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**THE EMERGENCE OF CIVILIZATION IN MYCENAE: THE PLAIN OF ARGOS  
3000–1500 BC**

Master's thesis

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## INTRODUCTION

It was in the 19th century AD when Heinrich Schliemann's archaeological excavations at the site of Mycenae in Argolid revealed a great, but up until then a lost prehistoric civilization – the Greeks of the Late Bronze Age, the people we today call the Myceneans. Spectacular walls, palatial riches and many more empirical evidence was discovered, all indicating a powerful society of the past. The discovery has inspired the researchers for well over hundred years by now to write and ponder about that grandiose civilization. The rise and fall of Mycenaean civilization has seen plenty of theories that have tried to analyze, study and understand the society and the world in which the Myceneans existed. One of the particular topics, which has never been fully understood nor agreed upon by the scholars, is the question of the Mycenaean state and its emergence. It is clear that the walls of Mycenae needed organized construction, thus organized society as well. Also we can say that, for example, the wealth found at the (burial) sites must tell us something about the complexity inside a society. In short, what we are interested in, are the socio-political developments inside the Mycenaean society.

### **Perspective and the method of research**

The geographical region on which the following study is based on, is the plain of Argos in Argolid (more details of the region will be given in chapter one). This particular part of Greece has been chosen as it offers different settlements which show continuity – that way we can observe different mechanisms of development all in one place. Also, in the case of Argolid, we have a clear example of an emerging state.

The time period in which we are mostly interested in is from circa 3000 BC to 1500 BC. In some parts of the work some information about earlier and/or later times has also been given, for the purpose of a better overview.<sup>1</sup>

Present thesis combines the empirical qualitative research method with a theoretical approach. Theories about the state formation will be given, followed by archaeological evidence (based on the sites of Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae<sup>2</sup>). Also, a synthesis based on those anthropological

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> All located on the plain of Argos, lying rather close to each other as well. See appendix 2.

theories and empirical data will be created. Archaeology can offer us the broad outlines of the rise and fall of a great civilization but by itself, not combined with any other science(s), it remains rather incomplete as it is only capable of giving an anonymous record.<sup>3</sup> The same problem concerns anthropological theories when taken in isolation, for they only serve as mental fictions unless supported by empirical evidence. So in this work it would be essential to combine those sciences and make them interact with each other. Only then can we analyze the emergence of civilization in Argolid critically, fulfilling the requirements of an academic and scientific research.

### **The principal aims of the study**

The purpose of the current thesis is to research and analyze the steps leading towards the emergence of an early state<sup>4</sup> on the example of the plain of Argos in Greece. We must take a closer look at the possible mechanism which could transform a simple unstratified society into a complex one.

One problem that we need to solve is the transformation period. We have to examine how society with ruling authority developed from a society which has left us with no empirical material that would suggest hierarchies. We need to study how one became the other, how the people changed, how the ruling class emerged, how the ruling class maintained its power, etc. In a sense, we have to fill the gap between the Neolithic and the phase of palatial centres.

In order to do that, the author has posed and resolved different questions with the purpose of getting a better understanding of the rise of Mycenaen statehood. In general, the present thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- How does the archaeological evidence characterize the Early and Middle Bronze Age Argive society?
- Can archeological evidence provide us with general steps leading to the emergence of statehood in the Argolid between 3000–1500 BC? If yes, then what would these steps be?

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<sup>3</sup> Taylour 1964: 155

<sup>4</sup> As the subject of the definition of the (early) state is a rather complicated one, we will try to analyze it in the early parts of the work. Obviously it needs treatment of some sort as the definition for state may differ between academics, so it is necessary to understand the use of the term „civilization“ in present work and context

Those questions will hopefully be answered by the end of the thesis on the basis of the following sub-questions:

- Is the emerging state in the Argolid, Greece, an indigenous phenomenon or is it imported from somewhere else?
- Is it possible to see an invader in the archaeological evidence who might have shaped the emerging state in the Argolid?
- How and when did complexity inside a society rise?
- What in our archaeological record would suggest differences of rank or status inside a society?
- Which strategies might the rulers have used to come to power and how did they maintain it?
- Is there any possibility to specify the power basis of the rulers?

### **Archaeological excavations and historiography of the Early and Middle Bronze Age Argolid**

Before discussing the historiography, it would be appropriate to briefly view who has conducted archaeological excavations in the Argolid, particularly on the sites of Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae (as those are the sites which come into more detailed view in the current thesis). At Lerna, in 1952–1958, Professor John L. Caskey alongside the members of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens conducted the excavations. The mound had been reduced over the centuries by erosion and parts of it had been cut away by railway builders in 1891 and by military installations of World War II. However, vast parts of the site had still been left undisturbed and were then investigated selectively by the digging of the pits and trenches and ultimately in more extended areas.<sup>5</sup>

At Tiryns, the first excavation was conducted in 1831 by Friedrich Thiersch and Alexandros Rizos-Rangavis. Some 25 years later H. Schliemann visited the citadel and opened 20 trial trenches within one week. Though he realized the importance of the monument, he returned to investigate it systematically in 1884.<sup>6</sup> In the late 1950s, underground cisterns in the Lower Citadel were revealed and so initiated the resumption of fieldwork by the German Archaeological Institute. Of particular importance were the large-scale excavations in 1976–

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<sup>5</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 5

<sup>6</sup> Papademetriou 2001: 9

1983, directed by Klaus Kilian. Since 1997, ongoing excavations under the direction of Joseph Maran alongside with Alkestis Papademetriou have focused on different areas of the Citadel.<sup>7</sup>

In 1841, The Archaeological Society of Athens began work on the site of Mycenae that has continued ever since. As mentioned, H. Schliemann excavated test trenches widely on the acropolis, thus discovering Grave Circle A. Christos Tsountas cleared almost the whole area of citadel, as well as more than one hundred chamber tombs, in 1884–1902. Alan Wace worked at intervals in 1920–1955 (variously on the tholos and chamber tombs) and since 1989, Spyros Iakovidis has been in charge.<sup>8</sup>

When discussing the historiography, it would be fitting and reasonable to start with Colin Renfrew, whose *The Emergence of Civilisation: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium BC* could be seen as a manual for researchers interested in the history of the Bronze Age Aegean, as it offers detailed archaeological evidence combined with anthropological theories.<sup>9</sup> Another prolific researcher would be Oliver Dickinson. In his work *The Aegean Bronze Age*, O. Dickinson offers an archaeological overview, whereas in *The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation* he discusses the state of Mycenae in detail.<sup>10</sup>

Emily Vermeule's *Greece in the Bronze Age*<sup>11</sup> also offers a detailed archeological account whereas in the recent years the most complete and thorough work concerning the archaeological material of Bronze Age Greece and its presentation has been written by John Bintliff.<sup>12</sup> Empirical material is also introduced in Jeremy Rutter's e-course, *Aegean Prehistoric Archaeology*.<sup>13</sup>

Robert Drews in his *The Coming of the Greeks*<sup>14</sup> discusses on the subject of the first Myceneans and offers his views, who those people may have been and where might they have come from. Lord William Taylour tries to analyze the society and how it might have acted in his work *The Mycenaean*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Maran 2010: 723

<sup>8</sup> French 2010: 671

<sup>9</sup> Renfrew 1972

<sup>10</sup> Dickinson 1977; 1994

<sup>11</sup> Vermeule 1964

<sup>12</sup> Bintliff 2012

<sup>13</sup> Rutter 1998

<sup>14</sup> Drews 1988

<sup>15</sup> Taylour 1964

## **The structure of the work**

The thesis is divided into four chapters, most of which are divided into sub-chapters for easier and more comfortable reading. The first chapter examines the background of the area in general. In order to do that it is necessary to briefly introduce and analyze the environmental and geographical conditions. The author also tries to offer a short description of the background from which the (Early) Bronze Age society evolved. The Neolithic represented a dynamic phase in the (pre)history of the Aegean: different changes, influencing the following developments of society, took place, such as the introduction of farming. On the basis of the sites of Sesklo and Dimini the author tries to show signs of earliest hierarchies and complexity.

The second chapter provides the theoretical basis. Instead of focusing on the plain of Argos or Greece in general, it considers a number of different theories of state formation, asking about the possible mechanisms and strategies that could have led to the rise of social complexity and the establishment of elite power. The author tries to analyze neo-evolutionistic views but also the ones that contrast it. This clash of theories is presented in order to offer different possibilities, which, while using critical argumentation, could perhaps all be used in the case of the Aegean. In the second chapter, definitions of the early states are also given. The author tries to see different ways and explanations how and from where the early states arose.

In the third chapter, however, empirical evidence is brought under view. The sites of Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae, and their archaeological material are analyzed (settlement archaeology, burial practices, etc). The author also tries to analyze the societies of the sites and how they may have acted and how they may have been organized. The sequence in which those sites are presented is mostly based on chronology – from Lerna we have the most archaeological evidence from the Neolithic whereas ending with Mycenae would lead us straight into an emerging state.

The fourth (and the last) chapter is an analytical one where previous data has been synthesized. An effort will be made to interpret the archaeological evidence with the help of the anthropological theories given in the second chapter of the work. Of course, doing so also means that archaeological evidence must support those theoretical assumptions. However, some additional information will be given in order to better connect the anthropological theories with empirical facts.



Before we go any further, the author would like to express his warmest gratitude to his supervisor Mait Kõiv for his valuable comments and remarks upon the work. Without those useful notes the present thesis would surely not have been able to acquire the form it eventually did. Another sincere word of thanks should be addressed towards the ever-so-kind workers of University of Tartu Library who have been more than helpful and patient with the author during his times spent at the Library.

## 1. NEOLITHIC IN THE AEGEAN – A SHORT OVERVIEW

Before we can examine different developments, which, in the end, led to the emergence of state in the Bronze Age Greece, it is rather useful to take a general look on the natural environment of the area. The climate and landscape of any particular country or region should always receive at least some sort of discussion because they might have an important impact on the direction in which societies can develop. The background is also introduced by viewing briefly some dynamics of the Neolithic, such as the introduction of farming.

The chapter begins with the discussion of environmental background, its middle part focuses on specific sites - Dimini and Sesklo - in the Aegean during the Neolithic whereas in the last part, social life and social transformation in general are under view.

The chapter does not claim to be an analytical one, or overly detailed, its goal is to introduce the overall background from which the Bronze Age Aegean and its complexity developed from.

### 1.1. The geographical background

The essential heartland area from the standpoint of this master's thesis is the southern part of the Balkan peninsula, to a great extent cut off from the area to the north by mountain masses.

Although communication between some areas could be seen as rather easy (for example, from the Argive plain to Lakonia by land or from Attica to the Cyclades by sea), this is not always the case.<sup>16</sup> The fact that Greek landscape is well dominated by the mountains and the sea does not come as a surprise. Overland travel, whether within the mainland and islands or to the rest of the Balkans, has more than often been made difficult and arduous by the mountains.<sup>17</sup> These mountains of the Peloponnese are, in truth, not exceptionally high, but they are steep. This has usually pushed historians to argue that the mountain system of Greece produced a

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<sup>16</sup> Vermeule 1964: 1

<sup>17</sup> Dickinson 1994: 23

fragmented country of small plain areas, some with access to the sea, others enclosed, drained by rivers or underground channels.<sup>18</sup>

It is believed that the Greek climate has not varied greatly since the end of the Ice Age, although a period of unusually high rainfall may have immediately succeeded it. But if anything, conditions for most of prehistory of Greece may have been slightly warmer and drier than at present.<sup>19</sup> The climate of this particular part of the Mediterranean is characterized by long, hot, dry summers, and cool, largely frost-free winters when most of the rain falls.<sup>20</sup>

It has been pointed out that Greece has never been a remarkably well-endowed nor fertile country.<sup>21</sup> Its climate has made drought a constant threat throughout history, an untimely rain or frost can ruin a crop, and poor to bad years are frequent.<sup>22</sup> In fact, it has been suggested that the ancient Greeks were a great people partly because of the hardiness engendered by their climate.<sup>23</sup>

The geographical central point of this thesis is the plain of Argos, located in Argolid.<sup>24</sup> It is believed that the plain had reached its present shape by about 10,000 BC. It lies at the head of an extensive gulf and is bounded by the Artemision range on the west (the range extending southward down the coast as well), whereas on the east the Arachneion range continues southward.<sup>25</sup> In the lowlands of the plain and in the high plateaux of the surrounding hills one can find arable land whereas the hills offer supplies of wood.<sup>26</sup> It has also been argued that Argolid was a famous horse breeding region at the start of the Mycenaean age.<sup>27</sup> All the sites analyzed in the current thesis – Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae – are located on the plain of Argos.

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<sup>18</sup> Hopper 1976: 2

<sup>19</sup> Dickinson 1994: 25

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Op. Cit.* 29

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Hopper 1976: 4

<sup>24</sup> Argolid is a county located in the northeast of Peloponnese

<sup>25</sup> French 2002: 13

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Vermeule 1964: 4

## 1.2. The introduction of farming

The beginning of the seventh millennium saw the introduction of farming in Greece. The earliest farming settlements identified (so far) on the mainland Greece were on previously unoccupied sites in Thessaly. This may suggest that they were founded by (experienced) farmers who could recognize the soils with best potential.<sup>28</sup> The area, Thessaly, was actually the only region in Greece that was capable of providing a reasonably assured harvest and was also large enough for significant population growth. The people flourished there and after more than a thousand years spread to the Balkans and beyond.<sup>29</sup> The basic crops of the prehistoric Greece were hardy and somewhat dull: wheat and barley, beans and peas, figs and pears.<sup>30</sup>

It is believed that the success of those early farmers may have depended on the natural irrigation of river and lake floodplains which can also lead us to a modified version of the wave-of-advance model of demic diffusion.<sup>31</sup>

These changes have usually been seen as brought on by new colonists, most likely from (Western) Anatolia.<sup>32</sup> Although the question of diffusion is more thoroughly analyzed in the later parts of the thesis, we can already see this problem to have emerged from the Neolithic. It has been argued that the southeastern Balkans were only sparsely occupied by an indigenous Mesolithic population.<sup>33</sup>

The Neolithic period of Greece covered a span of at least 3,000 years.<sup>34</sup> We can be sure that the Neolithic settlers of Greece played a tremendous role in developing the country's potential wealth and stamping a character upon its culture. It is evident that in some places the cultural habits of the Neolithic continued into Middle Bronze Age.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dickinson 1994: 31

<sup>29</sup> Andel & Runnels 1995: 481

<sup>30</sup> Vermeule 1964: 4

<sup>31</sup> Andel & Runnels 1995: 481

<sup>32</sup> Dickinson 1994: 32

<sup>33</sup> Andel & Runnels 1995: 481

<sup>34</sup> Renfrew 1972: 63

<sup>35</sup> Vermeule 1964: 6

### 1.3. The sites of Sesklo and Dimini

The classic Neolithic sequence in the Aegean is that of Thessaly, where two larger sites emerged: Sesklo and Dimini.<sup>36</sup>

Sesklo and Dimini have both been rather popular subjects of research among historians<sup>37</sup>, so a detailed overview nor analysis of these sites is not necessary in this introductory chapter – our purpose is to only emphasize some arguments and bring out the nuances which may help us later on when we are dealing with the emergence of complexity and state in the Bronze Age Aegean.

Sesklo was characterized by capacious, rectangular houses.<sup>38</sup> This settlement that may have accommodated a couple of thousand inhabitants also included a so-called megaron – a central building in the middle of the acropolis that was fronted by a larger vestibule or a lobby.<sup>39</sup> This would arise the question, who directed or conducted the building of this central construction. Could that building belong to a ruling chief or a king, or to a larger group forming the elite? Perhaps this was a building that served as a ritual centre instead? The function of the megaron remains unclear and many different theories could be put forward.

From Sesklo we have archaeological finds of stiffly geometric red-on-cream vases of high technical quality as well.<sup>40</sup>

Dimini, situated in the proximity of Sesklo, was also centred by a megaron-type building that was surrounded by an oval defence wall. The existence of a central building could allow us to believe that whoever lived in the megaron also ruled and controlled the whole site,<sup>41</sup> but then again, we cannot rule out the possibility of a ritual centre. Also, we can debate over the meaning of the surrounding wall, as a wall does not necessarily always have to be only a means of a defence from an enemy.

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<sup>36</sup> Vermeule 1964: 6. Although the sites of Nea Nikomedea in the plain of Macedonia and Franchthi in the southern Argolid emerged even earlier (in the seventh millennium whereas Sesklo and Dimini gained prominence in the sixth millennium) we will not be discussing those settlements in detail in order not to get too lost or away from our main goal

<sup>37</sup> Sesklo and Dimini have been discussed in general works of Colin Renfrew (1972), Vere Gordon Childe (1925), but also in detail by Daniel Pullen (2011), Paul Halstead (1995), Panagioti Pantou (2010) etc.

<sup>38</sup> Vermeule 1964: 9

<sup>39</sup> Kõiv 2010

<sup>40</sup> Vermeule 1964: 9

<sup>41</sup> Kõiv 2010

## 1.4. Complexity and change during the Neolithic

Excavations beneath the Bronze Age strata at Dimini and Sesklo in Thessaly and Knossos on Crete revealed an earlier epoch of human occupation. Termed Neolithic by analogy with other European regions, it was immediately clear that this was a phase of village-dwelling farmers, the Aegean's first agricultural society.<sup>42</sup> But what can we say about the society in the Neolithic? The research of this prehistoric time, where written sources are nowhere to be found, relies heavily on archaeological evidents, but on anthropology as well, for example. This (the problem concerning the evidence) is also the case during the Bronze Age.

