, narrow, funnel-shaped stomia were preferred (Galanakis 2008).

³³ Papadimitriou 2015.

³⁴ Boyd 2015, 440.

³⁵ Voutsaki 1995, 61.

To Carve a Tholos or to Build One?

The Kokla tholos was not the first tomb to be built at this site on the southwest edge of the Argive Plain. Two chamber tombs had already been built in LH I, and two more were added in LH IIA.³⁶ About 25 m from this cluster, the tholos was built in LH IIB.³⁷ From outside and – most remarkably – *also from inside*, the Kokla tholos would have given the impression of a monumental rock-cut chamber tomb (5.40 m in diameter). It was equipped with a very long, steeply descending, rock-cut dromos (23 m) and a very deep façade (7 m) (Fig. 5). The rock surface above the entrance was coated with a thick layer of clay and plaster, on which a painting of blue and red discs, with a zone of fine blue lines on a whitish ground, was found.³⁸ The stomion of the Kokla tholos, the dimensions of which are closer to those encountered in chamber tombs,³⁹ was a combination of built and rock-cut architecture: its sides were lined with stones and on top it was covered with a single lintel.⁴⁰ No built superstructure existed above it, only bedrock. The chamber, built of unworked flattish stones, was coated with a thick layer of clay, an element⁴¹ only partly preserved but reinforcing further the rock-cut appearance of this structure. Clearly, what mattered for this tomb-using group was the construction of an impressive funerary structure equipped with a round chamber. This tomb, with a chamber area of 23 m², is just under the cut-off point I set earlier for defining architectural monumentality in tholoi; but it sits comfortably within the group of monumental chamber tombs. In LH IIA, at least, whether the tomb was built or rock-cut may not have been the biggest criterion for highlighting the social significance of the individuals buried therein.⁴²

This attempt to develop common standards of measurement and appearance in early Mycenaean Greece was not limited to the blending of architectural and performative elements in tholos and chamber tombs, but also extended in the placement of these tombs in the landscape. Boyd⁴³ has convincingly shown, in my view, how the construction of chamber tombs far from the settlement may have pulled other tomb-using groups in that direction. In LH IIA, probably as early as the end of LH I, the monumental tholos appears to dominate over the small, crudely built tholoi, at least outside of the southwest Peloponnese,⁴⁴ as already mentioned above. However, a few large, well-carved rock-cut tholoid tombs may have notionally held the same significance as their monumental built counterparts at this early stage. At Mycenae, for example, the only prominent location without a tholos tomb (Alepotrypa – Tsountas' Kalkani) is dominated in LH II by some very large rock-cut tholoid tombs: Tomb 84 (7.14 m in diameter⁴⁵ with a deep façade, c. 6 m)⁴⁶ and Tomb 83 (8.20 m in maximum diameter). Carved on the slopes of the Alepotrypa cemetery, at the southwest end of the Mycenae funerary landscape and in a completely distinct location from all the other early tholoi at Mycenae, the location of these tombs welcomes visitors to the site, that is when approach-

³⁶ For the sequence of tomb construction and use at Kokla, see Demakopoulou 1993; Demakopoulou – Aulsebrook 2018.

³⁷ I agree with the excavator, Dr Katie Demakopoulou, and Fitzsimons's date (2007, 101–102 n. 26) for the construction of the Kokla tholos in LH IIB or early in LH IIIA1.

³⁸ Demakopoulou – Aulsebrook 2018, 121–122 and figs. 3–4.

³⁹ Based on the published plan, c. 1.50 × 1.40 m: Demakopoulou 1990, fig. 2.

⁴⁰ I would like to thank Dr Demakopoulou for providing this information to me.

⁴¹ This is, so far, the only instance where this element (the clay coating covering the masonry of a tholos) is attested.

⁴² I am of the opinion that the Kokla tholos was originally used for burials and that it was not a cenotaph. The fire on the floor may denote a final-act ritual in the history of use of the tomb; see Galanakis 2016a.

