

A GREEK STATE IN FORMATION

THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION
IN MYCENAEAN PYLOS



JACK L. DAVIS

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY SHARON R. STOCKER



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A Greek State in Formation

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Jack L. Davis

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For all those who have supported research at Pylos, past and present

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PROLOGUE

The Mycenaean are well-known to scholars, even to a general public. Less familiar are the early cultural developments that set the stage for the emergence of their palaces, their fortified citadels, their engineering projects, their hierarchical societies, and their literate bureaucracies. The focus of this book is on those formative stages between ca. 1600 and 1400 B.C., as seen through the lens of sustained archaeological research over the past thirty years at the Palace of Nestor in the southwestern Peloponnese of Greece.

Our lives move in unpredictable directions. In this book I try to give the reader a sense of one archaeologist's experiences, my own, and how seemingly unrelated chapters in my scholarly career can contribute to a larger picture, in unanticipated ways. It is impossible for me to demonstrate this without adopting an autobiographical approach, one that runs through each chapter. Nor can I avoid jumping from one topic to another that at first glance may appear unrelated. The progression of archaeological research is not always linear. I have tried to signpost the way clearly so that the reader can follow the twists and turns in the road that awaits.

Research at Pylos has not always reflected a consistent strategy and unified vision, focused on a single problem or period of the past. Instead, several loosely coordinated research projects launched since 1990 have each yielded important information. Each project has something to add to a view of the Mycenaean polity at Pylos in its formative stages. That portrait can now be painted in greater detail than is possible for any other Bronze Age polity in Greece, including Mycenae itself, if we tie together results from excavations, intensive archaeological surface surveys, and scientific analyses. The evidence all told sheds light on those who lived and died in Pylos, the environment that sheltered them, and their debt to the earlier Minoan civilization of Crete.

I also mean in this book to convey to readers something of the way in which archaeology creates knowledge, how that knowledge accumulates, and the manner by which our understanding of archaeological finds changes through time—and is shaped by our own experiences in the academy and in the field. It is impossible to do that without some discussion of the loci of knowledge production in the university, where students are trained and where traditions are passed along intergenerationally. Equally significant are the social networks in which all archaeologists are embedded. Readers will consequently hear quite a lot about the University of Cincinnati, where I was educated and where I have spent most of my academic career, as well as various colleagues and teachers of mine. Cincinnati itself has been for a century, and remains, a major center for the production of knowledge about the prehistory of Greece, and it was also the home of Carl Blegen, one of the founders of the discipline of Greek prehistory (see figure 1). If there are those who object to my approach, so be it. I am unapologetic, since it is within such a habitus that archaeological research, perhaps all team research, operates.

A few words about what this book is not. First and foremost, it is not a comprehensive overview of the Early Mycenaean period. Nothing is cut and dried; nothing ever complete in the field of archaeology—which is an important point to make. As the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosopher Heraklitos of Ephesus put it, “everything flows” (PANTA PEI) and we never step into exactly the same stream twice. Nonetheless, information at Pylos is more complete than elsewhere, and it is for that reason that I believe it is a case study now worth examining in depth. Perhaps one day it will be possible to do the same for other major Mycenaean centers. Then will be the time to rewrite Oliver Dickinson’s enormously influential *The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation* and examine more globally the role that contact with Crete played in the emergence of Mycenaean states in southern Greece.

When I arrived for graduate school in the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati in 1972, Carl Blegen was omnipresent, though he had died in Athens the previous year.¹ Blegen regularly spent spring and summer in Greece, according to terms set after a shrewd negotiation in 1927 when he was first hired. Blegen was world renowned, first as the archaeologist who clarified the date of Homer’s Troy through his excavations in Turkey in the 1930s, then as the excavator of the Bronze Age Palace of Nestor at Pylos (1939 and 1952–1970). Homeric Pylos, home of King Nestor in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, had long eluded would-be discoverers. Blegen and Konstantinos Kourouniotis, director of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, at last found it on the Englianos Ridge, near the modern agricultural center of Chora, and not at modern Pylos on the famous Bay of Navarino, in 1827 the scene of an important battle in the Greek war for independence (see figure 2 and figure 3). That port town had usurped the name in the nineteenth century.

In 1972 Blegen’s Troy and Pylos colleagues were still alive and living in Cincinnati, including his close friend and co-author, architect Marion Rawson. Marion sometimes came to events in the Department of Classics, and several of Blegen’s former students were my professors.



FIGURE 1. Carl Blegen supervising excavations at the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, 1939. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.



FIGURE 2. The Palace of Nestor and the Aigaleon mountain range in the distance, the boundary between the Hither and Further Provinces of the kingdom of Nestor. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.



FIGURE 3. The Bay of Navarino, scene of the defeat of the Ottoman navy in 1827, and the island of Sphaktiria in the distance at the left. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

Blegen considered his excavations at Pylos to be almost completely published. He and Rawson had composed a monumental, two-volume description of the architecture of the palace and finds from the debris left by its destruction ca. 1180 B.C. A second book by Mabel Lang, a professor of Greek at Bryn Mawr College, presented many of the palace's fragmentary wall-paintings, and a third, by Blegen, Rawson, Lord William Taylour, and William P. Donovan, described Mycenaean cemeteries nearby and discoveries predating the Palace of Nestor. A fourth volume was announced, a definitive publication of clay tablets incised in the Mycenaean (Linear B) script, still the largest such archive from the Greek mainland.² Its discovery had led to the decipherment of that pre-alphabetic representation of the Greek language.

Not only had Blegen's accomplishments proven monumentally important, but he was single-minded in his determination to make them public.

The room where Blegen and Rawson assembled their reports still held their filing cabinets when I arrived, but was eerily devoid of life. Now the building itself has been demolished to make way for one designed by a "signature" architect, part of a campus-wide initiative in which the city of Cincinnati takes pride.³ By 1972 fieldwork at Pylos was a closed book, literally and figuratively, and one that my Ph.D. advisor, John L. (Jack) Caskey, was not interested in reopening. Caskey had gone to Troy as a graduate student, but not to Pylos. In the 1950s, as director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, he organized his own excavations in the Argolid at Lerna and by the 1960s was investigating Ayia Irini, a peninsular prehistoric settlement on the Cycladic island of Kea, an Aegean Sea outpost of the Minoan civilization. It now is one of the best-known Bronze Age sites ever explored in the Greek islands.⁴ Kea is small (only a bit over 100 sq km in area) and is the nearest of the Cycladic Islands to Attica and Athens. Jack invited me to join his team, and I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation about massive stone defenses built around Ayia Irini ca. 1700 B.C.



FIGURE 4. The acropolis of Ancient Mycenae, as seen from near the valley of Nemea. Surface artifact collection by members of the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project in foreground. John F. Cherry. Courtesy of the Department of Classics. All rights reserved.

Cincinnati was famous then, as now, for the contributions of its archaeologists to the study of the Greek Bronze Age, the two millennia (ca. 3200–1100 B.C.) prior to the invention of the Greek alphabet in the eighth century B.C. As a student in the classroom, I studied prehistory on both sides of the Aegean Sea, Greece as well as Turkey, in addition to ancient languages, literature, and history—but I never imagined Pylos lay in my future. The Palace of Nestor was far away, conceptually and geographically—and Blegen had “been there, done that.”

After receiving my doctoral degree in 1977, Jeremy Rutter, now emeritus professor at Dartmouth College, suggested that I study the Early Mycenaean period at a site called Korakou, which overlooks the Corinthian Gulf near the Isthmus of Corinth. In 1915 and 1916 Blegen had explored this deeply stratified mound, and it was the subject of his Yale dissertation.⁵ A few years later, in 1983, James Wright of Bryn Mawr College asked John Cherry, then at Cambridge University, Eleni Mantzourani of the University of Athens, and me to join him in organizing a large-scale interdisciplinary research program focused on the valley of Nemea. In Classical times, Nemea, together with Olympia, Delphi, and Isthmia, was the site of Panhellenic games held at its Sanctuary of Zeus.⁶ Participation in that project brought me deep into the Homeric world for the first time, close to the capital of Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae, who, according to the ancient Greek cycle of heroic epic poems, had led the allied Greek contingents to Troy to recover Helen.

Most days I could see the prominent hills of Zara and Profitis Ilias looming over Mycenae’s citadel, as our teams trudged through fields in search of new archaeological sites (see figure 4). Wright and Mary Dabney were resuming Blegen’s excavations at a prehistoric village called Tsoungiza, a stone’s throw from the Panhellenic sanctuary. I was in hog heaven, practicing the kind of anthropological archaeology I had read and dreamt about in graduate school.

THE “NEW ARCHAEOLOGY” AND ME

In the 1970s a war was raging between the New Archaeology, which espoused the testing of social and economic theories through deductive reasoning, and more traditional approaches to prehistoric archaeology.⁷ More about that conflict is addressed later in this book. For now, it suffices to say that New Archaeologists were often dismissive of archaeologists of previous generations who had spent their time defining archaeological cultures—namely, recurring assemblages of similar artifacts, characteristic of particular past times and places. The latter had even argued that such cultures could be used to trace movements of Bronze Age peoples, such as migrations and invasions, from one place to another, in instances where an assemblage of artifacts appeared to have been replicated in a second location. New Archaeologists, in contrast, preferred to explore reasons why ancient societies evolved without bringing new peoples onto the stage. They found the notion that ideas simply “diffused” from one place to another, like atoms in a liquid or gas, to be simplistic and ill-defined. Why a given human population was disposed to accept innovations was of greater interest and demanded detailed knowledge of the inner workings of ancient societies. New Archaeologists were also skeptical of scholars who tried to equate archaeological cultures with modern or ancient ethnicities.⁸

Blegen was old-school. So was Jack Caskey, who saw little good in the New Archaeology. Lerna, the prehistoric mound in the Argolid that he had explored, was a landmark excavation.⁹ There Caskey had been able to define stages in the prehistory of southern Greece, ranging from the Neolithic, the New Stone Age, marked by the introduction of agriculture and animal husbandry, through the Bronze Age, a period two millennia long, when alloys of copper largely replaced stone for tools and weapons, prior to the widespread use of iron for these purposes in Classical Greece. Major changes in material culture at Lerna between one phase of the settlement and the next, in Caskey’s view, marked the arrival of new peoples. His central conclusion was that Greeks first arrived in Greece toward the end of the third millennium B.C.¹⁰

I was skeptical of Caskey’s methods and conclusions, but I could not immediately see how the New Archaeology could be applied to the Mediterranean world. New Archaeologists, led by their guru, Lewis Binford, had developed ideas and methods in reference to their own research in North America, Mesoamerica, and, to a more limited extent, the Middle East—all traditional haunts for American anthropologist-archaeologists.¹¹ Greece and Italy, left out of the picture, remained squarely in the hands of Classical archaeologists who mostly pledged allegiance to conservative traditions.

Caskey discouraged his students from taking classes in anthropological archaeology, although in other ways he was progressive. At Lerna he had commissioned experts to study human skeletal remains, animal bones, and botanical residue. It

was only modern archaeological theory, not the natural and physical sciences, that he found silly—in particular Binford’s claim that no aspect of the past, even ancient thought and belief, was unknowable—provided the right hypotheses were formulated and tested. He probably would have found some of the conclusions in this book silly too.

Caskey’s objections made the New Archaeology all the more appealing for me and my friends, of course. We began to read Binford’s publications surreptitiously, and then, one day, Gloria Pinney, a fellow graduate student, now emerita professor at Harvard, plunked a book called *The Emergence of Civilisation* on my desk, freshly arrived by mail from Blackwell’s Bookshop in Oxford. The author was Colin Renfrew. Gloria announced: “This is the most important book ever written in your field.” Here at last was a blueprint for applying the New Archaeology to topics of interest to me, but I never suspected that only a few years later I would be working for Renfrew in the Cycladic islands.¹²

That good fortune fell from a concatenation of events, set in motion in 1975 by a chance encounter in Athens with Robin Torrence. Robin was a Ph.D. candidate of Binford’s in Albuquerque, but teaching at the University of Sheffield in England. Her significant other was John Cherry, a graduate student at the University of Southampton, where Renfrew was professor of archaeology. Robin and John both went to the island of Melos as members of an interdisciplinary group re-excavating the iconic prehistoric settlement of Phylakopi, which had last been studied by members of the British School at Athens in 1911. Renfrew invited me to Melos to study prehistoric pottery from Phylakopi, on John’s recommendation. I was only too eager to accept.

INTENSIVE SURFACE SURVEY ARRIVES IN GREECE

Concurrent with excavations at Phylakopi, Cherry had been exploring the history of settlement and land use on Melos with a technique then new to Greece: “intensive surface survey.”¹³ He and a team of students had walked systematically through fields in randomly selected parts of the island, inspecting the surface of the earth for the presence of fragments of ancient pottery, stone tools, and walls. By so doing, they were able to document where people had lived in the past and to identify patterns that begged for explanation. Why was the population of Melos sometimes dispersed in smallish communities? Why, at other times, was it concentrated (or nucleated) in larger towns? They found that when, in the Bronze Age, contacts with Crete and the Greek mainland were most intense, the only city was Phylakopi. Did people move there for protection? To be close to those in power? To engage in trade with the outside world?

The size of populations and the distribution of people in landscapes was critical for Renfrew’s application of the New Archaeology to Greece. After Cherry finished

on Melos, he and I agreed to test some of his and Renfrew's conclusions about the development of social and political complexity in the Aegean with a similar intensive survey on Kea, which we began in 1983.¹⁴ It was also about that time that Wright asked us to survey the valleys around the Sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea and the passes leading to Mycenae.

IN THE LAND OF KING NESTOR

Pylos finally entered my life in 1989, when we were completing our work at Nemea. I then had no desire to excavate there. James Wright and Jeremy Rutter had considered doing that after Nemea. I went to Pylos instead with John Cherry, Susan Alcock, and John's daughter Ceridwen to assess the potential for a surface survey. Our interests lay in finding new sites in that area and gathering detailed information about ones previously reported by others. The settlement around the Palace of Nestor was an important target, as were towns that had been capitals of districts in the kingdom of Nestor in the thirteenth century B.C.

I have never since left Pylos for long. After the intensive survey that we called the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (1991–1996), efforts turned to reorganization and study of finds from Blegen's excavations (1997–2011), excavations in conjunction with the erection of a new roof over the Palace of Nestor (2011–2013), and, most recently, full-scale excavations on the acropolis and in the surrounding settlement and cemeteries (2015–2022).¹⁵

The discoveries from Blegen's own campaigns have had such a profound impact on study of the Greek Bronze Age that Pylos is now a name coupled in textbooks with Mycenae and Knossos. What graduate student ever imagines that he or she will have the opportunity to direct research at a site so famous, let alone find treasures there like those discovered by Heinrich and Sophia Schliemann at Mycenae? Yet that is exactly what happened on the first day of our excavation season in 2015 and again on the first day of our season in 2018, and these treasures—the grave of the “Griffin Warrior” and two previously unknown monumental tholos (beehive) tombs—have provided much fodder for this book. This new material in many ways is changing and may continue to change our understanding of the origins of Mycenaean states.¹⁶ Blegen had not found it all.

THE ARGUMENT OF THIS BOOK

This book is a case study in the origins of a Mycenaean state, not a comprehensive overview of the subject. My particular focus is on what was happening in the Early Mycenaean period in only one part of Greece, the area within the boundaries of what later became the Hither Province of the kingdom of Nestor. The book is based on six public lectures that I gave at the University of California at Berkeley as Sather Professor in the winter of 2019.¹⁷ In so doing, I joined, with trepidation,

several distinguished predecessors who have had the opportunity to deliver Sather Lectures about Mycenaeans and Minoans. The Sather Professorship has held a special place in the field of Bronze Age Greek studies since it was established at Berkeley in 1914, as I will discuss in chapter 1. Although the terms of the position have changed several times, since 1920–1921 the professor’s principal duty has been to present such lectures and then submit them for publication by the University of California Press.

The Early Mycenaean period was a time of drastic changes that distinguished it from the preceding Middle Bronze Age of mainland Greece.¹⁸ On Crete, the first palaces had arisen not long after 2000 B.C., and the islands of the Aegean, including Aigina in the Saronic Gulf, came into regular communication with Minoan Crete. But the Greek mainland was sluggish and it was not until about 1600 B.C. that we find the first elements of what we can recognize as greater social and political complexity. Distinguished scholars admit that previously “life must have been fairly grim, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this was a period when most people were desperately poor.”¹⁹ Oliver Dickinson already concluded in 1977 that “the essential development” in the time of the Mycenaean shaft graves, which overlapped the transition from the Middle to Late Helladic period, was “the emergence of a ruling class who . . . must have extended their control over quite considerable territories in order to command the resources to support their new splendor.”²⁰ I see the Mycenaean society that they created as a cultural construct—a powerful force that was capable eventually of engulfing and incorporating large parts of southern Greece. The interactions of peer polities led by their elites played an important role in that process—at times hostile, other times peaceful.²¹

Some researchers have insisted we focus on social, political, and cultural changes in the Middle Bronze Age that led to the formation of Early Mycenaean polities and the later Mycenaean states. I agree, but these developments for the most part are not recognizable before the final stage of the Middle Bronze Age, which itself was introductory to the Early Mycenaean period. It is then that rich burials become widespread in southern Greece—a phenomenon that has been attributed to actions taken by aggrandizing leaders of unstable, fluid, and competitive factions.²² It was then that a shadowy ruling class emerged.

It can no longer be assumed that all those who shared Mycenaean culture were Greek speakers or that Mycenaean culture was an inevitable expression of any latent Hellenic identity. Some years ago John Bennet and I argued “that the elite of the Palace of Nestor chose—in some circumstances—to emphasize the military character of the Pylian regime, probably to individuals not involved in the immediate palace bureaucracy or resident at Pylos.”²³ We concluded: “On the broader canvas, an analysis of the representation of warfare in the Palace of Nestor read against the process of expansion of the Pylian state offers considerable insight into the ideological and coercive means by which early Aegean states created from a

heterogeneous base a subject population that shared both in material culture and ideology—in short, how ‘Mycenaeans’ were made.”²⁴

I here describe some of the most striking developments that occurred during the Early Mycenaean period at Pylos. Military aspirations of mainland elite figure large in this book, but so do ideologies and concepts borrowed from the Minoan civilization. I suggest that already at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, both forces were contributing to shaping a Mycenaean identity at Pylos and elsewhere in southern Greece, in communities where Mycenaean palaces would later arise. This contention, as a general proposition, is not an entirely new idea. Yet there has been a scarcity of supporting evidence, in part because Early Mycenaean settlements in critical locations such as Mycenae were destroyed by later building and because many significant mortuary remains, such as the Vapheio Tholos at Sparta and the first Grave Circle at Mycenae, were investigated over a century ago and not published with a view to our modern need for detail.²⁵

Pylos was also in the Early Mycenaean period a major node for the exchange of ideas between Crete and the Greek mainland, more than has been generally understood. Minoan technologies were transferred to the Greek mainland, along with Minoan beliefs, perhaps even aspects of political systems, and the agricultural underpinnings of Mycenaean society were likely also established.

In the last two decades, our picture of Early Mycenaean Pylos has achieved great clarity. Pylos is now an ideal place to develop a model that may usefully be applied and evaluated in other parts of the Mycenaean world. I will suggest that Messenia, like the Argolid, was a place where a “Cretan graft” was first “set on the wild stock of the mainland”—in the words of Blegen and his best friend, Alan Wace, director of the British School at Athens from 1914 to 1923, and of its excavations at Mycenae.²⁶

Chapter 1 considers the historiography of the terms *Mycenaean*, *Mycenaean civilization*, and *origins of Mycenaean civilization*. What did our predecessors mean by these labels when they invented them? How should we understand them today? It is obviously important to be clear what we are talking about when we use the term *Mycenaean* and explore the beginnings of a Mycenaean state.

Within the broader context of the history of exploration in the Pylos area, chapter 2 considers what the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project’s fieldwork in the 1990s tells us about patterns of settlement at the time of the origins of the Mycenaean state. I add a personal touch by rehearsing my own experiences in rural landscapes while growing up in a Midwestern American countryside.

In chapter 3, I turn to a more recent past, the centuries when most of what is now the Greek nation-state belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The chapter is based on a study of Turkish cadasters that recorded agricultural holdings in the Pylos area in A.D. 1716. Although far removed in time from the Mycenaean Age, these land registries suggest what types of agricultural organizations may have existed three millennia earlier in the same landscape. I argue that a form of tenant

farming or sharecropping was already operational in the Early Mycenaean period, as it certainly was in Ottoman times.

Chapter 4 focuses on what we have learned about Early Mycenaean Pylos by mining Blegen's old excavation archives and by studying finds that he left unpublished.

Chapter 5 reviews both old and new evidence for Mycenaean burials around the Palace of Nestor. Ancient graves tell us much about the social and political structuration of the world of the living in Early Mycenaean Pylos.

In chapter 6, Sharon Stocker joins me in a discussion of relations between Crete and Pylos, in particular how Minoan ways of doing things and Cretan beliefs were adopted at Pylos in Early Mycenaean times. We suggest that the process of "Minoanization" at Pylos played a significant role in establishing the office of the *wanax*, the Mycenaean king.

Finally, in an epilogue, Stocker and I weave together interpretative threads from earlier chapters, our goal being to show how at the start of the Late Bronze Age foundations were laid for the emergence of a Mycenaean state at Pylos.

For those unfamiliar with the prehistory of Greece and the Palace of Nestor, I also include two brief introductions to these topics in advance of chapter 1.

ABOUT THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE

Here I provide an outline of later Greek prehistory for those unfamiliar with it. We who study the Greek Bronze Age always use shorthand, like most scientists. In the following pages I try to break down some of our in-house jargon so that general readers can follow my arguments more easily in subsequent chapters.

We generally do not use absolute dates, but instead employ a *relative* chronological scheme that describes the sequence in which events happened, rather than when they occurred in years before Christ (see figure 5). A century ago, Aegean prehistorians (field archaeologists, art historians, and others who professionally consume information produced by archaeologists in order to study human history prior to written documentation) divided the entire Bronze Age of Greece into three phases: Early, Middle, and Late. On the Greek mainland we call these Early Helladic (EH), Middle Helladic (MH), and Late Helladic (LH), so that they can be distinguished from the chronologically parallel Early Minoan (EM), Middle Minoan (MM), and Late Minoan (LM) on Crete, and Early Cycladic (EC), Middle Cycladic (MC), and Late Cycladic (LC) in the Cycladic islands. These broad phases have themselves been divided into sub-phases, each defined by characteristic styles of pottery.

We can, if we want, attach approximate dates B.C. to each phase, which I do here, since prehistoric Greek pottery has been found in Egypt and the Middle East, where literate societies recorded lists of kings and the length of their reigns. These reigns can in turn be dated, absolutely with some exceptions, since we sometimes know that an astronomical event occurred in the regnal year of a particular king. Carbon-14 dates can also be useful for absolute dating, if calibrated with reference to tree rings of a known date, but as yet we lack an uninterrupted series of rings reaching from the present back to the Bronze Age. Aegean prehistorians generally

	GREECE	CYCLADES	CRETE	EGYPT
3100	EH I	EC I	EM I	1st - 2nd Dynasty
2700	EH IIA	EC II	EM IIA	Old Kingdom
2400	EH IIB		EM IIB	
2200	EH III	EC III	EM III	1st Intermediate Period
2000	MH I	MCI	MM IA	Middle Kingdom
1900		MC II	MM IB	
1800	MH II - c.1800-1700	MC III	MM II 1800 - c.1700	2nd Intermediate Period
1700	MH III - c.1630/10		MM III - c.1630/10	
1600	LH I - c.1520/10	LC I	LM IA - c.1520	New Kingdom
1500	LH IIA - c.1450/40 LH IIB - c.1410/00	LC II	LM IB - c.1440 LM II - c.1410/00	
1400	LH IIIA1 - c.1360	LC III	LM IIIA1 - c.1355/45	
1300	LH IIIA2 - c.1295		LM IIIA2 - c.1295	
1200	LH IIIB1 - c.1240 LH IIIB2 - c.1200/1190		LM IIIB - c.1200	
1100	LH IIIC - c.1070		LM IIIC - c.1070	

FIGURE 5. Relative and absolute chronology of the Aegean area. Rosemary Robertson after data from Shelmerdine, *Aegean Bronze Age*, fig. 1.1, revised with information from Malcolm H. Wiener. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

use absolute dates B.C. among themselves only when trying to relate events in Greece to those in Egypt or the Middle East.

The Bronze Age in Greece began around 3100 B.C. with the first bronze working for the manufacture of tools and weapons (see map 1). Already in the Neolithic, there had been limited use of copper, the essential ingredient of bronze, while stone tools were still essential for some purposes in the Bronze Age. Copper typically was alloyed with tin to produce bronze, but so was arsenic, which continued to be used into late stages of the Bronze Age on Crete.



MAP 1. Greece with principal Bronze Age sites. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

It was not until the second stage of the Early Bronze Age, ca. 2700 B.C., that archaeological evidence points to the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals. On the mainland, this phenomenon manifested itself in the construction of large buildings called “corridor houses”—two-storied, with central rooms flanked by narrow annexes. Such monumental structures were characteristic of the Early Helladic II phase in southern parts of the Greek mainland and on the island of Aigina. During Early Helladic II, material culture was broadly homogenous, and interregional exchange of goods, especially pottery, was frequent. The Greek islands, even Crete, were part of this “international spirit,” as Renfrew called it in his *Emergence of Civilisation*.¹ Seals were used to secure parcels and boxes in the corridor house at Lerna, the so-called House of Tiles, and some have assumed that a centralized administrative system was in operation there (see figure 6a and figure 6b).²

On Crete a palace-centered society, which we call the Minoan civilization, emerged around 1900 B.C. and extended its economic (and perhaps political) reach into the Aegean Sea in the Middle Minoan period. There we speak of the Old Palaces, followed, after a destruction, by the establishment of New Palaces later in the

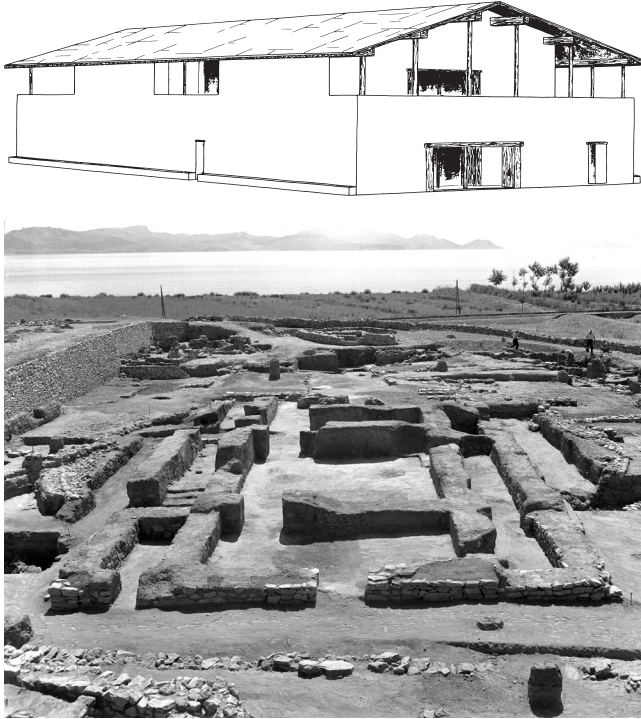


FIGURE 6a and 6b. The House of Tiles at Lerna in the north-eastern Peloponnese of Greece. 6a. Reconstruction after M. H. Wiencke, *The Architecture, Stratification, and Pottery of Lerna III (Lerna IV)* (Princeton: ASCSA, 2000), fig. 107a. Joseph Shaw. Courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. 6b. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Lerna Excavation Records. All rights reserved.

Middle Bronze Age.³ There was no cultural break between the Early and Middle Minoan periods. On the mainland, however, toward the end of the Early Helladic period, there was, in contrast, a significant wave of destructions and abandonments of settlements that many, following Jack Caskey, think bears witness to the arrival of newcomers to the Greek peninsula. Both he and Blegen imagined that this disjuncture marked the “Coming of the Greeks.” Others more recently have argued that climate change was the culprit. Whatever the case, the ensuing Middle Helladic period marked a setback along the road to state formation on the mainland.⁴

THE SHAFT GRAVES OF MYCENAE

Mainland communities in the earlier Middle Helladic period continued to trade with each other and with some Cycladic islands, but there is little evidence for direct contact between the Peloponnese and Crete. From burial customs, we can deduce that there were mechanisms emphasizing group identities (such as the family), and that these restrained the concentration of power in the hands of any one individual. The loosening of such constraints on centralized personal power would, of course, have been a prerequisite for the creation of states, when we would expect to see the development of a system based on inherited rank.⁵

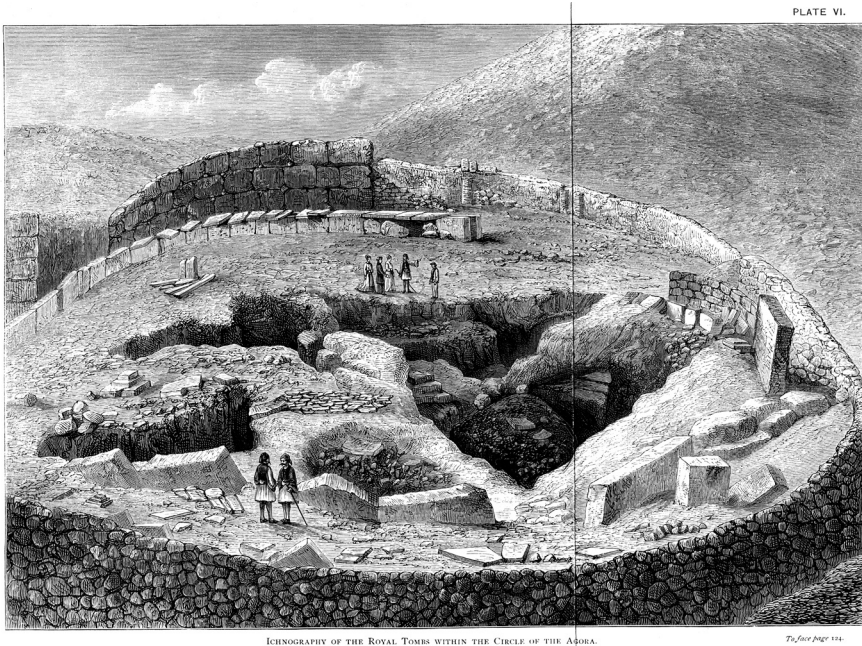


FIGURE 7. Heinrich and Sophia Schliemann's grave circle at Mycenae. After Heinrich Schliemann, *Mycenae: A Narrative of Researches at Mycenae and Tiryns* (London: John Murray, 1878), facing p. 124.