When studying the social complexity of the Neolithic, same questions arise as when studying the Bronze Age Aegean: do we actually have some sites with larger populations, and hence, greater social and economic position? Did those sites possess any kind of power over other (nearby) settlements? Do we have evidence for hierarchies of settlements and what is the nature of that evidence?

Complexity and change do belong to the Neolithic, as has been argued<sup>43</sup>, and it is also evident that the Neolithic and the Bronze Age have many features in common: for example, craft specialization, a diversified agricultural subsistence base, broadly analogous systems of intensive horticulture, exchange and trade, agricultural surplus (which in itself could be seen as a key resource in social competition).<sup>44</sup> Also, already in the Neolithic we can see the first appearance of commodities, such as wine, olive, and metal, whose availability can be linked to the emergence of Bronze Age societies.<sup>45</sup> It is possible to develop a hierarchy of sites, based on the size of scatter and type of artifacts.<sup>46</sup> It is clear that this perceived hierarchy has meaning for social or economic organization, although the definition of a „site“ has actually turned out to be a continual problem.<sup>47</sup> But whatever the functional interpretations of sites are, we should still keep in mind that what we are interested in is not in the strictest sense the size of a scatter of artifacts in the landscape, but rather the importance played in past human societies by the interpretive unit of the site.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Tomkins 2010: 31

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Renfrew 1972: 50–53, 63–80

<sup>44</sup> Tomkins 2010: 32

<sup>45</sup> Renfrew 1972

<sup>46</sup> Pullen 2011: 26

<sup>47</sup> *Op. Cit.* 20

<sup>48</sup> *Op. Cit.* 22

As mentioned in a segment above, change also took place in the Neolithic. It has been argued that the Late Neolithic period witnessed an ideological shift amongst the Neolithic households from sharing to hoarding.<sup>49</sup> This ideological shift could point to more profound socio-economical changes: it seems as if individual households may, for the first time, have begun directly to control the bulk storage of agricultural produce and thus enjoyed greater freedom in how they managed their own subsistence.<sup>50</sup> We can witness the emergence of the household as a more independent productive unit and a greater interest in storage at the household level could also be seen.<sup>51</sup>

It has been argued that the reason for this kind of shift could lie in a small climatic change – although we cannot say that climatic change could determine the nature and direction of social change, but it did have the potential to at least disrupt social structures by altering the conditions of existence.<sup>52</sup>

Also, we can witness the emergence of new burial practices.<sup>53</sup> Simple crouched burials (sometimes with sparse grave goods) can be found from the Early Neolithic period, whereas in the Middle Neolithic period onwards we have small cist graves, urn burials, and cremations. Whether those changes derived from the customs overseas is not sure, but that possibility has been seen as rather unlikely.<sup>54</sup>

The Neolithic can be described as a dynamic era, during which the society developed and signs of complexity also emerged. The Neolithic emerges as a period of both continuity and change - an ongoing tension between the public and the private, communal *versus* household. From different indications we can clearly argue that the Neolithic in Greece was not a static period as significant developments occurred in agriculture, settlement organization, burial, etc. As Colin Renfrew (1972) has put it: „*It is against this background that the innovations of the third millennium B.C., the Early Bronze Age, must be judged*“.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Tomkins 2004: 53

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Tomkins 2010: 44

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Renfrew 1972: 79

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Op. Cit.* 80

## 2. Theoretical background: the emergence of social complexity and the origins of statehood

As mentioned earlier, when researching an era without any hopes of finding literary sources, we rely on archaeology. From that we can build assumptions, theories, fantasies. But it is clear that archaeology, as any other kind of historical evidence, can offer different interpretations and this is why researchers can almost never agree upon some definite topics or details. There is almost always another possible way to see and look at the evidence, or at least most of the times. That is why different paradigms sometimes fall under (heavy) criticism.

This chapter aims to introduce different theories of how the early states may have emerged. Different mechanisms and possibilities will come under view, in order to understand, how the ruling elite could have gained its prominence.

### 2.1. Mechanisms and strategies of the growth of elite domination and political centralization. Neo-evolutionism and its critics

Starting from the 19th century AD, evolutionary theories arose from the works of Edward Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan<sup>56</sup> and were then revived in the mid-twentieth century by Leslie White, Julian Steward, etc.<sup>57</sup> This „neo-evolutionary“ theory tried to formulate the categories of human progress and stressed the functional role of culture in adapting to the natural environment.

In this conceptual framework, Elman Service (alongside with another neo-evolutionist scholar Marshall Sahlins) defined four classifications of the stages of social evolution in his works: band, tribe, chiefdom, state. Together with M. Sahlins, he also defined the conception of chiefdom – a tribal-centered pre-state centralized system which is based on redistribution.<sup>58</sup>

E. Service asked evolutionary questions about one's right to rule, one's right to power. What he was interested in was how does a personal power become depersonalized power, corporate

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<sup>56</sup> Kõiv 2010

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Service 1962; 1975



and institutionalized, or as he put it, *how does an egalitarian society become a hierarchical society with permanently ascribed differential ranks of high and low statuses*.<sup>59</sup>

As a one possible answer to these questions, he stressed the importance of **redistribution**: gift-giving may have been an important institutionalized occasion for demonstrating superiority.<sup>60</sup> In some cultures and tribes a „big-man“ or a „center-man“ achieved his institutionalization of this form of personal power by the process of gift-giving. As E. Service argued, a center-man is someone who attracted a cluster of followers: his bigness was manifested in various ways, but the most notable were the giveaway feasts that demonstrated his ability to attract goods from his followers in order to offer a lavish feast to some other close group.<sup>61</sup>

According to E. Service, chiefdom arose from the need to co-ordinate the economy when important ecological differences existed in the region. The chief concentrated the surplus of different areas, stored it in granaries and later distributed it according to need.<sup>62</sup>

Although E. Service did not have the Aegean in his mind, when he stressed the importance of redistributive power (focusing more on the tribes of New-Guinea and the chiefdoms of Polynesia), we can still actually use this argumentation in the case of Aegean.

At this point, it would be suitable to introduce C. Renfrew's **subsistence and redistribution model** which he has applied on the basis of E. Service's redistribution into Aegean context. According to C. Renfrew, one of the reasons for a change in a human society was the extension of the resource basis and the intensification of the exploitation of the resources already in use. He has pointed out that since the seventh millennium BC cereal cultivation (emmer wheat, einkorn, barley) was widely spread across Greece: in the fourth millennium BC, we can see the beginning of olive cultivation, which was followed in the third millennium BC by grape cultivation. Due to these developments, hillsides were introduced into use, as they offer(ed) enough sun and warmth for the grapes, for example. So the terrain in Greece allowed cereal cultivation in the plains of the valleys but just as well the grape and olive cultivation on the hillsides. The subsistence system was flexible and capable of responding

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<sup>59</sup> Service 1975: 71-72

<sup>60</sup> *Op. Cit.* 73

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Op. Cit.* 83

sensitively to local variations in the natural environment. All this led to intra-village redistribution system which indeed favoured the rise of local chiefs.<sup>63</sup>

In the context of Greece, we should also mention the importance of wine and public drinking feasts. In the Aegean, as C. Renfrew has seen it, wine was clearly a lot more than just an agreeable beverage, as it became a drink of key social importance, whilst it also possessed religious significance. The growing role of a chief-in-rising most likely affected the cultivation of grapes (and vice versa as well): if a public drinking and feasting would become an elitist joint event, then grape cultivation would stimulate the production of drinking vessels as objects of prestige. The act of wine-drinking would, in turn, be seen also as a prestigious act. All this would offer an opportunity for the elite to exhibit its power and to ensure it, which, in turn, would promote the grape cultivation – a prefect circle, if you will.<sup>64</sup>

Redistribution as an important aspect of an evolved social hierarchy could be evident in the case of Greece, as we will later try to analyze. We have reason to assume, or at least consider the possibility that the nature of one's power in the Bronze Age Greece was redistributive – in order to attain power, grand feasts were held. The ruler (if wished to become and/or remain powerful) collected tribute and later, in a process of gift-giving or feast, again gave some of it away. Below, when we deal with specific sites (Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae), we shall further discuss this strategy.

However, we should be careful of not overestimating the role of redistribution in the rise of social complexity and formation of chiefdoms. Robert Carneiro, though agreeing with E. Service that chiefdom should be seen as a precursor of state, has pointed out that redistribution is more like a blind alley instead of a main road of political evolution. He has argued that the chief could gain esteem, not power, from redistribution. R. Carneiro believed that power accrued to chief only when the chief ceased to redistribute food and goods wholesale and began to concentrate them. According to him, redistribution model does not explain sufficiently, why the production of surplus was needed inside a society: *if the roots of chiefly power lie in redistribution and the roots of redistribution lie in productivity, then where do the roots of productivity lie?*<sup>65</sup> He also added that the idea that the invention of agriculture automatically brought into being a surplus of food is misleading, as agriculture did

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<sup>63</sup> Renfrew 1972: 265–304

<sup>64</sup> *Op. Cit.* 281–282, 290

<sup>65</sup> Carneiro 1981: 58–63

not automatically create surplus of food, as he showed in the case of Amazonian Indians, who were agricultural, but in aboriginal times still did not produce food surplus.<sup>66</sup>

In R. Carneiro's opinion, the mechanism that brought about chiefdoms was the same one that brought about states – namely **war**. Archaeological finds have shown that in many parts of the world – in Europe, Africa, the Pacific, the Circum-Caribbean – we have overwhelming evidence for intensive warfare in tribal societies and chiefdoms. But warfare alone, as R. Carneiro has explained, was insufficient to account for the emergence of chiefdoms. Although warfare was an extremely widespread phenomenon, chiefdoms did not always arise wherever it occurred, which meant that additional factors had to be present where warfare fused autonomous villages into chiefdoms.<sup>67</sup>

While looking for conditions under which war gave rise to chiefdom, R. Carneiro has stressed **environmental circumscription** – the reason why rivalry for land, and thus wars, arose when the human population grew (he combined population pressure with war and conquest). Winners of the war assimilated the land from the losers, who were either killed or driven away or enslaved, the latter being more favoured by the winners. The conquered party had but one chance of survival: submission to the conquerors and paying whatever tribute was exacted. The losers had no possibility of moving onto new lands because of the neighbouring communities already exploiting the area. This has been seen by R. Carneiro as the **social circumscription**. As land shortages continued and became even more acute, so did the warfare. As the result of the conquests, the rivaling units were no longer small villages, but instead, larger chiefdoms. From this point on, as R. Carneiro has explained, through the conquest of chiefdom by chiefdom, the size of political units increased at a progressively faster rate. So, as autonomous political units increased in size, they decreased in number, with the result that an entire area was eventually unified under the banner of its strongest chiefdom.<sup>68</sup>

New conquests brought along bigger complexity of the political unit: craft specialization, bureaucracy, etc. In other words, the chief had more and more resources at his hand, so the chiefdom started to evolve and became a state. R. Carneiro has argued that the emergence of chiefdoms was a qualitative step, everything that followed – including the rise of states and empires – was merely quantitative. So the act of transcending of local sovereignty and the

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<sup>66</sup> Carneiro 1981: 55

<sup>67</sup> Carneiro 1970: 733–738

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

aggregation of previously autonomous villages into chiefdoms could be seen as a critical step in political development – probably the most important one ever taken.<sup>69</sup>

Timothy Earle, though mostly developing and defending the concept of chiefdom, has also believed that Service's concept of redistribution is misleading and too far-reaching.<sup>70</sup>

He has argued that the systems of redistribution were shown not to handle staple distribution between communities, because the communities themselves were highly generalized and largely self-sufficient in staple goods. T. Earle thus saw redistribution as an unlikely mechanism of staple exchange. Considering logistical problems, it seems unlikely that chiefs could have ever acted to organize staple production and distribute local products. He has said that redistributive ceremonies took place too infrequently to handle the daily consumption needs of households. So, rather, amongst chiefdoms with redistribution, it served as a system of finance, a means to mobilize staple goods to provide for public feasts and to feed chief's attendants.<sup>71</sup>

T. Earle, unlike R. Carneiro, has not emphasized the importance of war and conquest, but rather has seen them as one of the factors helping the elite to gain control. This latter, **control** over society by chief or elite, is what could be seen as one of T. Earle's main postulate. This control would first have been based on ownership of, and the establishment of restricted access, to productive resources, most importantly land, but it could also have been achieved by controlling the technology, distribution of prestige goods, or by warfare. He has argued that the competition for the positions of leadership required a maximizing economic ethic; the coming to and retention of leadership required the careful marshalling of support derived from prestige and the implied differential access on which it is based. Thus T. Earle has talked about chiefdom as a stratified society, which is natural, because through control access to privileged resource was gained.<sup>72</sup>

According to neo-evolutionist theory, chiefdom acted as a precursor to state. However, we do not necessarily have to see chiefdom as a precursor to state, as N. Yoffee, among others, has argued. N. Yoffee has believed that chiefdom could be seen rather as a dead end, which may never have reached statehood, because it was prone to collapse. N. Yoffee has pointed out that empirical evidence allows us to believe that most of the emerging states have possessed only a

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<sup>69</sup> Carneiro 1981: 38

<sup>70</sup> Earle 2002

<sup>71</sup> *Op. Cit.* 58–59

<sup>72</sup> *Op. Cit.* 60–64

small territory and have developed from systems of equal peer polities. So the starting point to the mechanism leading to an emerging state should be considered **village**-based society, instead of chiefdom. In a village, small agricultural settlements with their cultural identity formed interaction zones. Elite emerged, starting to restrict access to material and symbolic goods. From the groups of settlements city-states emerged, where one (strategically better located) gained prominence and urbanized. All this brought along another distinct change: the concentration of the population into cities.<sup>73</sup>

Although N. Yoffee has clearly stood against neo-evolutionary approach previously dominant in archaeology and anthropology, he has still found „evolution“ an appropriate term for investigating social change.<sup>74</sup>

What N. Yoffee has stressed most is that neo-evolutionists have spent too much time attempting to decide if a complex society was a state or a chiefdom, and he has also argued the emptiness of those categories (He even submitted „Yoffee’s Rule“ about how to identify the presence or absence of the earliest states: *„If you can argue whether a society is a state or isn’t, then it isn’t.“*)<sup>75</sup>

Rather, he has emphasized that what should be investigated, is how people came to live within a variety of differentiated social organizations, and the nature of power within these organizations.<sup>76</sup> He has argued that the earliest states „integrated“ these social organizations only loosely, and rulers and elites were constantly concerned to communicate a dominant way of meaning.<sup>77</sup>

Richard Blanton, Gary Feinman and their colleagues, have also analyzed neo-evolutionary theories which they have seen as *inadequate to the analysis of past social change as it arguably lacks a suitable behavioral theory, and also because its simple stage typology fails to account for variation among societies of similar complexity and scale.*<sup>78</sup>

They have argued that there were two types of power, the exclusionary and the corporate. In the first, political actors aimed at the development of a political system built around their monopoly control of sources of power. This sort of exclusionary power could have been

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<sup>73</sup> Yoffee 2005: 22–41, 134–138

<sup>74</sup> *Op. Cit.*: 4

<sup>75</sup> *Op. Cit.*: 41

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Blanton, Feinman et al 1996: 1

exercised in small scale networks of personal dominance. In the corporate political strategy, however, in contrast, power was shared across different groups and sectors of society in such a way as to inhibit exclusionary strategies. This did not necessarily mean a hierarchically flat society or a completely egalitarian one, as chiefs, rulers and governing bodies may still be found within the structure of corporate governance.<sup>79</sup>

Concerning the sources of power, R. Blanton and G. Feinman and their colleagues have stressed the network and corporate strategies. The term „network“ has been adopted in order to *characterize a political-economic pattern in which preeminence is an outcome of the development and maintenance of individual centered exchange relations established primarily outside one's local group*. They have argued that where a network strategy was the basis of the political economy, leadership tended to be volatile and the social scene laden with potential for conflict. When it comes to corporate strategy, it has been stressed its ability to transcend the scale limitations of the network strategy to include large and powerful states. But R. Blanton and G. Feinman have argued that these cases were analogous to social systems of smaller scale. Corporate and network strategies resulted in dissimilar and antagonistic political economies and so are likely to be temporally or spatially separated.<sup>80</sup>

## 2.2. Defining archaic state

Though the state is a social phenomenon which first appeared in the history of mankind several thousands of years ago and although many theories have been evolved up to now in order to account for its origins and subsequent development, there still exist important obstacles preventing researches from gaining a firm grasp of the subject. Perhaps three of those obstacles would be:

- There does not exist any *definition* of the state that is accepted by the entire community of scholars, thus leading towards a situation where almost every scholar evolves his or her own definition, which distinctly differs from the already existing ones.

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<sup>79</sup> Blanton, Feinman et al 1996: 2

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

- In many cases, theories concerning the *character* of the state in various epochs are based on insufficient data.
- In particular, there has been a lot of confusion in the theories on the formation and *early development* of the state.<sup>81</sup>

According to Max Weber, state is any human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.<sup>82</sup> In other words, M. Weber has described the state as an organization that succeeds in holding the exclusive right to use, threaten to use, or authorize others to use direct physical violence against members of its territorial domain. Although the state owns the legitimate monopoly of using physical violence, this does not necessarily mean that others cannot or will not use physical force – only their use of violence is illegal.

Obviously this kind of definition of a state is very theoretical and also extremely hard to find in cultures or sites where we do not have any written evidence. If using only archaeology and archaeological finds, it is almost impossible to say whether we have ourselves a state or not by the standards set by M. Weber.