⁴³ Boyd 2015, 438–442.

⁴⁴ It is worth noting that the LH I tholoi outside the Peloponnese are hybrids and associated with coastal sites: Thorikos IV (a built chamber tomb behaving like a tholos or a tholos behaving like a built chamber tomb) and Magoula Tomb 3 near Galatas, which also appears to make an effort to emulate tholos architecture, hence the comparison by Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2015 of Tomb 3 with the Cretan circular tombs of the Mesara type.

⁴⁵ Given as “6.90–7.80 m” in Xenaki-Sakellariou 1985, 239.

⁴⁶ Based on Spyros Iakovidis' section published by Danielidou 2001, 162, fig. 1.



Fig. 5: The dromos and façade of the hybrid Kokla tholos tomb in the Argolid (courtesy of Dr Katie Demakopoulou)

ing it from the southwest.⁴⁷ Could these rock-cut examples have been the ‘tholoi’ of Alepotrypa in LH II?

Monumentality in chamber tomb architecture may have triggered the construction of more monumental tholoi and vice-versa in the northeast Peloponnese. At nearby Prosymna, for example, the round form appears to have been a key component of monumentality in LH IIA as rock-cut Tombs 2, 7 and 44 suggest. Until the construction of the built tholos, late in LH IIA or LH IIB–IIIA1,⁴⁸ these tholoid rock-cut tombs were the largest and most elaborate funerary structures at Prosymna. These examples were part of clusters of chamber tombs that were the richest at this site in terms of burial furnishings. Not only are these tombs finely built, they also feature very long, unlined, dromoi (17.25 m in Tomb 2 and 18.80 m in Tomb 44, thus comparable to the 18 m-long lined dromos of the tholos), deep façades (7 m in Tomb 2 and 6.30 m in Tomb 44, thus possibly also comparable to that of the tholos, which was equipped with a larger entrance⁴⁹) and in the case of Tomb 2 a beautifully painted façade – a practice most likely

first developed in the northeast Peloponnese – adorned with a spiralforn decoration⁵⁰ (Fig. 6).

The three Prosymna chamber tombs 2, 7, and 44 are also among the largest in the cemetery (only Tombs 25–26, built in LH I, are actually larger) with round chambers up to 25 m² (only the tholos has a significantly larger diameter 9.50 m and an area of 70.85 m²). They were also built near the area of the LH settlement and at the opposite end from where the tholos was later built⁵¹ (the opposite pattern really from the one I mentioned for Mycenae). The positioning of the tholos, away from the LH IIA monumental chamber tombs and on the road to Mycenae – whether for ritual or social reasons or both – highlights further, in my view, the ways in which the competition

⁴⁷ Its use is dated by Danielidou 2001, 164, to LH IIIA–B, but may well have also been built in LH IIA when the construction of these tombs is more frequent. Tomb 70, also part of the same cluster, with a long dromos (8.30 m and possibly longer), and a diameter of 4.20–4.50 m may have been contemporary to Tombs 83–84 or a bit later. On the location of these graves, see Shelton 1995, 206–207, fig. 6. There is also the possibility of a further tholoid tomb, unreported by Tsountas, from the same area as the aforementioned tombs: 18 91/IG–KS of the Mycenaean survey with a dromos 15.24 m long and a chamber 5.02 m in diameter (Shelton 1995, 207).

⁴⁸ Fitzsimons 2007, 101–102 n. 26, correctly in my view, dates the construction of the Prosymna tholos to shortly after LH IIA, probably in LH IIB–IIIA1.

⁴⁹ Length: 4.40 m × Width: 2 m × Height: 4.50 m when compared to Tomb 2: Length: 1.60 m × Width: 1.36 m × Height: 2.60 m.

⁵⁰ Gallou 2005, 67–69; Sgouritsa 2011.