A hierarchical society of that sort is what we find emerging near the end of the Middle Helladic period. That has been obvious since the 1880s when German-American businessman Heinrich Schliemann and his Greek wife, Sophia, excavated the first shaft graves at Mycenae, in a “Grave Circle” just inside the Lion Gate in the Cyclopean walls that surround its acropolis (see figure 7).⁶ The graves contained such incredible wealth that at first many reputable scholars refused to believe that the burials were of prehistoric date.

The finds from the shaft graves of Mycenae have, since their discovery, been jewels in the crown of the prehistoric galleries of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. The quantity of gold (about 15 kg) alone is impressive, but even more important is evidence that at Mycenae the egalitarian ethos of Middle Helladic society had been replaced by one permitting individuals or groups of individuals (women and children included) to be singled out for special treatment in death—behavior that presumably reflected an elevated status in life. The graves excavated by the Schliemanns were joined in the 1950s by a second grave circle with shaft graves, a bit earlier in date. Both groups of graves belonged to an extensive cemetery on the western slope of the Mycenae acropolis, which also included humbly appointed burials.⁷ What was the engine that spurred such dramatic changes at Mycenae and resulted in the emergence of greater social complexity in southern Greece?

ABOUT THE PALACE OF NESTOR

Although this book is about events leading up to the construction of the Palace of Nestor, it is important to know about the palace itself because it marked the apogee of the social and political developments that are my concern.

In the thirteenth century B.C. the complex of buildings that we call the Palace of Nestor was built on a low acropolis on the long ridge of Englianos, a few kilometers inland from a coastal plain bordering the Ionian Sea (see figure 8).¹ The Main Building (1–57), the Southwestern Building (64–81), the Northeastern Building (92–100), and the Wine Magazine (104, 105) stood there until the destruction of the palace ca. 1180 B.C. The walls of the Main Building and the Southwestern Building were decorated with wall paintings applied in tempera.

The Main Building, as its name implies, was central to this complex, and it is the best preserved and most fully excavated Mycenaean palatial structure anywhere in Greece. From the existence of staircases, it can be deduced that parts had an upper floor, although little is preserved other than fallen plaster from its pavements. Its core rooms were elaborately decorated and consisted of five axially arranged spaces oriented southeast–northwest: the Propylon (1, 2) with access to the Archives (7, 8); a Court (3); and three rooms of the Megaron (4–6) that culminated in the Throne Room (6) for the Mycenaean king, the *wanax*.

It is likely that those who traveled to the palace from the coast, where the harbor of the palace was located, followed the floor of the valley bordering the Englianos Ridge for a while and then ascended as they approached the acropolis. Guard posts ensured protected access to the Main Building. Someone entering for the first time would have been impressed by the decorative program: in the propylon (1, 2), a life-size procession of gift or tribute bearers, then figures of women, animals, and

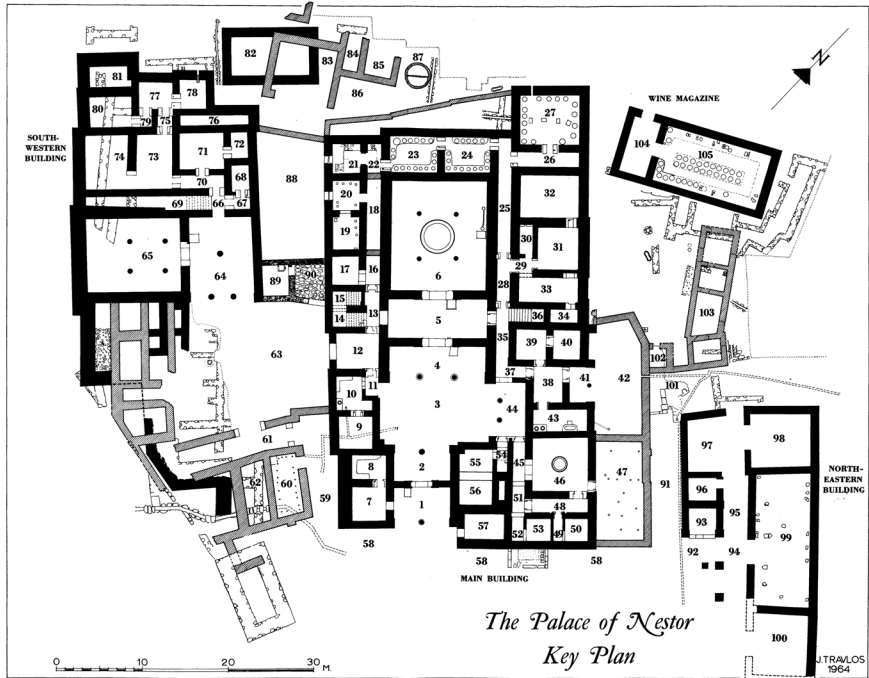


FIGURE 8. Plan of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. John Travlos. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

architectural façades. Under-life-size men carrying gifts or tribute decorated the walls from the Vestibule to the Throne Room (5).

The decorative program of the Throne Room (6) itself has been only partly restored, but it certainly emphasized the significance of the *wanax* (see figure 9). In the center of the room, surrounded by four fluted columns, was a large plastered hearth, its rim painted with spirals and its side with a “flame” pattern. Smoke from the hearth vented to the sky through a terracotta chimney. The floor of the room was plastered and divided into a painted checkerboard, whose squares, except for one, were decorated with geometric motifs. The exception, painted with an octopus, is located in front of a low plaster platform that supported a wooden throne. To the left, one shallow basin in the floor was connected to a second by a channel; liquid offerings or libations were likely poured into it. As at the Palace of Minos at Knossos, the king (in a secular capacity and also as a high religious official) was flanked by lions and griffins, symbols of majesty and power, when seated on his throne. Elsewhere in the room were scenes of men drinking, presumably at feasts, and of a lyre-playing bard seated on multicolored rocks, singing epic tales to the banqueters.

Other rooms of the palace served storage, production, and administrative functions. To the left of the entrance porch, the ruins of the two-room Archives complex (7, 8) preserved about 80 percent of all of the Linear B documents found



FIGURE 9. Reconstruction of the Throne Room of the Palace of Nestor by British archaeological illustrator Piet de Jong. Digitally restored by Craig Mauzy. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

by Blegen and Rawson's team. These had been stored in baskets and other containers in the innermost of the two rooms, while scribes wrote the documents in the other. Pantries in the Main Building (17, 19–22) were full of pottery, most of it unused at the time the palace was destroyed. Large storage jars, built into plaster benches in magazines (23, 24) behind the Throne Room, were filled with oil.

The Southwestern Building (64–81) was perhaps the headquarters of the *lawagetas*, a compound term consisting of the word for “people” in Greek (*laos*) and “to lead” (*ago*). It is likely that this man organized the defense of the kingdom. A freestanding structure immediately north of the Main Building was a Wine Magazine (104, 105) containing dozens of large storage jars. Lumps of clay, stamped with seal impressions, lay on its floor, several of them inscribed with the Linear B sign for wine. The Northeastern Building (92–100) housed a shrine, perhaps dedicated to a mistress of horses. Blegen and Rawson believed this was a workshop partly devoted to chariot repairs. Or was it a “clearing house for goods entering the palatial complex as a whole”?²

When the Main Building was newly erected, one secondary entrance (41) led through its northeastern ashlar façade to a small room (43) where a bathtub

was set into a plaster bench. Nearby, another entrance from the outside opened onto a majestic complex with a hall and central hearth (46) similar to that of the Throne Room. Griffins and lions or lionesses adorned its walls, and dolphins and octopuses were depicted on the plastered floor of small rooms nearby (49, 50). It is clear that these parts of the Main Building were once of significance, but in the palace's final years, the secondary entrances were blocked by two courtyards (42, 47)—possibly employed as industrial areas for the production of perfumed oils.³

The economic and political domination of the Palace of Nestor is reflected in the fortunes of the regions around it. Near the seacoast, the course of the river bordering the Englianos Ridge on the northwest was diverted, and an artificial basin near its mouth served as a port or harbor.⁴

The destruction of the Palace of Nestor ca. 1180 B.C. was so cataclysmic that neither it nor the community around it ever recovered. Some have argued that the agents of this calamity were invaders from outside the kingdom—Dorian Greeks or the “Peoples of the Sea” mentioned in Egyptian texts. Others have suggested that the people of Pylos themselves revolted against their king.⁵ Whatever the case, certain facts cannot be disputed: the Main Building burned with such ferocity that the Linear B tablets in its archive were unintentionally fired, and vessels in some storerooms even melted. Before the destruction, the town around the palace had extended up and down the Englianos Ridge, and perhaps as many as three thousand individuals were resident. Afterward, it was all but abandoned.⁶

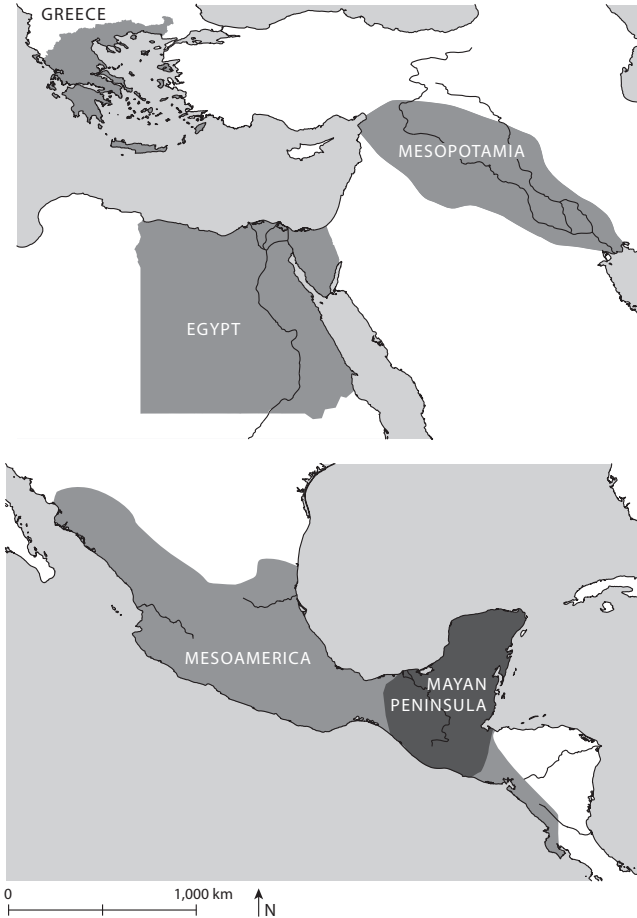
Tombs that had been reused for generations were neglected. The area of the Palace of Nestor remained severely depopulated. Unlike the great palaces of the Argolid, Mycenae and Tiryns, its ruins did not become a focal point for worship by Greeks in historical times. Walls that were still standing provided some shelter for squatters, and a bit of historical pottery, some of it as late in date as the third century B.C., has been found. But by then the names of Nestor and Pylos were no longer associated with the site.

Mycenaean Origins and the Greek Nation-State

Chapter 1 presents a rationale for studying the origins of the prehistoric state in Greece, then a discussion of how approaches to the prehistoric past of Greece changed in the course of the nineteenth century as a response to the formation of the Greek nation-state. Initially examined within the context of a broader European prehistory, by the 1890s, prehistoric archaeology became an important weapon that could be marshalled in support of the project of the Greek nation-state, one that foreign archaeologists like Carl Blegen helped to develop and promote. Once defined as an archaeological culture, Mycenaeans played an important role in combatting the ideas of those who argued that there had been a break in continuity between modern and ancient Greece. At the same time, Greek prehistory in Greece and abroad found a comfortable home in the field of Classics, which broadly embraced a phylogenetic narrative of the past.

Most American university courses concerned with the origins of the state focus on so-called primary or pristine states, areas of the world where civilizations—ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mesoamerica, or China—supposedly arose independent of external influences. Prehistorians recognize that the general processes that led to state formation were very much the same everywhere in the world.¹ States in Greece, however, are considered to be secondary states and often imagined to have come into existence in response to contact with the primary states of the Middle East and Egypt.²

Why then study the origins of early states in Greece? Greece (130,000 sq km) is small in comparison to Mesopotamia (500,000 sq km), modern Egypt (1 million sq km), or modern China (9.5 million sq km), much smaller even than the Mayan heartland in Mesoamerica (390,000 sq km) (see map 2). But within this small area, the quantity and quality of relevant archaeological data is staggeringly great, accumulated both through excavations and surface surveys, and the potential for learning more about state origins is correspondingly high. In Greece,



MAP 2. Greece, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Mesoamerica drawn to the same scale. Tina Ross. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

projects have been sponsored by the Greek Ministry of Culture, Greek universities, Greek private institutions (notably the Archaeological Society at Athens), and foreign schools of archaeology in Athens.³ Since the 1980s, a virtual avalanche of relevant information has accumulated in direct response to generous funding from the New York–based Institute for Aegean Prehistory and in association with development programs co-funded by Greece and the European Union.⁴

The road to social complexity in Greece was long and winding—despite considerable evidence for contact with the Levant, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Although some have argued for an indigenous origin of agriculture in the Balkans, it is now generally accepted that major grains and domesticated animals reached Greece from the Near East. Evidence points to the transmission of these essentials for a Neolithic (New Stone Age) lifestyle already in the seventh millennium B.C., yet



FIGURE 10. The *Palace of Minos at Knossos*, 1921–1936. Carol Hershenson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati.

the state in Greece emerged only after 2000 B.C.—in contrast with Egypt and Mesopotamia, where such developments took place in the fourth millennium B.C. What explains the lag? What broke the inertia two thousand years later, on Crete ca. 1900 B.C. and then on the Greek mainland ca. 1600 B.C.? Social complexity in Mainland Greece moved in fits and starts, more so than in Crete, where a steady pace led to the emergence of the Minoan civilization earlier than the Mycenaean.

BLEGEN AS SATHER PROFESSOR

It seems uncontroversial to me why the emergence of Mycenaean civilization should be of interest to anthropologists, but it is perhaps less clear why readers who come from a background in Classical languages and literature should care about the topic. Why would the University of California’s faculty of Classics invite me to Berkeley? After all, the Sather Professor holds the Sather Professorship of Classical Literature, not archaeology, let alone Greek prehistory.

The very first Sather Professor, J. L. Myres of Oxford, was, nonetheless, deeply interested in earliest Greece and collaborated with Sir Arthur Evans, the excavator of the Palace of Minos at Knossos, in an attempt to decipher the Linear A script of the Minoan civilization (see figure 10). Other Sather professors of the earlier twentieth century shared Myres’s interest in Greek prehistory. They included Martin Nilsson, who explored Mycenaean mythology; Axel Persson, who lectured on Bronze Age Greek religion; and Blegen himself. Clearly the Greek Bronze Age has always been a significant, if intermittent, component of the Sather Lecture series. How-come this was the case? What has more generally been the role played by Greek prehistory in Classics over the past century?⁵

To answer these questions requires an understanding of the developmental history of the discipline of Greek prehistory and the role that Blegen played in it prior to World War II. Blegen came to Berkeley as Sather Professor in 1942, an impossible year for Britain. Germany had been systematically bombing London since

September 1940, and a naval blockade had begun earlier. Sir John Beazley, who had accepted the Sather Professorship for 1941–42, was stuck in Oxford. Berkeley had a problem—and an impromptu solution was found. The duties of the Sather Professor that year were divided between Harold Cherniss and Blegen.⁶

It is easy to see why Berkeley called on Cherniss. Both he and his wife were University of California alumni. Although teaching at Johns Hopkins, Cherniss held a Guggenheim fellowship that year and was free to travel. Blegen, whose first language was Norwegian, was probably tapped through the intervention of Axel Persson, Sather Professor for 1941. In a letter to Blegen in Swedish, archived at the University of Cincinnati, Persson addressed him as “Dear Friend” and described his own presentations before he had returned to Sweden via the Far East (he was already expecting proofs of his *The Religion of Greece in Prehistoric Times*, Sather Classical Lectures 17).⁷

Predictably, Blegen spoke at Berkeley about his campaigns at Troy and his more recent discovery of the Palace of Nestor. But also of interest is an informal public discussion he led while at Berkeley. According to the *Daily Californian*, Berkeley’s independent, student-run newspaper, Blegen described the Greeks as a “courageous people, universally admired for their determined stand in defense of their country” against Mussolini and Hitler. In 1939 he had written his sister that both dictators “deserved to be boiled in oil.” The Greeks, in his mind, were clearly special, having stood up to the determined onslaught of the Axis powers. Blegen’s belief in the exceptional nature of the Greek character also pervaded and colored his views about Greek prehistory, as well as those of his contemporaries.

In reference to the Greek Bronze Age and the Mycenaean civilization, Michael Fotiadis has written that “the phantasy we inherited . . . has become the ideology that sustains our practice today.”⁸ And Blegen is as responsible for this situation as anyone. Unlike early complex societies in the Middle East and Egypt, which were literate, Bronze Age Greece is largely the creation of archaeology—a fact that has over the past 150 years made the field particularly susceptible to manipulation by forces of nationalism, especially but not exclusively those exerted by the modern Greek nation-state. Understanding this phenomenon requires inspection of certain foundational documents of Greek prehistory composed by Blegen and his closest friend and colleague Alan Wace.

In 1941 the University of Pennsylvania published the text of a lecture that Blegen presented within the framework of its bicentennial celebration.⁹ The text is important in that in it, Blegen, a man who rarely wandered far from descriptive prose, allowed himself to speculate. In so doing, he provided a charter for the inclusion of Greek prehistory within programs of Classics in his day. Blegen emphasized the following four points:

1. “Mycenaean civilization . . . maintained its existence some three hundred years, during which a slow progressive decline is manifest both on the material and artistic sides.”

2. The Mycenaean palaces (and Troy) were all destroyed at more or less the same time by fire, as the result of an external attack by the Dorians.
3. "Mycenaean culture was not completely obliterated. . . . It may safely be concluded that some part of the earlier inhabitants survived" and merged with the racially akin Dorian stock.
4. "By the end of the 10th century the amalgamation was virtually complete, and the Hellenic race had emerged ready to commence its creative role in cultural history."

He concluded:

The race was now a distinctive one, unified and sharply differentiated from those outside the pale; and the constituent elements of the blend are of course no longer recognizable. If one is familiar with the earlier archaeological material, however, one may indulge in some harmless speculation regarding the particular sources of some of the outstanding traits of the Greek character.

What were those outstanding traits?

- "superstition, coarseness, and occasional unbridled passion and cruelty," inherited from those occupying Greece in the Neolithic.
- "delicacy of feeling, freedom of imagination, sobriety of judgment, and love of beauty" from those who had arrived in the Early Bronze Age and "whose greatest achievement" was the creation of the Minoan civilization.
- "physical and mental vigor, directness of view, and that epic spirit of adventure in games, in the chase, and in war," attributable to the Aryan blood of the Mycenaean and Dorian population.

Cultural and political "divisions" in historical times are explained as differences in the proportions of racial blending represented in a given population and the speed at which that process took place. Blegen uses a metallurgical simile according to which "a similar alloy was everywhere purified and hardened during those later centuries of Aryan accretions, culminating in the pouring of the Dorian flux."¹⁰

Blegen himself was the product of blended cultures. His father had immigrated from Norway to the U.S. in 1869, where he studied in Minneapolis and later taught Greek. By 1908 young Carl had acquired a B.A. from Yale, his third, and, as a graduate student, continued to study Latin and Greek. It was at Yale that he also decided to attend the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) in 1910. In Athens at the ASCSA, under the mentorship of director Bert Hodge Hill, Blegen made decisions that would shift the focus of his research from literary and philological studies to prehistory and archaeology.¹¹

For his doctoral degree, he began in 1915 to excavate Korakou, where he learned British techniques of stratigraphical excavation from Wace. Wace also schooled Blegen in the typology of prehistoric pottery, so critical for relative dating. *Korakou: A Prehistoric Settlement near Corinth*, his published dissertation, provided scholars for the first time with a clear outline of the prehistory of the entire Bronze Age in southern Greece.¹²

Blegen's evolutionary picture of the Greek Bronze Age must have influenced philologist William T. Semple's decision to hire him to teach students about prehistoric Greece at the University of Cincinnati and to conduct excavations on behalf of his Department of Classics. Semple's newly founded department was being built so as to fit into the phylogenetic model of Greek history popular at the turn of the twentieth century.¹³ In fact, by the time Blegen arrived as a student in Athens, few, if any, serious scholars doubted that ancestors of the modern Greeks had created the Mycenaean civilization. Schliemann's finds at Mycenae already lay a quarter century in the past and had transformed views about Pre-classical Greece.

Scholars of prehistoric Greece before Schliemann, in the 1860s and early 1870s, had been concerned with artifacts from eras that, because of their temporal remoteness, had left no traces in later Greek written sources. They sought to incorporate Greece into European prehistory by documenting a Greek Stone Age, imagining that primitive lake dwellers had lived in Greece, as they had in Switzerland. The Cyclopean walls of the Argolid around Mycenae and Tiryns, constructed of massive, roughly hewn blocks, were thought to be Pelasgian, built by a pan-Mediterranean pre-Greek population—a proposition encouraged by Petit-Radel's 1841 *Monuments Cyclopéens*, a commentary on models in the Pelasgian Gallery of Paris's Mazarin Library.¹⁴

But after Schliemann's discoveries, it was Mycenaean full steam ahead, not Pelasgians. At Korakou, Blegen began to explore the “nameless τικ of the Homeric poems.”¹⁵ The Greek past was being pushed back into what had previously been a European prehistory, and young Blegen's mission was to marshal evidence for the continuity of the Greek people. He had committed himself to the nationalist project of the Greek state, a campaign in hyperdrive in his day in reaction to a critique by Jacob Fallmerayer, who in 1830 had written:

The race of the Hellenes has been wiped out in Europe. Physical beauty, intellectual brilliance, innate harmony and simplicity, art, competition, city, village, the splendour of column and temple—indeed, even the name has disappeared from the surface of the Greek continent. . . . Not the slightest drop of undiluted Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of present-day Greece.¹⁶

Fallmerayer argued that the Greeks had deliberately misled European elite. Michael Herzfeld has described the forceful Greek response:

The very name of Fallmerayer has been execrated in Greece from 1830 until our own time. . . . That execration, however, was extraordinarily productive, for Fallmerayer flung down a challenge which the Greeks could ill afford to ignore; and they met it magnificently. . . . Fallmerayer's crime consisted in denying them descent from the ancient Hellenes.¹⁷

Blegen never questioned the logic of this “magnificent” Greek defense and viewed the study of the Greek Bronze Age by philhellenes like himself as a means by which

foreigners could participate, through archaeology, in the process of Greek nation building. But Blegen was also committed to political action. He fully supported the irredentist platform of Prime Minister Venizelos and his party, the so-called Grand Idea (Μεγάλη Ιδέα) that Greece should capture former territories of the Byzantine Empire. In 1919 he was an asset of the Greek intelligence service in Bulgaria, where he gathered data on the Greek minority. And in 1920 he tacitly approved the Greek annexation of western Turkey by initiating excavations at Colophon, in the Greek zone of occupation.¹⁸

By 1930 Blegen had published two articles that cemented his reputation as a pre-eminent prehistorian: “The Pre-Mycenaean Pottery of the Greek Mainland” (1918) with Wace, and “The ‘Coming of the Greeks’” (1928) with J. B. Haley. According to Blegen and Wace, the cultures of Crete, of the Greek islands, and of the Greek mainland were all “branches of one great parent stock which pursued parallel, but more or less independent courses [while] the Mycenaean civilization is the fruit of the Cretan graft set on the wild stock of the mainland.”¹⁹

Wace and Blegen’s ideas fell on fertile ground, sprouted, and blossomed—welcomed by an audience well-prepared for the narrative they were writing. Long before the 1870s, there had been an interest in the ruins of Mycenae because of its central role in ancient Greek literature as Agamemnon’s seat. In the fifteenth century Cyriacus of Ancona had searched for it unsuccessfully, but a hundred years later the Venetians knew exactly where Mycenae lay. Francesco Vandeyk, an engineer, produced a map of the Argolid in 1700, described the ruins of Mycenae in detail, and may even have uncovered the Lion Gate. A 1703 account by Alessandro Pini, a Florentine doctor in the service of Venice, explicitly links the ruins to the Homeric epics—and through them to the ancestors of the historical Greeks. He wrote:

Among the ruins, which exist at present, there is a very majestic and large cupola, but full of earth. Anyone who has even a little knowledge recognizes it as a grave, and it is not unlikely that it is the Tomb of Agamemnon, as described by Pausanias.²⁰

Blegen and Wace’s orthodoxy owed much to the views of the Greek archaeologist Christos Tsountas. Tsountas’s ideas had been promulgated in the Anglophone world through his book *The Mycenaean Age: A Study of the Monuments and Culture of Pre-Homeric Greece* (1897), a translation of an earlier work in Greek. The noted biblical scholar, George Goodspeed of the University of Chicago, emphasized that Tsountas was writing Greek history:

We may be said now to possess a new chapter, or rather several new chapters, of early Greek history, about which we are better informed than concerning several later chapters, even that which has to do with Homer himself.²¹

The Greek Bronze Age was welcomed into the curricula of departments of Classics, particularly those that embraced the broad *Altertumswissenschaft* (science of antiquity) perspective. The idea of a Homeric archaeology, drawing on

Mycenaean discoveries, had also emerged in Germany with the appearance of Wolfgang Reichel's *Homerische Waffen* (1901). By the turn of the century, outside Germany, it had infected influential philologists such as Walter Leaf, who, in 1900, included an appendix on Homeric armor in his edition of the *Iliad* (1900).

Tsountas's influence can hardly be exaggerated.²² He declared the Greekness of Mycenaean culture six decades before Michael Ventris deciphered the Linear B script and confirmed that the administrative language of the Mycenaean palaces was Greek.²³ Tsountas imagined that Mycenaean culture resulted from an indigenous evolution that reached back to the Neolithic, where he believed that he had documented precedents for the Homeric palace-hall in his excavations at Dimini and Sesklo near Volos in Thessaly. In so arguing, he was incorporating an archaeologically based prehistory within the 1885 narrative of ethnic continuity composed by the Greek nationalist historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos.²⁴

Blegen remained dedicated to that same narrative until the end of his life, and because of his diplomatic service in Greece after World War II, his opinions were even sought outside the narrow field of Greek archaeology. A continued adherence to the Greek national project is clear from his (unpublished) book "The United States and Greece," written for the American Foreign Policy Library.²⁵ In it, he writes:

There is no doubt that in the people of modern Greece we must recognize the descendants of the ancient Greeks; and certainly there are few, if any, other races that can show so long a history of continuous national existence, contrary to the theory advanced by Fallmerayer.²⁶

According to Blegen, under the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans were occupied by "peoples with a motley pattern of distribution"; new nation-states "in their infancy" retained elements of the Ottoman pattern, "almost inextricably mixed in their population"; and this "confusion" was "largely cleared away" through "far-sighted agreements for the exchange of minorities." He speaks, furthermore, of the Greek race's "astonishing power to absorb and assimilate alien elements that from time to time established a foothold on Hellenic soil."²⁷

The decipherment of Linear B as Greek in 1952, hastened by Blegen's discovery of the archives of the Palace of Nestor in 1939, came as no particular surprise to the fathers of Greek prehistory. Blegen in 1954 could write to Wace, "Many thanks . . . for the copy of your bilge on 'The Coming of the Greeks.' I have read it with much interest and of course am in full general agreement with the views you express. In the main it is just what we've been thinking and saying for years on the basis of the archaeological evidence, before the clinching linguistic evidence was available."²⁸

Wace's article to which Blegen referred read:

Thus since the inhabitants of Greece in the Classical Period were Greeks and spoke and wrote Greek, we can only conclude that the time of their arrival in Greece was the Middle Bronze Age. In other words, the new race with a new culture which entered Greece at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age was the Greek race, the first Hellenes to come to Greece. Other waves of Greek speaking peoples like

the Dorians probably came into Greece at different dates in later times, but the Middle Helladic people were the first Greeks. . . . The substance of this archaeological argument is that the Mycenaean of the Late Bronze Age would have been Greeks and would have spoken and written Greek. The Mycenaean culture therefore is the first manifestation of Greek art and civilisation.²⁹

But what of the term *Mycenaean* as an identity attached to a particular people? Before Schliemann, the adjective *Mycenaean* had been used in Western languages only to describe the residents of ancient Mycenae, the earliest attestation in English being a Renaissance commentary on Diodorus Siculus, a historian of the first century B.C.: “This lyon . . . resortyd moche emonge the Micenyens, bitwene theym and the grete wode callyd Nemea.”³⁰ Schliemann applied the term to categories of artifacts from his excavations: “Mycenaean idols” or “Mycenaean metals.”³¹ It was used more broadly by German Classical archaeologists Adolf Furtwaengler and Georg Loeschke when they published their monumental *Mykenische Vasen* in 1886—the first steps toward defining a “Mycenaean” style of vase painting. By the mid-1890s French archaeologist Georges Perrot and art historian Charles Chipiez were speaking of “l’art mycénien.”