Vere Gordon Childe however, coming more from an archaeological background, has offered us a definition (not exactly of a state, though, but it can still help our case) that is perhaps more helpful to us. His definition is not necessarily so theoretical but easier to find in empirical evidents. In 1930s V. G. Childe first introduced the term „Urban Revolution“ when he discussed it in his work (1936)<sup>83</sup> and then later presented a 10-point model for the changes that characterized the Urban Revolution.<sup>84</sup>

- Large population and large settlements (cities)
- Full-time specialization and advanced division of labour
- Production of an agricultural surplus to fund government and a differentiated society
- Monumental public architecture
- A ruling class
- Writing
- Exact and predictive sciences (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, calendars)

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<sup>81</sup> Claessen & Skalnik 1978: 1

<sup>82</sup> Weber 2010

<sup>83</sup> Childe 1936

<sup>84</sup> Childe 1950

- Sophisticated art styles
- Long-distanced trade
- The state

It is safe to say that this model became highly popular amongst anthropologists and archaeologists all over the world and the items listed above have been almost always in search when dealing with a site that we could potentially call state (using archaeological evidence).

Henri Claessen (alongside with Peter Skalnik) has researched the early state, trying to distinguish it from the chiefdom on one side and from mature state on the other (suggesting that to reach the early state level is one thing, but to develop into a mature state is quite another). What H. Claessen has argued, is that the early state is the organization for the regulation of social relations in a society that is divided into two emerging social classes: the rulers *versus* the ruled. The early state includes many categories, three of them are presented here: a sufficient number of people, a certain delimited territory and specific type of government.<sup>85</sup>

The first component is a sufficient number of people. Though it is rather impossible to give an even average estimate of the minimum number of people necessary for the existence of a state, it has been thought that as soon as a group of people exceeds the number of 500, a government based on face to face relations will no longer be possible, and thus some form of organization becomes necessary.<sup>86</sup>

Concerning the concept of territory, it seems as if it is rather vague in the early states. It could also be argued that these early states extend its sway over people who either have residence, or have been born in its territory.<sup>87</sup>

As for the government of the early state, it has to be centralized, maintaining law and order. The sovereign or the central government has to have the power to make the rules and laws, or to issue decrees and impose decisions which must be obeyed by the population as a whole. The legitimacy is usually based upon ideological conviction and persuasion.<sup>88</sup>

Bruce Trigger has seen early civilization as an evolutionary concept, which assumes the existence of less complex societies (some of which later evolved into early civilizations) and

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<sup>85</sup> Claessen & Skalnik 1978: 17

<sup>86</sup> *Op. Cit.* 17–18

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*



more complex ones, which either developed out of early civilizations or grew up alongside of and, ultimately, replaced them.<sup>89</sup>

While trying to characterize early civilizations B. Trigger has argued that it must be framed in terms of the general sorts of social, economic, and political institutions and the associated types of knowledge and beliefs that were required for societies of that degree of complexity to function.<sup>90</sup>

According to B. Trigger, (some) common features of the early states around the world would be monarchy (king being mostly the military chief), distinct differences in wealth within a society and the exploitation of the lower classes by the upper classes. He has also added that the state was not unambiguously redistributive and that there were three types of land (the collective land of kinship, the land of corporate institutions, and the land of upper class). He has explained how, in early civilizations, elite art and monumental architecture both expressed and reinforced the power of the upper classes and the corporate identities of early civilizations and individual states.<sup>91</sup>

Considering all the previous data, we can see that the definition of the early state is a problematic one. Researchers may construct theories how the earliest civilizations might have acted and/or emerged, but this needs to be supported by archaeological evidence. It can be said that some of the earliest states around the world share some common features. However, which would those essential features be that need to be present and evident? What kind of archaeological evidence do we have to see and possess in order to discuss the topic of early state? What is perhaps even more complicated is telling the difference between chiefdom and early state. As discussed earlier, chiefdom could develop into an early state, thus making it very difficult to distinguish the transformation (in archaeological evidence) from one to another.

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<sup>89</sup> Trigger 2003: 40

<sup>90</sup> *Op. cit.*: 44

<sup>91</sup> *Op. Cit.* 653–658

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE BASED ON THE SITES OF LERNA, TIRYNS AND MYCENAE

The sites of Lerna, Tiryns and Mycenae have been taken under closer look as they offer continuity from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age (and even longer). This kind of dynamic and sequence allows us to see different development mechanisms represented in the same settlement and we can observe the transformation of the sites. From that we can also make suggestions how society may have functioned and transformed.

Alongside with the settlements, the burial customs are also under a brief view. It is obvious that when people habited a location, they died and were buried there (or at least in a close vicinity) and those burials could tell us a thing or two about the society, power structures, the existence/non-existence of hierarchies, etc. For example, Sofia Voutsaki has seen a weakness appearing far too often when researching the nature of centralized control over the palatial economy in the Mycenaean world. She has argued that most archaeological studies so far have based their inferences on only one kind of evidence: mortuary *versus* settlement evidence. So she has stressed that in order to avoid this sort of a shortcoming in academic papers, it is essential to carry out a study of both mortuary and settlement evidence.<sup>92</sup> The same sort of approach has been tried to apply in current thesis as well.

#### 3.1. Lerna

##### 3.1.1. The evidence

The historic site of ancient Lerna lies at the southeastern edge of the village of Myloi, approximately 10 kilometers from Argos. Foothills of the Arcadian mountains are on the west, whereas the Argolic Gulf is on the east.<sup>93</sup> The inhabitants of the settlement had an easy access to good farmland, timber, but also the main routes to the afore-mentioned Argos and Arcadian mountains.<sup>94</sup> The chronology of Lerna has been given in the appendix.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Voutsaki 2010: 86

<sup>93</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 5

<sup>94</sup> Wiencke 2010: 660

<sup>95</sup> See appendix 3

Archaeological excavations at the site have revealed that the settlement had been occupied with few (if any) interruptions over a period of circa 5000 years – from the sixth millennium to the first BC. One reason for such a long period of activity is that natural resources and advantages were at hand: rich arable land, the sea for fishing and commerce, wood (from the mountains), stone and clay for building, and, perhaps most important of them all, an abundant source of fresh water.<sup>96</sup>

The site was occupied for a long time, the houses were rather small (with a few striking exceptions). Archaeological researches have discovered that the walls were commonly erected of packed clay or unfired bricks resting on rough stone foundations. The roofs (although very little evidence has survived) were most likely clay supported on wooden beams and light poles or reeds. It is believed that when these buildings deteriorated or were destroyed by either fire or earthquake, the plots where they had stood were leveled and new structures were raised. Clay and crude brick, as a result of lying exposed to the elements, soon dissolved and are today rarely discernible unless hardened accidentally in fires.<sup>97</sup>

The Neolithic occupation at Lerna I has left us three-meter-deep deposits, of which only little could be excavated. By comparison with the pottery from Franchthi (also an ancient site in southeastern Argolis), it can be said that the major Neolithic occupation at Lerna belonged to the earlier part of the Middle Neolithic period, with perhaps very little to Later Neolithic.<sup>98</sup>

The pottery, used by the people, was hand-made and fired in open fires. Other tools of stone, bone and baked clay were also in use.<sup>99</sup> The inhabitants planted grains, kept sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle; hunted wild boar, fox, hare and birds and also gathered shellfish.<sup>100</sup>

In the Middle Neolithic (Lerna II), the economy was rather similar and the community perhaps a little larger, also more permanently settled. The pottery was still hand-made but more technically sophisticated and more varied compared to the earlier period.<sup>101</sup> Above the substantial accumulations from the Middle Neolithic period, only scattered traces of activities during the Late and Final Neolithic periods remain. 10 graves have been found, showing that

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<sup>96</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 5

<sup>97</sup> *Op. Cit.* 5–6

<sup>98</sup> Wiencke 2010: 660

<sup>99</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 7

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Op. Cit.* 8

children and adults were buried within the settlements, among the houses of the living. This took place throughout the Neolithic period, from earliest to latest times.<sup>102</sup>

There is a possibility that after the Neolithic occupation, Lerna might have been abandoned for a time. A vigorous Early Helladic II (Lerna III) people occupied the site for four or five hundred years as the evidence dates back mainly to the latter half of that period.<sup>103</sup>

The Early Helladic settlements followed the Neolithic ones and spanned much of the third millennium BC.<sup>104</sup>

Although Early Helladic I inhabitants may have been partly resident in the first centuries after the end of Neolithic, they have left us only a scattering of shreds, identified by comparison with the pottery of nearby sites - Tsoungiza and Talioti. Two important ceramic deposits in the earliest parts of Early Helladic II (Early Phase A) level contained almost all totally dark-painted glossy pottery („Urifirns“), red or black, at times well polished.<sup>105</sup>

No constructions of Phase A have been identified. Deep areas of stony fill have been found without habitational remains but containing both Neolithic and Early Helladic shreds in various percentages.<sup>106</sup>

The first Phase B house walls and floors have been found in widely scattered spots. The observable sequence of the strata has led to an arbitrary division of the material into three different levels. No overall plan for the Phase B early and mid-occupation could be recovered. In late Phase B, an extensive, pebble-paved area with two built gutters for drainage have been discovered.<sup>107</sup>

The increased variety of ceramic shapes, especially for storing and pouring liquids, is notable in the archaeological evidence and it is possible that this indicates to some sort of a change in diet and social behaviour. Sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs were all present whereas the donkey is identified in early Phase B. It is possible that animals might have been used for transport and plowing.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 9

<sup>103</sup> Wiencke 2010: 661

<sup>104</sup> Vermeule 1964: 21

<sup>105</sup> Wiencke 2010: 661

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Op. Cit.* 662–663

Archaeological evidence has uncovered many successive building levels of Early Helladic II. The majority of the remains still visible today belong to the latter part of that period, the culminating architectural achievement of which was the House of the Tiles.<sup>109</sup>

The House of the Tiles was preceded by a similar central building, building BG. Building BG was a monumental one and its main entrance was at the southern end of the construction, facing the circuit walls. This large structure has been seen as a forerunner and prototype of the later the House of the Tiles. During the phase of building BG, circuit wall and a U-shaped tower has also been found, possibly indicating to a fortification of some sort.<sup>110</sup>

The House of the Tiles<sup>111</sup> existed only for a brief time; its burnt ruins were partly preserved by the earth tumulus built over it.<sup>112</sup> It belongs to the latest phase of Lerna III, a time when previous circuit walls were out of repair. The building itself was unfinished on the day it was destroyed by the fire that marks the end of the Early Helladic II period at the site.<sup>113</sup>

The afore-mentioned house was rectangular in plan, measuring 25 meters by 12 meters. The building was divided into several rooms, with corridors and stairways leading to an upper story. The walls of the house were erected by square mud bricks, with some socles, and the edifice was roofed with stone and terracotta tiles. The walls were also plastered on the inside.<sup>114</sup> The lower parts of the walls are fairly well preserved. Clay benches stood against the outer faces of the north and south walls.<sup>115</sup>

A rather detailed overlook of the placement of the rooms can also be given. A main hall was entered through a wide doorway and vestibule. From here, the doorways gave passage to the rooms on the central axis while the rear door was placed at the west. The building clearly had a second story: a doorway in the north wall led to a staircase rising in the north corridor, and another flight of stairs, giving access from indoors, rose from the southeast corner. If the heavy walls supported similar walls on the second story, as seems rather probable, then the major room of the house may have been that above the large ground-floor room.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 10

<sup>110</sup> *Op. Cit.* 13–14

<sup>111</sup> See appendix 4

<sup>112</sup> Wiencke 2010: 663

<sup>113</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 15

<sup>114</sup> Renfrew 1972: 109

<sup>115</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 15

<sup>116</sup> *Op. Cit.* 15–16

Balconies may have encircled parts of the house at the second-story level above the corridors, providing light to the inner rooms. In fact, it could even be argued that one particular room may have functioned as kind of a „light well“, open to the rafters. It would appear that the front rooms and those above them formed more of a public unit, distinct from the likes of a private back rooms.<sup>117</sup>

Not too many archaeological finds have been found from the house: it seems likely that the house had not been occupied for long before it burned, as briefly mentioned above. Only one small storage room, opening to the exterior, contained notable finds: many plain saucers, a few sauceboats, and many fragments of broken clay sealings, stamped when damp by circa 70 different seals with mostly geometric designs. The clay had been fired hard in the destruction of the house, and the actual seals were no longer present.<sup>118</sup> The seals' designs are of a great quality when compared with other mainland and Aegean material of the period. It is evident that they are from a local workshop, which did not survive the destruction of Lerna III. Later on, during Lerna IV, sealings become rare.<sup>119</sup>

Although it was a fire that caused the destruction of the House of the Tiles, we do not know what caused the fire. But still, some speculation is possible as we try to analyze it a bit later. Certain other sites in Greece were destroyed around this same time (later stages of Early Helladic II). Some of these settlements in southern Greece had buildings like the House of the Tiles, which have now come to be known as Corridor Houses, notably Kolonna on the island of Aigina, and Akovitika near Kalamata.<sup>120</sup> Still, however the fire may be explained, it was a catastrophic event which marked the end of an era.

After the House had burned, a low mound was constructed out of the clay and brick debris, directly over the remains of walls. A circle of round stones was placed at the circumference of this tumulus, and the surface within the circle was covered with small stones. We do not know for sure who was responsible for this monument. What we do know, is that the next settlers did not at first construct any houses within the circle – it could be possible that they saw the space as sacred.<sup>121</sup> The shape of this new monument may suggest a funerary tumulus, but no

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<sup>117</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 15

<sup>118</sup> Wiencke 2010: 663

<sup>119</sup> Dickinson 1994: 189

<sup>120</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 17

<sup>121</sup> Wiencke 2010: 664

human burials have been found in it, only the ruins of the House of the Tiles, over which it was centered with remarkable accuracy.<sup>122</sup>

After the destruction of the House of the Tiles there was a distinct change of inhabitants and way of life at Lerna: there were no more fortifications or monumental buildings, just as well as the houses, pots and tools were quite different.<sup>123</sup>

The Houses of Lerna IV of the following Early Helladic III period were in general short and freestanding, with the doorway situated at one end within an open porch, the other end closed by an apse. Pottery and other objects of the Early Helladic III show new forms and techniques as well: vessels are now sometimes thrown on the wheel rather than built by hand; symmetrical shapes are favoured; and the vessels have painted decoration more frequently than before.<sup>124</sup> The population in Lerna IV was a mixed one that most likely included survivors of Lerna III as well.<sup>125</sup>

The transition to Lerna V marked the beginning of the Middle Helladic period and is less distinctly marked than were previous transitions. Some features of the Lerna IV culture were carried over but new ones appeared as well.<sup>126</sup>

Aspidal and rectangular houses continued to be built. Habitation was continuous throughout Middle Helladic, and in some areas up to nine levels of rebuilding can be seen. Metalwork also took place at the site.<sup>127</sup> The manner in which the inhabitants of Lerna (V) lived and worked changed little. As time passed, however, the village became increasingly prosperous, most likely in part because of exploitation of the rich farmland of the Argive plain and the growing importance of this coastal site as a market for traders sailing into the Bay of Argos.<sup>128</sup>

One of the most telling discovery from the Middle Helladic Lerna is that the analysis of the ceramic wares has shown that circa 40% of the total ceramic assemblage had been a product of import.<sup>129</sup> Of the imported wares, the commonest examples by far were of a volcanic fabric

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<sup>122</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 18

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 18

<sup>124</sup> *Op. Cit.* 19

<sup>125</sup> Wiencke 2010: 666

<sup>126</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 19

<sup>127</sup> Wiencke 2010: 666

<sup>128</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 22

<sup>129</sup> Wiencke 2010: 666

from Aegina, but other types of artifacts and pottery from the islands of Kythera, Crete and the Cyclades also arrived.<sup>130</sup>

Burials in stone cists became common also during the period of Lerna V. Tomb gifts, which were not always present, were of a simple nature and few in numbers.<sup>131</sup> Despite the overall homogeneity of the mortuary practices during Middle Helladic I–II, differentiation in burials between age categories can be seen, which, in Lerna, is expressed in the placement of the graves: only neonates were buried under the inhabited houses; jar burials contain only subadults, cists are associated more often with adults; clay vases were never given to older people, most of the tools were deposited with adults. Concerning the gender differentiation, some differences can be seen again: women are usually buried contracted on their left side, while men are placed on their right. It has also been pointed out that sometimes, gender and age are closely connected: weapons are found with adult men, while only juvenile females receive beads.<sup>132</sup>

When discussing the category of status (one that's generally very popular amongst archaeologists), then burial evidence suggests that neither grave elaboration nor wealth were very meaningful in the Middle Helladic I–II (in the Argolid as a whole and neither in Lerna particular). The differences in wealth are minimal and there seems no emphasis on status.<sup>133</sup>

Lerna VI functioned as a transitional phase between the late Middle Helladic period and the Late Helladic period. At this time (early 17th to early 16th century BC) larger houses with multiple rooms were constructed, and at least one of them was equipped with a built drain. This is the period that was made famous by the stupendous display of wealth in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae. But there were indications suggesting a changing economic status of the inhabitants of Lerna as well: improvements in architectural practices; increasing amount of disposable wealth apparent in grave offerings.<sup>134</sup>

Two Shaft Graves fairly similar to those at Mycenae were discovered at Lerna (VI). The shafts had cut through the layers of Lerna V and IV into Lerna III levels, destroying house walls of each period. There were no skeletons in either grave and, in distinct contrast to the riches of the royal graves of Mycenae, no precious or sumptuous objects of wealth have been

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<sup>130</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 22

<sup>131</sup> Wiencke 2010: 666

<sup>132</sup> Voutsaki 2010: 88

<sup>133</sup> *Op. Cit.* 89–90

<sup>134</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 25



found. It is highly likely, though, that the graves had been emptied in ancient times, either by grave robbers, or possibly by the people of later generation, who were perhaps moving to another site and wished to take the bones of their (heroic) ancestors with them.<sup>135</sup>

The sequence and continuity of habitation at Lerna continued (Lerna VI, Post-Mycenaean Period), but this goes beyond the time scope of the present thesis.