⁵¹ The Prosymna tholos actually belongs to the same architectural tradition as the Mycenaean tholoi, as already noted by Wace – Holland 1921/1923, 330 n.1; for the special connection between Mycenae and Prosymna, see also Wright 1987; Wright 2006.



Fig. 6: The façade of Tomb 2 at Prosymna in the Argolid, digitally processed by the author. Original drawings (façade and painted frieze) by P. de Jong (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

gabled roofs and side chambers). While tholoid tombs – built and rock-cut – continued to be built in LH IIB–IIIA, in monumental chamber tomb architecture one most frequently finds the rectilinear examples with a flat or pitched roof.⁵⁶ Perhaps alluding with its design to the idea of ‘family’ or ‘community’, in a metonymic way, their widespread distribution coincides with the expansion of chamber tomb cemeteries that by this time may well express what James Wright calls the institutionalisation of the funerary landscape within the new world of palace-based economy in the southern Aegean.⁵⁷

between tomb-using groups shaped LH II funerary architecture and the landscapes these groups lived in.⁵² As Bernhard Steinmann has recently argued for Prosymna, the competition between these tomb-using groups may well reveal power struggle at a site and regional level before the consolidation of the palatial system.⁵³ Could the Prosymna tholos, built late in LH IIA or in LH IIB–IIIA1, denote a social change, perhaps even the incorporation of the site within the sphere of power of Mycenae?⁵⁴

It is also during LH IIA, perhaps exactly because of this frenzy in creating bigger and more elaborate tombs, that another very distinct rock-cut chamber form now became consolidated, the rectilinear chamber with a pitched, arched or flat roof which equally featured long dromoi, deep façades and impressive burials (e.g. at Dendra and possibly also Mycenae),⁵⁵ indicating further the multiplicity of forms, techniques and levels of elaboration available for going monumental in the funerary context of LH II–IIIA mainland Greece, i.e. the period when ‘complexity’ became institutionalised in this part of the Mediterranean. The protruding mounds covering tholoi may have visually emulated tumuli; chamber tombs may have emulated tholoi or the architecture of the living (with their

⁵² Proximity to the settlement or prominent (earlier) graves appears to have affected, in some cases at least, the placement of tombs in the landscape (e.g. Pylos and Mycenae). See also Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

⁵³ Steinmann 2020.

⁵⁴ E.g. in a similar manner to that suggested by Bennet 1995, 599–601, for the MME tholos at Nichoria in LH IIIA2 as perhaps reflecting the expansion of the Pylian state in this part of Messenia.

⁵⁵ See e.g. Zavadil 2007 and Galanakis 2016b, with additional references.

⁵⁶ Though see also the idiosyncratic Voudeni examples (Kolonas 2009): e.g. Tomb 5 has a round plan and a tholos roof (LH IIB–IIIA1), while Tomb 9 has a rectilinear plan and tholos roof (LH IIIA2). Tombs 75 and 77, some of the largest in the cemetery and both probably built in LH IIIA1, have very long dromoi, deep façades, rectilinear chambers and pyramidal roofs with rounded corners. On labour investment in the construction of the Voudeni tombs, see now Turner 2020.

⁵⁷ Wright 2008, who is correct in pointing out that we should not be looking at tholoi and chamber tombs merely as ‘types’ adopted solely in preference for a new style of burial. The adoption (and eventual abandonment) of these funerary forms across the Aegean must be more critically evaluated, not least as some tomb-using groups were eager to adopt them while others resisted or rejected them altogether. Yet, and while I accept Wright’s premise