Tsountas and J. Irving Manatt, a professor at Brown University who had translated *The Mycenaean Age* from the Greek, would write in English in 1897 of the “Mycenaean Age,” of the “second decade of Mycenaeanology,” while using “the Mycenaean” both in reference to the prehistoric and historic residents of Mycenae. “The” Mycenaean is applied there in every sort of context, from discussions of the prehistoric economy to social organization, religion, warfare, and craftsmanship. For the most part, Tsountas and Manatt used “the Greeks” to emphasize contrasts and to make comparisons with “the Mycenaean,” but they also speak of “the Mycenaean Greeks” and wonder which “race or races among the Greeks known to history [is it] to whom the achievement of Mycenaean civilization is to be ascribed?”³²

It was Tsountas’s use of the terms *μυκηναίος* and *μυκηναίοι* five years earlier that had popularized the extension of the term *Mycenaean* to refer to peoples of the Late Helladic period.³³ He certainly hoped that it would:

As the outcome of all these discoveries and the studies based upon them, there stands revealed a distinct and homogeneous civilization, a civilization so singular in many aspects that scholars have been slow to see in it an unfolding of Hellenic culture. At first, indeed, it was pronounced exotic and barbarous. . . . While other terms (as Achaean and Aegean) have been proposed, it seems desirable for the present to adhere to that name for this civilization which is at once suggested by its earliest known and (so far as yet ascertained) its chief seat, Mycenae. And to the authors and bearers of this civilization throughout Greece, we must apply the same term Mycenaean.³⁴

The director of the Hermitage, Ludolf Stephani, had been one of the scholars slow to see in Mycenaean finds an unfolding of Hellenic culture. Stephani reasoned that Schliemann’s finds had been buried at the time of the Herulian invasion of Greece

in the third century after Christ. Wolfgang Helbig of the German Archaeological Institute was another doubting Thomas; he had argued in 1895 that Mycenaean art was the creation of Phoenician craftsmen.³⁵

Only rarely, however, has anyone tried to unpack the term *Mycenaean*, and then with little conviction. Lord William Taylour, who directed British excavations at Mycenae in the later 1950s and 1960s, comments in *The Mycenaean*: “‘The Mycenaean’ is not a designation that will be found in the Classical authors.”³⁶ He asks who were the people who created the Mycenaean civilization: “It was grudgingly admitted that they were ancestors of the Greeks, but how Greek were they? What is certain is that through its entire history Greece has been subject to the influx of foreign peoples, more often coming with hostile intent.”³⁷ He concludes, however, that the origins of the “Greek miracle” lay in the Bronze Age and celebrates, as had Blegen in 1947, the ability of Greek culture to absorb foreign elements.

The Lamarckian concept of cultural evolution that pervades the foundational documents of our field was founded in racial and racist concepts, even as is Taylour’s question “How Greek were they?” The notion that Greek culture had a remarkable superpower to create an amalgam from diverse peoples that would trigger accomplishments a half millennium later must arouse suspicion.

Even after Schliemann’s discoveries, not all would agree with Tsountas, Blegen, and Wace as to the relevance of Greek prehistory to the larger field of Greek studies. Already in 1911 Professor Percy Gardner, president of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, addressed his membership in London:

Another kind of expansion of Greek Archaeology has also been notable in the last thirty years. A strong tendency towards a research into origins set in with the rise of Darwinism in the mid-Victorian age. . . . The chasm dividing prehistoric from historic Greece is growing wider and deeper; and those who were at first disposed to leap over it now recognize that such feats are impossible. We shall all be disposed most heartily to welcome the spread of knowledge in regard to primitive and prehistoric Greece. It is a fresh breeze to fill our sails, and fresh point of view whence to approach the subjects which so deeply interest us. Yet I hope you will allow me on the last occasion on which I shall thus address you, to express my own preference for what is purely Greek.³⁸

So what does the field of Classics gain from study of the Greek Bronze Age?

GREEK PREHISTORY AND CLASSICS

Finally, we turn to the relationship between the study of Greek prehistory and the field of Classics today. Once the nationalist agenda that chartered Greek prehistory within Classics is removed, as it should be, what is the rationale for continuing to teach Greek prehistory within a Classics environment?

The recent publication of a two-volume collection of papers titled *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean* hints at one answer.³⁹

Contributors were invited explicitly to consider the debt (if any) to the Bronze Age of Classical city-states. William Cavanagh, in his essay on Sparta, states his own agenda clearly (and it is that of others too):

Opinions about the inheritance from Mycenaean to Archaic Greece has swung from a view that the culture of the 14th–13th centuries deeply influenced what was to follow in the 8th–6th centuries to a view that a deep gulf separated the two. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have been seen by some as a window on the Bronze Age, by others as a reflection of the time the poems were put together, centuries later. The nature of their creation is hotly contested: are they each the vision of one great poet or constantly reshaped by a fluid oral tradition? Their central theme, the Trojan War, has been reconstructed as a seminal historical clash or alternatively as a powerful myth but not a real event.⁴⁰

Cavanagh concludes that, among other things, the nature of the Spartan historical settlement pattern, the cluster of villages that constituted Sparta itself, *perioikic* (non-Spartan) communities, and a general sense of Spartan identity had emerged already in the Mycenaean period. He even suggests that the origins of the Spartan system of holding a subject population in thrall, *helotry*, might be traced back to the fall of the Mycenaean palaces and the dispersion into hinterlands of dependent labor forces.

In Pylos there also had been a very large community around the Palace of Nestor, including slaves. We have just enough finds in and around the ruins of the palace and elsewhere to know that that particular area was never totally deserted. In the main, however, the population would likely also have survived the fall of the palace, as in Laconia, dispersed elsewhere or invisible to us as archaeologists. This invisibility had already been the case in the Late Bronze Age, when only a fraction of the population seems to have had access to formal burial in tholos or chamber tombs. It was the elite culture that had been so obtrusive in the landscape, with their monumental burials, the buildings on the acropolis, and the ceramic production that we know the palace sponsored in the thirteenth century B.C.

In *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*, Sharon Stocker and I explicitly considered the aftermath of Mycenaean Pylos. The Archaic period did not begin as a tabula rasa in Messenia, and we concluded that a memory of a united Mycenaean kingdom surely remained, passed from generation to generation. Such traditions were likely strongest in places that had been integrated into a common polity the longest, such as the Hither Province of Nestor's realm (see map 3, in chapter 2). It was also there, north of the Bay of Navarino, that associations with Nestor were preserved in Classical times at the Cave of Nestor and at the Tomb of Thrasymedes, Nestor's son, mentioned by the traveler Pausanias in Roman times.⁴¹ If cult practice also played a role in transmitting memories from the Bronze Age to historical Messenians, this does not, however, appear to have happened at the site of the former Palace of Nestor itself, but nearer the coast where an early sanctuary of a goddess, perhaps Artemis, has been recently discovered.⁴²

So too for the Further Province—aspects of its Mycenaean background may have played a role in conditioning its historical development. Classical Thouria, on the outskirts of the modern metropolis of Kalamata, seems to have been the capital of the Further Province.⁴³ This settlement sat in a position critical for communications between Messenia and other parts of the Peloponnese through Laconia, by passes in the high mountain range of Taygetos. Indeed, shared cultural features, such as massive chamber tombs, may attest to direct relations between the Eurotas valley of Laconia and the Pamisos valley of Messenia already in Mycenaean times. The Pamisos Valley, the core of what had been the Further Province, would have been most exposed to Spartan aggression in the Early Iron Age simply because of its geographical proximity to Laconia. But the success of the Spartan invasion may also reflect a political weakness attributable to the fact that the area east of the Aigaleon range had not been so well-integrated into the Mycenaean palatial system and thus lacked as strong a sense of common identity as the area to the west. Here the Spartans could and did firmly impose their system.

Messenia after the Bronze Age split along its natural cleavage into eastern and western zones, although some memory of the Mycenaean provinces may be preserved in the *Odyssey*. Telemachos, son of Odysseus, in search for information about his father, stopped both at the Palace of Nestor and the house of Diocles at Pherai (probably modern Kalamata).⁴⁴ Only then did he cross from the Pamisos to the Eurotas valley via the Ager Dentheliatis, where the Spartan wars of conquest later began at the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis.

Can the prehistoric foundations of Messenia tell us anything about the likely distribution of its Helot and perioikic populations? Common sense suggests that principal Spartan estates would have been located on the best land, in the plains of the Pamisos River and Stenyklaros Plain. Nino Luraghi suggests that patterns of settlement in western Messenia beg to be compared with those in perioikic areas of Laconia, and we agree.⁴⁵ In the area of Pylos, it seems likely that such perioikic settlements, formed by those who survived the fall of the Palace of Nestor, preserved memories of the Mycenaean past more vividly, while it must have been in the Pamisos Valley that Messenians were “laden with heavy burdens like asses, forced to bring to their lords a half of all the fruit of the soil.”⁴⁶ Helot resistance against the Spartans was focused on Mount Ithomi in the Pamisos Valley, not the center of the old Mycenaean state, on the western side of the Aigaleon range. It was a popular hero there, Aristomenes, who supported the revolt. No reborn King Nestor led the charge.

Prehistory also offers grist for the mill of any scholar of Homer. An extraordinary find from Pylos provides one new example. The Pylos Combat Agate, from the grave of the Griffin Warrior, may be the finest example of glyptic art from the Greek Bronze Age ever found (see figure 11). It is a Cretan work of the New Palace period. The face of this seal stone bears a representation of combat that draws on an iconography of battle scenes known from the Shaft Grave period on the Greek

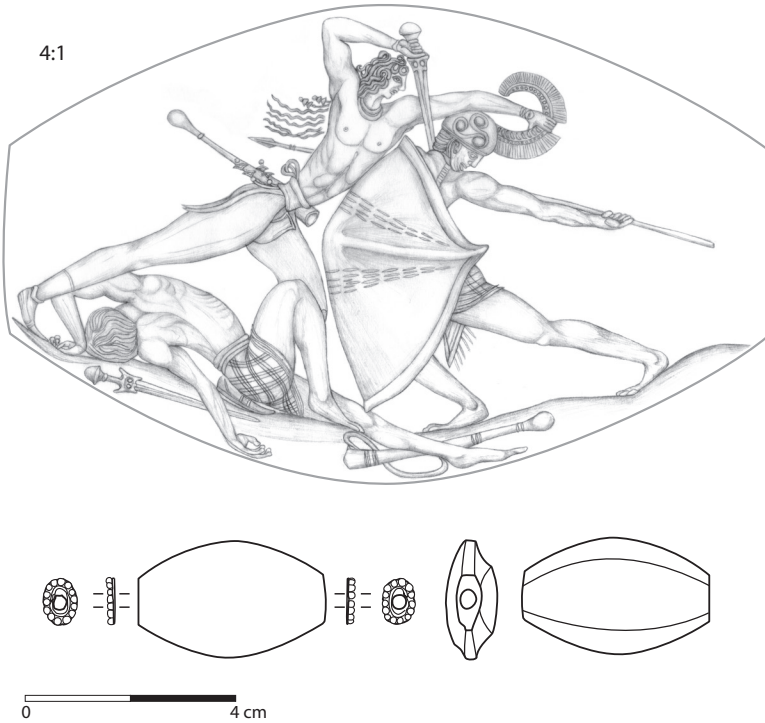


FIGURE 11. The Pylos Combat Agate. Tina Ross. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

mainland and in New Palace Crete. The level of detail in the representation of weapons and clothing, like the attention given to the physiognomy of the human bodies, is without parallel. We realized almost immediately that we had unearthed a masterpiece—one that had the potential to shed light on myth and legend in the Early Mycenaean period.

Schliemann had a strong emotional reaction on discovering at Mycenae the gold signet ring that has become known as the Battle of the Glen and the equally renowned gold ring depicting a hunting scene.⁴⁷ His interpretation of their iconography in light of Homeric texts was direct:

When I brought to light these wonderful signets, I involuntarily exclaimed: “The author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* cannot but have been born and educated amidst a civilization which was able to produce such works as these. Only a poet who had objects of art like these continually before his eyes could compose those divine poems.”⁴⁸

It is entirely understandable that Schliemann would draw connections between his finds and Homeric tales, inasmuch as he firmly believed that he was excavating the

graves of warriors who had fought at Troy. But what were the broader iconographic and mytho-historical contexts of such a scene? Emily Vermeule stated the obvious: “I need not stress that the great period of Troy VI down to the early fourteenth century is also the great period of Greek interest in battle art and siege scenes.”⁴⁹

Is it too fanciful to imagine that both mainlanders and Cretans in viewing the Combat Agate would have understood it to be a vignette from a well-known tale? Might some even have recognized one of the city sackers who would become, if they were not already, subjects of the *Iliad*, our most celebrated saga of war? This is not to say that we must believe that the composition on the Combat Agate was intended by its maker to reflect a Trojan War epic, but as Peter Warren wrote many years ago in reference to the Ship Fresco from Akrotiri and contemporary works,

exploits in such engagements were deemed worthy of record on frescoes, metalwork, stonework and faience. But is not this a familiar story? May we not see these exquisite but silent works as the visual counterparts of oral poets, who have long been thought to have composed their tales of heroic exploits since the earliest Mycenaean times?⁵⁰

And it is undeniable that elements from the Early Mycenaean period survived frozen in the oldest strata of the Homeric poems.⁵¹

The heroic character of the victor depicted on the Combat Agate is emphasized by both his lack of defensive armor and his nearly complete nudity. Such a theme would have been as intelligible to a Mycenaean as to a Minoan viewer, although open to varying interpretations in different contexts, irrespective of the intent of the craftsperson who designed it or any larger composition from which it was excerpted. The victor’s triumph over such a heavily armed opponent expresses his courage, skill, strength, and status. We can imagine that this particular seal held a special significance for the Griffin Warrior and for those who prepared his sepulcher—the depiction of the hero on the seal corresponding to his view of himself and also serving as a reflection of how his family intended to display him to their community in the course of burial ritual. The Pylos Combat Agate clearly befits the interment of one counted among the acquisitive elites who ultimately succeeded in elevating the community on the Englianos Ridge to a dominant position of power in Messenia. He was not Nestor, not Neleus, but an individual no less significant for our understanding of the emergence of the Mycenaean state. Perhaps even the bard depicted on the walls of the Throne Room of the thirteenth-century-B.C. Palace of Nestor continued to sing his exploits.

Farm, Field, and Pylos

In chapter 2, I turn to Mycenaean Pylos itself, with a discussion of the development of textual and archaeological studies of the history of rural settlement in an area that would in the Late Bronze Age belong to the state controlled by the Palace of Nestor. My interest in rural history derives in large part from my own biography, a youth spent in an agricultural area in the American Midwest. There I witnessed agricultural life responding to social and economic change in the world at large. I conclude that the expansion of very small Mycenaean settlements that were inscribed in the landscape of Pylos in the earliest stages of the Late Bronze Age reflects a significant change in social and political structures that heralded the emergence of the Mycenaean state.

Between 1990 and 1995, more than a hundred archaeologists, natural scientists, physicists, and students from a half dozen countries participated in the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. The purpose of the project was to explore one area that had belonged to the kingdom of Nestor in the thirteenth century B.C., the final century of Mycenaean palatial civilization. In the decades prior to World War II, the province of Messenia, where Pylos is located and where Blegen and his colleague Kourouniotis found the Palace of Nestor in 1939, had been peripheral to the concerns of most archaeologists, foreign and Greek. But in the 1950s interest intensified as communications and roads improved and, aside from the northeastern Peloponnesos, today we know as much or more about Mycenaean Messenia as any other part of southern Greece.

REGIONAL STUDIES IN THE KINGDOM OF NESTOR

In 1952, when Greece had achieved political stability after the violence of its civil war (1944–1949), Blegen resumed his excavations at the Palace of Nestor, which had been suspended since 1939. There he continued to explore, among other things, the small two-room complex in the Main Building that held its archives, their texts incised on clay tablets in the syllabic script called Linear B. He found in



FIGURE 12. William A. McDonald excavating in the Archives at the Palace of Nestor in 1939. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

total about 1,100 such tablets in the ruins of the palace, nearly all accidentally baked in a conflagration that had destroyed Pylos ca. 1180 B.C.

Blegen had been accompanied in 1939 by William A. McDonald, a twenty-six-year-old Johns Hopkins graduate student, who was being supported by a fellowship at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (see figure 12). McDonald was with Blegen on the first day of excavation when Linear B texts were discovered. Inspired by Michael Ventris's decipherment in 1952, McDonald was determined to locate on the ground the network of towns and villages mentioned in the texts.¹ McDonald had already explored the area around Pylos in 1939. In 1953 he resumed his search for Mycenaean sites, but only part-time, since, as a member of Blegen's staff, he also dug around the edges of the acropolis, looking for a fortification wall.

Still, in just four days of surface reconnaissance, McDonald mapped eighteen Mycenaean sites (see figure 13). He also partnered that year with Dimitris Theocharis, who, a few years later, discovered the Bronze Age palace of Jason at Volos in Thessaly. Together they excavated in the so-called Cave of Nestor on the slopes of the medieval castle of Old Navarino. The cave had been mentioned by the Roman traveller Pausanias, long after the name of Nestor was detached from the Englianos Ridge.

Bitten by the bug of regional exploration, McDonald never again returned to the Palace of Nestor to help Blegen. By 1962 he had constituted the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, in Greece the first truly multidisciplinary collaboration of archaeologists with natural and physical scientists. By 1972, when McDonald and geologist George Rapp published *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Environment*, hundreds of prehistoric and historic sites had been added to McDonald's list.

In his search for settlements and cemeteries, McDonald was soon joined by Richard Hope Simpson, an Englishman teaching in Canada, who shared his

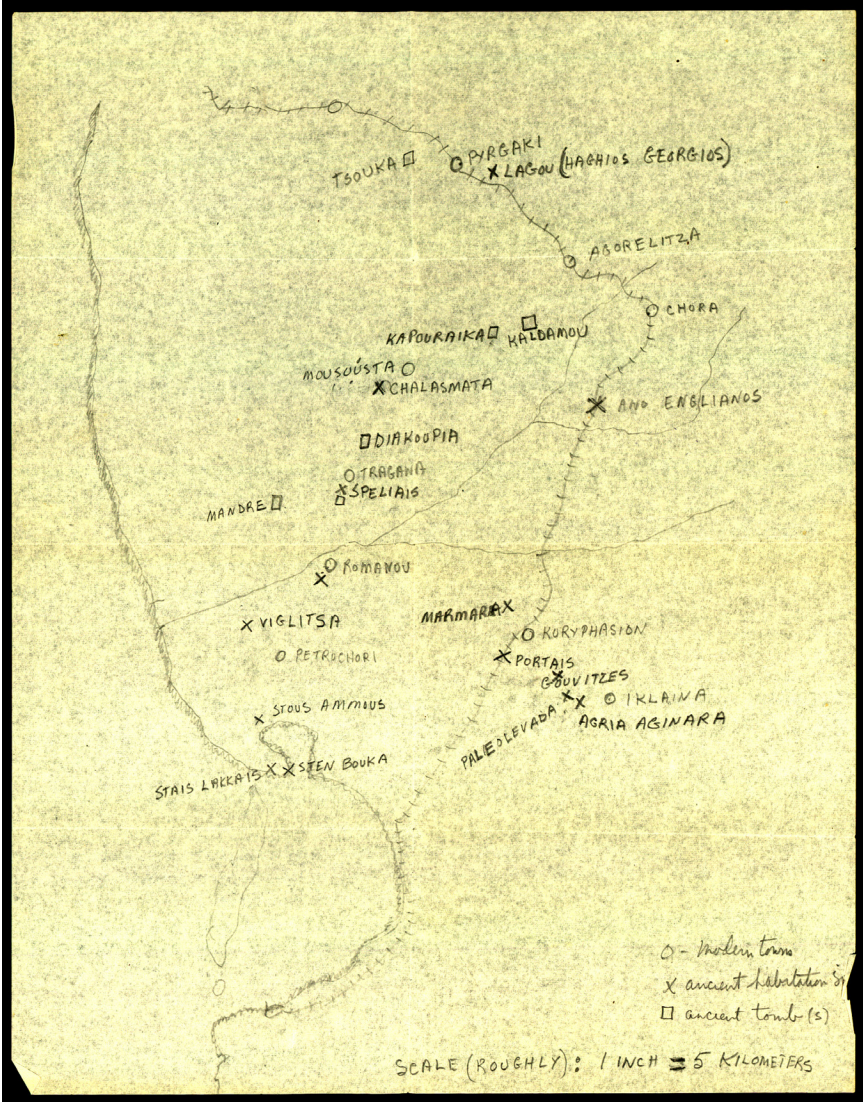
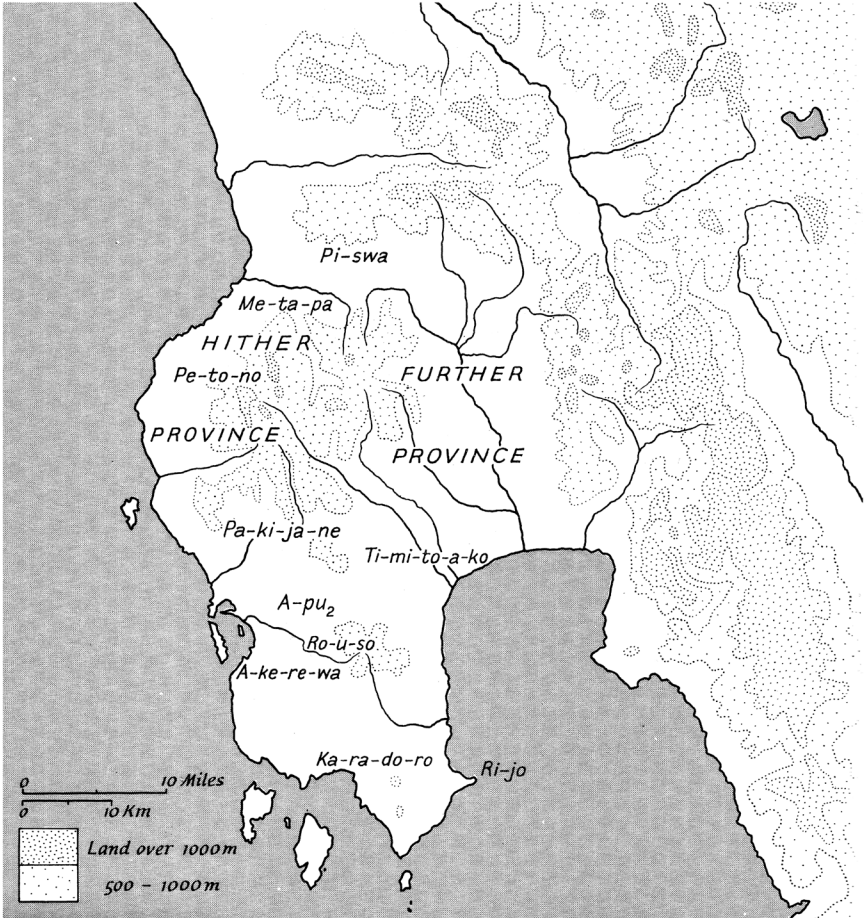


FIGURE 13. Ancient settlements and graves documented by William A. McDonald in the back of his 1953 excavation journal. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Pylos Excavation Records. All rights reserved.

interests in surface archaeology. “Naturally, our methods of search were modelled on those of Blegen and Wace,” they wrote.

They are sound methods, tested and improved over a half century. The base is the typological study of the surface pottery; but, of course, one must first locate the sites



MAP 3. Proposed locations of towns in the kingdom of Nestor. After John Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 64. © Cambridge University Press. Reproduced with permission of Cambridge University Press through PLSclear.

on which pottery may be found. To do this successfully it is essential to have a firm grasp of the ancient topographical sources and to build on it a thorough familiarity with the modern countryside. One must learn the location of the best agricultural land, the most abundant sources of water, what constitutes a good defensive location, healthful orientation, good drainage, easy communication.²

In short, McDonald and Hope Simpson built a predictive model for settlement location. In the winter, they inspected aerial photographs taken for them by the Greek air force; then, in the summer, they examined likely locations for ancient sites—a process that we would today call “ground truthing.” But, despite their remarkable successes, we now understand that such methods of investigation fail

to find a good many sites situated in places that do not conform to any predictive model, particularly those at the lower end of the size spectrum—and these small sites may be of great importance to us in understanding how a landscape was exploited in the past.

The next step in McDonald and Hope Simpson's research program was to try to match archaeological sites to the place names recorded in documents found in the archives of the Palace of Nestor. For help in this enterprise, they enlisted John Chadwick of Cambridge University, who, together with Ventris, had published the first major compendium of Mycenaean Greek texts (with translations and commentary).³ It was clear to Chadwick that the Kingdom of Pylos in the thirteenth century B.C. was divided into districts, grouped in turn into two provinces, Hither and Further, which were separated by a mountain range called Aigaleon. The order in which the district capitals are listed in Linear B allowed Chadwick to produce a map of the kingdom (see map 3).

Next, with more than two hundred prehistoric sites to choose from by the later 1960s, McDonald decided to move from surface reconnaissance to excavation (1969–1975) of a likely district capital—a site called Nichoria, probably the *ti-mi-to ak-e-e* of Linear B Greek.⁴

Thomas Palaima has summarized what we know about *ti-mi-to ak-e-e*.⁵ This toponym is mentioned in the Linear B texts from the Palace of Nestor in conjunction with bronze working, livestock, flax production, arrangements for coastal defense, and more. Palaima suggests that the name means “glen of the terebinth tree,” a plant we know was exploited for its resins in the Bronze Age. McDonald, in his excavations at Nichoria, uncovered houses and cemeteries, and there are indications that the importance of the settlement waned as the Palace of Nestor became more powerful in the fourteenth century B.C.

After World War II, Spyridon Marinatos, later known for his investigations of Akrotiri, a “prehistoric Pompeii” on the island of Thera, was appointed successor to Kourouniotis, who had died in 1945. Marinatos left work at the Palace of Nestor to Blegen and, like McDonald, set out to explore the larger region. McDonald's research was thus complemented by Marinatos's excavations at many Mycenaean settlements and cemeteries near Pylos, giving historical depth and spatial extent to a picture of the Pylos area that otherwise would be known mostly from surface remains.

By 1972, prehistoric Messenia was, in fact, so well-known archaeologically that the kingdom of Nestor became the focus of an academic conference at Cambridge University. Its proceedings, published in 1976 as *Mycenaean Geography*, further discussed settlement patterns and regional organization within Nestor's realm.⁶ My own interest in the kingdom was provoked by a desire to move beyond McDonald and Hope Simpson's approaches to surface archaeology and to gather fuller and more detailed information about the Mycenaean countryside than had been available to the participants in that conference.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

One particular focus of Renfrew's *The Emergence of Civilisation* had spurred my passion for intensive survey and regional studies: how to explain changes in patterns of rural settlement and agricultural land use. In retrospect I am certain that my regard for the subject ultimately reflects my own biography.

I was born in 1950 in the American Midwest, in northeastern Ohio, and was raised in idyllic Apple Creek, a small service center village of several hundred families, founded in 1817 by Scots Presbyterian immigrant farmers on the banks of the stream that would power their flour mill. Named for legendary Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman), Apple Creek sits amidst rolling, glaciated farmland, near the Agricultural Research and Development Center that is an extension of The Ohio State University, with the mission of exploring ways to improve animal husbandry and arable cultivation.⁷

As a child, the arcadian landscape of Apple Creek seemed timeless to me. Farmers lived in large, isolated farmhouses in the midst of enormous fenced fields, grew prodigious quantities of corn (largely as feed for livestock), and maintained huge herds of dairy cattle—Holsteins, Guernseys, and Ayrshires—for milk.⁸ Arable cultivation and animal husbandry were well integrated, promoting high productivity. The smell of manure lay heavy in the air.

Other than farmers, most outside the county seat of Wooster lived in small villages like Apple Creek, where there were dry-goods and hardware stores, mills, and railway shipping depots. The population was remarkably uniform—Christian and white. Other than we “English,” as the Amish call us, there were only those flourishing descendants of conservative, German-speaking Anabaptists, who began to emigrate to America from the Rhine valley in the eighteenth century. My area of Ohio still boasts one of the highest densities of Amish in the United States.

By the time I was in my teens, the landscape that I had naively thought timeless began dramatically to change. Mechanized corporate farming made it ever more difficult for small farmers to eke out a living, and many threw in the towel or took second jobs. Farmland was put to new uses as urban populations and light industry expanded. Those farmers who survived were tempted to sell off plots for housing subdivisions at the edges of their fields, along existing roadways.

The collapse of rural railroads in the 1960s deprived villages like Apple Creek of an important means for transporting goods and people, while service providers also fell on hard times (see figure 14). The creation of the interstate and defense highway system under President Eisenhower, along with more dependence on automobiles, drew consumers to larger shopping centers owned by conglomerates and located in county seats like Wooster.

Transformations of this sort impacted much of rural America in the latter half of the twentieth century, and there is a very different feel to the countryside of



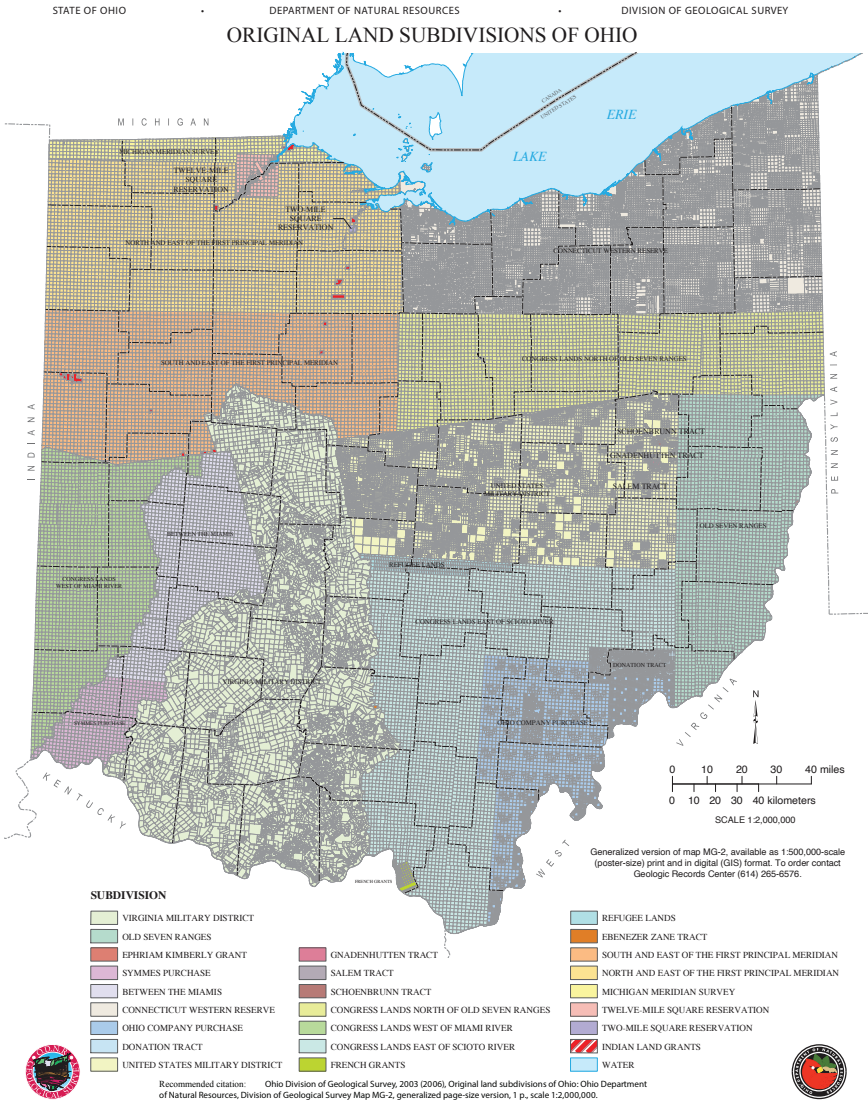
FIGURE 14. Railway Park and Soldiers Monument, Apple Creek, ca. 1900. Wayne County, Ohio, Online Resource Center.