### 3.1.2. Interpretation

As the evidence shows, the houses in the Neolithic were rather small-sized, and there is no evidence for a central house. No notable objects of wealth have also been found from the graves. The pottery, although in a constant state of development and becoming more sophisticated, still remained rather simple-minded and basic. Also, no signs of considerable fortifications have been found from this era nor a distribution of goods. It would be quite reasonable to suggest that what we are dealing with here is a rather common farmers' society. We do not have any significant proof in order to speak about complex society – we lack archaeological evidence for that. The society does not seem hierarchical and a ruling group or elite nor a chief as a single leader cannot be found in the empirical evidence.

From Lerna III, on the other hand, we have a circular wall (a fortification), a U-shaped tower, and also, for the first time, a central building (predecessor of the House of the Tiles).<sup>136</sup> This kind of empiric material would perhaps allow us to start seeing some kind of a change in the society. It would make sense to believe that whoever controlled the central house – building BG - also controlled or was responsible for the building of the fortification walls. It is evident that the House of the Tiles – a central unit, as discussed previously and as follows – did not appear from nothing. The building BG and the society in which it existed already carried some elements of complexity which achieved a whole new level during the House of the Tiles.

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<sup>135</sup> Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 25–26

<sup>136</sup> *Op. Cit.* 13

The House of the Tiles served as a unique building and archaeological site for many different reasons – its unusual dimensions and complex design, unique large collections of clay sealings from jars, boxes, and baskets.<sup>137</sup>

As briefly discussed earlier, the House could have held a distinct difference between restricted access *versus* more accessible rooms. This would mean that there would have existed both privileged residents (as evidenced by „private“ spaces) and those, who were not granted the possibility to exploit all the space, but only given access to „public“ spaces for activities that gathered larger groups of people.

But what was the function of those bigger, public rooms? What kind of collective activities took place in them? Vessels related to the preparation and serving of food and drink seem to represent large-scale feasts – a perfect function for public spaces (although this should not be taken as a fact, as a large party could also be of a „private“ nature).<sup>138</sup> It seems rather likely that the privileged resident(s) living in the more private rooms would have been responsible for this sort of a feast – a manifestation of one’s power and a clear intent to maintain it as well.

Archaeological evidence offers us another interesting empirical material from the Lerna III. That material would be the sealings. It has been argued that they document the developing organization of the redistribution system.<sup>139</sup>

As the great majority of seals were used just once, a non-intensive pattern of seal use has been inferred. It has been explained that non-resident seal owners sent a few sealed objects to the site, as opposed to resident seal owners repeatedly sealing and unsealing on the spot. Such sealed goods – probably prestige goods – most plausibly represent either tribute to a chief residing at the House or, at least, property that was to be kept safe.<sup>140</sup>

Given a clear architectural distinction between insiders and outsiders, evidence for control over the distribution of valuables, and provision for the hosting of public events that promote solidarity possibly at a regional, or inter-regional level, the House both reflects well

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<sup>137</sup> Peperaki 2004: 214

<sup>138</sup> *Op. Cit.* 216

<sup>139</sup> Renfrew 1972: 482

<sup>140</sup> Peperaki 2004: 218

established asymmetries of wealth and power.<sup>141</sup> We can see an organized social system that was based on at least some sort of ranking.

Also, the destruction of the House should not be forgotten. As said, we do not know the exact reason of the fire, but the presence of the resources allowing the leveling and building programs culminating in these large structures (The House of the Tiles) indicate a well-organized society. It would be fairly naive to suggest that a society, possessing levels of complexity, would have no rivalry or aggression. It has been argued, that the destruction of the House took place when incomers from the north penetrated to the south.<sup>142</sup> However, other possibilities could also exist – an intra-region conflict for example, which does not indicate to a foreign conquest but rather refers to a conflict between local inhabitants. Complexity, which is based on a production of surplus, can and will flatter enemies, war-driven enemies.

But the complexity of Lerna was not fully destroyed along with the House of the Tiles. As mentioned, the site grew prosperous during the Late Middle Helladic period, and showed rather far-reaching contacts, with a reference to imported ware. Similarly to Mycenae, Shaft Graves have also been found from the site. We should not make too ambitious conclusions from that but we can see differences of rank, social complexity, social hierarchies.

## 3.2. Tiryns

### 3.2.1. The evidence

Circa two kilometers from the present coast of the Bay of Nauplion lies the fortified acropolis of (Mycenaean) Tiryns. The acropolis ascends from the bay on a narrow, rocky outcrop that reaches a height of up to 28 meters from sea level. The hill slopes from south to north – that topographic feature was later used during the Mycenaean period to create a division into an Upper Citadel, a Middle Citadel, and a Lower Citadel. When comparing to all the other Mycenaean palatial centers, Tiryns is the one closest to the sea. In the third millennium BC, the coastline was only a few hundred meters from the foot of the acropolis hill but in later Mycenaean times the shoreline had moved outward because of massive sedimentation as a consequence of soil erosion, while reaching a position approximately half as far as the current

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<sup>141</sup> Peperaki 2004: 222

<sup>142</sup> Hopper 1976: 19

modern coast.<sup>143</sup> Tiryns as one of the major settlements in Argive plain lies also rather close to Lerna, with about 9 kilometers separating them.<sup>144</sup>

It is believed that Tiryns had an outstanding significance and importance in three periods particular: during the later part of the Early Helladic II (2500–2200 BC), during the Mycenaean Palatial period (1400–1200 BC) and during the Postpalatial periods (1200–1050 BC).<sup>145</sup> In this sub-chapter only the first and the period from the first to the second will come under view.

The site of Tiryns was first inhabited in the Neolithic (around seventh millennium BC), as the first few pottery finds suggest. The later building activity, which disturbed the earlier levels, serves as a reason why the Neolithic pottery of Tiryns is highly fragmentary and not associated with architectural remains. The few shreds and one poorly preserved female figurine that have been found during the archaeological excavations offer no clear information on the kind and extent of the settlement, which must have been contemporary with the neighbouring one at Lerna.<sup>146</sup> As mentioned, later building activities have mostly obliterated the earliest signs of occupation which date to the Middle Neolithic (5900–5400 BC).<sup>147</sup>

Tiryns was most likely of a considerable size during the later part of Early Helladic II – the so-called Period of the Corridor Houses. In most archaeological excavations in the Lower Town that were deep enough to reach such levels, substantial architectural remains which date to that time have been uncovered.<sup>148</sup>

But the most important and perhaps prominent structure of the Later Early Helladic II in Tiryns is the monumental circular building on the Upper Citadel – *Rundbau*<sup>149</sup> – which had a diameter of circa 28 meters and a facade that featured jutting, bastion-like projections.<sup>150</sup>

Although the Tirynthian *Rundbau* is strikingly distinguished by its round plan as well as by its enormous size, it features concentric corridors and a roof of both tiles and schist slabs, thus

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<sup>143</sup> Maran 2010: 722

<sup>144</sup> Weiberg & Finne 2013: 8

<sup>145</sup> Maran 2010: 723

<sup>146</sup> Papademetriou 2001: 15

<sup>147</sup> Maran 2010: 722

<sup>148</sup> *Op. Cit.*: 723

<sup>149</sup> See appendix 5

<sup>150</sup> Maran 2010: 724

making it clearly part of the same highly distinctive architectural tradition as the Corridor Houses.<sup>151</sup>

The building was unique and exclusive architectural creation for the period. It was founded on the very top of the hill and it locates below the later megaron as a part of the megaron's central court and the adjacent buildings. The construction comprises a central circular space, 12 meters in diameter, which is surrounded by concentric brick walls defining corridors and intersected by walls radiating from the centre to the periphery.<sup>152</sup>

The outer brick wall of the construction is set on a stone foundation terminating in tongue-shaped buttresses, estimated at 44 in number. The strong structure leads to a thought that the building was originally a high one, with a brick-built upper structure and perhaps a gable roof covered with tiles and slates.<sup>153</sup> *Rundbau* was divided by concentric ring walls and cross-walls on two storeys to form a series of small compartments surrounding an inner core.<sup>154</sup>

On the basis of the archaeological finds the circular building can be dated to the Early Helladic II (2400–2300 BC). It was destroyed by conflagration.<sup>155</sup> *Rundbau*, just like the House of the Tiles at Lerna, was destroyed and not rebuilt, although both settlements were continuously inhabited.<sup>156</sup>

From the third millennium BC, no other buildings even remotely resembling the *Rundbau* of Tiryns are known in the Aegean region. It is also important to note that in some particular respects the circular building resembles the much later central buildings of the Mycenaean palace. To start with, the construction constituted a radical break with the former patterns of the Early Helladic architectural use of the Upper Citadel. It was also built on exactly the same plot where roughly 1000 years later the Great and the Little Megaron were built.<sup>157</sup>

The builders of the *Rundbau* wittingly ensured its visibility both from the sea and land by positioning it as the main building of the settlement exactly on the highest topographical point of the hill. So it is rather likely to have functioned as an imposing and fortified structure that

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<sup>151</sup> Rutter 1998

<sup>152</sup> Papademetriou 2001: 15

<sup>153</sup> *Op. Cit.* 16

<sup>154</sup> Dickinson 1994: 145

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Weiberg & Finne 2013: 9

<sup>157</sup> Maran 2010: 724

served as a landmark and symbol of political power during the times of peace, and in times of war as a refuge.<sup>158</sup>

During the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1600 BC), fillings were made and terraces were constructed on the Upper Citadel, in order to arrange flat surfaces on which to found the buildings. Though the later building activity has made it rather complicated to investigate remains of this period, settlement is still considered certain.<sup>159</sup>

On the Upper Citadel, five archaeological levels have been located, all of which are linked with architectural remains. The buildings excavated are of a curvilinear plan as well as rectangular. Six cist graves, most of them unfurnished, have also been found and investigated.<sup>160</sup>

On the Middle Citadel, two repositories have been located, with pottery associated with one Middle Helladic level. On the Lower Citadel, only some sporadic remains of walls have been identified, mainly on its north-west section. Despite the fragmentary state of the archaeological finds in the area of the citadel, there was most likely continuous habitation from the Middle Helladic period. The settlement in this period may have extended in the plain around the citadel as well, with greater density to the south of it. The spaces between the houses were used for burials.<sup>161</sup>

The Late Bronze Age (1600–1050 BC) is perhaps the most illustrious of all the periods at Tiryns. It was then that it needed the monumental fortification, which the ancient Greeks themselves generally believed was the work of the Cyclopes. Those „Cyclopean walls“, which kept Tiryns visible for many centuries and alive in the memory of many generations, were brought to light by Heinrich Schliemann and his archaeological excavations.<sup>162</sup> Those glorious and famous days of Tiryns, however, will not be discussed in present work as they exit the time-limit that has been set.

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<sup>158</sup> Maran 2010: 724.

<sup>159</sup> Papademetriou 2001: 17

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.2.2. Interpretation

In many ways, the results of interpreting the archaeological data of Tiryns follow the same patterns as of Lerna. Not much information from the Neolithic has preserved: so, considering the scarce archaeological evidence, it would be more than hazardous and complicated to make clear suggestions considering the society, complexity, or the level of (general) organization.

But still, we can see transformation and change as by Late Early Helladic II, the settlement of Tiryns attained a considerable size. As discussed previously, during the phase of Corridor Houses, a monumental construction – *Rundbau* – emerged in Tiryns, which should also be placed in this category (though the plan of *Rundbau* does not exactly resemble the plans of Corridor Houses) because of their potential function.

The opinions on the use of the construction differ from fortified palace to a monumental mortuary building or shrine, communal granary, or perhaps even a monumental meeting-place. Despite this uncertainty, *Rundbau* can still be interpreted in the context of the organization of one of the first urban centres as an administrative centre that displays morphological adaptations to the configuration of the grounds.<sup>163</sup> It is thought to have been public building.<sup>164</sup>

John Bintliff has claimed that at that time period, Tiryns, at 6 hectare, could perhaps have existed at a „proto-city state“ level, where a possible population of 500–600 people may have created a largely endogamous, inwardly-focused society.<sup>165</sup>

*Rundbau*, just as the House of the Tiles at Lerna, was destroyed and never rebuilt in the following times, thus leaving Tiryns to become great and mighty (again?) during the Mycenaean Palatial period.

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<sup>163</sup> Papademetriou 2001: 16

<sup>164</sup> Dickinson 1994: 59

<sup>165</sup> Bintliff 2012: 89

### 3.3. Mycenae

#### 3.3.1. The evidence

The site of Mycenae is located roughly 13 kilometers from the sea at Tiryns. The settlement lies tucked into the hills with a deep gorge on the south and another almost as precipitous on the north. It commands a view to the south-west down the plain towards the site of Argos but Tiryns, for example, cannot be seen from any part of the site.<sup>166</sup>

The location, in the northeast corner of the Argive plain, allowed exploitation of both pasture and grazing lands of the hills, the arable lands of the adjacent uplands and the plain below. Mycenae also became a network of built roads. It could be probable that the natural environment of the Bronze Age was rather similar to that of the earlier part of the 20th century AD, as it seems that the north and east sections of the Argolid had suffered less than other areas from poor land management in the Early Bronze Age, which caused severe changes in the landscape.<sup>167</sup>

Today, the site of Mycenae is well dominated by the massive fortification walls and extensive palace remains. It could be argued that these ruins serve as probably the most visual reminder of the powerful state authority. Most of the extant remains, however, represent the final stage in the long process of social transformation and state formation that culminated in the creation of the mature Mycenaean palace state.<sup>168</sup>

Mycenae was inhabited for several thousands of years before the beginning of the Bronze Age and also, it remained occupied for at least a millennium after its end. It has been said that the evidence for the early occupation is rather sporadic and tantalizing, but often unidentified as well.<sup>169</sup>

In Mycenae, we do not have as much material evidence from the Neolithic as we do, for example, from Lerna. Some sherds have of the Early Neolithic were first found rather unexpectedly. There is still a lot of work and research to do, in order to find out whether the

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<sup>166</sup> French 2002: 14

<sup>167</sup> French 2010: 671

<sup>168</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 75

<sup>169</sup> French 2010: 671



site was continuously occupied from the seventh millennium BC and which areas of the site were occupied in which periods.<sup>170</sup>

It could be said that Mycenae would not necessarily have been a leading site during the Neolithic. For example, we may assume that it was (far) less important than Lerna in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.<sup>171</sup>

The evidence for the Early Bronze Age at Mycenae, however, is more prevalent. The first period of the Bronze Age, the Early Helladic, is attested by sherd evidence from the acropolis and several of the adjacent hills. This material arguably appears to be largely from occupation, although occasional whole or restorable pots from near Grave Circle A may indicate that the lower west slope had already begun to be used for burials. The presence of a considerable amount of Early Helladic pottery in the fills on the very top of the citadel may suggest that it might have been the site of a notable and noticeable building (Palace I) – just like those already discussed in Lerna and Tiryns.<sup>172</sup>

We know rather more about Mycenae in the Middle Bronze Age. This period starts with the pottery phase Early Helladic III, which is distinct in many ways from what preceded it but shares features with the following phases (this material is also found at Lerna particularly in levels immediately succeeding a heavy burning, which ultimately destroyed the House of the Tiles). The period ends with two Grave Circles A and B.<sup>173</sup>

Occupation of the Middle Helladic period at Mycenae is known to us both from scattered traces of walls and from the copious amounts of excellent pottery found in most later contexts. On the top of the acropolis, walls thought to be from the Middle Helladic have been discovered below the Great Court and in the lower strata of the Pithos Area, and in deposit on the north slope beyond the terrace of the later temple. This evidence may once again indicate that there might have been a main residence or central building at the highest point of the site.<sup>174</sup>

Outside the walls of Mycenae are remains of architectural structures by the Grave Circle B as well as near and under the Ivory Houses Group. Much of the lower west slope of the acropolis hill (both inside and outside the later citadel wall) was covered by a large diffused cemetery

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<sup>170</sup> French 2002: 25

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> French: 2010: 672

<sup>173</sup> French 2002: 29

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

known as the Prehistoric Cemetery. The overall cemetery includes the two Grave Circles but in addition well over 100 graves of individuals have been found. This cemetery was probably external to the main settlement and those in outlying areas would have been interred near where they lived.<sup>175</sup>

It would be rather safe to argue that the Prehistoric Cemetery at Mycenae provides our most coherent glimpse of the Middle Helladic period at Mycenae. It comprises the prestigious burials with dazzling displays of grave objects found in the wealthiest of Grave Circles A and B, but just as well a host of lesser graves spanning from the Middle Helladic to Late Helladic II. Many of these burials have been disturbed, either by the Bronze Age practice of re-using graves or in later building operations, but others have been found intact.<sup>176</sup>

The smaller graves of Grave Circle A seem to have been characteristic of many of the graves of the Prehistoric Cemetery: they have been dated to Middle Helladic and they contained little apart from the burial. The smaller graves were already in existence at the time of the construction of Grave Circle A, but were unknown to, or ignored by the founders of the Shaft Graves.<sup>177</sup> Grave Circle B also contained early graves which were disregarded by the founders of the circle.<sup>178</sup>

The objects found in graves can generally be divided into two different categories. The first would more properly be called „grave offerings“ since they were placed deliberately in the grave at the time the burial took place. The second category should be seen as „associated finds“, for there are items, usually sherds and fragments of obsidian blades, that are in the grave by chance. The majority of Middle Helladic graves in Greece, however, contain no grave objects.<sup>179</sup>

The increase in visible wealth and change in society, that is both so marked at Mycenae towards the end of the period and so intriguing, can best be exemplified in Grave Circle B.<sup>180</sup> The clear growth of wealth that is apparent in the burial evidence of Grave Circle B could be seen as the most striking feature of the Middle Helladic period. Series of pit graves that

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<sup>175</sup> French 2002: 29-31

<sup>176</sup> Alden 2001: 1

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Dickinson 1977: 40

<sup>179</sup> Alden 2001: 26

<sup>180</sup> French 2002: 29-31.

gradually transform into full shaft graves,<sup>181</sup> with a corresponding increase in both the number of interments and the number and quality of grave goods, documents this transformation. Also the manufacturing techniques in both metal and pottery develop to high standard which will be retained throughout the Late Bronze Age as well.<sup>182</sup>

The Grave Circle B, which lies on a slight rise in the rock to the west of the main extent of the Prehistoric Cemetery, was surrounded by a wall which has been dated back to the Middle Helladic Period. Within the wall lay 25 graves (containing 35 individuals) of which 14 were shaft graves. There was also one larger built tomb.<sup>183</sup>

As briefly stated above, the site of Circle B was a small knoll, separated from the slopes leading up to the acropolis by an abrupt dip. Traces of the Middle Helladic structures preceding the circle have been found over most of its area. Some of the early remains are of an unusual nature, perhaps suggesting cult-connections. The process by which the knoll became a burial ground is not clear.<sup>184</sup>

Although no two examples can be found identical, all of the shaft graves in Grave Circles A and B share the same overall principal design characteristic: a deep shaft dug into the earth or bedrock at the bottom of which stood the burial chamber. Indeed, it is the presence of this shaft that can be seen as the primary structural feature distinguishing this tomb type from the typical Middle Helladic cist grave, not only in terms of form but also, and as well as more importantly, in terms of scale.<sup>185</sup>

The earliest tombs are the simple cist graves and these have been dated to the end of the Middle Helladic. The shaft graves belong to the last phase, just before the change to Late Helladic I in pottery terms.<sup>186</sup>

The graves seem linked in a typological sequence, so that the earlier graves, though poor, probably represent the same group of people as the later. It is likely that the Circle B was

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<sup>181</sup> A shaft grave is a large deep rectangular pit in the bottom of which a grave is placed. The distinguishing features are the depth and the presence of low rubble walls in order to support a roof of the grave.