That tholoi and chamber tombs were more dynamically used in the service of social competition in early Mycenaean Greece might also be suggested by their infrequent coexistence (the Argolid in this respect forming the exception rather than the rule). While tholoi occasionally coexist with other tholoi, they are rarely found side by side with other graves, a pattern that does not appear to be just a bias of uneven archaeological research. For example, when they coexist with tumuli and built graves, tholoi not only post-date them but also constitute an additional form of elaboration – the next must-have type of grave, so to speak. One out of approximately ten tholoi in the Aegean appears at present to coexist, in the broader landscape, with chamber tombs (13% of all known cases).⁵⁸ Even then, they are rarely found side by side – and almost three out of four monumental chamber tombs are found at sites where no tholos is as yet attested. Whenever this coexistence is observed, however, the tholoi are always the largest funerary structures, with only one exception: the tiny LM IIIA1 Armenoi tholos on Crete (4.30 m²), perhaps the earliest tomb and only tholos in this massive cemetery full of chamber tombs, some of which are monumental. Yet the built nature of the Armenoi tomb and its early date of construction in the cemetery's sequence of use may have given it more social prominence than its size would suggest.⁵⁹ Caution is therefore needed when attempting to equate size with political power and social complexity with particular tomb types, consequently assuming that the construction of the monumental structures was undertaken solely on the basis of facilitating political subjectivity.⁶⁰

Ma(r)king Mortuary Landscapes in Early Mycenaean Greece

Social dynamics, ideological and/or religious reasons may have all influenced the choice of tomb, with the various expressions changing position within this notional hierarchy of types across the Late Bronze Age and between the various Aegean regions. What we urgently need are more publications of cemeteries where the sequence of use of the various tombs can be established so that we can start grasping, with an even finer resolution, possible chronological nuances and different trends across space and time.⁶¹

Until a finer resolution is achieved, however, we can summarise the current situation in the following manner: monumentality in tholos and chamber tombs in early Mycenaean Greece provided an impressive stage for funerary performances and the common standards of measurement needed by some groups to make their efforts similar in order to facilitate comparison with those of their competitors. Standardisation – in funerary architecture and practice – should therefore not be equated, necessarily or exclusively, with the end of social competition or even the formalisation of the palatial system. What this standardisation may reveal is the strengthening of shared codes and values, a process that in mainland Greece started already in the Middle Bronze Age. This emulation and standardisation should, therefore, be understood not as linear or stemming from one source – but rather as the result of cross-regional contacts. Take, for example, the possible

for a fundamental realignment and reorganisation of socio-political and economic relations also affecting funerary forms and practices (alongside perhaps religious/cosmological changes), at the same time I am not entirely convinced that chamber tombs spread (only or exclusively) as a 'family burial receptacle' par excellence across the Aegean. While this interpretation may hold true for some regions (e.g. northeast Peloponnese), it may not be enough for explaining the adoption (or lack thereof) of these tombs in other areas of the Aegean (e.g. Crete, Dodecanese, Thessaly, etc.), where we may be dealing with different social agendas and groupings.

⁵⁸ Monumental chamber tombs are often found in clusters and rarely in isolation.

⁵⁹ On the Armenoi tholos: Papadopoulou 1997.

⁶⁰ I do not think, for example, that Thebes and Chania, where monumental chamber tombs are attested but as yet no tholoi, were less 'palatial'. The dynamic use of tomb forms is underlined further, in my view, by sites with tholoi, housing rich and elaborate burials, but so far no monumental examples of chamber tombs (e.g. Englianos, Tiryns, and the Volos area to mention but a few notable cases).

⁶¹ For some recent studies in this direction, see Fitzsimons 2007; Boyd 2014; Boyd 2015. On labour investment, especially in the construction of chamber tombs, see Turner 2020.

imitation of the tholoid form from Messenia to the Argolid, perhaps via Arkadia and Lakonia, as LH IIA examples at Palaiokastros and Pellana suggest (both sites also forming connection nodes between regions). In addition, in the northeast Peloponnese at least, the monumental frenzy of LH IIA may have produced the form of the rectangular chamber tomb (frequently with a rock-cut gabled roof) which was copied (also in a monumental form) across most of southern and central mainland Greece. This frenzy, however, should not be understood just as a matter of fashion; but as a process involving the adoption and adaptation of material expressions conducive to generating particular actions (e.g. in relation to the funeral) and compatible with (pre-)existing or emerging cosmologies and social practices.