Apple Creek. Gone now is the sense of rural isolation. Shallow ribbons of houses line the tertiary roads that link villages. Their occupants are entirely urban in their lifestyles, separated by more than fences from arable fields. Amish farms, in contrast, do survive intact, secured by the conservative tenets of religious practice. Custom, enforced by threats of community ostracism, discourages the sale of land to “English” families, and fields are rarely subdivided.

It was only after coming to work as an archaeologist in the Mediterranean that I developed a conscious curiosity about the relationship between natural and human landscapes. I learned that historical developments, reflecting stages in European colonization of the Ohio Country, had determined the rural agricultural organization familiar to me as a child. Early settlers had cleared vast expanses of hardwood forest in Ohio, and the policies of Thomas Jefferson were ultimately responsible for the pattern into which I was born: a sea of isolated family farms, punctuated with villages.

The United States had claimed the Ohio Country after the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended the American Revolutionary War. Jefferson, before assuming his post as U.S. ambassador to France in 1785, headed a Congressional committee that proposed division of the western lands of the nation, including Ohio, according to a grid that consisted of squares called “hundreds.” The United States Land Ordinance of 1785 established “townships” of thirty-six square miles, cut into square-mile “sections” of 640 acres (see map 4). Government-sponsored surveys led to land speculation, displacement of native American populations, rapid colonization, and the construction of farmhouses centered in quarter-section lots of 160 acres. The pattern of isolated rural farms that I knew as a child had arrived in Ohio.⁹

My own European ancestors emigrated to Ohio in 1814, only a few years after this part of the Ohio Country, called Congress Lands North of the Old Seven Ranges, was surveyed in 1809 and opened for colonization. Joseph Arnold and his



MAP 4. Original land subdivisions of Ohio. Ohio Geological Survey, State of Ohio.

wife, Susanna Flickinger, left Maryland with a wagon, blazing their road west with axe and mattock as they plunged deep into the wilderness. At last, in the middle of December, they reached Wooster, where Joseph found his brother Samuel already settled. (“Chain migration” is not a recent phenomenon.) Joseph bought 320 acres of land, almost all forested, except where he and Susanna built a log cabin. Joseph was my mother’s father’s great-great grandfather.¹⁰

The Greece I found in 1969, when I first visited, was so very different from Apple Creek.¹¹ Rural landscapes were village-based; isolated farmsteads, rare. The organization of some landscapes reflected their origins in Ottoman sharecropper systems, which, in southern Greece, prevailed until the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s (more about this in the following chapter). Defensive considerations had sometimes been significant. There were villages attenuated along roads. Others were established as permanent settlements in places once seasonally occupied.

I came soon to understand, however, that the Greek rural landscape, like my own in Ohio, has not been stable in the longer *durée*. Its structure also has fluctuated in response to variability in historical, economic, and social conditions.

THE EARLY MYCENAEAN PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT AT PYLOS

Renfrew emphasized the importance of examining changes in settlement patterns for insights into the beginnings of complex societies in the Aegean. A chapter in *The Emergence of Civilisation* is titled "Patterns of Settlement and Population." There he defines four subsystems within the overall Aegean cultural system: Subsistence, Technology, Social, and Projective. Population was treated as a "parameter, a relevant statistic of all of these subsystems, . . . and settlement pattern an obvious record and symptom of so many activities." It was with these topics that Renfrew began the systems analysis central to his work.¹²

Renfrew hoped to define similarities and differences in the trajectories that different parts of the Aegean world had followed along the evolutionary path that led rapidly and smoothly or slowly and in fits and starts to the Minoan and Mycenaean palaces. He focused on the density, size, numbers, and locations of settlements and on continuity and disruption in their occupation through time. In so doing, he hoped to monitor population growth and decline, his assumption being that population growth had encouraged greater social complexity and that greater social complexity in turn promoted population growth. With power centralized in a state, one might expect that settlement patterns would reflect that hierarchy, with a larger center as the seat of power and subsidiary towns and smaller settlements under its authority.¹³

Renfrew's conclusions about population and settlement rested on wobbly evidential foundations, more wobbly than he may have realized.¹⁴ As yet there had been no intensive surface surveys in Greece of the sort that Cherry would organize on Melos in the 1970s and that we would together launch on Kea. The extent and intensity of research varied greatly from one region to another and often was biased for or against sites of particular dates. Renfrew, nonetheless, hoped that, by examining the Aegean on a large scale, certain valid gross patterns would emerge.

Many of Renfrew's observations do hold up at the broadest level, in fact, but not when we zoom in closely on a specific part of Greece like Messenia. Drawing

on data gathered by McDonald and Hope Simpson, Renfrew concluded that the “growth of settlement in Messenia for the Neolithic through the successive phases of the Bronze Age . . . gives a vivid picture of sustained growth.”¹⁵ But this generalization masks truly important changes prior to the emergence of the Mycenaean state of Pylos. It hides, in particular, a major rupture in the settlement pattern late in the Early Bronze Age, one perhaps more severe than in the north-east Peloponnese—possibly reflecting the impact of a major climatic event at the end of the third millennium B.C.¹⁶

For southern Greece, Blegen long ago recognized a major disruption at the end of the third millennium, writing in reference to the Middle Helladic, “The geographical distribution of the principal settlements supports the view that Middle Helladic culture was brought by invaders from the north, or more probably the north-east, perhaps coming by sea.”¹⁷ Caskey also imagined a widespread incursion, marked by drastic changes in the character of material culture at Lerna after the House of Tiles was destroyed.¹⁸

In Messenia, it is toward the end of the Middle Helladic period that there first are indications both of population growth and the emergence of a multitiered pattern of settlement. At Pylos, we should search for the origins of the state at times contemporary with the period of the shaft graves at Mycenae.

The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, our intensive surface survey of the 1990s, did clarify patterns of habitation. We not only found new settlements but were able to determine with greater precision the sizes of previously known sites. Now we know that there was a gradual expansion in the settlement on the Englianos Ridge where the Palace of Nestor would later be built, beginning at the end of the Middle Helladic period and continuing through the thirteenth century B.C. That town finally stretched for a kilometer and accommodated a community of several thousand people.¹⁹

For the region as a whole, we have come a long way from the simple dots on Renfrew’s map in *The Emergence of Civilisation*. We can say with confidence that a dramatic expansion in numbers of settlements in the Early Mycenaean period is indicative of more than population growth. We can document a three-tier size hierarchy of sites consisting of the primary center at the Palace of Nestor, secondary sites in places that later became district capitals in the kingdom of Nestor, and relatively tiny tertiary sites.

These very small sites, for the most part newly discovered in the 1990s, have much to tell us about the character of Early Mycenaean political and economic systems. They are not impressive on the ground—and it is doubtless for that reason that they escaped previous notice. Nor have they been considered worthy of excavation. One example is the site of Megas Kambos I, located on a small knoll in the plain west of the town of Gargaliani, north of the Palace of Nestor (and coincidentally the ancestral home of U.S. vice-president Spiro Agnew) (see figure 15). We found evidence of habitation there, first in the Early Mycenaean period and



FIGURE 15. Small Mycenaean site at Megas Kambos, near the modern town of Gargalianoi. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

continuing in later Mycenaean times. Finds are spread over a surface area of fewer than two hectares and include pottery of types typical for a Mycenaean household.

UNDERSTANDING NUCLEATION AND DISPERSION

One of the most important discoveries of intensive surface survey in Greece has been a recognition that very small sites have increased or contracted in numbers in the past and that they were sometimes scattered widely over a landscape. Such sites can be obtrusive far out of proportion to the percentage of the overall population that could ever have lived at them. In contrast there are periods when it appears that nearly everyone in a given region lived in a large settlement—a nucleated rather than a dispersed pattern.

In the *Emergence of Civilisation*, Renfrew wrote about the contraction of populations into nucleated settlements: “The chief factor producing these changes in settlement distribution and settlement type may well have been piracy.” He considered the fifth century B.C. historian Thucydides to be “key to the understanding not only of the various settlement types, but of the different growth patterns of the time.”²⁰ In *Emergence*, piracy seems to explain almost everything (walled citadels, even the creation of “regional territorial states” in historical times), while underscoring the advantage of a power structure that is hierarchical.

A decade later, in his study of the Cycladic island of Melos, more subtle explanations for nucleation and expansion of population were mooted.²¹ Piracy may have played some role in dictating patterns of settlement there, as it did in the medieval and early modern periods in many Aegean islands. As a one-size-fits-all explanation, however, it fails to address certain questions. Why, for example, were certain Cycladic islands, such as Kea, home to multiple city-states in Classical times, whereas larger, more fertile islands, such as Naxos or Paros, had only one?²²

While experiences on Melos nudged Renfrew and his colleagues toward a broader range of explanations for nucleation, particularly integration into external political and economic systems, his emphasis continued to focus on the processes by which highest-order centers were formed. Bronze Age sites at the very bottom of the settlement hierarchy commanded relatively little attention in periods when a central place existed in a region (as it did in the Middle Cycladic period and later at Phylakopi).

For historical periods, some progress has been made elsewhere toward understanding the character and significance of sites beneath the highest tier in a settlement hierarchy. Bjorn Forsén has observed that in Classical antiquity the fact that

the population to a considerable degree lived in second-order, politically subordinated villages/hamlets not only in large poleis such as Athens . . . but also in several smaller poleis . . . [something that] offers valuable information for our understanding of the origin and nature of the Greek city-state. A pattern is revealed with villages/hamlets located at a distance of 4–6 km from each other, of which some develop into poleis, sometimes incorporating other villages/hamlets into their territory.²³

We still, however, have lots of work to do. Forsén notes that most intensive surveys claim that they can help us understand “in what ways and how intensively the countryside was exploited.” But such statements are generally based on unsubstantiated assumptions about the nature and significance of small, unexcavated rural sites. Were these permanently occupied single-family farms or clusters of several farmhouses? Were they seasonally inhabited field houses? For the city-state of Athens, Robin Osborne once argued for the latter in *Demos: The Discovery of Classical Attika*.²⁴ He admitted the existence of highly dispersed patterns of settlement elsewhere in Classical Greece but considered Attica different because of its geography as well as political and social determinants peculiar to the Athenian democracy. He concluded that isolated country residences were rare and that “completely dispersed settlement patterns seem to be a product of modern agricultural conditions.”

By the time Osborne wrote his next book, *Classical Landscape with Figures*, three years later, more sites likely to be farmhouses had been discovered in intensive surveys on Melos, on Kea, and in Boeotia.²⁵ In favor of some of these being permanently inhabited was the range and diversity of associated finds, their regular spacing in the landscape, their presence only in some periods, and the existence of adjacent cemeteries. Haloes (low-density rings of artifacts) around them

point to the use of manure in fields near many and arguably indicate an integration of animal husbandry and arable cultivation that might be expected of intensive agricultural practices.²⁶ Osborne observed, too, that there tends to be a profusion of such small sites when landscapes are resettled after periods of abandonment.

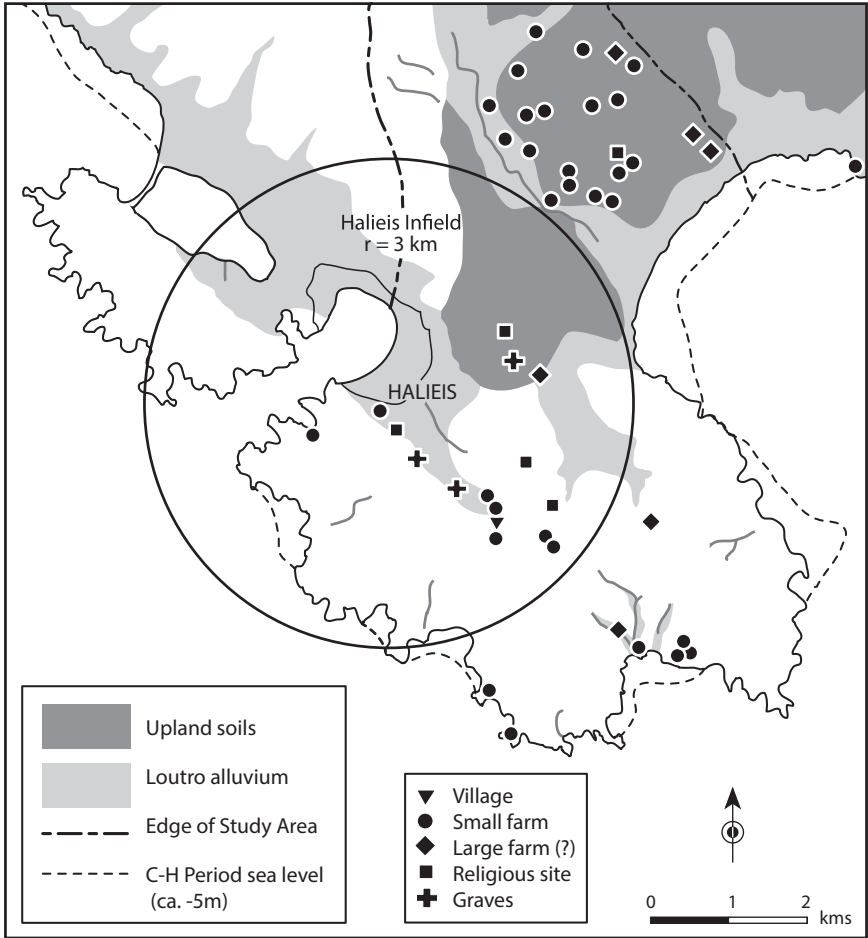
But, insofar as Attica is concerned, a problem remained: despite a very long tradition of topographical studies by archaeologists and ancient historians, the area of the ancient city-state of Athens had not been targeted by a single intensive surface survey. Now a Greek-Swiss-American project has been exploring the Mazi Plain in western Attica. Preliminary results suggest a more complex settlement pattern than one might have expected, and the evidence does point to intensive agricultural exploitation in Classical antiquity. One Classical-Hellenistic complex considered to have been a permanently inhabited farmstead is described as follows:

The third location of interest is found in the southwestern extremity of the plain, at the debouchment of a small stream originating from the hills of Kokkina Chomata, in an area called Karaiskaki. The more fertile bottom of the valley, hemmed in by limestone hills, was divided by several low terrace walls running north-south. They appear to be connected to several features . . . forming a larger complex. Among them was discovered a rectangular enclosure with an internal room . . . , the walls of which are rectilinear and made of limestone blocks. The pottery from the site includes fine and coarse wares, a pithos [large storage jar] rim, and a large amount of glazed tiles.²⁷

Outside Greece, such small sites have been excavated at times. For example, in the context of an intensive survey of the territory of the Greek colony of Apollonia in central Albania, we explored the fragile remains of a farmhouse of the third century B.C.²⁸ We suggested that more land was then being brought under cultivation, whether or not that particular farmhouse was occupied seasonally or inhabited year-round.

Distributions of very small settlements have also claimed some attention at a regional level. Phoebe Acheson has reanalyzed data from an intensive surface survey in the southern Argolid, southeast of Nauplion, challenging a belief that the “number and density of settlements increased, usually with an increase in population, whenever access to external commercial markets was available.”²⁹ She instead argues that denser settlement patterns reflect an intensification of labor, the purpose being to bring more land under cultivation in response to population growth. She also makes a case that several small, coastal sites were probably permanently occupied farmsteads because of their distance from large settlements (see map 5). Acheson further hypothesizes that such isolated establishments controlled fields averaging thirteen hectares in size.

If studies such as Acheson’s have brought us a bit closer to understanding rural patterns of settlement in Classical antiquity, the significance of their Mycenaean counterparts remains to be addressed. I will argue in the following chapter that the proliferation of small sites in the Early Mycenaean period at Pylos also reflects an intensification in agricultural production, although one embedded within a



MAP 5. Settlement and land use model for part of the southern Argolid in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. After Phoebe Acheson, “Does the ‘Economic Explanation’ Work?,” fig. 4. With permission of Phoebe Acheson and Equinox Publishing Ltd. Phoebe Acheson; redrawn and abridged by Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved..

social and economic system radically different from that of Classical Greece. It is a pattern, however, in concord with what we might expect, given the nature of the Mycenaean economy. Ethnohistorical case studies from medieval and early modern Greece provide more useful analogies for the Early Mycenaean settlement pattern than those of Classical Greece.

A Truly Prehistoric Archaeology of Greece

Chapter 3 builds on the propositions of the previous chapter—namely, that an expansion of very small Mycenaean settlements in early phases of the Late Bronze Age reflects the existence of social and political structures that herald the emergence of the Mycenaean state. My approach in this chapter is somewhat different; it is an exercise in model building by analogy, of a sort promoted by New Archaeologists. I draw on lessons learned from a decade-long “vacation” from prehistory, when I became fascinated with Mediterranean historical geography of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries A.D. I begin with a brief history of post-antique Pylos and hint at the richness of the post-antique archaeological record that remains to be explored. Next I suggest ways in which an integration of text and material culture can help to disentangle the various components contributing to the restructuring of patterns of rural settlement. A full-scale assault on Ottoman archives in Istanbul opened the road to a very detailed understanding of the countryside of Pylos and was particularly informative in regard to estates occupied by sharecroppers. Income was extracted from these estates to support Ottoman officials. I suggest that a similar system of wealth extraction from benefices existed in the Early Mycenaean period and that elites grounded their power in local agricultural production.

As a student in the early 1970s, I became curious why it was so difficult to obtain detailed information about times when Greeks labored under the “Ottoman yoke,” as it was frequently called.

I remember being told by several professors that this was because the Turks had destroyed primary records when they left Greece during the Greek Revolution.

I learned later that that explanation was a myth. The Ottomans were meticulous bureaucrats, and copies of all significant documents were archived in Constantinople. Even within Greece itself, Ottoman administrative archives have survived.¹ Our ignorance of the period instead reflected a lack of interest on the part of historians of Greece and Turkey. On the one hand, the national project of the Greek

state emphasized ties with antiquity, secondarily with the Byzantine Empire, not Turkey.² On the other hand, Turkish scholars were not much concerned with what was a minor part of the Ottoman Empire. As a consequence, for many parts of Greece, the centuries prior to the 1821 War of Independence have long been more prehistoric, figuratively speaking, than the Bronze Age.

POSTCLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND PYLOS

The province of Messenia fell to Western European crusading knights, as did most of the Peloponnese, after 1204 A.D., in the wake of their brutal conquest and sacking of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire (which the Latins held until 1261).³ The exception was its southwestern projection with the fortresses of Koroni and Methoni on either side, claimed by Venice as its “eyes” in the Levant, the eastern Mediterranean (see figure 16). Not long after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 A.D., at the hand of Sultan Mehmed II, the area of Pylos passed from Latin to Ottoman control in 1500 A.D. Then, except for an interruption between 1685 and 1715, when Venice occupied the entire Peloponnese, and a few years in the late eighteenth century, when Russian forces invaded, Pylos remained Ottoman until 1828.⁴

In recent decades Greek and foreign scholars have at last begun to mine Ottoman archives in order to write regional histories. At the same time, there has been a greater emphasis on the archaeology of medieval and Ottoman Greece. These periods are now emerging from darkness, sometimes in surprising ways. Undiscovered physical remains may, in fact, be hiding in plain sight.

In 2011, before Sharon Stocker and I rented a house in the town of modern Pylos, we regularly stayed in a small villa in the seaside village of Yialova, fifteen minutes by car from the Palace of Nestor and forty minutes by foot from the Latin stronghold of Old Navarino (see figure 17). The castle of Navarino was built at the end of the thirteenth century A.D. by Nicholas II of Saint Omer—an heir to those knights who had conquered the Peloponnese. One morning Sharon went jogging before work while I drank my morning coffee on the veranda of our villa. Her usual course ran along the north shore of the Bay of Navarino to the foot of the castle and back. That particular day Sharon casually announced on her return, “I found the aqueduct that supplied water to the castle.”

“Right,” I said. “Sure you did”—since I wasn’t even certain that the castle had had an aqueduct. At least I then knew of no published account that described one.

What Sharon had noticed was a line of trees and brush defining a low, linear earthwork. I saw it with my own eyes that same afternoon. She was absolutely correct. I could also follow its course on satellite imagery once I knew where to look. In 2012, Michalis Kappas of the Greek Ministry of Culture’s office in Kalamata and I were able to verify in only a few hours that a stone channel was still preserved beneath the earth and the thick vegetation covering it.



FIGURE 16. The castle of Methoni in Messenia, one of the two “eyes” of Venice in the Levant. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.



FIGURE 17. The castle of Old Navarino on the bay of Navarino, built by a Frankish lord in the 13th century A.D. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

Research in the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens later revealed that Sharon was not first to have seen the aqueduct.⁵ Captain Smyth of the British navy in 1823 marked its course with a dotted line on a map.⁶ An earlier Venetian map showed that more of the aqueduct was preserved in the later seventeenth century, but even then it was no longer in use. The great Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi also wrote about the castle in the seventeenth century:

As you go down to the shore by the harbor, there is a huge arched structure which is supposed to have brought water in from the rocks and mountains to this castle of Navarino, but it has fallen into ruin in many places with the passage of time, and because they have not rebuilt it, the water no longer flows.⁷

How old is this aqueduct? Because of its stone, rather than brick, construction, it likely predates the Ottoman conquest of 1500 A.D.

Discoveries of this sort, coupled with the results of intensive survey and augmented by the research of documentary historians, can supply exactly the sort of information we need to understand medieval and early modern Greece at a local level. Historical geographies of these periods can also provide analogies helpful for interpreting land-use patterns in the prehistoric past, such as the hierarchy of settlements first established in the Pylos area in the Early Mycenaean period.

POSTCLASSICAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND DISPERSED RESIDENCE

My serious interest in the post-antique history of Greece began in the early 1980s when I was co-directing the intensive surface survey on Kea.⁸ That project was designed as a follow-up to John Cherry's intensive survey of Melos. In the course of our fieldwork on Kea, there were many surprises, but one stood out: we could not recognize medieval and early modern remains—although texts testified to the island then having been occupied. We hypothesized that in those periods nearly everyone on the island had lived in the capital, which lay outside the area we investigated.

On the other hand, remains from the nineteenth century were bountiful. Nearly the entire landscape of Kea was packed with stone terraces, field boundary walls, and single-family farmhouses, many still occupied in the 1980s (see figure 18).⁹ These small houses were roofed with massive schist slabs, covered with earth that was renewed regularly and hard-packed with column-like stone rollers. Here was a dispersed landscape, more like Apple Creek than any other I had yet experienced in Greece.

Published literature helped very little in understanding the absence of evidence for a dispersed pattern of settlement prior to the Greek Revolution of 1821, but “gray literature” did.¹⁰ A nineteenth-century schoolteacher, Konstantinos Manthos, had written a history of Kea, not published in his lifetime, but there was a manuscript copy in the library of the British School at Athens.¹¹ Manthos's text

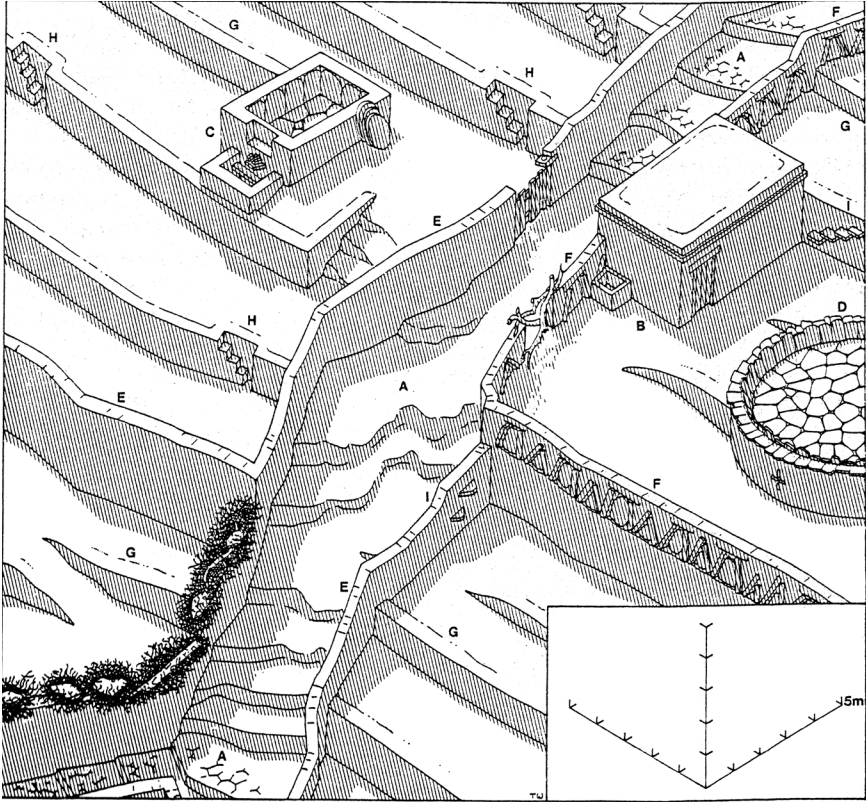


FIGURE 18. Manmade elements of the 19th century A.D. in fields on the island of Kea. Reproduced from Cherry, Davis, and Mantzourani, *Landscape Archaeology*, fig. 21.3. With permission from Todd M. Whitelaw and the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, UCLA. All rights reserved.

had later been liberally plagiarized by Ioannis Psyllas, also a schoolteacher, who published his own work in 1920.

Psyllas appended transcriptions of Ottoman Greek documents to his history, written in a hodgepodge of unsophisticated Greek, infiltrated by Italian and Turkish vocabulary, everything stitched together with unschooled grammar. Many are last wills and testaments, dictated stream-of-consciousness to a notary by illiterate clients. They were difficult to read. Challenge accepted!

Eventually, I discovered that these documents would help me understand the nature of the agricultural system on Kea prior to 1821. Rights to graze animals and to cultivate fields had been separable. A few elite families controlled large parcels of land, demarcated by long stone walls still distinguishable in the 1980s. Under such a socioeconomic system, it was impractical for farmers to establish isolated, single-family farmsteads.¹² For that strategy to make sense, they would have had

to hold exclusive cultivation rights in contiguous parcels of arable land—which they did not. Also working against a pattern of dispersed residence were complex systems of partible inheritance, according to which ownership, even of individual trees in a field, might be bequeathed to different individuals.

What changed after 1821? What factors then facilitated the establishment of the many isolated nineteenth-century farmsteads that we found in our survey? The answer lay in social and economic developments that followed in the wake of the War of Independence. The elite who held large estates under the Ottomans left Kea to jockey for power and prestige in Athens, the new national capital. Many of the poor also departed to seek employment there.

A veritable agricultural revolution gained momentum, as formerly disempowered farmers who stayed on Kea acquired landholdings under the Greek democracy. A vital land market resulted, making it possible for farmers to amass contiguous holdings, such that it became a viable economic strategy for them to live amid their fields in isolated farmsteads. An intricate system of stone-paved paths mitigated the disadvantages of living outside the capital of the island. The dispersed pattern of early modern settlement that we had observed resulted, it seems, from a complex interplay of social, political, and economic factors.

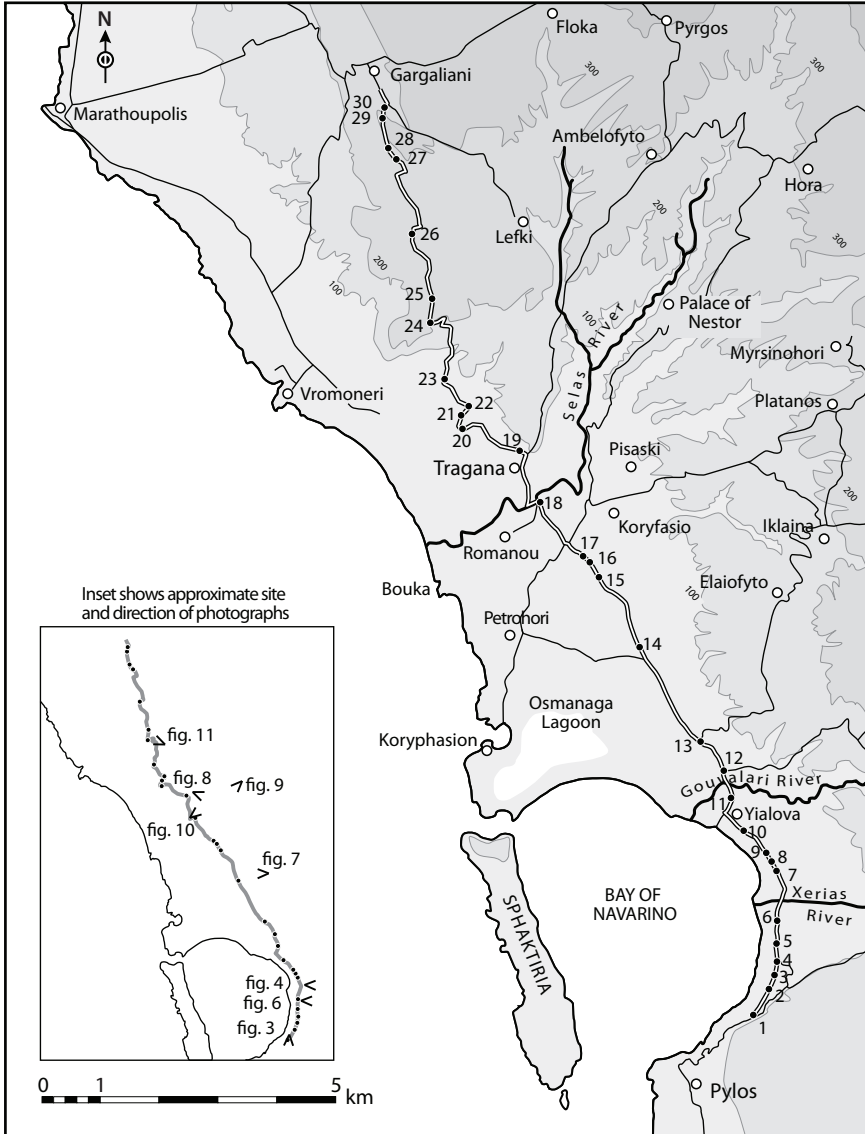
The relatively recent identification of a seventeenth-century Ottoman tax registry in Istanbul has confirmed the existence of a highly nucleated settlement pattern on Kea prior to the Greek Revolution: aside from several monasteries, everyone did live in a single town.¹³

In field projects subsequent to Kea, we devoted even more effort to studying the history and archaeology of post-antique Greece, partly from a desire to understand fluctuations between nucleated and dispersed patterns of settlement. In the 1980s at Nemea, we mined the archive of Antonio Nani, an early-eighteenth-century Venetian governor of the Peloponnese, and also studied Ottoman cadastral registers in Istanbul (censuses and surveys of property compiled for the purpose of taxation).¹⁴

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF PYLOS

By the time we came to Pylos in the early 1990s, an even more comprehensive study of post-antique periods seemed desirable and viable. Cadastral information from the fourteenth century A.D. had already been published, drawing from the archives of Niccolò Acciouoli, a Florentine banker who owned property in the area. Information was also readily available for the period 1685–1715, when the entire Peloponnese was part of Venice's *Stato da Màr*.¹⁵ But we also wanted to learn about the Ottoman occupation.