<sup>182</sup> French 2010: 672

<sup>183</sup> French 2002: 31

<sup>184</sup> Dickinson 1977: 40

<sup>185</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 79

<sup>186</sup> French 2002: 31.

primary feature and that the earlier graves were disturbed because their position was uncertain or not marked at all, and destroyed only if there was no help for it.<sup>187</sup>

It seems rather sure that the wall originally formed a full circle, although it is only intact on the north-east; it is traceable in the south-east and south, and later constructions are likely to have destroyed the rest. There seems to be no evident sign of an entrance, but since there are fairly wide spaces in the west and southwest of the hypothetical circle, and since the stelae faced west, or in the case of O, probably south, the entrance is likely to have been on the south side.<sup>188</sup>

The graves show little if any evidence of deliberate arrangement, most of them are oriented roughly north-south, their occupants lying in either direction (although north does seem preferred, but still there are several oriented east-west). There are enough burials in order to represent several families, or at least branches of one family, over a period of generations.<sup>189</sup>

The earliest graves in the Circle B were uniformly small and shallow and contained few, if any, goods. Their size necessitated burial in a contracted position. There was a distinct differentiation in the grave goods, apart from the pottery, between the male and the female burials. The men usually had a full set of weapons, both simple and elaborate, and some items of personal adornment. Women, on the other hand, had pins, several of which were also elaborate, and jewellery as well as some personal adornment.<sup>190</sup> The later Circle B graves were generally much larger, even though their contents were not very impressive.<sup>191</sup>

In general, the graves in Circle B are cruder and poorer in burial-offerings than those of Circle A, although in details of construction the graves of both circles are very similar. Also, there is no essential difference in character between the grave gifts found in Circle B from those of A. Most of the pottery that has been found in the graves of Circle B is assigned to Middle Helladic, though in some cases to very late Middle Helladic.<sup>192</sup>

Archaeological excavations have also discovered stelai on the grave circles which must have stood as testimonies to the Mycenaean lords. Two sculptured stelai were found at Grave

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<sup>187</sup> Dickinson 1977: 40

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Op. Cit.* 40-41

<sup>190</sup> French 2002: 35

<sup>191</sup> Dickinson 1977: 42

<sup>192</sup> Hooker 1976: 37-38

Circle B and 11 at Grave Circle A.<sup>193</sup> Jeremy Rutter argues that these stelai mark the first large-scale relief sculpture of the mainland Greek Bronze Age. On these Shaft Grave stelai chariot scenes are quite common (though it is unsure whether these are to be interpreted as illustrations of warfare, hunting, or of races at funeral games), but mostly the decoration is abstract (spirals, wavy lines for example).<sup>194</sup>

Graves were often reused: in such cases the earlier dead would be moved to one side of the grave or to a corner (with some or all of their goods) and their pottery might be removed and placed on the relaid roof. In some cases it is also possible that the more valuable goods were largely removed.<sup>195</sup>

A link with Crete is provided by some of the swords included in the burial offerings of Circle B. The swords have been found to be divisible into two types, A and B and it is thought that at least the type A originates from Crete.<sup>196</sup>

Rodney Fitzsimons has observed that there seems to be no direct correlation between the size and sophistication of the graves, and the passage of time, nor are the most elaborate tombs confined to an intermediate phase of Circle B's use. In fact, small and relatively simply built tombs appear to be distributed throughout the sequence. At the same time, it is also possible to see a small trend towards elaboration and sophistication. The earlier graves rank among the smallest and that features such as wall linings and grave markers are rarely present in them, while the later graves tend to be larger and characterized by the use of more sophisticated construction techniques (such as mud brick and/or rubble walls, flagstone roofs) and the presence of more prominent markers (notably the stelai).<sup>197</sup>

R. Fitzsimons has also calculated that the estimation of 100 man days for the largest of the Shaft Graves represents the minimum amount of energy expended on the construction of these tombs, as it omits not only the time and effort required for these structural enhancements, but the additional efforts that were undertaken when the graves were reused as well. So, due to that the appearance of the Shaft Grave marked and increase not only in the structural

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<sup>193</sup> Drews 1988: 159–160

<sup>194</sup> Rutter 1998

<sup>195</sup> Dickinson 1977: 42

<sup>196</sup> Hooker 1976: 38

<sup>197</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 85–87

elaboration and physical magnitude of the tomb architecture itself, but also in the size of the workforce employed in its construction.<sup>198</sup>

By the end of the period, the Middle Helladic, pottery in Mycenae is being imported: mainly from the Cyclades, but also from northern part of Greece. There also seems to exist types of pottery that are imitations of Cretan wares, although actual Cretan pottery itself is very rare in Mycenae. This, however, is in distinct contrast to Lerna, for example.<sup>199</sup>

The Late Helladic Period is divided into the somewhat usual three divisions. In order to overcome the terminological difficulties, it has been customary to use the terms coined for Crete – Early Palatial, Palatial, and Post Palatial.<sup>200</sup>

The Early Palatial period is what marks the beginning of the Mycenaean period proper. There exists a vast increase in evident wealth and in ostentatious display in burials.<sup>201</sup> For this particular period, we have clear archaeological evidence (such as pottery, wall paintings, and domestic debris) of an elite presence on the summit of the citadel, possibly demarcated by a surround wall, and widespread settlement in the surrounding area. The Early Palatial period is also marked by the climax of the Shaft Grave era and the transition to tholos and chamber tomb cemeteries.<sup>202</sup>

Grave Circle A overlaps Grave Circle B, both in date and style. It has been taken to exemplify the cultural emergence that occurs at Mycenae in the 17th century BC.<sup>203</sup>

Circle A is roughly in the centre of the Prehistoric Cemetery. Its original appearance has been lost forever due to thorough reconstruction in later periods. It can still be said that the area has been left untouched since the last burials. The fact that Circle B was surrounded by a circular wall would seem enough to assume that Circle A had had one as well, although some probable traces have not been found. The pottery finds suggest that the Circle A graves were constructed within a short space of time and used concurrently.<sup>204</sup>

Archaeological evidence suggests that the graves held nine women, eight men, and one child, though there is argument about one burial in Shaft Grave IV where the earliest burials occur.

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<sup>198</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 82

<sup>199</sup> French 2010: 672

<sup>200</sup> *Op. Cit.* 672–673

<sup>201</sup> French 2002: 37

<sup>202</sup> French 2010: 673

<sup>203</sup> French 2002: 37

<sup>204</sup> Dickinson 1977: 46–49

The majority of the burials are from Late Helladic IB – the first truly Mycenaean period in pottery terms.<sup>205</sup>

As with the earlier Circle B, the goods that accompany the burials have a rather distinct difference between male and female, although jewellery and personal adornment are not confined to women. Weapon sets for men and pins for women are distinctive but many of the other grave goods occur with either. However, the most overwhelming effect of Grave Circle A is the vast quantity of wealth and the degree of craftsmanship which the grave goods exhibit. On the other hand, the source of the wealth remains a topic of great and lengthy discussion.<sup>206</sup>

There is not much pottery, although there are plenty of vessels to take its place. The pottery that is there, however, shows the same range of origin as Grave Circle B with its material coming from Crete, Cyclades as well as other parts of the mainland. The other grave goods are often of disputable origin: while some are clearly Cretan, others Egyptian, which almost certainly arrived via Crete. Many goods are assumed to be by Cretan craftsmen working to the tastes and standards of the mainland chieftains.<sup>207</sup>

As mentioned above, great quantities of goods were heaped about the graves. In grave IV, each burial wore a mask and had weapons by his side, many large copper vessels stood at their feet, some of them containing gold and silver vases and other objects. Many small and a few large pieces of a gold leaf were also found. Among the goods by these burials were the Bull's Head Rhyton, the so-called Nestor's cup, and Lion Hunt Dagger. The masks of these burials were basically identical with each other.<sup>208</sup>

In grave V, the central burial had been disturbed, most likely on the occasion of emptying and refilling the shaft in later periods. The goods included gold-plated buttons, gold plates, and boar's tusk ornaments. This all indicates that the central burial was richly provided, although it should not be assumed that it would have had a mask and a breast-plate like the others. The northern burial in grave V, the so-called „mummy“, possessed a remarkable array of goods: three gold cups of varied type, several silver vases including a large jug, a limestone chalice, gold plates that possibly decorated a hexagonal wooden box, as well as a mask, plain breast-

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<sup>205</sup> French 2002: 37

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Op. Cit.* 37–38

<sup>208</sup> Dickinson 1977: 48–49

plate and sword plate of gold. In general, this grave V was not as rich as grave IV, which it probably outlasted, though it contained some notable treasures.<sup>209</sup>

The burials in grave III were literally covered in gold ornaments, as well as a crown and an enormous head-band were found on the heads of two burials. A set of gold toilet-vases and a pair of crystal-headed pins were found with a single burial, while a fine gold gem showing a man fighting a lion was found a bit to the north. The northern burial also had a lighter series of gold ornaments.<sup>210</sup>

Grave Circle A is unique in other ways as well: six Shaft Graves were constructed closely together on a rock slope adjacent to various areas which had been used for burials throughout the Middle Helladic period. The respect with which those six graves were being treated is striking. Though within the graves themselves the usual practices, by which earlier burials were thrust to one side were used, the tombs as a whole were not disturbed and in the later Full Palatial period (in the first part of the 13th century BC) they were incorporated into a special monument that formed a focus of attention just within the new and imposing Lion Gate. Moreover, a sherd of the early classical period found in the area of Grave Circle A bears the inscription „To the hero“ and there does not seem to have been any Hellenistic overbuilding of this area.<sup>211</sup>

Concerning the chronology of the two circles, it should be said that the great variety of pottery and goods put into the graves and their frequent reuse make assessment of relative dates difficult. Still, it is evident that Circle A's closest connections are undoubtedly with the late graves of Circle B, including parallels in weapons, jewellery, metal vessels, etc. The foundation of Circle A has been placed at or near the beginning of the late phase of Circle B. Circle A undoubtedly outlasted Circle B, but it is not obvious, how much. Circle B has been conventionally dated 1650–1550 BC, Circle A 1600–1500, although the latter date has received some criticism, mainly from Oliver Dickinson.<sup>212</sup>

The Shaft Graves were finally abandoned towards the beginning of the Late Helladic IIA period. By this time, however, the burial practices of the inhabitants of Argolid had been

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<sup>209</sup> Dickinson 1977: 48–49

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> French 2002: 40

<sup>212</sup> Dickinson 1977: 50–51



marked by a striking innovation with the introduction of a new type of funerary architecture – the tholos tomb.<sup>213 214</sup>

The Cyclopean Tomb, which is the earliest of the tholos tombs found at Mycenae, has been dated (on the basis of the pottery found in it) to the Late Helladic IIA period – thus making it contemporary with, or following very closely, the last of the shaft graves. It could be possible that Grave Circle A was still in use for one family group, but others changed to the new type of tomb that was already in use in Messenia. The reason, however, to change from shaft grave to tholos for high status burial could easily be purely of convenience in reopening the tomb for subsequent burials or to give greater impact.<sup>215</sup>

In the Argolid, over the course of the Late Helladic IIA through Late Helladic IIIB periods a total of 16 tholoi were erected, displaying a wide range in scale and elaboration. From 16, 9 such monuments were being constructed at Mycenae. Those new burial monuments did not only stand at the forefront of architectural complexity but also, for circa 250 years, served as the prime architectural marker of elite status in the Argolid.<sup>216</sup>

A tholos tomb possesses a circular stone-built chamber that is approached by a passage or dromos. Usually the chamber is built within a cylinder cut down into a hillside from above with the dromos cut in from the side. The masonry is corbelled and the whole construction is stabilized by a mound of earth heaped over the top. It is thought that all tholoi had relieving triangles. The stone for the dome was carefully cut and shaped on the spot and the fill itself was very clean and consistent in colour and texture.<sup>217</sup> This basic pattern of design is what almost all tholos tombs conformed, although no tholoi were identical in terms of overall size, construction technique, or decorative sophistication.<sup>218</sup>

Unfortunately all the tholos tombs in the Argolid have been robbed, and only small traces, largely pottery fragments, remain of the wealth they once contained. This phenomenon is not unique to Argolid or Mycenae, but is the case for almost all tholoi known.<sup>219</sup>

The tholos tomb was rather similar to the chamber tomb<sup>220</sup>, which is a second new burial type introduced to the Argolid in the Late Helladic I period. The chamber tomb is also

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<sup>213</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 89

<sup>214</sup> See appendix 6

<sup>215</sup> French 2002: 41

<sup>216</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 90

<sup>217</sup> French 2002: 41

<sup>218</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 90

<sup>219</sup> French 2002: 41

usually understood and seen as a monumental funerary struction in whose variation of size, plan and design can be found elements of the cometitive display of resources. But in essence, although in terms of plan and elevation, the chamber tomb resembled the tholos tomb, the latter served as much more effective instrument of conspicuous consumption. This is evident in three different aspects of tholos tomb construction in the Argolid: the increase in sheer magnitude over contemporary (and earlier as well) tomb types; the application of an elaborate, new architectural features that were absent in other tomb types; and the regional, rather than local, nature of their geographical distribution.<sup>221</sup>

Taking all this archaeological material into account, we can conclude that by the middle of the second millennium BC, when Mycenaean civilization emerged, it had already witnessed a great deal of changes. Ruling elite grew strong and powerful as witnessed by mortuary data, which allows us to discuss, how the society may have functioned.

### 3.3.2. Interpretation

It could be argued that the plain of Argos is one of the key areas for observing critical change in Middle Helladic Greek society. It is there that the Later Middle Helladic phase witnesses evidence for a hierarchy of smaller and larger communities, with the high probability that the latter may also center a political power.<sup>222</sup>

The ruling elite who buried their dead in Grave Circle A did it with such an ostentatious display of wealth that it must have have been aimed at defining and reinforcing their power and authority over the people of Mycenae.<sup>223</sup>

What can we say about the leadership? O. Dickinson has suggested that due to the popularity of weapons and from the apparent conversion of wealth into personal possessions we could see a society of a heroic type. Such a society would have been dominated by a well-armed aristocracy upon whom the rest of the community depended for protection and for whom they would have worked. The leadership would thus perhaps have been entirely personal. O.

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<sup>220</sup> A chamber tomb is rock cut and the positioning and size depend on the nature of the rock available. In plan they resemble tholos tombs with an entrance passage opening through a doorway into a chamber. There may have been secondary chambers, niches, grave pits into the floor and other elaborations.

<sup>221</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 92–93

<sup>222</sup> Bintliff 2012: 170

<sup>223</sup> Schofield 2007: 47

Dickinson has argued that at first a primitive oligarchy may have shared power whereas the establishment of Circle A suggests a narrowing of the group to one family later on. The positions of great importance could have been held by two or three men at a time.<sup>224</sup>

According to J. Bintliff, burial archaeology that is signaling elite status through wealthy or prominent burials may be exceptional, depending on the local or temporary necessity of emphasizing political realities. He continues by saying that the prominence of male warrior statuses in Aegean burials indicates competition and conflict in society.<sup>225</sup>

The Shaft Graves, from which we can accumulate rich evidence, show us the rapid growth in wealth and status of the men and women buried in those deep pits. This elite had relatively swiftly gained the ability to acquire large amounts of precious metal, prestige goods from distant places and the services of skilled craftsmen.<sup>226</sup> A rather obvious question arises: How did this elite achieve the capability for all that? We will be discussing this topic later.

It is essential to stress the importance of prestige goods found from the graves and the fact that they (or at least lots of them) have been acquired from abroad. This would indicate that the rulers had foreign contacts, i.e. social connections outside its local region. These connections may have held an essential role in the emergence of this elite.