Monumentality emerged and came into the service of competing groups more systematically than ever before at the end of the Middle Bronze Age/early Late Bronze Age in the Aegean. Although the tholos became, in certain regions (e.g. the Argolid) and certain sites (e.g. Mycenae), the ultimate tomb type for elite display and the competitive conspicuous consumption of regional and pan-Aegean elites, at the same time it may not have gone uncontested early in the Late Bronze Age with chamber tombs also frequently displaying elements of monumentality and an attempt for magnitude and elaboration. In some other regions (e.g. central Greece) and sites (e.g. Thebes, Chania, Pellana), the chamber tomb may indeed have retained its monumental character even in LH IIB–IIIA1 and also late in the Late Bronze Age. It is the heavy emphasis of Mycenaean scholarship on the Argolid and Messenia that has shaped and blurred our understanding of how tomb forms were used in the long Late Bronze Age in the Aegean and we need to move beyond this model.

We treat tholos and chamber tombs as analytical categories. We still often forget that these are our modern categories and that within them there is great diversity in terms of their popularity across the Aegean, their chronological distribution and prominence, and also in terms of their architecture – from small and crudely built tholoi to monumental chamber tombs. Although, for example, in the Argolid tholoi are consistently monumental and chamber tombs show greater variety in size, elaboration and the burials they contained, in other regions tholoi display an equally impressive level of variation with chamber tombs being at times more energy expensive and more monumental, e.g. at Armenoi on Crete or at Voudeni in Achaia, where chamber tombs are more monumental than the local tholoi.

The clearly articulated door jambs, occasionally decorated with carved fascias or painted, the frequent employment of long dromoi and deep façades and of well-carved round or rectangular chambers, with further embellishment (e.g. benches, gabled or tholoid roofs, side chambers, doors, etc.), speak in favour of a shared and widely recognisable ‘architectural style’ of power in chamber tomb and tholos architecture – a style that, although not limited to large tombs, appears to have found its most elaborate expression in the most monumental examples. The three regions that appear, based on the extant record, to have most profoundly shaped the funerary architecture of the Late Bronze Age Aegean are the southwest and northeast Peloponnese and Crete. Although inspiration for the tholos and the chamber tomb may well have originated in Messenia, it was the competition between regions and communities that helped shape the material culture of the Late Bronze Age. The development of a distinctive style (‘Mycenaean’) can thus be seen as a result of the interaction, competitive consumption and social transformation of Aegean societies to palace-based economies.⁶²

Following this line of thinking, material uniformity and diversity in the funerary record can be interpreted as representing social and regional strategies for the promotion of specific social identities and their agendas – i.e. two different sides of the same coin. It is within the framework of architectural traditions and craft practices that I propose to interpret the funerary monumentality of the Aegean: shared by some, rejected by others and possibly deemed very difficult by

⁶² On the meaning of ‘Mycenaean’, see Bennet 1999; Sherratt 2005; Mac Sweeney 2008; also Preston 2000, Vol. 1, 57–75.

most (because they lacked the knowledge, or the people/logistics, or the materials or they were not allowed to do so, or any combination of the above). The sharing also extends to burial practices to the point that we often find specific artefactual types and categories of objects included in these most elaborate, monumental and richly-furnished tombs as if these tomb burying groups were following a checklist of things that had to be included in an elite burial.⁶³ The replication of certain architectural forms and practices appears to have become for certain members of society an important aspect of their socio-political discourse and a point of measuring ‘competitive emulation’.⁶⁴

Tombs in the Late Bronze Age Aegean became the façade and setting, the ideal theatrical backdrop, for the performance of elaborate funerary ceremonies and acts of power. Depending on their context, the many landscapes of chamber tombs and tholoi appear to reveal complex social strategies in a politically dynamic period for Aegean affairs. Shaped by, and also shaping, the politics of the time, monumental tombs, with their use and reuse, created competing social narratives and long-lasting mnemonic landscapes that by LH IIIA2–B were engrained with the palace-based economy and its ideology for most regions in the southern Aegean. In my view, the aforementioned analysis re-affirms the existing notion that there is no clear-cut equation ‘tholos’ = ‘king’ and ‘chamber tomb’ = ‘ordinary people’. While in specific regions, tholoi and chamber tombs may have acquired an institutionalised function, in other areas local practices and social concerns appear to have affected their numbers, appearance and use.