The accounts of Western European travellers give the impression that the area was nearly deserted then and have long deceived scholars into thinking that the Ottoman administration in Greece here and elsewhere was so harsh that Christian villagers took refuge in the mountains, moving as far away from centers of



MAP 6. The route of Sir William Gell through the Pylos area. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

political power as possible. The travelogues of the English classical archaeologist and illustrator Sir William Gell would seem to support such an idea.¹⁶

Gell has long been considered one of the most observant of Westerners who travelled in Greece in decades immediately prior to the Greek Revolution. His published itineraries record times elapsed between one landmark and the next,



FIGURE 19. Traveling by horseback in Greece at the beginning of the 19th century A.D. Reproduced from Gell, *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, 171.

visible along the routes he travelled. Since Gell tells us how long (in minutes) his total journey through the Pylos area lasted, we can approximately locate each place he mentions (see map 6).

The speed that Gell travelled varied, of course, depending on the terrain (see figure 19). He himself makes this point when he describes the hardships of riding on horseback across a Greek plain

when it has been soaked by the autumnal rains; and the short herbage beginning to spring up in the winter renders it necessary for the traveller to attend to his own involuntary agitations, while the luggage-horse, after a thousand slips, and as many recoveries, almost invariably puts a stop to further progress for a short time, by receiving a desperate fall after a slide of several feet and a succession of unavailing struggles.¹⁷

Gell's picture of the human landscape in the last century of Ottoman rule is, indeed, a bleak picture, and it would be easy to surmise that the lowlands around Pylos were desolate. In the course of a trip that lasted more than five hours, he did not report seeing a single person.

It is likely, however, that Gell's literary style was influenced by the Europeans in whose footsteps he followed. A countryside deserted by its Christian population had become a trope. Susan Sutton has demonstrated just how formulaic the accounts of Western visitors to Greece can be: themes of desertion and isolation were maintained consistently in narratives of the nineteenth century that described the Nemea valley—despite documentary and archaeological evidence that the land was inhabited and extensively cultivated.¹⁸

Gell's general distaste for ordinary farmers is also well-known, as is his preference for the Europeanized Greek upper class. Despite his frequent reference to the mundane (for which he was sometimes mocked by reviewers of his books), he was after all a scholar, a Cambridge graduate engaged in debates about the authorship and historicity of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He was also a leader in the Society of Dilettanti (founded in 1732 as a dining club for British elite who had been on the Grand

Tour). Ancient authors, notably Pausanias and Strabo, were his guides and, no doubt, averted his pen from aspects of Greece that he considered irrelevant to antiquity.

Ottoman tax registers tell a very different story from his. They and also the Frankish and Venetian cadasters make it clear that farmers were dispersed throughout the Pylian landscape in very small communities, even on isolated farms that remained viable over centuries. Finding the Ottoman documents was not difficult, but interpreting them was not easy. The Dutch scholar Machiel Kiel has described how Ottoman cadasters were composed:

A census commission headed by a Census Master (*Emin*) and a Scribe travelled throughout the land, visiting all localities in existence. They were assisted by the Ottoman Judge (*Kadi*) of the district in question and by the members of the Ottoman cavalry, the *sipahis*, who lived in or near the village(s) allotted to them. The *Kadi* had to bring copies of the local records, the villagers were summoned to show their documents and to give verbally an exposé about the manner in which the taxes were hitherto collected. The entire village population, headed by the priests and the village notables, had to appear before the commission and all married men and the unmarried boys from 13 years upward were written down with their name and patronym, and, if they had one, also with their family name.¹⁹

The Ottoman administration was mapless, and when my first European ancestors came to Ohio in 1814 and purchased land delimited by surveyors, Greece was still part of the Ottoman Empire. Once a Greek central government had been established, systematic records of land ownership were also kept, but, even then, the spatial extent of agricultural property was not indicated on maps. It has, in fact, been in only the past couple decades that Greece has produced plat books, supported by a massive infusion of cash from the European Union. Disputes over boundaries of fields were previously negotiated between farmers, mediated by special agricultural police. Such a system obviously made it very difficult for the Greek state to protect its claims to property inherited from the Ottoman state, and private encroachment on state lands was a perennial problem.

An absence of maps does not, of course, mean that the Ottoman Empire was unconcerned about levying taxes on land wherever possible. Quite the contrary. Its cadastral registers painstakingly tracked at the village, town, and city levels the amount of land worked by residents in a community as well as its productivity—and thus amounts owed to the state.

Maplessness was not our only challenge. Another catch was the shorthand script used by Ottoman scribes: for example, vowels were not indicated and diacritical dots that distinguish similarly written consonants were generally omitted: a *b* and a *p* can look the same. None of this is a serious problem if you know in advance what a text is meant to say, but it is a different matter when what interests you are place names foreign to Turkish.

A scribe might choose to translate a Greek name into Turkish in one part of a document but elsewhere to transliterate it: for example, the Greek Lykovouni

(“Wolf Mountain”) could appear as Likovun or its calque Kurd Dağ. In addition, everything is complicated by the fact that many places were renamed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and again in the nineteenth century: a settlement near Pylos that is today called Koryfasion was known as Osman Ağa or Büyük (big) Pisaski to the Ottomans, and to Venetians as Pisaski Grande.

As a component in our research program of the 1990s, we published one large part of a Turkish tax document—its text registered in 1716, less than a year after the Ottomans had recovered the Peloponnese from Venice.²⁰ The cadaster is written on paper, each page of text about 15 cm wide. Twenty-three pages are concerned with the judicial district of Pylos, including the Latin castle where Stocker noticed the aqueduct, and a fortress (*kale*), New Navarino, built by the Ottomans on the opposite side of the Bay of Navarino at the end of the sixteenth century, and its suburb (*varish*). New Navarino served as headquarters for the local Ottoman administration.

The mission of the scribes was to describe the fortresses, as well as villages (*karyes*), small estates occupied by sharecroppers (*çiftlik*s), abandoned estates (*mazraâs*), vineyards, and trees.²¹ The boundaries of each of forty-nine rural properties are recorded as a series of toponyms, written diagonally, sloping upward from left to right at the end of each entry. We were able to locate 86 percent of them, and since in many instances, it was also possible to determine the placement of the boundaries, we succeeded in making a map where the Ottomans had supplied none (see map 7).

Twenty-four of the forty-nine properties in the Pylos district were registered as *çiftlik*s, with taxes assigned as a form of salary to Ottoman cavalrymen or state officials.²² Sixteen of these were populated in 1716, and the majority of non-Muslims in the area lived in them. Other estates (*mazraâs*) in the lowlands north of the Bay of Navarino and near New Navarino were uninhabited, and the cadaster’s text hints that there had been an overall decline in the extent of arable cultivation in the district. Such a state of affairs may partly have resulted from Venice’s war of conquest in 1685. The situation may also have been aggravated by the Venetian retreat in 1715, when some of its subjects deserted their lands and left the Peloponnese behind.

The first part of the entry for each *çiftlik* consists of a description of goods not personally owned by the sharecroppers, being state property from which the beneficiary of the *çiftlik* profited. Real property is listed first: houses, towers, and furniture. Presses and mills follow, sometimes with comments on their condition or whether they were used seasonally or all year. Fruit trees and olive trees were counted individually. Then the extent of arable land was recorded.

The second part of each entry lists all Christian males living in the *çiftlik* and their personal property: grain fields, real estate, livestock, and beehives. Finally, the cadaster tabulated the revenue to be collected from the estate for the benefit of the state and its designates.

Ottoman Pylos, though not a major commercial center, was integrated into a broader Mediterranean economy. Our cadaster of 1716 lists olives as exported.



MAP 7. Settlement map compiled from the Ottoman cadaster of A.D. 1716. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

(Pylos today is in the heart of the area producing Kalamata olives for market.) By the beginning of the nineteenth century, other cash crops had been added. François Pouqueville, Napoleon Bonaparte’s consul at Ioannina, mentions grain, vermilion, maize, cheese, wool, silk, tobacco leaves, oil, and goat hides.²³ British traveler and spy Captain William Leake speaks of “six or seven hundred barrels of oil in good years, some vermilion, tobacco, and goat-skins.”²⁴

From the Ottoman documents, it is clear that the sharecropper system encouraged small-scale, dispersed estates within a settlement pattern dominated by towns where the majority of the population was gathered. It did so in the following ways:

- Sharecroppers had limited mobility and were tied to estates.
- Extensive property belonging to the state needed to be guarded.
- State land could not be divided by partible inheritance.

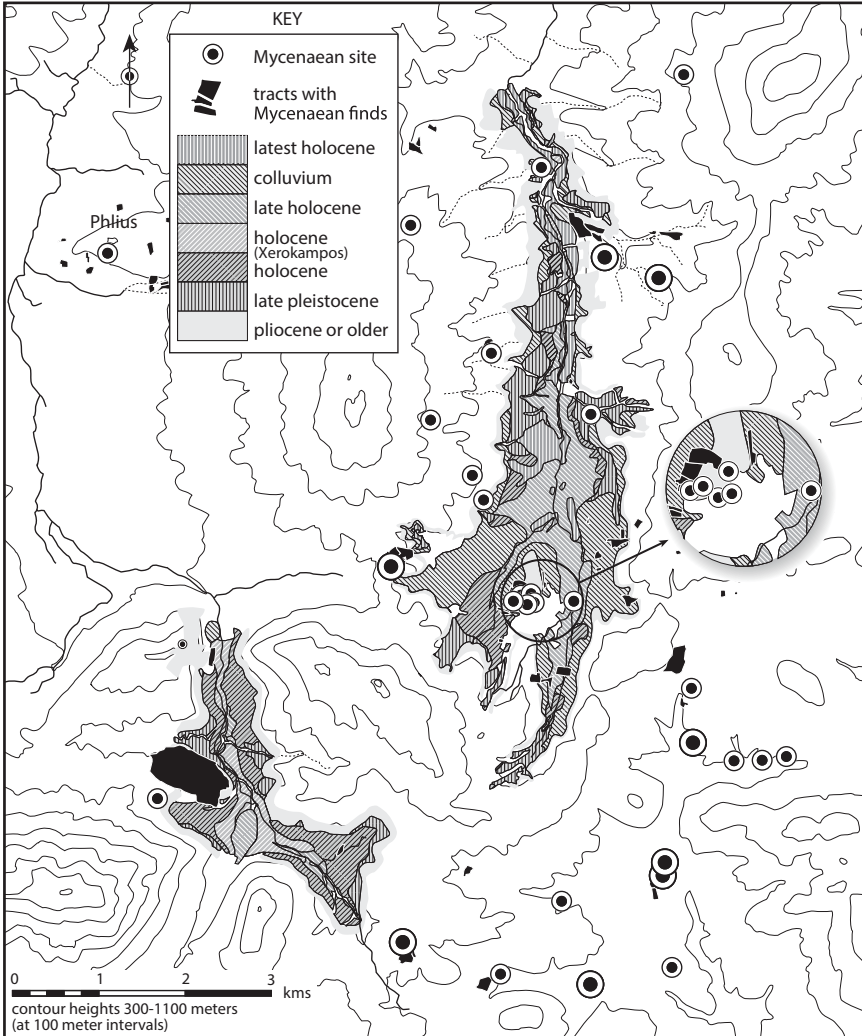
Such a system ensured that the pattern survived, despite disruptions provoked by acts of war and informal violence. For Ottoman Pylos, as for Kea, social and political factors are key to understanding nucleation and dispersion of settlement. On Kea, where there was no direct control by the Ottoman state, it became possible for a small farmer to amass contiguous parcels of land only after the Greek Revolution of 1821. Although partible inheritance subsequently did operate to fragment an individual's holdings, out-migration after World War I held the division of land in check. In Pylos, sharecropping served to hold many cultivators close to their fields in Ottoman times.

In the cases of Kea and Pylos, personal agency, or lack thereof, is key to understanding residential dispersion. On Kea, as in early Ohio, small farmers embedded in a market economy chose to move into the countryside only when it was worth sacrificing the benefits of living in a centralized community. In Pylos, the Ottoman system of benefices bound small farmers to the land as sharecroppers in *çiftlik*s. Their choices were limited.

The Ottoman case studies can, I think, help us to understand patterns of settlement in the much more distant past—even in Early Mycenaean times, when intensive survey has documented a virtual explosion in the number and variety of archaeological sites, not only at Pylos. At Nemea, for example, our intensive surface survey found Early Mycenaean pottery at some twenty-five sites, all of them, with the exception of the village at Tsoungiza, very small (see map 8). Some years ago, John Cherry and I argued that this striking expansion of settlement in the Early Mycenaean period reflected efforts by the elite of Mycenae to bring more land under cultivation by improving drainage of the Nemea valley.²⁵

Neither at Nemea nor at Pylos do we have written sources that might explain the nature of the organization of agricultural production in the Early Mycenaean period. Explanations can only be hypothetical, but it seems reasonable to imagine that, as at Nemea, at Pylos too the proliferation of small sites reflects a desire to cultivate more land. Since the completion of our intensive surface survey in the 1990s, a similar survey in an area south of the Palace of Nestor, focused on a large prehistoric settlement near the modern village of Iklaina, has yielded similar results. Iklaina was probably the district capital known as *a-pu₂ in Linear B tablets of the thirteenth century B.C.²⁶

Details of Mycenaean agriculture are imperfectly known, but there is broad agreement on many points. John Killen has written that “there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that, just as palaces and temples in the Near East were often significant owners of land, so the central institutions in the Mycenaean world had an effective control over—even if they did not technically own—substantial tracts of the arable [land].”²⁷ Thomas Palaima reports an *opinio communis* among scholars that there was a “system of landholding, rather than landowning,” according to which a parcel of land, an *onāton*, would be allotted to an individual according to his status in return for benefits rendered to the state.



MAP 8. Mycenaean sites found through intensive surface survey at Nemea. Rosemary Robertson and Anne Demitrack. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. Reproduced from Cherry and Davis, "Under the Sceptre," fig. 10.6, with permission of Bloomsbury Publishing and Continuum.

Palaima underscores the potential for a system of this sort to increase productivity by bringing more land under cultivation, and there are striking similarities between it and the Ottoman *çiftlik*. Land is measured in seed grain. In addition, just as the Ottoman documents discriminate between *mazra'as* and *çiftlik*s, so the Linear B documents distinguish between land under cultivation and land that has the potential to be cultivated.

The hierarchical pattern of settlement that characterizes the Late Bronze Age at Pylos was already in place by the Early Mycenaean period. Was it not then that the elite of Pylos first established the system by which they profited from the agricultural labor of others? We may be witnessing in the Early Mycenaean expansion of small settlements the initial implementation of a system of sharecropping. Palaima, without adducing archaeological evidence, in fact suggested that some of “the structures and methods of mobilizing and controlling labor that we can detect in the Linear B records must have pre-existed the imposition or insertion of the palatial system and then been adapted to new conditions and ways of operating.”²⁸

What would have been the source of the agricultural land controlled by the elite? Who would have worked land granted as a benefice? In the Mycenaean case, as in the Ottoman, we may doubt that the beneficiary of a prebend worked an *onāton* with his own hands or would have lived on a farmstead distant from centers of power. The settlement around the later Palace of Nestor was already the focus of Early Mycenaean power and doubtless the place where the elite would have congregated.

It seems most likely that, as the community of Pylos extended its control over western Messenia, conquests and acquisitions would have yielded opportunities for the confiscation of land.²⁹ Given the warrior ideology emphasized in Early Mycenaean art and burial practices, this expansion likely resulted as much from the stick as the carrot—and frequently in the face of rival Early Mycenaean centers, such as Iklaina, which had ambitions similar to those of Pylos. Confiscated land could be assigned as benefices and cultivated by land-poor or landless retainers. Rivals to Pylos probably also pursued this same strategy.

A system of benefices would have promoted residence on the land. It would have created circumstances advantageous for small rural settlements to exist and the possibility to extensify and intensify agricultural production, through the integration of arable cultivation and animal husbandry—as happened on Kea in the nineteenth century A.D. The establishment of benefices would also have encouraged the maintenance of small rural estates by restricting the transfer of land through dowry, a force that in other times and places worked against dispersed patterns of settlement within systems grounded in private landownership. The three-tier settlement hierarchy at Pylos had, in fact, a remarkable longevity, lasting until the final collapse of the palatial system ca. 1180 B.C. The dissolution of this pattern, contemporary with the demise of the palaces, in itself suggests the embeddedness of the *onāton* landholding regime within the Mycenaean political system.

Preserving and Conserving Nestor

In chapter 4, I argue that no archaeological project is ever finished, once begun—which may be a shocking and unwelcome revelation to many readers (and archaeologists). The notion that we can write a final report about our discoveries is an artifact of antiquated attitudes and no longer supportable. For this reason I suggest that preservation of sites and excavation records is as important as publishing books. Blegen was scrupulous in preserving his excavation records, as was Marion Rawson, his principal collaborator at Pylos. In Pylos in the 1990s, we found enormous numbers of still unpublished artifacts in the local museum and were able to determine exactly where they came from. We found evidence for ritual burnt animal sacrifice of Homeric type and new wall-painting scenes that included a female archer and a procession of ships. Renewed studies and excavations at the Palace of Nestor itself have also contributed greatly to our knowledge of social and political organization in the Early Mycenaean period.

After turning sixty, I began to anticipate retirement and to think about what comes next—not for me, but for the archaeological field projects that I have directed over past decades. Responsible archaeologists—and I would like to be considered one of them—face problems today that I could hardly have imagined as a graduate student.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ARCHIVED

When Carl Blegen died in 1971, the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati celebrated his successes, even as it mourned his passing. In a foreword to Blegen's final Pylos book, posthumously published, his successor, Jack Caskey, wrote: "This volume comes directly from his hand: another task finished, like many before."

Pylos, like Troy before it, had been the pride and joy of the department, but things soon began to change. Caskey had other priorities. The results of his fieldwork at Lerna (1952–1959) remained largely unpublished, as did those from a



FIGURE 20. Mt. Olympus, the estate of William and Louise Taft Semple in Cincinnati. Courtesy of the Indian Hill Historical Society.

decade of campaigns at Ayia Irini on Kea. Will Semple, who had brought Blegen to Cincinnati, died in 1962, and he and his heiress wife, Louise Taft, had personally funded Blegen's activities (see figure 20). Although they endowed the department on their deaths, the department considered Pylos to be finished.

By 1993, when I returned to Cincinnati, this time as a faculty member, not as a student, the Department of Classics was distancing itself still further from Blegen's legacy, and there was no systematically organized archaeological archive. Some records had even been given away to other universities, including Berkeley.

I myself had co-directed an archaeological survey on Kea in 1983–1984 and another at Nemea (1983–1989), and I had already begun the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. Even before returning to Cincinnati, I did think a bit about the long-term preservation of archaeological records, but as the years passed, I became increasingly frustrated. One source of that frustration was that Classical archaeologists had been encouraged to send electronic data for archiving to a repository at the Center for the Study of Architecture in Philadelphia. I sent Pylos data there and imagined it would be permanently curated and made available to future researchers. But in 2002 the director of the repository sent a form letter to me and other contributors:

Announcing the termination of the Archaeological Data Archive Project.

The Board of Directors of the [Center for the Study of Architecture] has determined the Archaeological Data Archive Project should cease operation, effective

immediately. . . . All files will be returned to the owners in current forms so that they can see to their proper care and preservation elsewhere. . . . Archaeology is hardly alone in finding it impossible to fund an archives for digital data. Archaeologists will, however, be taken to task more strongly than many scholars because their data cannot be recreated, once lost. Their experiments cannot be replicated.¹

Dispiriting indeed, but an action not without parallel. Important research initiatives, critical to archaeology, frequently collapse for lack of funding. A crisis precipitated in 1998 by the retirement of Minze Stuiver at the University of Washington is a noteworthy example: his pioneering radiocarbon and dendrochronological calibration laboratory in Seattle was shuttered. The *Chicago Tribune* quoted Austin Long, a geosciences professor at the University of Arizona and editor of the journal *Radiocarbon*: “You can count on one hand the number of labs that can do this. Decommissioning one of the foremost is a shame.”²

It is important that departments supporting archaeological research take care to preserve data. If they don’t, who will? Archaeology does not produce replicable results. The center in Philadelphia was correct in saying that archaeological data cannot be reproduced. Nor do the data we gather become irrelevant with the passage of time. The preservation of archaeological archives, the conservation of the sites we dig, and the curation of the finds we retrieve are as important as our publications, since they are unique. This can be a difficult concept to grasp, even, or perhaps especially, by natural and physical scientists, whose studies are explicitly designed to be repeatable.

Archaeologists spend millions of dollars on fieldwork, too often with little thought to the future. Should we not think of archives, finds, and sites as investments that will pay dividends for future generations? Our research yields vast repositories of information that can be exploited by those yet unborn—as has been our own experience at Pylos in restudying Blegen’s discoveries. In any case, it is virtually impossible to publish all finds from any excavation. Excavators prioritize those that best address their research questions.

THE LEGACY OF BLEGEN AND NESTOR AT PYLOS

Pylos is today, we think, a success story in preservation, conservation, and curation. How this came to be and why it makes a difference is the story told in the remainder of this chapter.

Blegen’s first priority in publishing his excavations at Pylos had been the thirteenth century B.C.: the architecture of the Palace of Nestor, its wall-paintings and painted floors, the contents of rooms, and the Linear B tablets from its Archives and elsewhere. It was only in his third book about Pylos that he turned his attention to earlier periods.³ There he and his colleagues meticulously described Early Mycenaean graves, as well as remains found beneath and near the later Mycenaean palace. But they nowhere tried to reconstruct life and society at the start of the

47 Highpoint,
North Hill,
Highgate,
LONDON N6.

19 May 1953

Dear Professor Blegen,

Thank you very much for your letter, and the transcription of the most exciting tablet. I've only been looking at it for half an hour, and most of the first line still baffled me completely, but the second and third lines certainly look to me like:

di-pa	me-zo-e!	qe-to-ro-we :		
δέπας	μέζων	κ'ετρωφης		
di-pa-e	me-zo-e	ti-ri-o-we-e :		
δέπαςε	μέζοε	τριωφης		
di-pa	me-wi-jo	qe-to-ro-we :		
δέπας	μέφωv	κ'ετρωφης		
di-pa	me-wi-jo	ti-ri-jo-we :		
δέπας	μέφωv	τριωφης		
di-pa	me-wi-jo	a-no-we :		
δέπας	μέφωv	ανωφης		

[Dual? otherwise
δέπαςε would have
to be masculine.]

There still might be room for coincidence, but there seem to be too many things clinching it:

- 1) The fact that "larger" comes before "smaller", and the number of handles in descending order 4,3,0 within each category.
- 2) The fact that Chadwick and I had already presumed $\text{ε}++$ as "Four", $\text{Α} \text{ξ} \text{τ} \text{η} \text{φ}$ as τριποδισκος , and η^- as "not-having".
- 3) The fact of the four plurals (including ti-ri-no / ti-ri-no-de) each corresponding to their proper Greek declensions.

There are, of course, still one or two irregularities:

- 1) ~~The Greek word δέπας, considered by some a non-IE loanword, is neuter and consequently forms its plural δέπασε, classically.~~
- 2) The ending me-zo-e for the singular in the first entry must be taken as a scribal error, I suppose.

The last entry helps to explain a Knossos phrase which has long puzzled me: $\text{η} \text{η} \text{η} \text{η} \text{η} \text{η}$ on 5 lines of No 872a, the 6th line giving the context of the tablet with the ideogram

This evidently resolves itself into $\text{di-pa a-no-wo-to δέπας ανόφατος}$, the equivalent of the Pylos "earless jug". The variation in the form of the compound word is parallel in the 2 alternative Greek forms for "2-eared":-

ἀμφ-ώης from *ἀμφ-ώσης [κισσόβιον ἀμφώης, Theocr.]
ἀμφ-ωτος from *ἀμφ-όφατος

To us, your tablet 641 does seem extremely encouraging; and we would be very gratified if it helped to bring you into the ranks of the "skeptical believers". But evidently the job is much more difficult than we imagined, when some things fit so convincingly, and yet other tablets seem to offer no progress.

Chadwick and I have 2 or 3 lectures to give at Oxford and to the British School: would you have any objections to our including the phrases of Pylos 641 on a slide? We will treat the matter as being still sub judice.

Thank you again for your exciting letter,

Yours,
Michael Ventris

Best wishes for this year's work

PS: - [ε]ηε in line 1 could be a-no-we = π'F-ώφης "one-handled". Cf οίόυρες etc [οίος is supposed to be more archaic than νόσος] but the evidence of the ideogram is less explicit.

FIGURE 21. Michael Ventris's letter that convinced Blegen and others that Linear B had been deciphered. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Carl W. Blegen Papers. All rights reserved.



FIGURE 22. The House on Ploutarchou St. in central Athens occupied by “the Quartet.” American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Archives, Carl W. Blegen Papers. All rights reserved.

Late Bronze Age. We have had to do that ourselves, in many instances by examining records and unpublished finds from his excavations.

First, however, we needed to organize the various treasures that constitute Blegen’s legacy (see figure 21). Anyone who adopts an abandoned archaeological project, a so-called legacy excavation, confronts this Herculean task.

We were fortunate to have copies of many of Blegen’s paper records at the University of Cincinnati, even some originals, and in 2012 we began to organize these according to modern archival standards. We also had in hand an inventory of original Pylos documents in Athens, where their fate had been happier than in Cincinnati. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 1971 had inherited the impressive neoclassical mansion that Blegen and his wife, Elizabeth Pierce Blegen, shared for most of their adult lives with Bert Hodge Hill and his wife, Ida Thallon Hill (see figure 22). Hill had been the director of the American School when Blegen arrived as a student in 1910, and Blegen soon became his best friend. While serving as Hill’s assistant director, Blegen fell in love with Elizabeth. She had come to Athens as a student on the recommendation of Ida, her professor at Vassar, with whom she was romantically involved. Not without a bit of heartbreak, the four made compromises and formed what they called “the Quartet.”²⁴

Lucky for us, all the members of the Quartet were packrats, Blegen the worst of them. When the American School cleaned the Quartet’s house after his death, it retrieved and inventoried hundreds of letters, excavation records, and

personal diaries. The collection became the centerpiece of the school's institutional archives.⁵ These documents cover critical periods in the history not only of Greek archaeology but also of the Greek nation, since Carl, Elizabeth, Bert, and Ida were well-known figures in the social, intellectual, and political circles of Athens in the early and mid-twentieth century.

EXCAVATING BLEGEN'S STOREROOMS

So much for Blegen's paper records. Actual artifacts from his excavations at Pylos also had mostly been ignored since his death. We confronted this reality in a dramatic way when, in 1995, Cynthia Shelmerdine, director of museum operations for the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, sent Sharon Stocker to look in local storerooms to see if she could find excavated pottery similar to what we had recovered in our intensive survey. Cynthia knew more than most about these storerooms, since she had worked in them as a graduate student.⁶

A seed was planted in the course of that visit. Stocker was determined to reorganize the storerooms and to make Blegen's finds more accessible to researchers. Thus for three years in the later 1990s, under her direction, graduate students and other volunteers devoted parts of their summers to cataloguing and photographing artifacts. Even Emmett Bennett, the scholar who had excavated many of the Linear B tablets in 1952, was on hand to decipher his own handwriting on labels he had written then.

In good time, we learned that large numbers of finds from Blegen's excavations remained unpublished. Some would reveal significant and previously unknown facts about the nature of Mycenaean society.

Animal bones are a case in point. Blegen had collected them from his digs at a time when many other excavators thought faunal remains could tell us nothing about ancient society that we could not deduce from reading ancient literature or from common sense. He stored them in large cardboard barrels that had held food sent from America to Greece as relief aid after World War II. Hill and Blegen had both participated in those efforts, and Blegen had served as cultural attaché at the U.S. embassy in 1945–1946.⁷

Inventorying the bones began in 1998, a bit shy of 300 kg of them. Study continued over seven summers (2000–2007). We discovered that cattle bones lay on the floor of the palace Archives at the time of the Main Building's destruction, ca. 1180 B.C. (see figure 23). Similar groups of burnt cattle bones had been found buried in pits northwest of the Main Building. The bones had been burnt at a very high temperature in a previously undocumented Mycenaean sacrificial rite, although one well-known from Homer and later Greek practice.

It was impossible for us not to recall Homer's description of the arrival of Telemachos, son of Odysseus, in Pylos, accompanied by Athena disguised as Mentor:

Even as the sun rose, leaving the sea to ascend into the brazen sky,
so that it might shine on immortals and mortals,
they arrived at Pylos, the well-built citadel of Neleus.