However, as argued earlier, the Shaft Graves were abandoned and tholos tombs were introduced as a new funerary architecture. In an attempt to summarize the transition from the Shaft Graves to tholos tombs, R. Fitzsimons has argued that the introduction of those new monuments marked a change in the scale on which the competitive display of resources was being enacted in the Argolid (in addition, the change was marked in growth and elaboration as well). The Shaft Graves were restricted to the gentle plateau spreading west from the acropolis hill, thus indicating that the audience to whom they were advertising status was limited to the occupants of the site itself. In addition to this, the Shaft Graves were clustered into two tight groups, Grave Circles A and B. The widespread distribution of tholos tombs, however, not only in the immediate vicinity of Mycenae but throughout the Argolid as a whole, indicates that their elite owners were now displaying their privileged status not as a collective subsection of a larger community, but rather as discrete groups operating in direct competition, rather than collaboration.

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<sup>224</sup> Dickinson 1977: 56–57

<sup>225</sup> Bintliff 2012: 91

<sup>226</sup> *Op. Cit.* 171

The audience to which this elite was advertising its power and authority had now also expanded to a regional scale. So, with the introduction of tholos tomb, the socio-political boundaries of elite competition were expanded beyond the confines of the individual settlement and into the larger arena of the Argolid as a whole.<sup>227</sup>

R. Fitzsimons has argued that the popularity of this new tomb type in the Argolid could also be seen as an indication that the competition for prestige and authority, which had begun in the Shaft Grave period, continued in to the succeeding era. So in this retrospect we can see the adoption of the tholos tomb as an attempt on the part of the local elite in the region to maintain their privileged positions by keeping pace with the latest „fashions“ emerging from the southwestern Peloponnese.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Fitzsimons 2011: 98–99

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

## 4. DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS THE EMERGENCE OF STATE

In this final chapter we will try to analyze different mechanisms leading to state in the case of the plain of Argos during the Bronze Age. An attempt will be made to synthesize previously given data, including some additional evidence, viewing all this in the light of the theories of state formation discussed in chapter two. The purpose will be to examine the development of social complexity, culminating with the emergence of statehood.

Before that, however, one more topic must be discussed – the origin of the Mycenaeans. This problem inevitably affects our understanding on the relation of local development and foreign impacts.

### 4.1. The origin of the Mycenaeans

Historians have traditionally seen the beginning of the Mycenaean civilization as marked by the rich finds from the Shaft Graves. No palace remains have been found from this early period and the more impressive tholos tombs are also considerably later, nor was writing used on the mainland so early. Considering all this, it is the wealth of the finds and the magnificence of their craftsmanship that has earned the term civilization for this early Mycenaean period.<sup>229</sup>

The archaeological finds from the Shaft Graves show that when the Mycenaean civilization first appears on the scenery, its culture was already rich and society complex. As discussed, the evidence exhibit signs of different contacts with the outside world.<sup>230</sup> It is also generally, if vaguely agreed that those buried in the Shaft Graves were probably members of ruling and thus royal families.<sup>231</sup>

Lord William Taylour has argued that all the great civilizations of the Near East, such Egypt, Babylonia, the Hitties had built up their great wealth and power from their own natural resources, making it thus unnecessary for them to import knowledge or cultural development,

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<sup>229</sup> Renfrew 1972: 49

<sup>230</sup> Taylour 1964: 155

<sup>231</sup> Hopper 1976: 28

for example. Greece, as W. Tayour has seen it, had to turn to those energies outwards, in order to compete with its neighbours.<sup>232</sup>

There have been many attempts to identify the „coming of the Greeks“ in the archaeological record by searching for distinct breaks in continuity: the arrival of new people who brought different form of pottery, weapons and tomb types with them.<sup>233</sup>

The origin of the idea of the Shaft Graves has never been settled and one can doubt, whether it ever will be. Emily Vermeule has noted that some scholars see as if the shafts developed normally out of older cists and burial practices with new wealth inspiring more to gift-giving, while the others stress the undeniable differences from previous burial customs.<sup>234</sup>

She has argued that the Shaft Grave era was one of mobility, while highly trained soldiers were everywhere, seeking out new stations of power. Those soldiers, perhaps warrior-princes, were few in numbers (closely knit by social or family ties), but their dominance may have sprang from many different qualities, such as knowing how to exploit local metals and metal technology and training in new war techniques – the battle chariot and the long sword. All this helped them to impose their policies on a diffuse agrarian peasantry, as E. Vermeule has explained.<sup>235</sup>

According to this opinion, the Mycenaean civilization is essentially not a product of local processes, but to a great extent imported from outside. This theory is supported by other historians as well.

As E. Vermeule pointed out, the invaders may have had better training and an edge in warfare. What would that edge have been? Why were they so successful at conquering? Robert Drews has argued that what contributed most to the chaos of the period was the advent of a weapon that transformed warfare in the ancient world: the horse drawn chariot.<sup>236</sup>

According to R. Drews, the men buried in the Shaft Graves were charioteers<sup>237</sup> whereas O. Dickinson has added that they were bigger, taller and broader than the typical inhabitants of Middle Helladic Greece.<sup>238</sup> R. Drews has also argued that they were among the pioneers of a

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<sup>232</sup> Taylour: 154

<sup>233</sup> Schofield 2007: 26

<sup>234</sup> Vermeule 1964: 108

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*: 110

<sup>236</sup> Drews 1988: 74

<sup>237</sup> *Op. Cit.* 158

<sup>238</sup> Dickinson 1977: 146

warfare this kind. The chariots in which the charioteers of the Shaft Graves were presented were of the same kind that swept the world from Egypt to India at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age.

R. Drews has supported his theory with the stelai which stood on the grave circles. According to him, on five of the six stelai a charioteer is depicted. The reliefs are crude and primitive, as they are perhaps one of the earliest preserved portrayals of the chariot. The reason for the reliefs being primitive may be that they testify that for the men buried beneath the stelai nothing else in life had been more important than charioteering. R. Drews has stressed that the chariot was important to these men as it helped them to kill.<sup>239</sup>

R. Drews has not accepted the argument that the first shaft-grave charioteers were actually natives of Greece, descended from Greeks who had been in the Aegean since 1900 BC. This would suppose that the chariot warfare evolved in Greece itself, which, according to Drews, can be excluded. Since the beginning of the 18th century BC chariot was known in regions such as central Anatolia and Syria, it should be there, where the chariot originated and from where it was introduced to the Greeks. So far no archaeological evidence for wheeled vehicles of any kind has been discovered in Early or Middle Helladic Greece. Instead of the charioteers being of local origin, R. Drews clearly sees them as Indo-Europeans.<sup>240</sup>

The manner in which the charioteers of Mycenae arrived is often seen differently. For example, Fritz Schachermeyr has also argued that the reliefs on stelai depict the use of chariot in warfare and hunting. He has proposed that perhaps the Myceneans of Greece had had the possibility of learning the art of chariot riding in Egypt, whose rulers of XVIII dynasty had learned it from their enemy, Hyksos. According to F. Schachermeyr, the Greek soldiers of fortune left the Aegean in order to help the Egyptians to expell Hyksos. When the mission was finished, the Greeks returned and build chariots of their own, though recieving tips and guidances from Central-Asia.<sup>241</sup>

The aspects of warfare are not supported by all the historians, however. For instance, C. Renfrew has ruled out the possibility of conquerors. He believes that the steps taken towards

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<sup>239</sup> Drews 1988: 160

<sup>240</sup> *Op. Cit.* 172

<sup>241</sup> Schachermeyr 1983: 115

an evolved society came from the region within, as he has not seen enough sufficient evidence to support the invasion-theory.<sup>242</sup>

## 4.2 Mechanisms and strategies leading to the emergence of Mycenaean civilization

The basis of the current thesis is not Mycenaean civilization at its prime era. As we have explained, our research does not concentrate on the classic Mycenaean state which begins roughly from the 16th century BC. What we are interested in are the steps leading to that great prehistoric state.

In a way, our task is to connect the „dots“ from the Neolithic to the 16th century BC. It is evident that human societies evolve and, when given right conditions, become more complex. This complexity and the way how it rises and/or transforms through the time manifests itself in different ways, whether in burials, pottery, architecture, etc. All this would allow the researchers to see the empirical evidence for social ranking within a society. The process of growth and development in Greece seems to have been a continuous one, although invasions and population movements did occur, thus causing destruction. That may have been evident in Lerna and Tiryns, as discussed previously.

C. Renfrew has distinguished four different phases from the Neolithic to 16th century (his distinctions start from the Paleolithic and end with the collapse of Minoan-Mycenaean civilization (altogether seven phases), but we are not interested in the first nor the last ones): introduction of simple village farming, diversification in village farming pattern, development of proto-urban communities and the emergence of palace economies.<sup>243</sup>

When discussing the emergence of complexity, it is evident that it could occur only when the society was capable of producing surplus, as it was essential in generating and maintaining craft specialists and the (ruling) elite. Generally this surplus was based on agriculture, but not always. Without no surplus there could not have existed any ranking nor hierarchy visible in empirical material, as the people of certain settlement did not differ from each other when it comes to social stratification. This development is notably evident in the Neolithic as in the

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<sup>242</sup> Renfrew 1972: 440–476

<sup>243</sup> *Op. Cit.*: 50–52



Bronze Age the production of surplus could be seen as rather elementary. However, taking all this into account, it should still be noted that agriculture did not necessarily produce (food) surplus, as R. Carneiro has argued.<sup>244</sup>

What can we say about complexity in the Aegean during the Neolithic? As discussed in the first chapter, during that period we can see dynamism as the society developed, thus making it possible for complexity to emerge. Surplus was being produced on the basis of agriculture. This development is identifiable in the empirical material, where we can see changes taking place in burial customs, settlement archaeology etc.

Considering all this, we can argue that the surplus that was being produced brought along many changes, such as larger communities (as is evident on the likes of Sesklo and Dimini, for example), but also the growth of population. All this required more complex organization.

It is evident that this sort of a transformation and change carried into the Bronze Age where it actually acquired a whole new level. It can be argued that since the Late Neolithic (and in most cases even before), there ceased to be egalitarian societies throughout the Aegean.<sup>245</sup> From that point on, hierarchies and differences of rank can be seen (almost) everywhere. According to C. Renfrew, it can be said that by 16-15th century BC, the Aegean had developed into full palace civilization. He has underlined the importance of the third millennium BC (the phase of development of proto-urban communities).<sup>246</sup> The Early Bronze Age could thus be seen as the era, when significant steps were being made.

Those steps lead us to questions and problems. As discussed so far, complex organization did not arise from nowhere nor for nothing. Societies, population and settlements were growing, thus making better control and leadership necessary. In a word, ruling elite appeared.

James Wright has stressed that if our aim is to better understand the processes of the rise of socio-political complexity, we truly have to see how vital it is to understand the role played by the structures and dynamics of individuals. He adds that it could be seen as the nature of transegalitarian societies<sup>247</sup> for there to be individuals who try to differentiate themselves from each other and form other social groups. This is the transformation to the more complex

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<sup>244</sup> Carneiro 1970: 733–738

<sup>245</sup> Wright 2004: 68

<sup>246</sup> Renfrew 1972: 52–53

<sup>247</sup> A society which is in a transformation from egalitarian to hierarchical structure. Though its roots lie in the Neolithic where differences of rank cannot be seen in empirical evidence, this society is evolving and becoming more complex

levels of organization that may result in civilizations. J. Wright has argued that in order for individual leaders to gain and retain their position, they have to be able to mobilize labour.<sup>248</sup>

So, our central question can (and already has been) only be one: what were the processes that led to the differentiation and how did they lead to further transformations?

Taking E. Service's redistribution model (which he has mainly constructed to the tribes of New-Guinea) as a basis, C. Renfrew has modified it into the Aegean context, thus creating the subsistence and redistribution model. The introduction of farming, though imported<sup>249</sup>, was the basis of a whole new subsistence system. The agricultural system was modified in several significant ways during three millennia, though the changes were neither sudden, nor made with deliberate foresight, but were instead the result of continual adaption to the environment.<sup>250</sup>

Though able to adapt, Greek civilization was ultimately economically dependent upon the „Mediterranean triad“: wheat, the olive and the wine.<sup>251</sup> But when it comes to food surplus, questions can be formed: how was this surplus stored? A subsistence economy, producing food supplies, clearly needed a place for those supplies. As C. Renfrew has explained, during the phase of the development of Mediterranean polyculture, storage became more systematic as an economy based upon cereal agriculture must have an efficient way of storing grain between the harvest and subsequent sowing, and of storing the bulk of the harvest until it is to be eaten.<sup>252</sup>

But can we find a granary that would perhaps be of a bigger size, thus abeling to distribute grain among lots of people? A large circular building in Tiryns, as discussed earlier, could perhaps be a grain store, although this is not for sure. On the other hand, the enormous capacity of this building (163 cubic meters) would allow to suggest that, when filled with grain, it could have met the annual subsistence needs of several dozen households.<sup>253</sup> But then again, we can juxtapose the evidence from Tiryns with the House of the Tiles in Lerna. From Lerna we have sealings, indicating to control or organization or to collective activities of some sort. Putting the evidence from Lerna and Tiryns together, we could see a picture of Renfrew's subsistence system expanding, not only in terms of the range of cultivars, but in the

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<sup>248</sup> Wright 2004: 73

<sup>249</sup> Andel & Runnels 1995: 481

<sup>250</sup> Renfrew 1972: 273–274

<sup>251</sup> *Op. Cit.* 280

<sup>252</sup> *Op. Cit.* 287

<sup>253</sup> Halstead 1994: 203

organization of their exploitation.<sup>254</sup> Feasting was also well attested in the Early Helladic world, as Lerna offers us evidence of a place for feasting and storage.<sup>255</sup>

However, it is clear that, for example, despite early identifications of the House of the Tiles as a central building, we do not expect the Early Helladic Greece to present the same degree of organization in political economy as the Mycenaean.<sup>256</sup>

C. Renfrew has seen the model of redistribution of bulk staple goods as the economic and political power behind the chiefdoms that emerged in the Early Bronze Age Aegean. According to that point of view, those chiefdoms may be viewed as the direct forerunners of the later Minoan-Mycenaean palatial systems, which must have been controlled by a well-defined social hierarchy.<sup>257</sup>

R. Carneiro, however, has argued that E. Service's redistribution model does not explain why the production of surplus is necessary inside a society, adding that the chief gains only esteem, not power, from redistribution.<sup>258</sup> So, in a sense, this would apply to C. Renfrew's subsistence and redistribution model as well. Also, what should be noted, is how R. Carneiro has seen the chief of redistribution. As he explained, the chief gained no power from redistribution, only esteem. This would apply that redistributive chiefs power may not have been strong, and even if it was, then it was not strong nor stable due to redistribution model. So in a sense, redistributive chief may have been a weak chief, as he gained no real power from gift-giving. He lacked strong political stability.

R. Carneiro has stressed the importance of war and environmental circumscription. The latter, as he has argued, could be a condition under which war gave rise to the chiefdom. One of the main reason for warfare was land shortage, which, caused by population growth, led communities to war.<sup>259</sup> War-driven chief was stronger chief than redistributive one as war (if successful, of course) offered more stable power. There was more firm control when the community or society was lead by waring chief.

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<sup>254</sup> Renfrew 1972: 288

<sup>255</sup> Pullen 2011: 192

<sup>256</sup> *Op. Cit.* 192

<sup>257</sup> Renfrew 1972: 476–500

<sup>258</sup> Carneiro 1981

<sup>259</sup> Carneiro 1970: 733–738

Also, the (massive) wall surrounding the site of Lerna indicates towards war, just as the destruction of the House of the Tiles, as the fire may have been a result of an attack, whether foreign or intra-regional.

The Shaft Graves indicate the rise of a warrior elite. The weaponry found from the Grave Circles is first-class quality, whereas the stelai suggest a radical change in warfare in Mainland Greece – the introduction of the chariot. Those men in Grave Circles were charioteers, bringing thus along advanced expertise and techniques. Whether they were of local heritage or foreign invaders remains unsure as archaeological data allows to interpretate it both ways.

It would be fitting to see war as a mechanism for chiefdom. And not just any kind of chiefdom, but the kind of a chiefdom which allowed the elite to be buried like it had never been done before in Greece. Wealth and riches had been accumulated throughout time, thus making it possible to distinctly distinguish the elite from other burials. And not only wealth in the grave goods testified the greatness of the rulers, large burial architecture demonstrated it as well (Shaft Graves, tholos tombs).

T. Earle, alongside with R. Carneiro, has also criticized the redistribution model and has brought up the importance of war, though perhaps not as strongly. What T. Earle has stressed, however, is the importance of control, which could be based on restricted access to land, but also achieved by distribution of prestige goods or warfare, for example.<sup>260</sup> Control would also explain the differences of rank, which, for instance, are visible in the Shaft Graves. The stronger the control, the bigger the rank, thus creating stratifications inside a society. As control was possible only in a complex society, it would be fitting to see the element of control in the Aegean as well, where we have clear evidence for complexity during the Bronze age.

We also must not forget the importance of prestige goods. From the Grave Circles A and B we have prestige goods of highest quality, such as drinking vessels, swords, masks, gold ornaments, etc. And, as analyzed before, these goods seem to have been acquired from abroad. All this, again, indicates towards a powerful elite that was able to impose itself by war but also by obtaining the prestige goods.

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<sup>260</sup> Earle 2002: 60–64

We can view this in the light of R. Blanton's and G. Feinman's network strategy.<sup>261</sup> As introduced in chapter two, this strategy has stressed the elite's capability of creating exchange relations which were established outside one's local group. It is possible to see that, in many ways, the network strategy coincides with T. Earle's establishment of control. The powerful elite held access to prestige goods by having relations outside its local group.