Conclusion

Monumental architecture shaped the visual world of the Aegean for the entire Late Bronze Age, both in areas that were to become part of palace-based states, and also in areas that were adjacent to, yet not fully integrated by these states.⁶⁵ Monumentality, in the world of the living and the world of the dead, is probably the most consistent feature in the material culture of the period under examination – one that, I would argue, would have been recognisable and legible among communities from across the different Aegean regions, especially from LH IIB to LH IIIB. Funerary architecture, and the associated burials, was shaped to a large extent by the interaction of social groups that strove for most of the early Late Bronze Age to establish their power and prominence over their competitors by outdoing them. Although the very act of building a monumental tomb or performing a rich burial may not have sufficed for achieving this goal,⁶⁶ both may have helped provide a visual and material testimony of the shared ideology/cosmology that was emerging in the Aegean.

In this paper I have attempted to develop a threefold argument: first, that ‘monumentality’ can be understood as a meaningful emic category that helped to provide a standard of comparison for those involved in its production (and use), whether in a local, regional or supra-regional context. Secondly, we need to be careful about the meanings we ascribe to modern tomb ‘types’ (‘tholos’ versus ‘chamber’ tombs), not least because in the early Late Bronze Age their social significance (perhaps also ideological/religious) may have been more fluid than we have previously envisaged, both possessing the potential for monumentality and ma(r)king places.⁶⁷ Moreover, how these funerary forms were perceived and what their social significance might have been for the people

⁶³ As shown by the detailed study in Zavadil 2013; also Darcque 1987.

⁶⁴ Along the lines of Renfrew 1986, 8, mentioned at the start of my article.

⁶⁵ E.g. Arena 2015.

⁶⁶ Acheson 1999 and Wolpert 2004 correctly remind us of the importance of warfare and violence in the emergence of the Late Bronze Age mainland polities; for an excellent narrative on the transformation of early Mycenaean societies, see also Wright, this volume.

⁶⁷ To paraphrase here the ‘marking and making place’ of David – Wilson 2002, which is also a characteristic element of monument construction.

in the past needs to be understood relationally: first at a site and then at a regional level. Thirdly, the construction of monumental funerary structures, whether tholoi or rock-cut tombs, should not be understood only or exclusively on the basis of power politics, as is often the case; but also, as affirmation of participation of the tomb-using groups in shared symbolic systems.

By extension, the progressive standardisation in the form and use of these tombs, and here I am referring to all examples not just the large ones, can potentially be understood as an index of social proximities and relative degrees of social connectedness, i.e. of networks and ‘traditions’ with which these tomb-using groups were involved. They can be read, therefore, as signs of competition and participation, which I see as key drivers of the societal makeover early in the Late Bronze Age. That these symbolic systems may have existed prior to their materialisation and the changes we observe in funerary architecture is indeed a possibility and an aspect that requires further investigation as, undeniably, we focus on material expressions and what is visible; and we often forget that the negotiation of relations needs not be conducted materially and is often archaeologically invisible. If that was indeed the case, can we then perhaps hypothesise that people chose through the progressive standardisation in funerary practices to also standardise the ways their conception of the world around them was materialised (ideologically/cosmologically)?