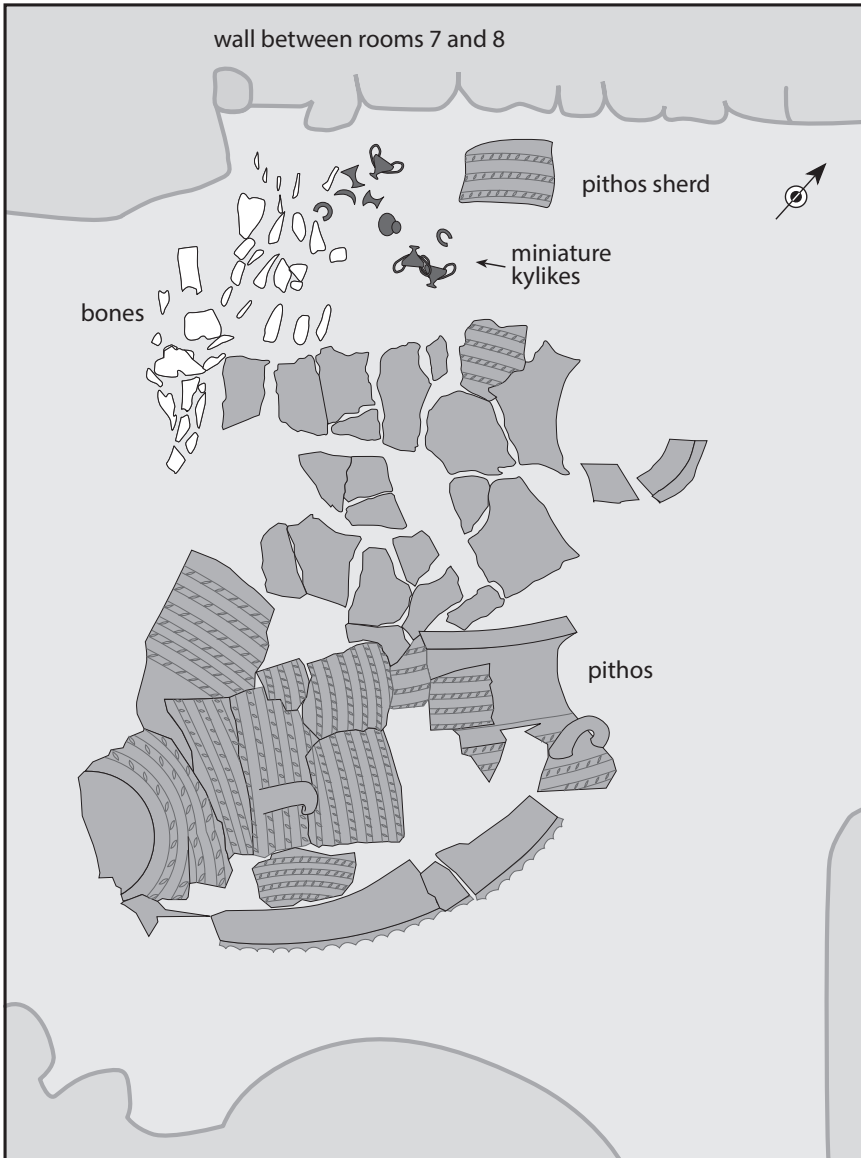


FIGURE 23. Animal bones, miniature kylikes, and a large ceramic container (pithos) on the floor in the Archives of the Palace of Nestor. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

The Pylians were assembled on the seashore to sacrifice
pure black bulls to dark-haired Poseidon, the earthquake god.⁸

Nestor sat with his sons, while meat was put on spits and roasted. One of them, Peisistratos, gave Athena and Telemachos a share of innards from the sacrificed bulls and poured wine for them into a goblet of gold.

The bones we rediscovered were not only burnt, but were calcined and brittle. What's more, only parts of the skeletons of the cattle were present, lower jaws and leg joints. Similar body parts were de-fleshed, wrapped in fat, and immolated on the altars of heavenly divinities in Classical Greece—as dictated by the ancient Greek etiological myth of Prometheus's sacrifice to Zeus at Mecone. The practice, however, was not known from the Bronze Age, and certain historians of religion even denied that the Mycenaeans had sacrificed animals.⁹

That animal bones were disposed in special places after a sacrifice was not so surprising. What was difficult to explain was their presence on a floor in the palace's Archives. What were they doing there? Blegen also was puzzled:

A considerable heap of burned animal bones lay in the western corner, and close beside them near the northwest wall were found 11 diminutive kylikes, probably votive offerings. What these apparent remains of sacrifices and dedicatory vessels had to do in the tax collector's office raises an unsolved problem.¹⁰

The bones, which we now understand represent eleven head of cattle, are indicative of sacrifice on a grand scale. If meat were distributed to those in attendance at the rite, as was customary in Classical Greece, a couple thousand people could have been fed. But how did the bones end up in room 7, the archivist's office, a place where Linear B tablets were inscribed, not stored?

Stocker and I suggested that bureaucratic practice mandated verification that a sacrifice had been completed. Had the palace not been destroyed, we assume these bones would have been collected and buried in a pit like the others. On the day the palace was destroyed, there was a scribe in room 7, recording a sacrifice to Poseidon.¹¹ The diminutive drinking cups surely were used in this rite, as Blegen suggested, and two bronze knives lying nearby could have been employed to slaughter the cattle.

A second surprise led to another major expansion in our program of research. Many walls and floors of the palace were covered with painted plaster (murals, not true frescoes). Mabel Lang, a professor of Greek at Bryn Mawr College, had studied the paintings. Assisted by Piet de Jong, a renowned British draftsman, Lang composed a lavishly illustrated volume that was published in Blegen's series of books about Pylos. De Jong, an architect by training, had come to Greece after World War I to help rebuild villages in northern Greece that had been destroyed by the Central Powers. He soon found himself working for Wace at Mycenae and for Arthur Evans at the Palace of Minos at Knossos in Crete, then for many years at Pylos as a valued member of Blegen's team. His reconstruction of the Palace of Nestor's Throne Room is widely reproduced in college textbooks today (figure 9).¹²

One might be forgiven for assuming that these two major authorities, Lang and De Jong, had said all that could be said about the Pylos paintings. But their "team" comprised only the two of them and one conservator. It is thus understandable that, as we started to clean and register all the thousands of pieces of

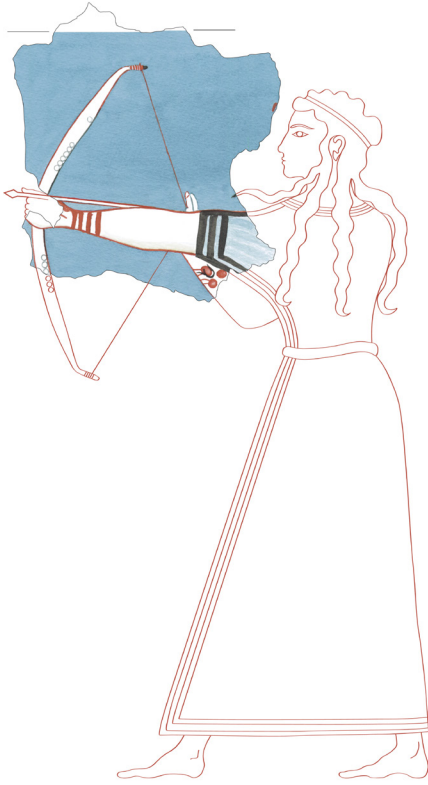


FIGURE 24. Wall-painting of a female archer from the Palace of Nestor. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

decorated plaster from Blegen's excavations, we soon discovered that many had not been published. Among the fragments, we even found compositions previously unknown to Mycenaean art.

One such scene depicted a female archer (see figure 24). Its two fragments were found in 1939, in Blegen's first season of excavation. They had then been packed away and taken to Athens in anticipation of the outbreak of war with Italy and Germany. Afterwards, the pieces of plaster were returned to Pylos, but forgotten. Blegen had commented on the larger of the two in his 1939 notebook without realizing what he had in front of him:

Courses of good room with fine walls. Just east of this room was found the best fragment of plaster with braceleted hand. Other fragments of painted plaster were numerous. This must be dug very carefully.

That braceleted hand holds a bow and, because of its white skin, should belong to a woman archer. She is clothed in a style of dress well-known in Minoan and Mycenaean art.¹³ While there is no other depiction of a female figure with a bow in Mycenaean or Minoan wall-painting, representations of archers do appear on



FIGURE 2.5. Wall-painting of three ships at sea from the Southwestern Building at the Palace of Nestor. Rosemary Robertson. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.

engraved seals and in other media—including women who may be goddesses. Those most similar to our composition are, however, several centuries older than our wall-paintings, from the time of the Minoan New Palaces. Was our archer perhaps inspired by a sealstone recycled from an Early Mycenaean tomb?

Another major find followed the archer: a frieze, some six feet in length and two feet high, with three ships sailing through a purple sea teeming with fish (see figure 25). Its closest parallels are also in art from earlier phases of the Late Bronze Age, particularly the miniature Ship Fresco found at Akrotiri on Thera.

The discovery of this wall-painting was almost accidental. One day in the summer of 1998 I noticed a long, very heavy slab of plaster high on an upper shelf in a storeroom. The ancient plaster was still encased in the modern plaster of Paris used to stabilize it when excavated. What was it? With some difficulty we lowered the slab onto a table. It wasn't labelled and the surface was badly burnt. Over the next several years, however, our conservators succeeded in joining other fragments to the slab, and a polychrome composition emerged. Scientific analysis of paint allowed us to determine the original hues of pigments and to produce a watercolor reconstruction.¹⁴

While colleagues studied the painting, Stocker and I poured over Blegen's field notebooks. Our detective work soon proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the frieze had fallen from high in the monumental entrance hall (64, in figure 8) of the Southwestern Building. Like the Main Building, the Southwestern Building has an inner hall with a central hearth surrounded by four columns (65). Unlike the Main Building, where wall-paintings depict processions of men and women, emblematic lions and griffins, pairs of men dining at tables, and a singing bard with a lyre, those of the Southwestern Building feature scenes of war and overt expressions of power.

Lang and De Jong were able to restore on paper most of one painted wall of hall 64. At the bottom was a dado of faux stone, above it a row of seated dogs. Still higher on the wall, Mycenaean warriors clad in skirts and greaves, their heads protected by boar's tusk helmets, engage barbarians clothed in animal skins in combat (Lang called them "Tarzans"). Our ship frieze now crowns that composition. Viewed as whole, the wall is an emblematic representation of the might of Mycenaean Pylos on land and sea. Such statements seem appropriate to the headquarters of the *lawagetas*, perhaps the war-chief of the Mycenaean state.¹⁵

PRESERVING THE PALACE

Not only did paper records and artifacts need our attention. The Palace of Nestor itself was calling. In the 1950s, Blegen diligently reburied its remains with earth following each excavation season, a time-consuming process that archaeologists call "backfilling." The Greek Ministry of Education was, however, quick to recognize the touristic value of the archaeological site. After first considering a proposal to

rebuild the Main Building, as Evans had done for parts of the Palace of Minos at Knossos, a light metal protective shelter was erected in 1959. Backfilling was no longer necessary, and tourists could visit the Palace of Nestor year-round.

In 2010, however, concerns were raised about the stability of the shelter, which was desperately in need of repair. A consulting engineer predicted imminent collapse, but that cloud had a silver lining. We had an opportunity to collaborate with the Ministry of Culture, first in designing a new, more suitable shelter and then in excavating trenches to hold its support-posts. In this way we were able to open a new window on the pre-palatial history of Pylos.

The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project had already determined that the Early Mycenaean settlement near the acropolis of the Palace of Nestor had expanded around a Middle Helladic core.¹⁶ This village likely drew people into it from marginal agricultural areas to the east of Aigaleon, the mountain range that would, in the thirteenth century B.C., mark the boundary between the two provinces of the kingdom of Nestor.

Much of the Middle Helladic settlement is deeply buried under later alluvium or washed away by erosion, but Blegen's team did locate traces of it. For one week in 1959, Marion Rawson excavated northwest of the acropolis in a field belonging to the George Petropoulos family. There she found remains of three superimposed buildings, the lowest dating to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, the highest near its end. Reexamination of artifacts from her excavations and other soundings made here and there in the vicinity of the palace led Stocker and me to conclude that in the Middle Helladic period the area had been continuously occupied.¹⁷

Such a history of unbroken Middle Helladic habitation is unusual in Messenia. We think it possible that early in the period those who lived at Pylos had already begun to depart smaller settlements in the area in favor of residing in the community at Pylos. One such small settlement, a half mile toward the sea from the Palace of Nestor, was, in fact, wholly abandoned after the first stage of the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁸

Not only had the Pylos settlement increased greatly in size by the Early Mycenaean period, the acropolis was then fortified for the first time.

We now know more about earlier buildings under the palace than did Blegen, thanks to architectural studies by the University of Minnesota and to excavations in preparation for the new shelter. An important first step was made in the 1990s when a Minnesota team came to Pylos to produce a measured stone-by-stone plan of all the walls that Blegen had uncovered. Michael Nelson, an architect and archaeologist working with that team, summarized his observations in a landmark Ph.D. thesis.¹⁹

In that work, Nelson demonstrated how several building systems, all Cretan in origin (ashlar, pseudo-ashlar, orthostat, and ashlar-shell), were introduced at Pylos in the same chronological order as on Crete. Nelson postulated that at least three mansions with ashlar façades stood on the Early Mycenaean acropolis.

Two decades later, we uncovered stratigraphical evidence supporting Nelson's sequence of wall types, while digging the trenches for the support-posts for the new shelter. We learned that ashlar stonework was more widespread on the acropolis than we had imagined. We also found Early Mycenaean painted plaster, proving that the local elite who lived in the mansions on the acropolis appreciated rooms finely decorated in Minoan style.²⁰

These same excavations produced evidence that the Early Mycenaean elite were organizing large-scale feasts, just as later in the thirteenth century B.C.²¹ We can only speculate about the occasions, but it is certainly possible that sacrifices were held when a high-ranking individual who lived in one of the mansions on the acropolis died. A stepped gateway led through the Early Mycenaean fortification wall, down the slopes of the acropolis toward the beehive tomb that Blegen called Tholos IV and two new tholos tombs that we found in 2018. Funerals clearly were an arena for display, and the elite of Pylos were concerned to establish a link between the living and the dead.

WHEN DOES IT EVER END?

Archival, artifact conservation, and architectural preservation projects are continuing at Pylos, and none is ever likely to be finished. Permanent commitment to an archaeological site is required, and that is worrisome for an archaeologist approaching retirement. The problems are both financial and conceptual. Current policies of many foundations and governmental institutions can be myopic, focusing on sites alone, to the detriment of artifacts and documents. Site conservation was, for example, the central theme of the Euromed Heritage II project, celebrated in Hodder and Doughty's *Mediterranean Prehistoric Heritage: Training, Education, and Management* (2007). American professional organizations jumped on the same bandwagon, probably because care for sites is relatively easy to sell to private donors. The deterioration of a major monument like the Palace of Nestor is obvious to visitors. Archives and the overwhelming majority of finds from excavations, on the other hand, escape public gaze.

Archaeological sites are also the principal concern of Greek antiquities legislation.²² Article 36, Section 8, of the appropriate Greek law states that an excavation should use nondestructive methods so far as possible; that it should care for the preservation of finds, preferably in situ, and their consolidation and conservation; that appropriate methods for the restoration of monuments should be followed; and that the director of the project should also care for the landscape design of the excavated site. The emphasis is on monuments. The only reference to artifacts is a clause stating that "moveable finds shall be transferred without undue delay preferably to the nearest public museum or to an appropriate place of storage."

Professional conservators hired by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports continue to work at the Palace of Nestor today, providing first aid to the walls of the Main Building, now having been exposed to the air for six decades. Conservation of Blegen's records continues in Cincinnati in cooperation with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. That institution has become a leader in the long-term care of data, both electronic and paper. The archives of excavations that it has sponsored at Ancient Corinth (since 1889) and in the Athenian Agora (since 1930) are totally digitized.²³ The fact that both Corinth and Athens were important city-states in antiquity makes knowledge about them a desideratum for all interested in ancient Greece.

Earlier in this chapter, I spoke of the shifting priorities in the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati, which abandoned Pylos after Blegen's death. Other factors also contributed to the neglect, among them attitudes toward publication shared by most Classical archaeologists in the twentieth century. In 1976, on the island of Kea, on the porch of the house where we lived while working at Ayia Irini, Jack Caskey told me over an ouzo that it was the duty of an excavation director to present a definitive "final publication" to the world. Caskey understood such a publication to be a place where readers would find facts, with little interpretation, and where the director's vision would be the authoritative voice. I suspect that Caskey had received the same advice from Blegen—whose style was similarly laconic. In light of such a philosophy, there would never be much need to return to excavation records, finds, or architectural remains. Reports written, certified by director, job done.

As a graduate student, one alternative model caught my attention. Colin Renfrew had transcribed a daybook from the 1890s British dig at Phylakopi on Melos.²⁴ He had presented a carbon copy to our Cincinnati library in 1963, and I was thrilled when I found it. Primary records could tell us things that published reports could not.

Excavation records, in fact, permit archaeologists to question and revise their predecessors' interpretations. We also can use them for studies our mentors did not imagine: social history, network analysis, political theory, the reproduction of institutional practice. If we want to understand contemporary praxis in archaeology, we need to denaturalize the present state of affairs by asking what if different decisions had been made at critical developmental junctures in our field. Archives open the doors.

But discovering old records and helping others to find them is only part of the story. Ensuring resource sustainability is the other side of the coin.

Electronic data from Pylos sit on departmental servers for the time being, where they are accessible to researchers. Most large universities now also offer long-term safety nets: data storage in their libraries, the missions of which, after all, include information curation. In Cincinnati, we have uploaded to our library's server all records from an intensive survey of the territory of the ancient Greek

colony of Dyrrhachium/Epidamnus in Albania—from concept to fieldwork to final publication.²⁵

But what about routine long-term care for a site and the finds from it? There are no easy or inexpensive solutions. Only a thirty-year commitment to Pylos has enabled our own accomplishments in the aftermath of Blegen's excavations. Archival and conservation programs have contributed immeasurably to what we know about the Palace of Nestor, not only in its final phase but in the Early Mycenaean period. It is the picture of the settlement at that time together with the agricultural landscape, which I discussed in the previous chapter, and the mortuary landscape, to which I turn next, that yield the fullest picture of any pre-palatial Mycenaean kingdom in Greece, Mycenae included.

Science and the Mortuary Landscape of Pylos

In chapter 5, I continue to pursue the autobiographical thread that runs through this book, referring to my earliest teaching experiences at the University of Illinois at Chicago as a new professor in the later 1970s. Classical and anthropological archaeology then had different approaches to archaeological science and definitions of what constituted science. Archaeologists faced challenges when they attempted to integrate components of a multidisciplinary project, which is still true today. I discuss the use of archaeological science at Pylos, particularly what we have learned from studying the skeletons of those who lived there at the start of the Late Bronze Age. Blegen was farsighted in retaining all human bones from graves that he excavated. The examination of these remains from Pylos and collaborations with archaeological scientists in Europe and North America have given us insights into the role the mortuary sphere played in competitive engagements among elites in Early Mycenaean times.

In 1977 I defended my doctoral dissertation and was hired to teach at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I wasn't entirely sure what was expected. In graduate school, I had learned nothing about teaching. The objective there was to produce researchers. The only advice I got about the undergraduate classroom was from a Classical art historian: "One per minute, fifty per class," he said when I asked for guidance—he was referring to numbers of slides. I had, however, been advised to tell any search committee that I could do whatever they wanted me to do.

I was first interviewed at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in Manhattan, where the annual convention of the Archaeological Institute of America was held in 1976, in the week after Christmas. I had not yet defended my doctoral dissertation. It was New Year's Eve and Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians were setting up for their annual performance. Two months later I was offered a job, without ever having gone to Chicago. On arriving at the University of Illinois in August,

I was shocked to find I would be teaching Latin, topography and monuments of ancient Athens, and ancient Greek and Latin literature in translation, in addition to archaeological science. They took me at my word! My new department had recently received a federal grant in hopes of creating an interdisciplinary archaeology program to bridge natural and physical sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences. Three trial courses were scheduled, and, as a newly minted Ph.D., I found myself co-teaching classes in ancient structural engineering, ancient ceramic technology, and ancient metallurgy, while participating in a seminar co-sponsored with the Department of Anthropology. A mechanical engineer who held patents for hip replacements became my mentor.

I had previously collaborated with several archaeological scientists to determine sources of pottery and metals found at Ayia Irini on Kea. I had studied the Greek temple architecture of southern Italy and Sicily. I had been exposed to anthropology in graduate school through my own devices. But why anyone thought a twenty-seven-year-old was qualified to instruct students in such a wide range of interdisciplinary subjects remains a mystery to me to this day. I suspect that it was my Latin that got me hired. Nevertheless, it was in Chicago that I came to understand the fundamental difference between an anthropological approach to science and that of Classical archaeology.

SCIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Science in archaeology has gone through various transformations in the decades since World War II, some determined by trends in the core disciplines of the archaeologists themselves. As a graduate student, bits of contraband leaked into our Department of Classics from our Department of Anthropology, including a chapter titled “Archaeology with a Capital ‘S’” by Kent Flannery. When recently I pulled the relevant book from our library shelf in Cincinnati, I found living proof of a continuing divide between Classical archaeology and anthropology. The book had been purchased for our Classics library in 2010 but had never been checked out. “Archaeology with a Capital ‘S’” is, however, still widely assigned to students in departments of anthropology.

I loved this paper in 1973 when I first read it. The capital S in the title refers to science, but not natural or physical sciences. What concerned Flannery was archaeology itself as a science of process, operating within a Hempelian hypothetico-deductive framework. That approach to research begins with a theory about how things work and derives testable hypotheses from it. Hypotheses are then evaluated by gathering and analyzing data, and a theory is either supported or rejected by the results. Flannery humorously described two contrasting types of analysis in archaeology. The first was a “law and order” approach, which he criticized for confusing statistical correlations with causation. The second was a

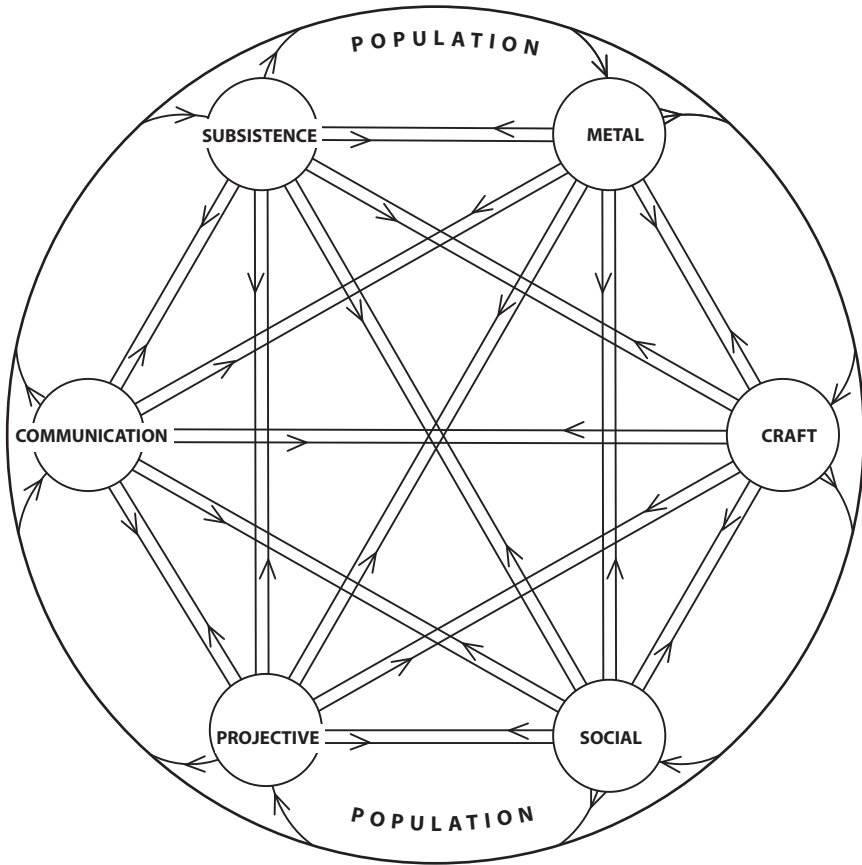


FIGURE 26. Colin Renfrew's systems diagram for the emergence of complex societies in the Aegean area. Redrawn by Rosemary Robertson, from Colin Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilisation*, fig. 21.1. With permission from Casemate Publishers.

“Serutan” approach (named after a popular American laxative, its slogan “Serutan is Nature’s spelled backwards”), essentially the general systems theory of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, an Austrian biologist (1901–1972), popularized in Aegean prehistory by Colin Renfrew in *The Emergence of Civilisation* (see figure 26).¹

Von Bertalanffy’s proposition was that virtually all natural phenomena, including human societies, can be described as systems. Any system consists of interdependent components, or subsystems. Change in one component may prompt changes in another, and the consequences may be quantifiable, even predictable. Renfrew had argued that such a “multiplier effect” was responsible for a growth in complexity in past Aegean societies.² Growth in one subsystem encouraged expansion

in others, and that ultimately explained the origins of civilization in the Greek Bronze Age.

Classical archaeologists showed little or no interest in hypothesis testing, systems theory, or more generally in archaeological theory as it was developing in American anthropology and in European departments of archaeology. Anthropology and Classics were, however, both concerned then with another definition of science: analytical studies of archaeological materials, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral.

Bill McDonald, Blegen's colleague at Pylos, was, in fact, a pioneer in expanding the contributions of the natural and physical sciences in archaeological research, in the Mediterranean's version of the New Archaeology, one that was neither processual nor anthropological. Bill was inspired by large multidisciplinary expeditions mounted in the Near East by Robert McCormick Adams and Robert Braidwood, and in Mesoamerica by Richard "Scotty" McNeish and William Sanders. These were anthropologists of a generation older than Lewis Binford and Kent Flannery.

McDonald, in his introduction to *The University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition*, describes the philosophy of his project.

There is no argument—at least among scholars like Adams and Braidwood—about the importance of obtaining all relevant information about the natural environment as well as the cultural features of the target region. The real nub is how to collect the information, digest it, and present it in integrated form.³

For McDonald the answer was to coordinate a large team of "specialists" in the field in the hope that resulting products could be integrated in publication and made interdisciplinary, not merely multidisciplinary. His colleagues were often drafted from university departments of natural and physical sciences and many learned about archaeology and prehistory on the fly.

Our own approach to science at Pylos is one that attempts to integrate research by natural and physical scientists within a research program focused on archaeological and anthropological problems—and thus to produce results that are truly interdisciplinary. We draw on the expertise of professionals in the field of archaeological science for nearly every aspect of our work. How were the soils that we excavate formed? Where were the objects we excavate made? What were they made from? When were they buried? For help in answering these and many other questions, we turn to chemists, geologists, physicists, and botanists, as well as osteologists, malacologists, and physical anthropologists.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the role of archaeological science at Pylos in just one aspect of our research: the analysis of human skeletons. These include remains from graves excavated by Blegen's team and more recently by our own group since 2015.

A LITTLE HISTORY OF EARLY MYCENAEAN BURIAL
AT PYLOS

In the course of reorganizing storerooms in our local museum, Sharon Stocker located human bones that Blegen had recovered from Mycenaean graves. J. Lawrence (Larry) Angel of the Smithsonian Institution had examined them, but only cursorily, and some not at all. We had his notes in our archives, but he had never published a report.

Lynne Schepartz, a physical anthropologist and archaeologist based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, has now analyzed all of these skeletal remains—179 individuals in total, dating from the end of the Middle Bronze Age to the end of the Late Helladic period (see figure 27).⁴ Blegen had found them in two tholos tombs, seven chamber tombs, and one large circular enclosure that he called the Grave Circle. The collection is one of the largest preserved assemblages of human remains from Mycenaean Greece.

There is nothing particularly unusual about Mycenaean burial customs at Pylos. Tholos tombs and chamber tombs are found throughout southern Greece.⁵ Tholos tombs were round, vaulted monuments with coursed stone walls, often called “beehive tombs.” They were first built in Messenia toward the end of the Middle Helladic period, perhaps in imitation of tumuli, the earthen burial mounds that preceded them chronologically. Multiple individuals were buried in a tholos tomb, the bodies of the dead set on its floor (or occasionally put in large jars). Accompanied by adornments and surrounded by gifts of precious materials, the bodies were left to decay. The bones were eventually gathered together and put in pits or simply shoved toward the walls of the tomb. Components of skeletons are thus generally comingled, and most of the time it is difficult or impossible to determine precisely when any particular body was interred.

The same practices hold true for chamber tombs, rectangular or circular graves that were dug like small caves into the soft marl bedrock common in the Peloponnese. In the Grave Circle at Pylos, the earliest dead were buried in large jars, set into pits, while the latest skeleton was still articulated. Its excavator believed the Grave Circle was a poorly preserved tholos tomb. Blegen disagreed, and we agree with him.

Tholos tombs are typically found near important Early Mycenaean centers, and the discovery of several of these tombs had encouraged Blegen and Kourouniotis to look on the Englianos Ridge for the Palace of Nestor.⁶ Already in 1939, Blegen located two tholos tombs there in addition to the Grave Circle: Tholos IV, north-east of the acropolis and oriented to the gateway through the Early Mycenaean fortification wall, and Tholos III, a kilometer toward the sea.

In addition to analyzing human skeletal remains, we have also defined with greater precision how long each tomb served as a place of interment by reexamining pottery deposited with the burials. It is clear that in Early Mycenaean Pylos, the mortuary “arena” was a more important locus for competition among the elite



FIGURE 27. Lynne Schepartz studying human remains from the Palace of Nestor. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved.



FIGURE 28. Tholos Tomb IV near the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.



FIGURE 29. Gold-handled sword from the grave of the Griffin Warrior. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

through display of wealth than in the later palatial period. By then, tholos tombs were no longer being built and were less regularly used for burial.