Whether state emerged from a village based society or was the chiefdom the necessary precursor of the state is a question of great difficulty. As N. Yoffee has argued, chiefdoms were a dead end and not needed in order to reach the level of state, as neo-evolutionists previously explained. Instead, N. Yoffee has seen the state emerging from village-based society.<sup>262</sup> On the basis of evidence from the Aegean this, however seems rather unlikely to the author of present thesis. Sites in Greece or in the plain of Argos seem rather well developed, consisting of many different layers of complexity. Village-society would also indicate that wealth or distinct differences in rank would not exist on a larger scale, but the evidence of the Aegean shows otherwise: the findings from the Shaft Graves clearly affirm the existence of wealth and complexity. People living inside a village without any notable differences in stratifications would not have been able to produce riches like those. And they also would not have had anyone to produce these elements of wealth to as well if the differences in rank were as big (in this context, however, small) as they were in a village. In addition to this, one can doubt whether village-society would have been able to introduce a revolutionary turnaround in warfare, the chariot.

In an attempt to conclude all these theories, it must be said that there does not seem to be a theory about the strategies of the growth of elite political centralisation that would outweigh the others. We have different mechanisms that might show how the elite gained its domination and, though while trying to adopt them to the context of the Bronze Age Greece, these mechanisms do not rule each other out necessarily. For example, the model of redistribution is clearly evident in archaeology, though we may be critical or cast doubts of its influence on the power of the ruler. Also, for instance, we can say that the elite based its power on strong and stabile control, what is debatable, though is how the ruler gained the control in the first place.

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<sup>261</sup> Blanton, Feinman et al 1996

<sup>262</sup> Yoffee 2005: 22–41

As stated in chapter two, the definition of the early state is a complicated matter. It is problematic for the researchers to construct theories about the definition and then support it with archaeological evidence, because different components of the early state may be difficult to see in empirical evidence. What is more, it is also difficult to properly see the transformation, for example from chiefdom to state.

M. Webers definition of the state is too general to find in archaeological evidence so what we need is something more specific, something that we could follow in empirical material.

V. G. Childe's definition, however, is more precise and allows us to find the requirements needed in archaeological material. When we start to check the list step by step, we can say, that at some point Mycenae surely possessed all the important elements of being a state. The question is, when did that happen? For example, writing is something that was not in use by the time of the Shaft Graves, as Linear B tablets have been found from the following times.

B. Trigger's definition and/or understanding of early civilization is what the author of the current work believes would be best suited to describe the emerging statehood in Argolis. We clearly have evidence for distinct differences in wealth within a society, thus suggesting also the presence of a king or ruler. His power, however, seems to have been based on war (thus being also a military chief) and though redistributive model surely existed, the importance level of it could be argued, especially in the earlier periods. In addition to this we can find elite art depicting the ruling class (those depictions also serve as evidence for military force) and also monumental architecture expressing and reinforcing the power of upper classes.

The emergence of civilization and/or statehood at Mycenae is evident. What is also evident, is the knowing that the socio-political context from which it arose had been developing for thousands of years. Step by step the society transformed and different levels of complexity emerged as well. We can see centralization – an element necessary for the state – from archaeological evidence, leaving us with theories that try to analyze, how this level of complexity was achieved through time and change.

Rome was not built in a day. Neither was Mycenae.

## CONCLUSION

Present thesis analyzed the steps leading towards the emergence of state on the example of Argive plain in Greece. A great prehistoric civilization of Mycenae with its spectacular walls and palatial riches has inspired researchers for over a century to understand the society and the world in which the Mycenaeans lived in. One thing, however, that has never been fully understood, is the question of the emergence of Mycenaean state.

The method in use has been a combination of empirical qualitative method (based on archaeological evidence) combined to a theoretical approach. In a study like this it would of great importance to use interdisciplinary research method as neither archaeological evidence nor anthropological theories alone would allow an adequate discussion of the present topic. The author believes that this approach has justified itself as the questions set in the introduction found its answers.

It would be important to note that the Neolithic in the Aegean, preceding thus the Bronze Age, should be described as a dynamic era, during which society developed and signs of complexity also emerged. Farming was introduced and that was essential for the inhabitants of Greece to be able to produce (food) surplus. First larger settlements with a central building also emerged, such as Dimini and Sesklo. During the Bronze Age the level of complexity within a society and settlement reached a new stage.

At Lerna during the Early Helladic II period a central building – building BG – arose, followed by similar, but larger and more complex building, the House of the Tiles. This central construction is characterized by unusual dimensions and sophisticated design. Also a unique large collections of clay sealing have been found from the house. The sealings have been claimed to document the developing organization of the redistributive system.

The House may have held a distinct difference between restricted access *versus* more accessible rooms, thus indicating to possibility that there would have existed both privileged residents (as evidenced by „private“ spaces“) and those, who were given access only to „public“ spaces. The function of those rooms have been a matter of interest among historians. It has been argued that inside those „public“ rooms grand feasts were held by the privileged resident(s) living in the more private rooms.

The House of the Tiles existed only for a brief time as it was burnt down by the end of the Early Helladic II and never rebuilt.

Another site in the Argolid showing signs of growing complexity was Tiryns, which in many ways, when interpreting the archaeological data, followed the same patterns of result as did Lerna. During the Early Helladic II a mysterious monumental construction emerged – *Rundbau*. *Rundbau*, alongside with the House of the Tiles has also been categorized in the Corridor Houses type.

The opinions on the use of *Rundbau* differ greatly, so it is not sure whether this construction was monumental mortuary building, shrine, communal granary or monumental meeting place. Just like the House of the Tiles, *Rundbau* was destroyed and also never rebuilt.

It is in the site of Mycenae, though, where the new ruling elite imposed itself greatest. Archaeological excavations have discovered Grave Circles (A and B) from the site, both also containing Shaft Graves. The elite who buried their dead in those Grave Circles did it with presentation of sublime riches and wealth. Among the burial goods were weaponry of exceptional quality, jewellery, objects of gold, cups, vessels, masks, ornaments, pottery etc. Some of these prestige goods are considered of foreign origin or foreign influence, such as weapons, for example.

Towards the beginning of the Late Helladic IIA, the Shaft Graves were abandoned. The burial practices of the people of Argolid had been marked by a new type of architecture – the tholos tomb. The earliest tholoi were contemporary with, or following very closely, the last of the shaft graves. In the Argolid, total of 16 tholoi were erected. The tholos tomb was similar to the chamber tomb – a second new burial type introduced to the Argolid in the Late Helladic period.

The society at the time of the Shaft Graves may have been a heroic type and dominated by well-armed aristocracy. This has been argued due to the popularity of weapons found.

It is evident that when the Mycenaeans first appear on the scene, their culture must have already been rich and society complex. The archaeological evidence shows signs of foreign contact, which has given a possibility for historians to search for the origins of the Mycenaeans outside of Greece.



As the era has been seen mobile and aggressions taking place in many regions, it is believed that the dead buried at the Shaft Graves might have been warrior-princes, giving thus reason to speak of diffusion theory. These soldiers may have possessed lots of qualities, which might have helped them to gain their dominance. It is also believed that those warriors had an edge in warfare: the horse drawn chariot.

The theory that the graves belong to charioteers comes mostly from the stelai which stood on the grave circles. On some of those stelai, primitive portrayals of chariot has been depicted. Where did these charioteers come from, and how, is uncertain, though most likely they may have come from Anatolia.

However, there are also historians, who do not believe the diffusion theory in the case of Aegean. It has been said that although grave goods from the Grave Circles have a large Cretan influence, they still are of local heritage as local craftsmen had been trained and in the Cretan tradition.

Taking all this archaeological evidence into account, it is necessary to use anthropological theories and try to fit them into Aegean context. This is an assignment of tricky nature, however, because many of those theories did not have the Aegean in mind, when first constructed.

It is important to connect the „dots“ from the Neolithic with the emergence of Mycenaean civilization in the 16th century BC. We can see how the society and the way it existed transformed through the time, evolving into a more complex one, where social stratification, differences of rank, and the rise of the ruling elite can be seen.

Though the Neolithic already witnessed some change and diversity, it was in the third millennium BC when early signs of centralization emerged. With the central system, one can ask, whether there was a central ruler, a chief, or perhaps a group of rulers.

It has often been said that the Greek civilization depended on the „Mediterranean triad“ of wheat, olive and wine. All this food, of course, needed a storage, which, in time, grew more systematic. Evidence on large structures, possibly of storages, can be found in the Argolid, whereas there is also a possibility of feasts to have taken place. This sort of a model would see the central ruler to use subsystem and redistribution use as a strategy for political power.

However, it could be argued, that the power of a chief like that would not be stable, as gift-giving and feasting would only offer esteem. In addition to this, the previous theory does not explain sufficiently, why food surplus was produced in the first place.

But what kind of strategy would have been able to bring more stability and power to the elite? Evidence in the Shaft Graves points to heroic type of warriors, charioteers. It could be argued that the dead buried there were of a high military class and well developed and trained, in terms of warfare. So, war, if successful, would provide more dominant and secure power over the others.

What is also important, is the elite's capability of acquiring prestige goods. A lot of the prestige goods found from the Grave Circles are of foreign origin, thus indicating that the rulers had relations outside its local region as well.

Successful war-chief would thus have a great deal of control over the society and the people he ruled. Through control one can also explain differences of rank, which, in the case of the Shaft Graves, became evident.

To conclude all this, one may say that different strategies together influenced the emergence of statehood in the Argolid. It would be difficult to say, which one would have been the most important or prominent. We can say that these mechanisms were combined, suggesting that in a way, they all supported each other. For example, redistribution model may have given esteem for ruler, indicating his good relationship with the ones he had power over. Having a good relationship would suggest his popularity, authority. Authority was especially needed during the times of war, when the society had to support the warriors. Successful warriors, receiving help and support, made a successful army during times of war. Success in war would lead to control, power, but also spoils of war, thus taking the circle back to the beginning – giftgiving and feasts.

It is important that the present subject would be studied further, as the Argolid with its archaeological setting is able to provide plentiful material. The first step has been made, soon it will be time for the next one.

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## RESÜMEE

### TSIVILISATSIOONI TEKE MÜKEENES: ARGOSE TASANDIK 3000–1500 eKr

Magistritöö „Tsivilisatsiooni teke Mükeenes: Argose tasandik 3000–1500 eKr“ eesmärgiks on uurida ning analüüsida erinevaid arengumehhanisme, mis võisid välja viia varase riigi tekkeni Argolises.

Töö aluseks on Argolise maakond Kreekas, täpsemalt Argose tasandik, kus ajaloo vältel on toimunud ühtlane areng. Selline järk-järguline, ilma eriliste katkestusteta areng võimaldab meil erinevaid sotsiaal-poliitilisi etappe paremini mõista ja seda kõike ühes kontsentreeritud piirkonnas. Määrava tähtsusega on kahtlemata ka see, et Argose tasandiku puhul on olemas selge näide varase pronksiaegse riigi – Mükeene – tekkest.

Selleks et mõista varajast riiki, ei piisa, kui meie uurimused tegelevad ainult riigi kõrg- või hiigelaja (aegade) tundmaõppimisega. Üheks probleemiks, mis lahendamist vajaks, olekski nii-öelda ülemineku periood: kuidas ühiskond, mis pole empiirilises allikmaterjalis jätnud endast selgeid märke hierarhiatest ja/või võimustruktuuridest, arenes ühiskonnaks, mida valitses ja kontrollis võimulolev eliit (olgu tegu siis grupivalitsuse või ainuvalitsusega). On oluline luua teooriaid (ning loomulikult asetada need (antropoloogilised) teooriad arheoloogilisele leiumaterjalile), mil moel inimesed muutusid, kuidas tõusis esile valitsev klass, kuidas võimulolev klass oma võimu jätkusuutlikult säilitas. Sisuliselt peame täitma lüngad neoliitilise ühiskonna ning võimsa Mükeene riigi vahel.

Töö lõpuks üritab autor jõuda selgemale arusaamisele, mis võisid olla need arengumehhanismid, mis viisid aastatel 3000–1500 eKr Argose tasandikul välja Mükeene riigi tekkeni. Lisaks on arheoloogilise allikmaterjali põhjal püütud analüüsida ka prongsiaegset ühiskonda ja muutusi selles. Et seda kõike mõista ja kriitiliselt hinnata, tuleks leida vastused sellistele küsimustele nagu: Kas riigi tekkega Argolises on tegu kohapealse arenguga või difusiooniga?; Juhul kui tegu ei ole kohapealse arenguga (ning on väljast sisse toodud), siis kes olid sissetungijad ning milliseid meetodeid nad võisid vallutuse puhul kasutada?; Kuidas ning millal tekkis ühiskonnas komplekssus?; Millised arheoloogilised tõendid viitaksid staatuserinevustele selles ühiskonnas?; Kuidas tulid esimesed valitsejad võimule ning kuidas nad seda võimu hoidsid?; Millel baseerus eliidi võim teiste üle?

Siinkohal tuleks rõhutada, et käesoleva töö eesmärk ei ole rangelt uurida Mücke riiki, vaid eelkõige mehhanisme, mis selle tekkeni viisid.

Magistritöö puhul on kasutatud empiirilist kvalitatiivset uurimismetoodikat. Autor on üritanud erinevaid antropoloogilisi tõlgendusi ja teooriaid rakendada Argolise puhul, sidudes neid arheoloogilise leiuväinestega. Arheoloogia pakub meile küll teatud kuvandi ning piirjooned, aga kui arheoloogilist materjali teiste teadustega mitte siduda ning täiesti iseseisvalt kasutada, võime saada kõigest pooliku ja ebapiisava pildi möödanikust. Sama võib öelda ka antropoloogiliste tõlgenduste kohta: ilma arheoloogilise materjalita on tegu kõigest fantaasialendudega, sest meil ei ole midagi, mis meie fantaasialende empiiriliselt kinnitaks. Sestap ongi oluline need teadused omavahel siduda, sest ainult siis oleme võimelised akadeemilise töö kriitilisi nõudmisi täitma.

Töö koosneb neljast suuremast peatükist. Esimene neist, „Neoliitikum Egeusel – põgus ülevaade“ annab lühikese tausta nii Kreeka looduse, maastiku ja kliima kohta ning ühtlasi ka tutvustab, millist dunaamikat kätkes endas neoliitikum. Käesoleva töö keskpunktis on Argose tasandik Argolises, mis asub Peloponnesuse poolsaare kirdeosas. Tasandikku piiravad kolmest küljest mäestikud ning ühest laht. Tasandikult võib leida haritavat põllumaad, samas kui metsad pakuvad puid. Kõik käesolevas töös uuritavad asulad – Lerna, Tiryns ning Mücke – asetsevad Argose tasandikul.

Peatükist võib selgelt välja lugeda, kuidas juba neoliitikum oli dunaamiline ning muutuv periood. Sel ajal võeti kasutusele põllumajandus (Tessaalias Mandri-Kreekas), tõukeid selle tekkeks on aga nähtud Anatooliast. Neoliitikumis kerkis esile ka mitmeid suuremaid asulaid nagu näiteks Sesklo ja Dimini. Mõlemat iseloomustab keskse hoone - megaroni - olemasolu, kuigi me ei saa kindlalt väita nende hoonete funktsiooni.

Töö teises peatükis „Teoreetiline taust: sotsiaalse kompleksuse esiletõus ning riikluse algupära“ uuritakse erinevaid antropoloogilisi tõlgendusi, mis võiks selgitada tsivilisatsioonide esiletõusu. Olulisel kohal on neo-evolutsioonilised ideed, mis rõhutavad pealikuvalitsuse tähtsust ning seda, kuidas riikluse vältimatuks eelastmeks on pealikuvalitsus. Lisaks tähtsustavad neo-evolutsionistid, eesotsas Elman Service’ga, pealiku laialijagavat, redistributiivset funktsiooni. Järgmisena tuleb peatükis juttu Colin Renfrew’st, kes E. Service’i ümberjagava pealiku Egeuse konteksti asetas, luues niimoodi subsistents-redistributsiooni strateegia. Nimelt pidas C. Renfrew silmas, kuidas ühtede toiduainete kasv ja



saagikus mõjutab teisi (näiteks viinamarjade rohkus võimaldas rohkem veini toota), andes niimoodi võimaluse pealikule see kõik kokku koguda ja hiljem laiali jagada.

Neo-evolutsionistlikud teooriad kohtasid aga ka kriitikat. Robert Carneiro väitis, et ümberjagamine ei anna pealikule mitte võimu, vaid lugupidamist; lisaks väitis ta, et ümberjagamise mudel ei selgita, miks oli esmalt üldse ülejääki vaja hakata tootma. R. Carneiro omakorda rõhutas hoopiski sõja osatähtsust ning koos sellega looduslikku ja sotsiaalset piiratudust – nimelt kui populatsioon kasvas, tingis see vaba maa vähenemise, lausa kadumise, mistõttu vallutuse korral ei olnud kaotajatel enam kuhugi võimalik ära minna (sest ümbritsevatel maadel juba elasid naaberkogukonnad), jäädes paigale ja muutudes niimoodi võitjate alamateks.

Timothy Earle aga omakorda rõhutab kontrolli osatähtsust. Kontrolli teiste üle võib pealik omandada mitmel viisil: maa omamisel, tehnoloogia kontrollil, prestiižesemete jagamisel, sõjalisel viisil jne.

Vaieldud on ka selle üle, kas pealikuvalitsus pidi ilmtingimata olema riigi eelastmeks. Norman Yoffee leiab, et ei pidanud, sest pealikuvalitsus võis olla ummiktee hoopiski. Ta rõhutab, et mehhanismi algupäraks, mis viib lõpuks välja riigini, tuleks näha külaühiskonda.