While no two landscapes can ever be the same (let alone because of the people, flora, fauna, and monuments that live in them) and despite regional variation all the way to the end of the Late Bronze Age (from tomb type popularities to differences in artefactual frequencies and practices), this progressive standardisation that is observed in material culture eventually also extended (by the 15th–14th centuries BC) to include much of the mortuary landscapes of central and southern mainland Greece. Where once many mortuary landscapes could be experienced across the mainland, developments in the early Mycenaean period, as described in this paper, appear to have also paved the way for the progressive visual standardisation of the world of the dead, particularly with regards to the marking, and therefore making, of mortuary places; a phenomenon most notably witnessed in those regions that were later to fall under direct palatial control and/or influence.

Visible or not after the funeral, these monuments would have been hives of activity during their construction. Given how demanding some of the most monumental tholoi and chamber tombs were in their making, it becomes clear that their presence in the landscape was felt for a long time – for as long as their construction lasted, and in some cases probably also afterwards, while new burials and commemorative rites may have enhanced further the mnemonic value of these monumental tombs of the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean.

As a final note: tribute should be paid to the workforce responsible for these monumental tombs. For some of these tholoi and chamber tombs considerable labour was required, which might well have extended beyond the confines of individual sites with all the implications this parameter may have had for state formation, as recently noted by Rodney Fitzsimons.⁶⁸ Yet even when we think, say in LH III, that we have the tombs of ‘ordinary people’ – the small and crudely built tholoi and chamber tombs or the pits and cists – even then, I think, we should not assume that these tombs include the whole range of the population, let alone the actual builders who built these awe-inspiring structures and transformed the landscapes of Mycenaean Greece forever.

⁶⁸ One way forward may well be to take Fitzsimons’ (2014) energetics approach to Late Bronze Age tomb building a step further, and beyond the remit of shaft graves or tholos architecture, by adding to the mix the monumental chamber tombs: e.g. Pellana Tomb 2 would require the extraction of c. 445 m³ comparable to the Kokla ‘tholos’ and the top-25 largest tholoi. Tomb 505 at Mycenae would require c. 710 m³, a figure comparable to the mass required to be extracted prior to the building of the Prosymna tholos (for Pellana Tomb 2: Spyropoulos 1998; for Tomb 505 at Mycenae: Wace 1932, 12–18). On the application of the energetics approach to Late Bronze Age Aegean architecture, see also Brysbaert 2015; Harper 2016; on the approach in general, see Abrams 1989 and Abrams – Bolland 1999. For chamber tombs and architectural energetics, the work of the Set-in-Stone project has started yielding important results: Brysbaert 2018 (for an introduction); Turner 2020.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Graph showing all measurable Late Bronze Age tholos tombs (in blue), excluding LM IIIC examples. The y-axis gives the chamber area in m². A blue dot refers to each of the 246 measurable examples (82% of all known tholoi). Red dots represent only the early Mycenaean examples. Average and median chamber areas are also indicated (Y. Galanakis)

Fig. 2: Graph showing the number of examples of monumental tholoi (i.e. with a chamber >23.50m²) per period in columns. These columns are juxtaposed to overall examples of measurable tholoi per period (in green) and their average chamber area in m² (in red) (Y. Galanakis)

Fig. 3: Averages of chamber area in m² of measurable Late Bronze Age chamber tombs in the Aegean (c. 40% of all known examples) (Y. Galanakis)

Fig. 4: Graph of monumental chamber tombs (i.e. with a chamber area >15m²) per period. Each dot represents an individual measurable and datable example (only 138 of the c. 210 extant monumental chamber tombs can be dated with any certainty). The y-axis refers to chamber area in m² with Pellana Tomb 2 marking the largest known example (c. 80m²) (Y. Galanakis)

Fig. 5: The dromos and façade of the hybrid Kokla tholos tomb in the Argolid (courtesy of Dr Katie Demakopoulou)

Fig. 6: The façade of Tomb 2 at Prosymna in the Argolid, digitally processed by the author. Original drawings (façade and painted frieze) by P. de Jong (Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

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