Our own recent research is fleshing out the picture we had from Blegen's bones. We have the grave of the Griffin Warrior, found in 2015, and two new tholos tombs, unearthed in 2018. Discovery of the former grave was the result of happenstance, inasmuch as it was never our intent to dig where we discovered it. Our intended target in 2015, then also in 2016 and 2017, was instead a nearby field where we hoped to find houses in the town that had surrounded the Palace of Nestor in its heyday in the thirteenth century B.C. Several years before, the Greek Ministry of Culture had, on our behalf, begun legal procedures to expropriate this field, which was still in private hands. Blegen himself in the 1950s had requested permission to explore it, but its owner would not give him access. He did, however, manage to excavate Tholos IV, which was cut into the edge of the field (see figure 28). Today that tholos tomb is a popular attraction for visitors to the site.

In the event, we were not successful in completing the expropriation by 2015 and, as a Plan B, needed to excavate in an olive grove nearer the acropolis. Blegen had already looked there and found next to nothing, so we were not optimistic. On the first day of excavation, however, we found a small shaft with stone walls, which we subsequently have called the grave of the Griffin Warrior. A single male in his thirties had been buried in it, accompanied by extraordinary riches—gold, silver, bronze, ivory, precious gems—the likes of which had never before been discovered at Pylos (see figure 29).⁷

Three years after the discovery of this amazing grave, excavation in the adjacent field, expropriated at last, could finally begin in 2018. We first cleared weeds from it so that we could see the surface of the earth and could map its contours. In so

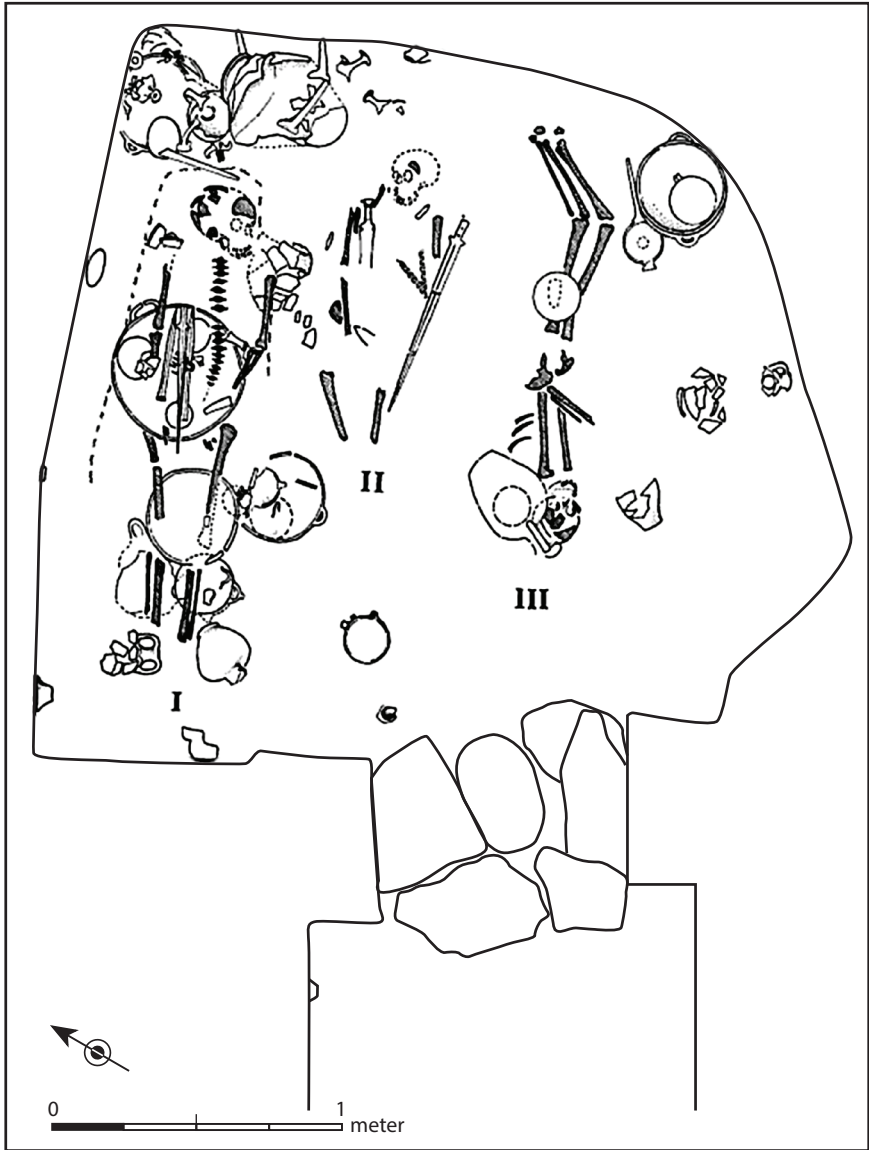


FIGURE 30. A warrior grave from the Sellopoulo cemetery in the Kairetos valley near the Palace of Minos at Knossos. Redrawn by Rosemary Robertson, after Popham, Catling, and Catling, *Sellopoulo*, fig. 3. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

doing, we immediately noticed a concentration of stones in the northeastern part of the field and, nearer to Tholos IV, several large stone blocks with a hollow under them. With these observations in mind, we opened trenches, and it was soon clear to us that lightning had struck a second time: just as with the Griffin War-

rior, again on the first day of excavation we made important discoveries: the two new tholos tombs (see figure 30). The entrance passages (*dromoi*) leading to these tholos tombs, VI and VII, were parallel to each other and to that of Tholos IV.

It now seems that the most important cemetery of Early Mycenaean Pylos was centered on the newly expropriated field, along a road that led northeast from the acropolis of the Palace of Nestor toward the Aigaleon range.

In the case of Tholos VI, the space within the chamber of the tomb, the *thalamos*, is enormous, about 12 meters in diameter, and its walls are preserved to a height of about 4.5 meters above the floor. According to our rough estimates, we removed about a thousand cubic meters of earth and rocks from the interior of Tholos VI in order to reach its floor. Tholos VII is considerably smaller, about 8.5 meters in diameter, and its walls are preserved to a height of only about 2 meters. The walls of both, like Tholos IV, are built of unworked stones, and the *dromoi* are earthen. A peculiar feature of Tholos VI, however, remains unexplained. In two parts of the *thalamos*, ashlar blocks rested on its floor, so close to the walls that they cannot have fallen from above. We imagine that the blocks were brought here from the acropolis of the Palace of Nestor, salvaged from destroyed buildings of Early Mycenaean date.

The chronology of the three tholos tombs is relatively clear. Blegen's Tholos Tomb IV was built first. Tholos IV may, in fact, be one of the earliest tholos tombs built anywhere in mainland Greece. The evidence for its date consists of three ceramic vessels of the later Middle Bronze Age—one a small pithos that probably had served as a burial urn, as in the Grave Circle. This jar was made in central Crete, in the Knossos area, and its "kin" there were used as burial containers. Fragments of the pithos were dragged into the *dromos* of Tholos IV when new burials were added to the tomb. Dating the final use of Tholos IV is more problematic, but it was certainly in use in the fifteenth century B.C.

Did Tholos IV serve as a magnet for the other graves that we have discovered since 2015? Our two new tholos tombs and the grave of the Griffin Warrior were built later than Tholos IV, in the fifteenth century B.C., in the phase just prior to the destruction of the Minoan New Palaces (Late Helladic IIA). Anyone passing through the gateway in the fortification wall that surrounded the acropolis would have confronted them straight ahead.

The Grave Circle, on the other hand, lay along a road leading down the Englianos ridge toward the sea in what must also have been a prestigious location. Like Tholos IV, the Grave Circle was first used in the later Middle Helladic period. Tholos III is much farther from the acropolis, along the modern road to the sea, and, like the others, was used in the fifteenth century B.C.

Its excavator, Lord William Taylour, imagined, naturally enough, that Tholos IV had been the royal mausoleum for the family that ruled Pylos and was the dominant force in western Messenia. The picture now becomes more complicated. We have speculated that the Griffin Warrior, in light of so many expressions of both military and religious symbolism in the iconography of objects buried with him,

was an early Mycenaean king, a *wanax*.⁸ Was it that special rank that explains his isolated burial? All three tholos tombs adjacent to the acropolis and the Grave Circle were used at more or less the same time for lavish displays of wealth in burial. Did these monuments hold the mortal remains of competing lineages or factions, lesser princes of Pylos, their families, and supporters? These Early Mycenaean elite, in any case, were filling their tombs with Cretan imports of the highest quality, in addition to imports from farther afield, including objects made of amber, amethyst, carnelian, glass, and lapis lazuli.

Our scientific examination of human remains recovered by Blegen has shown just how special the elite were, but the studies have been time-consuming. Many skulls from Blegen's day had remained encased in a matrix of soil since being excavated. Once we cleaned the bones, standard techniques were employed to determine the sex of the individuals and their age at death. The proportional representation of different age groups is the same both for chamber tombs and tholoi, the largest cohort being young adults, nineteen to thirty years of age. Nor do proportions of males and females differ by tomb type. The equal distribution of males and females supports the hypothesis that Blegen's Early Mycenaean graves were family tombs—but does not rule out their being a place for interment of members of a faction, which may have had, in any case, a basis in kinship.⁹

We have also determined what people buried in the tholos and chamber tombs ate. The fact that we have had a large number of individuals to work with allows us to say meaningful things about the composition of their diet and to determine if they had differential access to protein.¹⁰ Samples from teeth or bones were collected from sixty-seven individuals, and then stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen preserved in them were examined. Carbon isotopes can be used to distinguish between three major dietary categories: marine resources, most leafy plants, and grasses. Nitrogen isotopes can be used to differentiate between terrestrial and marine protein.

The results of analyses point to minimal consumption of marine resources by all groups, independent of tomb type. This is unsurprising since fish has never been a major component in the Greek diet, despite proximity to the sea. But analyses did document considerable variability in meat consumption correlated with tomb type. Higher amounts of animal protein were consumed by individuals buried in the tholos tombs, irrespective of gender, and their dental health was superior to others.

Women, on the other hand, had poorer dental health than men. This is true of women from both tholos and chamber tombs, while men from tholos tombs had the least tooth decay and less tooth loss before death. Why did men have more access to protein than women? Perhaps because they attended meat-based feasts more often. We know from later Linear B texts and wall-paintings in the Throne Room of the Palace of Nestor that feasts were a tactic employed by the *wanax* to promote solidarity among the elite in the thirteenth century B.C.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned evidence for feasting already in Early Mycenaean Pylos. Special access could also explain why linear enamel hypoplasia (a failure of the tooth enamel to develop correctly during growth, leaving bands of reduced enamel on a tooth surface) is not correlated with tooth decay and loss. Hypoplasia is indicative of relatively acute childhood stress that would be experienced by an entire population. In contrast, tooth decay and antemortem loss reflect experiences as an adult.

We have also suggested a mechanism that would have contributed to superior health among those buried in tholos tombs: not only availability of more food, but also a more diverse range of food produced on agricultural benefices, if these were operating in the Early Mycenaean period for the advantage of an emergent elite, as I suggested in chapter 3.

We might already have guessed that Early Mycenaean society at Pylos was very hierarchical from our archaeological investigations alone. In the 1990s, our intensive surface survey collected artifacts from 468 grid squares (20 m × 20 m) around the acropolis of Pylos.¹¹ We collected and dated 35,700 pieces of pottery—permitting us to estimate the size of the settlement at various times in the past. By 1700 B.C. the settlement covered more than five hectares. By the fifteenth century, it had reached nearly seven hectares. The thousand individuals living in a settlement of that size should have yielded thousands of corpses in the course of the Early Mycenaean period—yet relatively small numbers were buried in tholos or chamber tombs.

It thus seems obvious that anyone buried in a tholos or chamber tomb was privileged. Few members of society would have enjoyed a burial of either sort. The evidence on the whole points to the existence of three levels in the Early Mycenaean social hierarchy: the highest-ranked elite buried in tholoi or the Grave Circle, lower elite interred in chamber tombs, and non-elites leaving no traces at all.

In our epilogue, Stocker and I incorporate what we have learned about the mortuary landscape of Pylos into a systems analysis that we think yields a convincing reconstruction of social, political, and economic change in Early Mycenaean Pylos.

WHERE THE FUTURE LIES

Programs in archaeological science have become more common and their projects have become more ambitious. There are exciting new methods applicable to mortuary analysis. Several remain in their infancy as interpretative tools for archaeologists, however, and it is important to evaluate their claims critically. Results may at times be presented in such a way as to make them ripe for misinterpretation by contemporary political causes that would misuse and abuse them.

Two recent studies, both concerned with human skeletal remains, have the potential to impact greatly how we view the Early Mycenaean period. Both address



FIGURE 31. Tholos Tombs IV, VI, and VII near the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

the nature of relations between the Greek mainland and Crete at the time of the Griffin Warrior.

The proposition that a mainland invasion was responsible for cultural changes on Crete in the fifteenth century B.C. is an old one and at times has been employed to explain how such a great wealth of Minoan luxury goods reached the Peloponnese.¹² Many prehistorians also believe that Greek Linear B replaced the indigenous Minoan script, Linear A, at Knossos, after that center was captured by mainlanders. An older generation of archaeologists postulated, in fact, that so-called Warrior Graves in the Knossos area, dated to the Cretan Monopalatial period (LM II–III A₁), hold the remains of mainlanders. Swords, daggers, and other weapons accompanied those burials (see figure 31).¹³

This culture-historical hypothesis that an invasion of Crete by mainlanders was responsible for bringing the Minoan New Palace Period to an end has, however, been doubted by some.¹⁴ Scientific techniques employed to test the hypothesis have involved measuring the ratio of two isotopes of strontium that reflect the bedrock geology of the area in which an individual spends the early years of his or her life. The isotopes are transferred into local food chains and from there lodge in

human skeletons through consumed food and water. A signature remains frozen in dental enamel.

One recent study has tried to determine if mainlanders could be recognized in graves from the Knossos area. Human remains were examined from graves older and younger than the destruction of the Minoan New Palaces, several from Warrior Graves dated “to the period immediately following the LM IB destructions.” Characterizations of these samples were compared to the geology of the Knossos area and to that of the northeast Peloponnese. It was concluded that there were no significant differences between isotopic signatures for the individuals buried in the Warrior Graves and those buried at Knossos prior to the LM IB destructions. Thus that those interred in the Warrior Graves were not mainland Greeks.

But what if the people from Warrior Graves were descendants of mainlanders rather than the first wave of invaders themselves? The Warrior Graves at Knossos contained multiple burials, some as late as the middle of the fourteenth century. A precise dating was possible because an imported Egyptian scarab of the pharaoh Amenophis III, manufactured late in his reign, was associated with the final burial in one tomb. It has been suggested that even if those in the Warrior Graves were not first-generation immigrants to Crete, skeletal morphological differences should still exist between them and the Minoan population as a whole, if they were mainlanders—a proposition that remains to be evaluated systematically.

We also may not, I think, assume that invaders from the mainland came from Mycenae. As we have seen, Crete was in contact with Pylos, and that is true also for other Early Mycenaean centers on the mainland that may have had bedrock geology similar to that of Crete, and thus would yield similar isotopic signatures. But even if those interred in the Warrior Graves at Knossos were not mainlanders, that fact alone does not rule out the possibility that Mycenaeans contributed to bringing the Cretan New Palaces to an end. Could they not have ruled the island without extensively colonizing it? A conquest of Crete might have been gradual and have followed a long period of raiding by mainlanders. We need not imagine that a single sudden event was responsible for the havoc represented in the archaeological record.¹⁵ We might even imagine collaborative attacks by mainlanders and Cretans launched against other Cretans.

Another important new research area, potentially relevant to the same hypothesis, but with results likewise inconclusive as yet, pertains to the genetics of the Minoans and the Mycenaean. Can mainlanders be distinguished from Cretans on the basis of their DNA? The Minoans have long been a problem for the Greek state. The Minoan language was not Greek nor did it belong to the Indo-European family of languages.¹⁶ How then to incorporate a non-Greek civilization into a Greek national project that has emphasized homogeneity and continuity?

Genetic studies seem to be offering a solution to this conundrum. In 2017 a study titled “Genetic Origins of the Minoans and Mycenaean” appeared in the prestigious *Nature Letter*. The lead author and his colleagues announced: “Here we

show that Minoans and Mycenaeans were genetically similar, having at least three-quarters of their ancestry from the first Neolithic farmers of western Anatolia and the Aegean, and most of the remainder from ancient populations related to those of the Caucasus and Iran.¹⁷

Mycenaeans were said to have additional genetic makeup related to that of pre-Neolithic populations of western Europe and the Caucasus and that was lacking in Minoans.

The authors concluded that contemporary Greeks are related to Mycenaeans—a conclusion that would have warmed the heart of Christos Tsountas, but also one immediately celebrated by Greece's neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party. Continuity and racial purity were fundamental to their platform.¹⁸ The ultraconservative Right must also be relieved to find that there is no measurable Levantine or African influence in either the Minoans or the Mycenaeans. Greek nationalists can thus have their cake and eat it too. Minoans and Mycenaeans are basically the same stock, which is good, and Greeks today are more like Mycenaeans, which is even better.

These conclusions sound convincing until one learns that ancient DNA from only nineteen individuals was examined for the study. The sample included just ten “Minoans,” chosen from phases of the Cretan Bronze Age earlier than the supposed arrival of mainlanders on Crete, and only four “Mycenaeans,” from contexts covering the entirety of the Late Bronze Age on the Greek mainland.

The authors correctly note that “relative ancestral contributions do not determine the relative roles in the rise of civilization of the different ancestral populations.”¹⁹ No archaeologist today would imagine otherwise. But is it even possible to speak of Minoans or Mycenaeans as ethnic groups, since the labels refer to cultures, not to genetically homogeneous populations?

Genetic research and strontium isotope analyses have important roles to play in Aegean prehistory, but as yet, the data at our disposal are insufficient to bear the interpretive weight that they have been asked to carry in culture-historical reconstructions. At Pylos we have preferred to concentrate on social and economic questions at a local scale—leaving big-picture questions aside for now and focusing on the creation of the rich little history that I discussed above. Genetics has the potential to tell us more about the Early Mycenaean elite at Pylos, and we are currently collaborating with American and European geneticists. In two of Blegen's chamber tombs, our colleagues at Harvard have identified fathers and sons. We are hoping in the future to be able to determine relationships, if they exist, between the Griffin Warrior and those buried in other Early Mycenaean tombs.


Minoan Missionaries in Pylos

What we call the Mycenaean culture came into being at a particular time and in special circumstances, deeply impacted in its formative stages by contact with Crete through a process that has been called Minoanization. The people we call Mycenaeans shared artistic styles and political institutions, and held similar religious beliefs, but we cannot assume all of them spoke Greek. In the Early Mycenaean period, it is equally clear that there were those outside the sphere of major centers like Pylos who did not share in Mycenaean culture but may have spoken Greek. Language and culture are two different things. In chapter 6, we focus on Cretan contributions to the creation of Early Mycenaean culture at Pylos. The suggestion of Minoan missionaries in our title is intentionally provocative, but we can recognize the infiltration of Minoan concepts, even in regard to the institution of kingship and belief. Discovery of the Griffin Warrior permits us to argue that in the fifteenth century B.C., this powerful figure, likely an Early Mycenaean wanax, exercised power both on the field of battle and in the religious sphere.

In Christmas week of 2016, a long article in *Smithsonian* magazine about our excavations in Pylos hit the newsstands, well-researched and impressively written by journalist Jo Marchant, a scientist with a Ph.D. in microbiology (see figure 32).¹ We had worked closely with Jo for six months and were excited to see it published.

Little did we expect the online comments that the story would provoke. Here are three:

The political comment at the end could indicate a desire to force-fit these discoveries into a revisionist history that redefines these societies as cosmopolitan. Really, I don't think that respectable scholarly work can be done by people who try to impose modern socio-political visions onto the evidence of the past. Without juxtaposing these implications against the reams of evidence to the contrary, it seems like journalistic sensation pandering to a modern cosmopolitan audience that wants to follow their imaginations instead of the evidence.



THE 3,500-YEAR-OLD TOMB OF AN UNKNOWN
SOLDIER IS SHAKING OUR UNDERSTANDING
OF THE ROOTS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

BY JO MARCHANT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MYRTO PAPADOPOULOS
ILLUSTRATION BY JON KRAUSE

THE GOLDEN WARRIOR

38 SMITHSONIAN.COM | January • February 2017

FIGURE 32. The *Smithsonian* magazine cover for the issue presenting the first major story about the grave of the Griffin Warrior. Copyright 2017 Jo Marchant/illustration for *Smithsonian* by Jon Krause. Reprinted with permission from Smithsonian Enterprises. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any medium is strictly prohibited without permission from *Smithsonian* magazine.

It's so funny how the comments all assume the writer meant trump. But trump is never mentioned. You hear "xenophobe" and immediately think of your president. Amazing!

I'm pleased to see that so many here called them on that blatant Cultural Marxist ending.

What was that "blatant Cultural Marxist" ending that inspired so much controversy?² Jo wrote that we "favor the idea that the two cultures [Mycenaean and Minoan] became entwined at a very early stage," and she continued:

It's a conclusion that fits recent suggestions that regime change on Crete around the time the mainland palaces went up, which traditionally corresponds to the decline of Minoan civilization, may not have resulted from the aggressive invasion that historians have assumed. The later period at Knossos might represent something more like "an EU in the Aegean," says [John] Bennet, [director] of the British School at Athens. Minoans and Mycenaean Greeks would surely have spoken each other's languages, may have intermarried and likely adopted and refashioned one another's customs. And they may not have seen themselves with the rigid identities we moderns have tended to impose on them.

Jo concluded:

The revelation is compelling for anyone with an interest in how great civilizations are born—and what makes them "great." And with rising nationalism and xenophobia in parts of Europe and the United States, Davis and others suggest that the grave contains a more urgent lesson. Greek culture, Davis says, "is not something that has been genetically transmitted from generation to generation since the dawn of time." From the very earliest moments of Western civilization, he says, Mycenaean "were capable of embracing many different traditions."

We doubt that many professional Aegean prehistorians, if any, would disagree with this statement. We presume that by "cultural Marxism," the commentator is referring to the far-right conspiracy theory that claims there is an ongoing academic and intellectual effort to undermine Western culture and its values. We assure readers that we are neither that clever nor that conspiratorial.

THE PHENOMENON OF MINOANIZATION

What is not, however, thoroughly understood as yet is the process (or processes) by which Minoan ideas and technologies spread from Crete to the Greek mainland. By the end of the New Palace period, ca. 1450 B.C., was the Aegean one [happy] EU trading community, as Bennet is quoted as saying?³ Or do we imagine that Minoanization, a term long used by prehistorians working in the islands of the Aegean Sea to describe the adoption of Cretan ways, followed a violent path? Both scenarios may, of course, be perfectly possible, with one following the other sequentially, or both happening concurrently.⁴

Minoanization was characteristic of islands in the Cyclades and the Dodecanese in particular, but also the western coast of Turkey—even the island of Kythera, off the southeastern Peloponnese.⁵ Minoan culture had already arrived on Kythera in the third millennium B.C., and this island, along with neighboring Antikythera, was certainly settled by immigrants from Crete. On Thera, in the period of the Minoan New Palaces, the settlements buried by the volcanic eruption in the sixteenth century B.C. are hardly distinguishable from contemporary towns and villages on Crete.

Homer, our earliest Greek poet, wrote about King Minos of Knossos, as did many other ancient authors.⁶ Archaeologists have been tempted to see in these references a remembrance by Classical Greeks of a prehistoric past—of the civilization that we today call Minoan. Even the fanciful tale of the Minotaur is sometimes imagined to contain a kernel of truth. King Minos's wife, Pasiphae, bore this monstrous creature, part man and part bull; he was locked in a labyrinth constructed by Minos's master craftsman Daedalus. Do Daedalus's miraculous abilities reflect the skills of Minoan craftsmen? Is the labyrinth a vague recollection of the labyrinthine passageways in the palace uncovered by Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos? Could the Minotaur encapsulate a fractured memory of bull sacrifice or athletic bull-leaping?

King Minos appears in Greek literature as a tyrant, whose navy allowed him to rule wide dominions and police his empire—his thalassocracy, or sea empire. Herodotus, writing in the fifth century B.C., attributes overseas territories to Minos. His children and brothers supposedly founded colonies in Italy and Sicily, at Miletos and in Lycia in western and southern Turkey, on the Levantine coast, in Libya, in central Greece, and in the Troad.

Toward the end of the fifth century B.C., Thucydides was quite clear on one point: "Minos was the oldest of those who we know possessed a navy and he dominated most of what is now called the Greek Sea. He ruled the Cycladic islands and was first to colonize most, after he drove out the Carians and established his own sons in them as sovereigns."⁷

Some of the ancient traditions are very specific in their details, as in the case of the island of Kea, nearest of the Cycladic islands to Athens, where one clan (called the Euxantidai, "descendants of Euxantios") in historical times traced its pedigree to Crete and a son of Minos. In the early fifth century B.C., the poet Bacchylides, himself from this island, described how:

Warlike Minos came with a host of Cretans in fifty ships with swift sterns. By the will of Zeus who brings glory, he married the ample-bosomed maiden Dexithea and left her half of his people, men who were devoted to Ares, god of war. Then after distributing this mountainous land to them, King Minos, he of Europa's bloodline, sailed back to Knossos, his beloved city. After nine months the fair-haired maiden Dexithea bore Euxantios to rule over the celebrated island of Kea.⁸



FIGURE 33. The Bay of Ayios Nikolaos on the Cycladic island of Kea (Ayia Irini and peninsula in foreground). Courtesy of Lyvia Morgan.

How well does the archaeological record agree with this literary tradition of a “Minoan thalassocracy”? There is considerable evidence that, in the Minoan New Palace period, Crete had a profound influence on the development of local cultures in other parts of the Aegean. Any evaluation of the historical worth of later Greek traditions must take into account evidence from several archaeological sites in the Cyclades and Dodecanese. The long-term process of Minoanization is, however, seen very clearly at Ayia Irini.

The prehistoric settlement of Ayia Irini sat on a low peninsula inside a deep bay on the island of Kea (see figure 33).⁹ Because its remains are deeply stratified, it is possible to follow the development of contacts between Kea and Crete from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age through the Minoan New Palace period. The process of Minoanization for the most part played out gradually, but accelerated at certain points in the life of the settlement. Ayia Irini, like Akrotiri, was, however, most deeply impacted by Minoan civilization in the early phases of the Late Bronze Age.

It is also at Ayia Irini that we can see best what Cycladic settlements were like before interaction between the islands and Crete became routine. Plans of Middle Bronze Age houses at Ayia Irini were one-storied and simple. There were no Cretan elements in their architectural details. Plastered walls are rare and bore no traces of wall-paintings with figural decoration. Local potters for the most part looked to the Greek mainland for inspiration rather than Crete and produced pots with highly polished, lustrous surfaces, sometimes red with patterns in white. The vessels were largely handmade.

This situation began to change rapidly near the end of the Minoan Old Palace period. A grand circuit of fortifications with rectangular towers was constructed of large limestone blocks. Minoan pottery became more abundant then, and potters working locally closely imitated Cretan shapes. The Minoan Linear A script was used. And the centuries that followed witnessed a veritable avalanche of

additional Cretan influences. Several grand mansions sprang up. It is clear that these buildings, like the houses at Akrotiri, were patterned on contemporary mansions in Crete. Local traditions were not entirely extinguished, but Minoan influence was evident in almost every element of daily life. Cretan weaving technology was introduced. Scoops, trays, stands, and many other forms of specialized Minoan ceramic vessels were copied.

Near the main gateway to the town, inside the fortifications, a temple served as a place of worship. More than fifty large terracotta statues of women in Minoan dress served as cult paraphernalia. A Minoan-style shrine was also established on a hill called Troullos, which overlooks Ayia Irini.

The most impressive mansion was House A, which was outlined by alleys and may have occupied an entire block of the town.¹⁰ Beneath its pavements were drains to conduct rainwater away from the house. A stairway led to living quarters on the second floor. State rooms included several Minoan features: a columnar hall, a paved bath, and an elegant parlor. Also of Minoan inspiration was a light well (a small room open to the sky), which allowed air and light to reach deep into the house. As at Akrotiri, the walls of some rooms were adorned with figural frescoes.

We cannot yet be entirely sure which particular polities on Crete were responsible for initiating, promoting, and maintaining contacts abroad. The island of Crete was not a monolithic or politically unified entity. Already, however, there are hints of relationships between specific Minoan centers and certain settlements outside Crete: for example, the same seals were used at Akrotiri and at Ayia Triada and Sklavokampos in central Crete.

MINOANIZATION AT PYLOS

Minoanization is a term not much used in reference to the Greek mainland, in large part, we think, because no settlement comparable to Ayia Irini on Kea has been excavated there.

Nor do ancient texts much mention the mainland in regard to Minos or his thalassocracy. Pylos is an exception, since there is literary reference to Cretans headed there, specifically in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo.¹¹ Pylos figures in an origin myth for the cult of the god at Delphi:

Straightway then in his heart began pondering Phoibos Apollo who were the men he should bring in there to be priests of the temple, making oblations and doing him service in Pytho the rocky [Delphi]. As he revolved these things, he perceived a swift ship on the wine-dark seaway and saw inside of her men both many and noble, Cretans from Knossos the city of Minos, who for the lord make sacred oblations, and also as messengers bring the decrees of Phoibos Apollo the god of the gold sword, which he declares as oracles out of the laurel below the ravines of Parnassos. These, pursuing their commerce and profit, were now in a black ship making a voyage to sandy-soiled Pylos and seeking the people native to Pylos; but they were encountered by Phoibos Apollo.



FIGURE 34. An ashlar block from beneath the Archives of the Palace of Nestor, with the Minoan double-axe symbol carved on it. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

This is the lone reference to Cretans at Pylos in ancient Greek literature, but we can, nonetheless, be confident that in the Early Mycenaean period it was a major node for the exchange of ideas between Crete and southern Greece—a settlement unlike its contemporaries in Messenia.

We will even go so far as to suggest that Cretans likely lived and worked at Pylos at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. Minoan influence was hardly superficial, as is clear from extensive use of ashlar masonry—with quintessential Minoan symbols, a double axe carved on one ashlar block and a large stone horns-of-consecration, reused much later in a pavement outside the thirteenth century B.C. palace (see figure 34). Pylos was a locus where not only technologies were transferred from Crete to the mainland. Beliefs and perhaps even political systems were too.