Lisaks on peatükis arutletud ka (varase) riigi definitsiooni üle. Kui näiteks Max Weber pakkus välja definitsiooni, mis arheoloogia seisukohalt on liialt üldine, siis Bruce Trigger tõi välja mõningad varaste riikide ühisjoones: monarhia (valdavalt tegu sõjalise pealikuga), rikkuserinevused, madalamate klasside ekspluateerimine kõrgemate poolt.

Kolmas peatükk, „Arheoloogiline tõendusmaterjal Lerna, Tirynsi ja Mükeene asulate põhjal“ uurib eelmainitud kolme asulat, sest nende puhul on näha üsnagi järk-järgulist arengut. Varase-Hellaadi perioodi jooksul kerkis Lernas esile keskne hoone – hoone BG – millele järgnes sarnane, kuid suurem ja kompleksem hoone – Plaatide Maja (*the House of the Tiles* – ingl k). Hoonet on peetud ümberjagava süsteemi keskuseks, sest sealt on leitud pitsateid, lisaks nõ ühisruume ja eraruumi. On oletatud, et eraruumides resideerinud eliit pidas ühisruumides suuri pidusööke. Plaatide Maja põles aga üsna varsti maha ning seda ei taastatud hilisematel aegadel.

Tiryns oli oma arengus küllalt sarnane Lernaga – kas seal pole märkimisväärset asutust või kogukond enne suure, keske hoone – *Rundbau* – ehitust. *Rundbau* funktsioon ja tähendus on jäänud mõistatuseks tänase päevani: välja on pakutud selliseid variante, nagu oleks tegu

võinud olla monumentaalse surnukambriga, pühamuga või viljaaidaga. Nagu ka Lerna Plaatide Maja, ei taastatud *Rundbaud* pärast hävingut.

Mükeenes aga tulevad kõige selgemalt esile rikkused, millega uus, esiletõusev eliit välja paistis. Hauaringides A ja B asuvad šahthauad on täidetud uhkete panustega: esmaklassilise kvaliteediga valmistatud relvad, nõud, ehted, kuldobjektid, veininõud, ornamendid, maskid jne. Suur osa leiust on tugeva Kreeta mõjuga.

Varase-Hellaadi IIA alguses šahthauad aga kadusid käibelt, asendudes tholos haudadega, millele lisandusid hiljem ka kamberhauad.

Kui rääkida ühiskonnast šahthaudade ajal, siis on arvatud, see võis olla heroilist tüüpi ning seda domineeris hästirelvastatud aristokraatia. Kõrge kvaliteediga valmistatud mõõgad ning muud prestiižesemed viitavad ka Mükeene eliidi võimekusele kaugematelt maadelt rikkusi endaga kaasa tuua, tõstes niimoodi enda kontrolli ja võimu ühiskonna üle.

Neljas peatükk „Arengud, mis viivad välja riikluseni“ üritab kõike eelnevat sünteesida. Igaljuhul on selge, et mükeenlaste kultuur oli uhke, jõukas ja rikkalik juba siis, kui nad esmalt haudedes esile tulid. Tuleb aga küsida, kust või kuidas selline eliit niivõrd järsku areneda võis.

Arvestades asjaolu, et toonane ajastu oli üsna agressiooniderohke ning sõdalas-kujutusi on selgelt võimalik arheoloogilises leiuaines tuvastada, on arvatud, et šahthaua eliit ei ole mitte kohalikku päritolu ega kohaliku arengu tulemus, vaid pigem on tema juured kuskil kaugemal. Nendes, kes sinna maetud, on nähtud võõrvallutajaid, sõdalas-printse, kes oma teadmisi-oskusi kasutades suutsid vastavad alad vallutada.

Kuid mis võis tingida nende sõjalise edu? Arheoloogilist materjali uurides (reljeefid steeledele, mis on püstitatud hauaringidele) on edu valemiks peetud hobukaarikut. Nimelt on eelmainitud reljeefidelt leitud mitmeid vankrikujutusi, vihjates vankrite tähtsusele nende omanike jaoks. On arvatud, et vanker ja kaarikusõitjad tulid Mükeenesse Anatooliast, kuid on ka teisi piirkondi nende koduks pakutud (näiteks Egiptus).

Samas on ka arvamusi, mis ei usu, et Mükeene rajajate puhul oleks tegu välisvallutajatega, seega välistades difusionismi. On väidetud, et esemed, mis haudadest leituna olid Kreeta mõjutustega, olid tegelikult kohalike meistrite (keda oli õpetatud Kreeta eeskujude järgi) poolt siiski valmistatud.

Võttes seda kõike arvesse, tuleks arheoloogilise ainese põhjal meil nüüd leida mõningad antropoloogilised tõlgendused ning asetada need Egeuse konteksti. Meie ülesanne on mõista, kuidas arengud, saades alguse juba neoliitikumis, viisid lõpuks välja Mückeene riigi rajamiseni 16. sajandil eKr. On selge, et juba neoliitikumis leidsid aset muutused.

Kolmandal aastatuhandel eKr on selgelt näha keskseid hooneid, kuigi me ei tea alati nende funktsiooni. Küll aga on mõnede puhul alust arvata, et tegu võis olla viljaaidaga (näiteks *Rundbau*) või näiteks pidusöögi kohaga (Lerna). Pidusöök või viljaait – mõlemat võib seostada pealikuga, kes vilja kokku koguks, seda hoiaks, ning hiljem uhke pidusöögi teeks ja teatud osale ühiskonnast miskit tagasi annaks. See annaks meile alust rääkida redistributiivsest pealikust.

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Olulisel kohal on ka prestiižesemete kontroll. Kuna mitmed leiud šahthaudadest on välismaist päritolu, võib arvata, et eliidil olid kaugeleulatuvad suhted, mille abil suudeti rikkust kokku koguda. Rikkuse kogumine ning selle näitamine rõhutaks taas kontrolli osatähtsust.

Kui kontroll on tugev ja pealik tugev, on ka staatuserinevused arheoloogias selgemini nähtavad. Mückeene šahthauad tõestaksid seda teooriat: meil on tegu sõjalise eliidiga, kes kogus kokku suuri aardeid, millega end hiljem matta lasi, eristades sel moel on selgelt tavaühiskonnast.

## APPENDIX 1

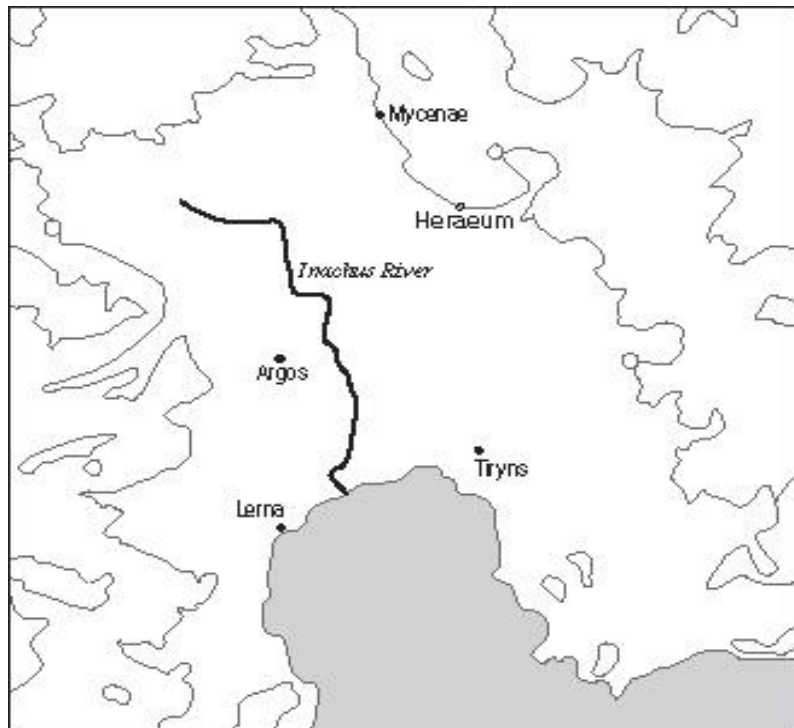
### AEGEAN BRONZE AGE CHRONOLOGY, MAINLAND GREECE

Early Bronze Age or Early Helladic period	EH I	3000–2650 BC
	EH II	2650–2200 BC
	EH III	2200–2000 BC
Middle Bronze Age or Middle Helladic period	MH I	2000–1900 BC
	MH II	1900–1800 BC
	MH III	1800–1700 BC
Late Bronze Age or Late Helladic period	LH I	1700–1600 BC
	LH II	1600–1400 BC
	LH IIIA	1400–1300 BC
	LH IIIB	1300–1200 BC
	LH IIIC	1200–1100 BC

*Source:* Cline 2010: xxx

## APPENDIX 2

### THE PLAIN OF ARGOS



Source: <http://wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/13623/13950907/images14/MapIV.jpg>

## APPENDIX 3

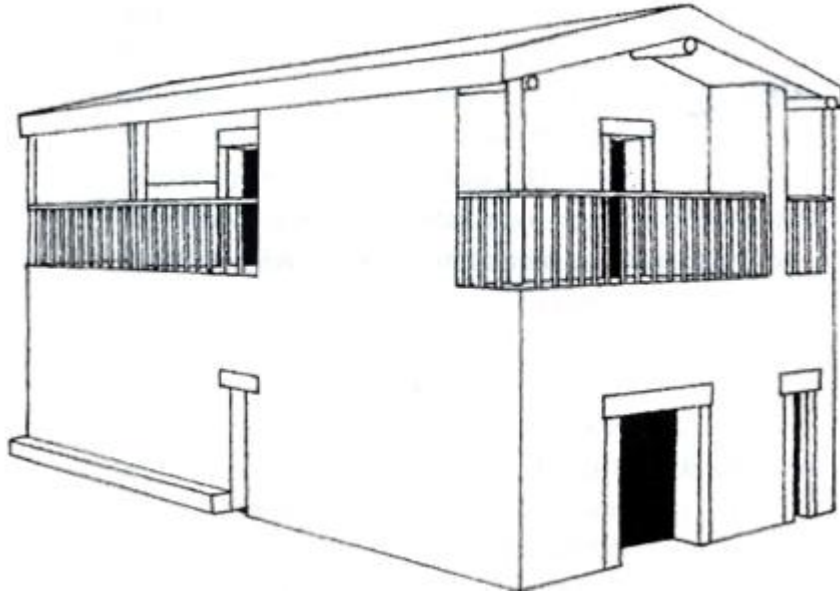
### THE CHRONOLOGY OF LERNA

Lerna I	Early Neolithic	6th–5th millennium
Lerna II	Middle Neolithic	early 5th millennium
Lerna III	Early Helladic II	middle of 3rd millennium ( <i>ca.</i> 2750/2700–2300/2200)
Lerna IV	Early Helladic III	end of 3rd millennium ( <i>ca.</i> 2300/2200–2050/2000)
Lerna V	Middle Helladic	early 2nd millennium (2050/2000–1700/1675)
Lerna VI	end of Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I	early 17th–early 16th century

*Source:* Caskey & Blackburn 1997: 3

## APPENDIX 4

### THE HOUSE OF THE TILES

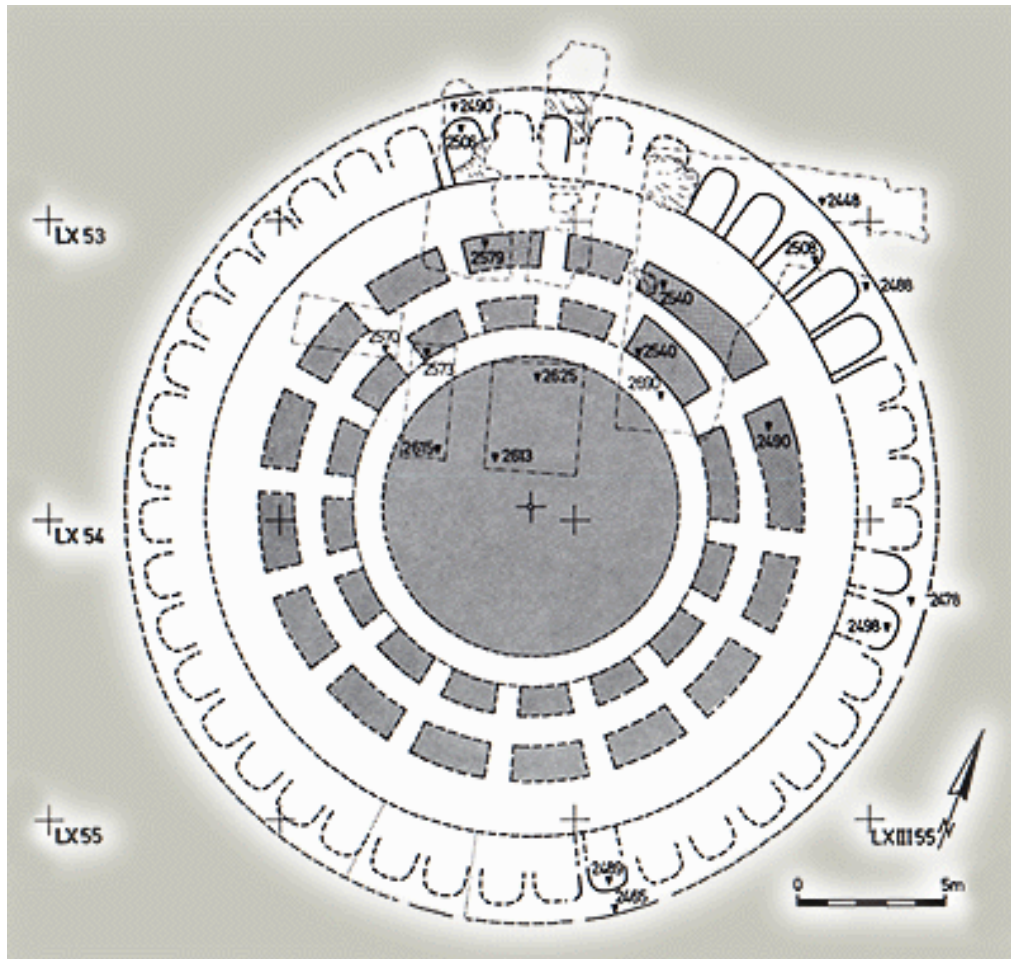


*Source:*

[http://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/636/flashcards/821636/png/screen\\_shot\\_2012-09-15\\_at\\_54444\\_pm1348172538629.png](http://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/636/flashcards/821636/png/screen_shot_2012-09-15_at_54444_pm1348172538629.png)

## APPENDIX 5

### THE GROUNDPLAN OF *RUNDBAU*

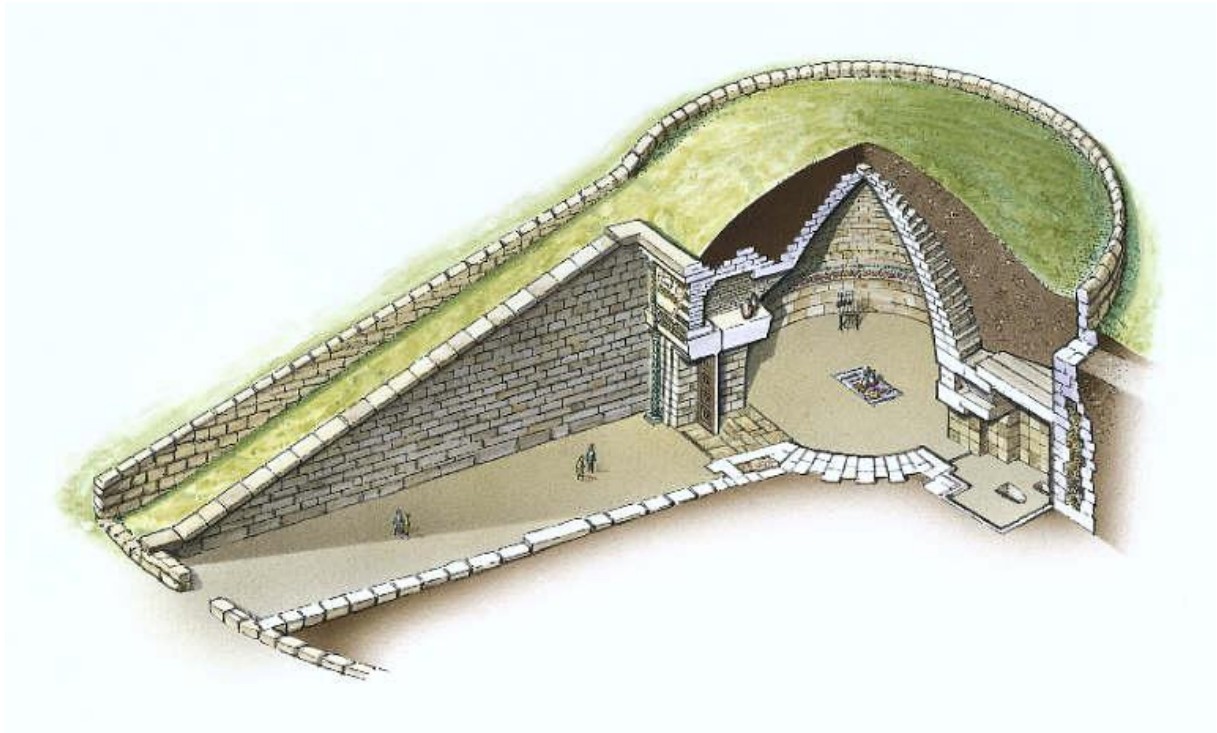


Source: <http://www.ime.gr/chronos/02/mainland/images/eh/habitation/max/tiryns.gif>



## APPENDIX 6

### THOLOS TOMB



*Source:* <http://www.dkimages.com/discover/previews/864/20213145.JPG>

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