Evans might have been sympathetic to our ideas about Crete and Pylos. In *Shaft Graves and Bee-hive Tombs of Mycenae*, written in 1929, he observed: “The higher aspects of the culture revealed to us at Mycenae must in any case be recognized as belonging to the Minoan world . . . showing that the Minoan religion had been transported in every detail to the Mainland side.”¹² Stephanos Xanthoudides, father of Minoan archaeology and Evans’s coeval, even imagined that Minoan missionaries had sailed forth from Crete. At the port of Nirou Chani in the center of Crete’s north coast, among the remains of an extensive Minoan settlement, he discovered in 1918–19 a grand, well-preserved house that he thought was “occupied by the Priest of the Minoan Cult.”¹³ Within the rooms of this structure, he found several curious features. At one side of a well-paved court was a raised platform with large stone horns-of-consecration. Next to it were large bronze double axes and fragments of a fresco representing the Minoan sacral knot. In a small room beyond



FIGURE 35. The plaster tripod table from the Throne Room of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos (in foreground, to the left of a column base). Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

the court, Xanthoudides recovered dozens of painted plaster offering tables, which he imagined were awaiting export from the nearby harbor to places overseas only recently exposed to the religion of the Minoans.

Tables of this sort, with plaster surfaces, are relatively common on those Aegean islands in contact with Crete in the New Palace period. At Ayia Irini, a dozen or more were recovered, apparently made locally, the plaster legs molded around stones or conical cups, a quintessential Minoan shape found by the thousands in Cretan settlements.

Blegen also discovered offering tables in his excavations at Pylos, one on the floor of the Megaron near the throne of the *wanax* (see figure 35). We believe that it was likely recycled from an Early Mycenaean grave—looted by later Mycenaean at a time when connections were broken between those in power and the dead, no longer recognized as ancestors. Earlier grave goods would have been fair game then.¹⁴

We can, in fact, now be sure that offering tables like the one Blegen found in the Throne Room were used locally in Early Mycenaean times. In preparation for building the new shelter over the palace, fragments were discovered in pre-palatial contexts. Equally important evidence is the complete plaster offering table found on a bench in an Early Mycenaean tholos tomb excavated near Pylos at Routsis.¹⁵

Xanthoudides's notions must have been inimical to the beliefs of Blegen and Wace, although I have found no evidence that either of the two confronted his ideas directly. The battle for an independent mainland Greece was eventually won by the "Govs", as Blegen and Wace called themselves, and there has subsequently been a tendency to emphasize differences rather than similarities between these two areas of the Aegean.¹⁶ Perhaps the deepest criticism of Martin Nilsson's *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion* was, in fact, the implication of its title: that the religions of the Minoans and the Mycenaeans were a unity.¹⁷

Several years ago, however, Thomas Palaima argued that the impact of Minoan ideology on mainlanders was so profound that the very institution of Mycenaean kingship was borrowed from Crete. He placed that event in the later Shaft Grave period, arguing that

the terminology directly relating to Mycenaean and later Greek kingship and kingly ideology is either non-Indo-European (ἀναξ and βασιλεύς) or Greek-specific (σκήπτρον). . . . We can detect the importation and implementation of such ideology within the various stages of Shaft Grave burials. . . . I do not think it is coincidental that LH I is a period of extremely strong Minoan influence in the two regions where our evidence for the formation of mainland palatial culture is strongest: the Argolid and Messenia, and that in both territories we find then and later Minoan objects with strong religious overtones.¹⁸

He believes that the powers of the *wanax* are "intimately connected with—and derived from—his religious associations," and he argues that the σκήπτρον is a symbol of the divine authority held by the *wanax*, stressing the significance of the staff in Minoan iconography.

Palaima anticipates one problem with his argument: poor archaeological documentation for the Early Mycenaean period:

What we have here is a selective élite using these and other symbols, such as the non-Minoan but equally non-pan-Mycenaean funeral masks, to legitimize and enhance their authority. Whether they would have used such symbols in their lives as well is a question which the poor documentation for LH I–LH II aristocratic architecture at Mycenae and Pylos makes it impossible to answer. . . . There is no compelling reason to argue, essentially from a broader silence of archaeological testimony that the "religious" artifacts of the later Shaft Graves had no "religious" or "charismatic" meaning for the "rulers" with whom they were buried.¹⁹

At the time Palaima wrote, the silence of archaeological testimony was, indeed, deafening. But we have seen that now at Pylos we can talk about the settlement in which Early Mycenaean elite resided, and there we find Minoan symbolism in play. In addition, the discovery of the grave of the Griffin Warrior has given us an unparalleled opportunity to study relationships between and among objects decorated with Minoan figural iconography, as they were employed in that Early Mycenaean burial of a single individual.

It has, of course, been hard to distinguish between situations where mainlanders borrowed Minoan symbols and attached the same meanings to them that they had on Crete and situations where symbols were recontextualized on the mainland and assigned different meanings. Some scholars have even entertained the possibility that Minoan exotica had no specific meaning for mainlanders—that they were just loot from raids or goods acquired through trade for the purpose of impressing others.

Prior to the discovery of the grave of the Griffin Warrior, the most ambitious attempt to distinguish between such options was a study by Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier, published in the annual of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz.²⁰ There Kilian-Dirlmeier examined the spatial distribution of grave offerings retrieved from a cist in the floor of the famous tholos tomb at Vapheio near Sparta, explored by Tsountas in the later nineteenth century (see figure 36).

The Vapheio tholos is exceptional in that the locations of objects recovered from the cist can be determined with some accuracy, using Tsountas's description of the excavation, while the artifacts themselves were extraordinary. Not only were the two eponymous Vapheio Cups found in this cist but also an extraordinary number of sealstones, one of which depicted a priest in a long robe, carrying a "fenestrated axe," a type of axe with openings in its blades, presumably associated with animal sacrifice.²¹ The head of an actual axe of this kind was present in the grave.

Kilian-Dirlmeier concluded that the social structure and organization of power supported by an elite had been fully established already by what she calls the "LH IIA protopalatial stage." She proposed a direct relationship between the owner of the seal, the individual buried in the cist, and the image of the priest itself—a proposal very much in accord with Palaima's ideas.

Unfortunately, Tsountas found no body in the cist. Its absence gave rise to the notion that the grave might have been a cenotaph, although it is also possible that the bones had thoroughly decayed. Whatever the case, we do not know the gender of the deceased.

IDEOLOGY AND THE GRIFFIN WARRIOR

It is control over osteology that makes the grave of the Griffin Warrior so important for prehistorians, in addition to the number and diversity of the grave goods that accompanied the burial. We know for certain that the Griffin Warrior was a young man, about thirty-five years old. His sex was determined by Lynne Schepartz and has been confirmed by the recent discovery that the Y chromosome is present in his DNA. No mortal wounds are obvious on his skeleton.

There are many similarities but also several differences between the burial in the grave of the Griffin Warrior and that in the Vapheio cist. We found no ceramic vessels in his grave, whereas at Vapheio, Tsountas found several. For over a century, Vapheio held the record for the most sealstones (twenty-eight) from a single

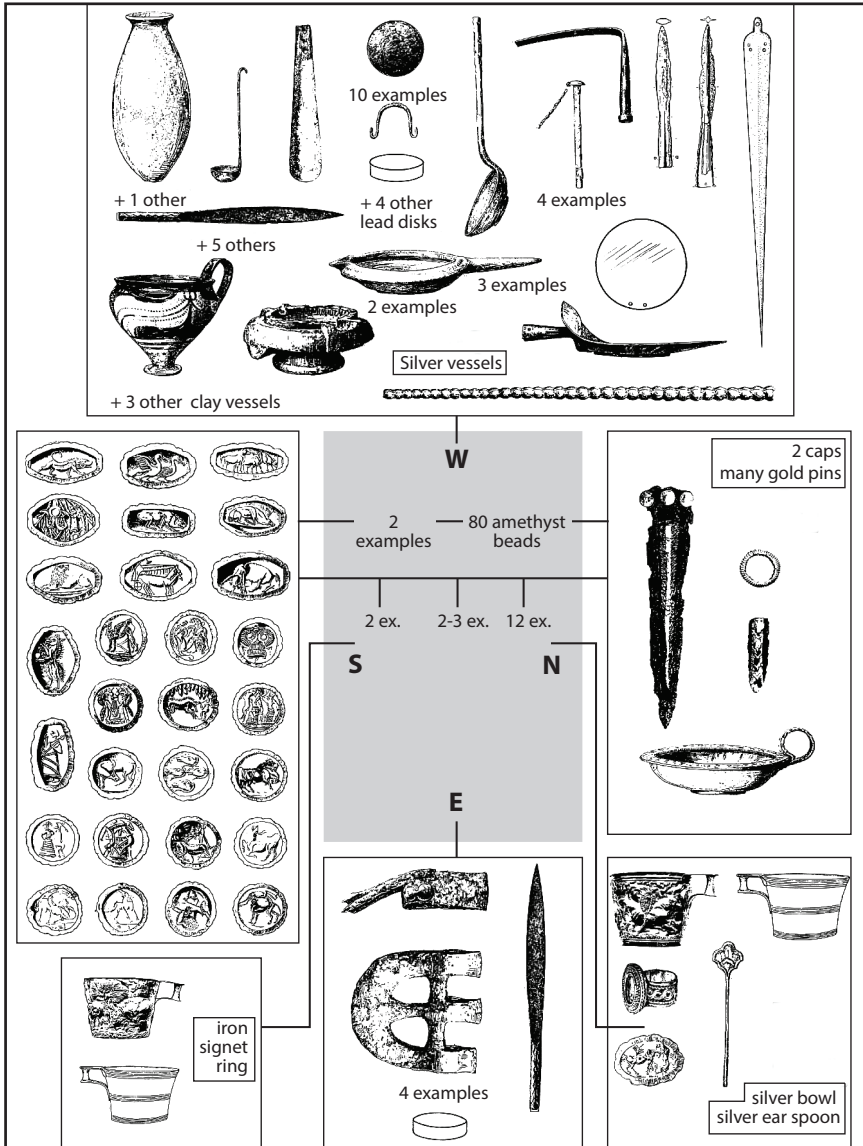


FIGURE 36. Offerings in the cist in the floor of the tholos tomb at Vapheio in Laconia, south of Sparta, in relation to the status and rank of the interred individual. Courtesy of Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier. Adapted by Rosemary Robertson from Kilian-Dirlmeier, “Das Kuppelgrab,” fig. 9, with permission from Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier.

grave. Now the Griffin Warrior has over fifty. But what is most striking at Pylos, as at Vapheio, is the extent to which physical objects reflect the imagery on sealstones and signet rings.



FIGURE 37. Sealstone with Minoan genii from the grave of the Griffin Warrior. Tina Ross. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

We first noticed this phenomenon in 2016, when we published four gold rings from the grave of the Griffin Warrior.²² Then we noted an emphasis on bulls and horns, in comparing the representation of bull-leaping on one gold ring to the bronze head of a staff, a σκήπτρον, in the shape of a bull's head. The staff, in fact, is not so different from one carried in the outstretched arm of a goddess who descends to earth between twin mountain peaks on another gold ring.

The resemblance between the design on another seal and an actual artifact in the grave leaves no doubt that the motifs refer to each other and a common idea.

The seal in question is a large lentoid agate, exceptional for not only its size but also the detail of its engraving (see figure 37).²³ Two Minoan “genii” (a composite demon modelled on the god Taweret, an Egyptian divinity depicted as a bipedal composite of a hippopotamus and a crocodile, with lion paws and female human breasts) face each other antithetically. One grasps a ewer, holding its handle with one paw, supporting its base with the other. The second genius supports what may be an incense burner in both paws. Together they flank an altar with incurving sides, on top of which are horns-of-consecration, from which a tree sprouts. Above their heads is a sun-symbol.

The basic components of the scene all find parallels in Minoan art, and antithetic genii are not unique. The Vapheio cist offers one particularly close parallel, also an agate sealstone.²⁴ Although not identical, in that on it both genii carry

ewers and there is no sun-symbol above their heads, they also flank an altar topped by horns-of-consecration and a tree.

Genii are depicted in Minoan art as hunters who carry dead animals over their shoulders (in one case, a human) or as participants in cult activities, where they typically hold ewers from which libations will be poured. In one instance, however, on impressions from a gold ring used at Pylos in the thirteenth century, both genii carry long, loop-handled, single-edged knives of the sort that Schliemann called *Schlachtmesser*, or “butchers’ knives.” Here they seemingly are associated with blood sacrifice.

Our example is unique in associating the act of sacrifice and the sacrificial altar with the sun-symbol and seemingly supports Nanno Marinatos’s reading of this complicated set of interlocking iconographical elements, as discussed in her book *Minoan Kingship and the Solar Goddess*. There she also revives an argument that horns-of-consecration are not horns, but a schematic representation of the morning sun rising between twin peaks.²⁵

Among hundreds of fragments of bronze armor from the grave of the Griffin Warrior was a heavily corroded bronze disk that likely was attached to its breastplate. At first sight, only one small pointed piece of gold foil peeked out from beneath the corrosion at its edge. But in December 2016, the fragment was transported to the Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, where it was examined by portable X-ray. The result was extraordinary: from beneath the corrosion emerged a sixteen-pointed sun-symbol, with sixteen dots between the rays, identical to the sun-symbol over the heads of the genii on the agate sealstone.

Marinatos sees the ubiquitous distribution of religious symbols in the New Palace period, both on the mainland and on Crete, as justification for speaking, as did Nilsson, of a common Minoan-Mycenaean religion.²⁶ Although there were fundamental differences between cult in New Palace Crete and the Mycenaean mainland—an obvious one being the scarcity of peak sanctuaries in the Peloponnese, is it not likely that the belief systems of the elite of Early Mycenaean Pylos and the Minoans were similar? Intentionality in the choice of religious symbols deployed for the burial of the Griffin Warrior seems to suggest that concepts originating in Crete had been transplanted to Pylos already in the Early Mycenaean period, if not by Minoan missionaries, then by “converted” mainlanders.

It seems clear that such motives belong to the symbolic universe that concerned Fritz Blakolmer when, in the course of a discussion of the evolution of representations of the Minoan genius, he wrote that a “theological concept of constructing a normative and unified Minoan sacred ambience borrowed from abroad in order to give a new orientation to the entire society of Crete would perfectly fit a propaganda of religion.”²⁷ He was speaking of Near Eastern concepts introduced to Crete, but *mutatis mutandis*, the same interpretation can explain the presence of Minoan elements on the mainland.



FIGURE 38. Sealstone with a priest carrying a fenestrated axe from the grave of the Griffin Warrior. Jeff Vanderpool. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati. All rights reserved by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports—Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

Other objects from the grave suggest that the Griffin Warrior was himself a participant in ritual activities with Minoan content. Among the sealstones chosen to be buried with him were two with depictions of a long-haired man in priestly robes (see figure 38). On one, the priest bears the fenestrated axe over his shoulder. The representation is virtually identical to the sealstone from the Vapheio cist. The grave of the Griffin Warrior lacks an actual axe head, but it does have another type of ritual sacrificial instrument: a bronze *Schlachtmesser* of the variety illustrated on the sealing with the genii from Pylos.

The combination of military and religious imagery present in the grave of the Griffin Warrior seems to us to point in the very direction suggested by Marinatos, Palaima, Kilian-Dirlmeier, and others: these symbols of power and ritual are appropriate to the office of a *wanax* at a time when the state of Pylos was in its earliest stages of formation, when the elite in Messenia were drawing on Minoan antecedents to reinforce the emergent inequalities that are manifested in the archaeological record, even expressed in the diet of the elite.

In our epilogue, the various conclusions reached in this and previous chapters are conjoined. We include a brief systemic reconstruction of the sort that Renfrew employed for all of Greece in the *Emergence of Civilisation*, but it pertains only to the micro-region of Pylos. The data at our disposal are much more detailed than Renfrew's, but their collection was inspired by his example. Systems analysis has long been criticized as lacking in explanatory power, unable to identify actual causes. It is, nonetheless, a useful way of looking at interrelated subsystems in an ancient society.²⁸

We focus on relationships between the agricultural economy and diet, settlement patterns and population growth, trade and other external contacts,

investments in mortuary display—and, of course, the role of ideology. Each of these factors promoted and in turn reflected the expansion of power that is witnessed in the Early Mycenaean archaeological record and that led to the emergence of the first states on the Greek mainland.

Our reconstruction is stripped of any assumptions that Mycenaean civilization was predestined because of essential elements in the character of earlier Bronze Age peoples, whether Greek speakers or not. In so doing, we hope to make a contribution to the separation of Greek prehistory from the national project of the nineteenth century that has so long haunted it.

EPILOGUE

Here we pull together the diverse conclusions reached in the chapters of this book within the loose framework of Colin Renfrew's systems theory model. We speculate retroactively why and how one polity, Pylos, emerged into statehood.

Archaeologists who work in Greece have tended to be highly specialized in their interests. Until very recently there was not even an introduction to the archaeology of Greece that treated every period of its past, from the Paleolithic until modern times.¹ Instead, research is fragmented by period and topic, and it is not easy to gain a sense of the continuity and flow of human existence in the Greek landscape.

Long-term historical perspectives have, however, grown more popular since the 1980s. Intensive surface surveys confronted archaeologists with a Hobson's choice: ignore much of what they were finding or invest more resources in analysis and programs of publication for finds from all periods of the past. Earlier surveys had been more restricted in their interests. Indeed, casual hunting in the 1920s for prehistoric remains alone was what led to the discovery of the Palace of Nestor and many other Mycenaean settlements and cemeteries in Messenia.

A long-term perspective permits us to focus analyses on critical junctures in time, when inertia was broken, when a society rapidly developed in previously undocumented ways, as happened at Pylos in the Early Mycenaean period. That can potentially also provide a prehistorian with analogies drawn from historical societies that existed in the same physical landscapes as did prehistoric. Comparisons with other periods may suggest interpretations for the prehistoric evidence we assemble, as did Ottoman geography in chapter 3 for Mycenaean patterns of settlement.

Such an approach conforms to principles of the *Annales* school of history. Its members, such as Fernand Braudel and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, viewed the past as a dialectic between short-term events and those played out on longer time scales in similar environments.²

EARLY MYCENAEAN CIVILIZATION AND PYLOS

What can we now say about the beginnings of Mycenaean civilization at Pylos? The so-called multiplier effect, as defined by Renfrew in *The Emergence of Civilization*, provides a useful framework for drawing together our disparate conclusions about Early Mycenaean Pylos—although he himself applied it to events in the third-millennium-B.C. Aegean that he imagined lay behind the Minoan palatial system. Renfrew's analysis broke society into the following subsystems: population and settlement, subsistence, craft production, social systems, projective systems, and trade and communications. Here we briefly do the same and consider how growth in each subsystem likely promoted expansion in the others.

POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT

The Early Mycenaean period witnessed a growth in population at Pylos. The settlement expanded in area, but, at the same time, the absolute number of settlements in the broader region increased and a three-tier hierarchy of settlement emerged that had not existed in the Middle Helladic period. Sites at each of the three levels in the hierarchy likely functioned in dissimilar ways—the community at Pylos, where elites resided, functioned very differently from smaller settlements, which in some cases were inhabited by only a handful of families.

SUBSISTENCE

The basic Mediterranean triad of crops (olives, grain, and vines) has long been entrenched in the Pylos area. A settlement of the mid-third millennium B.C., recently excavated near Pylos has, in fact, yielded the oldest testimony to grape cultivation in the entire Peloponnese.³ Other evidence for agriculture in the Bronze Age comes from pollen analyses conducted in the 1990s by Sergei Yazvenko on behalf of the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project.⁴ Sergei and his wife, Gule Ismailzade, drilled cores into the floor of the lagoon of Osmanaga, north of the bay of Navarino. Fossilized grains of pollen allowed vegetational histories to be written, beginning as early as the sixth millennium B.C.

In the Middle Helladic period (before 1600 B.C.), there was little pressure on the landscape from agriculture. After that, in the Early Mycenaean period, pine forests began to disappear and an expansion in olive cultivation began, which reached its peak in the thirteenth century B.C. During that high-water mark, the archives

found by Blegen in the Palace of Nestor testify to the production of perfumed oil, presumably for export.⁵ The environmental evidence seems to fit with what we would hypothesize from settlement patterns: that there had been an intensification in land use in the Early Mycenaean period, one that we think reflects the creation of elite benefices, landed estates granted in tenure to those at the top of the social and political order.

It is also possible also that metal agricultural implements came into more common use, if the large number of metal vessels found in Early Mycenaean graves is any indication that bronze was then more available—although no such tools have yet been found at Pylos.

CRAFT PRODUCTION, TRADE, AND COMMUNICATIONS

What do we know about craft production in the early phases of the Late Bronze Age? Quite a bit, in fact, although there remain many unanswered questions. Bronze vessels are not the only novelty in Early Mycenaean graves. They and other exquisitely crafted goods were arriving from the Minoan world, but we also find goods from more exotic locations. Glass “Nuzi” beads likely came from as far away as northeastern Iraq, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, amber from the Baltic Sea, inlaid cloisonné ornaments from the Levant. All these products doubtless followed indirect routes to Pylos.

Their availability, however, signals an extension in the range of the trading networks into which Pylos was plugged, and their accessibility must have promoted the production of luxury goods in the Aegean, if not at Pylos itself. Objects manufactured of gold foil are common in Early Mycenaean graves around the Palace of Nestor and elsewhere, and contemporary parallels on Crete are rare. Minoan-derived curvilinear motives are sometimes embossed in the gold, but geometric motives lack Cretan antecedents.

The tradition of cutting limestone into squared blocks set in impressive façades of buildings is an art that the Minoans learned from the Levantine coast, but it had been practiced on Crete for two centuries by the time it reached the mainland.⁶ Pylos is not the only place in the Mycenaean world where ashlar masonry was employed, but the fact that fashions there followed trends on Crete over several centuries favors Cretan masons being responsible for its execution. So does the presence of a Minoan mason’s mark on a block found in an older wall under the Archives of the thirteenth-century Mycenaean palace.

Such stonework would have contributed to the monumentality of Early Mycenaean mansions on the Pylos acropolis and lacks any parallel in Middle Helladic architecture—true also of the wall-paintings that appear now for the first time on the mainland. Deposits of murex shells on the Pylos acropolis possibly point to local production of purple pigment used for painting.

Itinerant craftsmen may have been responsible for these innovations, but the demand would have emanated from the elite stratum that was emerging within an increasingly hierarchical society. As yet, however, we lack direct evidence that this elite supported and patronized craftsmen permanently ensconced at Pylos, other than perhaps for the production of pottery. Blegen's discovery of an Early Mycenaean kiln on the acropolis bears witness to the local manufacture of pottery, and its location raises the possibility that some was being produced for those living in the acropolis mansions. But whatever the case, Cretan styles of pottery rapidly replaced traditional Middle Helladic types for all consumers, not just for the elite.

SOCIAL AND PROJECTIVE SYSTEMS

A major social upheaval occurred at Pylos in the Early Mycenaean period. A great disparity in access to resources is obvious from differential access to types of burial (single or collective), from the relative richness of grave goods, from mansions, and from exceptional elite diets. Objects of symbolic importance mark rank: diadems as well as a staff in the grave of the Griffin Warrior.

Weapons, both defensive and offensive, emphasized the status of the elite as warriors, even as a defensive wall was erected around the citadel on which their mansions stood. Finds from the grave of the Griffin Warrior, in particular, demonstrate that such privileged individuals understood the meaning of Minoan symbols, whether they were religious or badges of authority. This dual concurrence led us to suggest that the Griffin Warrior was a Mycenaean king, a *wanax*.

Those who held power at Pylos were surrounded by a universe of imagery deeply immersed in Minoanized forms, styles, and decorations. The Middle Helladic period had been largely devoid of figural images, but, in the Early Mycenaean period, human, animal, and floral motives pervaded representations on jewelry, ceramics, and wall-paintings. The elite who demanded new ways were no mean raiders preying on Minoan targets, then slinking back into mainland hovels. They knew the finer aspects of Minoan society; they wanted them for themselves; and they drew on its material culture as their own society leapt to a higher level of complexity.

The "multiplier effect" allows us to imagine how positive feedback among the preceding subsystems would have promoted expansion in each. Increased efficiency in agriculture would have favored population increase. A greater population may have demanded more specialized systems of social management. Warfare would have promoted the emergence of strong leadership. As an emergent elite struggled to differentiate itself from others, trade for exotic goods must have followed. One may presume too that involvement in regional exchange networks would have led to competition of all sorts with elites in other emergent polities for land, prestige, power—all of them, like Pylos, finding inspiration in Minoan models.

Such an analysis allows us retroactively to speculate how Early Mycenaean societies like Pylos grew in complexity. What set such profound changes in motion after a long period of homeostasis in Middle Helladic times and led to the emergence of a social and political structure unprecedented on the mainland? It is hard to imagine that integration within the Minoan world did not play a decisive role in promoting growth in trade, intensification of agricultural production, greater acquisitiveness on the part of mainlanders, more specialization in craft manufacture, and the formation of larger political units through wars of expansion. Systems theory anticipates that growth in subsystems eventually reaches a point where any additional increase, however small, will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. A system will be transformed and restructure itself in an unprecedented manner. It was at that point that Mycenaean society stabilized itself within a new social system based on the institutionalization of inherited leadership, rank, and privilege.

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This book would never have been written had I not been invited to deliver lectures in honor of Jane K. Sather. It is all too easy for a field archaeologist and teacher to invent reasons to avoid composing a general, interpretative, synthetic work. I am grateful to the faculty of the University of California for providing me with the necessary excuse and to the University of Cincinnati for granting me leave to go to Berkeley.

My friends and colleagues in the Classics Department at Berkeley during the spring term of 2019 made me feel welcome on campus and in their homes. It also was an anticipated delight to spend several months across the corridor from Kim Shelton in Dwinelle Hall, but the talented group of graduate students who attended my Sather Seminar on the “coming of the Greeks” was an unexpected bonus. My two Sather Assistants, Bekah Mckay and Emma Remsberg, were invaluable in handling logistics for the lectures. David Wheeler, who was present for the lectures in Berkeley, then read my manuscript in Athens.

I can hardly find words to express my gratitude to the many from whom I have learned so much in the course of my career. As an undergraduate at the University of Akron, Theodore T. Duke first taught me that one must consider the Mediterranean and Near East as a whole in order to understand the Greek Bronze Age. In graduate school at the University of Cincinnati, Gerald Cadogan forced me to think big, while Jack Caskey emphasized speaking and writing with precision (in his mind, these were one and the same thing). My classmates in graduate school and at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens were inspirational. In Chicago at the University of Illinois older professors nurtured me academically.

At Pylos I am blessed to have had amazingly talented colleagues in our intensive surface survey in the 1990s, for legacy data studies after that, and in excavations since 2015. Among them, John Bennet has remained steadfast in all matters Pylian, now for thirty years, and I have summarized our joint studies in several parts of this book.

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I am grateful to the following institutions for permissions to reproduce works over which they hold copyright: the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc and Continuum, the British School at Athens, Cambridge University Press, Casemate Publishers, the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press at UCLA, the Department of Classics of the University of Cincinnati, Equinox Publishing Ltd., the Geological Survey of the State of Ohio, the Indian Hill Historical Society, the Ministry of Culture of Greece, the *Smithsonian* magazine, and the Wooster, Ohio Public Library.

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former director general of antiquities and cultural heritage; and Lina Mendoni, minister of culture.

Field archaeology has a voracious appetite for cash. Fundraising can be the invisible second full-time job for an excavator. The successes at Pylos have largely been possible through the generous contributions of many foundations and individuals. These donors are recognized on our website (<http://www.griffinwarrior.org/support/>).

I have profited greatly from the wisdom of the referees solicited by the University of California Press, from acquisitions editor Eric Schmidt, as well as from LeKeisha Huges, editorial assistant, and Barbara Armentrout, my copyeditor. Jennifer Sacher, editor of *Hesperia*, journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, advised me on editing matters prior to submission. Kay Banning assembled an index, once again for me expertly and on short order.

I thank especially Sharon Stocker, who has jointly authored the final chapter and epilogue of this book. Shari joined us at Pylos in 1992. In the course of working and living together over more than a quarter century, she has challenged me to think differently about Greek prehistory, while generously sharing her own ideas. Our thoughts are by now so intertwined that I could not begin to unravel them. Shari has pushed me to take academic risks and not worry about the consequences, where I would have chosen a less ambitious path. I have learned to trust her gut. She meant to spend the spring term of 2019 with me in Berkeley, but the discovery of the two new Mycenaean tholos tombs at Pylos made that impossible. I am pleased that she has been able to contribute to this book.

Some years ago, when we were on Crete together, Jared Diamond told me I should write a general book about the Minoans. I am grateful for that advice. This isn't exactly what he had in mind, but it is the best I can do for the moment.

NOTES

PROLOGUE

1. Vogeikoff, Davis, and Florou, *Carl W. Blegen*, provides the fullest biography of Blegen and his contributions to archaeology, which were fully recognized in 1965 when he was awarded the first gold medal for Distinguished Achievement in Archaeology from the Archaeological Institute of America.
2. Blegen and Rawson, *Palace of Nestor I*; Lang, *Palace of Nestor II*; Blegen et al., *Palace of Nestor III*. Blegen's student Emmett Bennett was assigned the fourth volume, which still awaits publication.
3. New buildings at the university include creations by "starchitects" Michael Graves, Peter Eisenman, and Frank Gehry.
4. Caskey began investigating Ayia Irini in 1960, and he continued there until his death in 1981. Twelve volumes (*Keos I–XII*) and dozens of journal articles (including Caskey, "Investigations in Keos," Part I and Part II) report his results.
5. Blegen, *Korakou*. He believed it to be the location of Homeric Ephyrae.
6. Panhellenic games were open to competitors from any Greek city. Wright and Dabney's Nemea Valley Archaeological Project sponsored fieldwork from 1983 to 1989, including excavation, intensive surface survey, and cultural anthropological and geological investigations. Three volumes (Nemea Valley Archaeological Project I–III) and dozens of journal articles have thus far reported its results.
7. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the New Archaeology was challenged by postmodern approaches that emphasize reflexivity and subjectivity and consider the biases that archaeologists themselves bring to their interpretations of the past.
8. Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*; Bahn, *Bluff Your Way* (the lightest introduction); and Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, all discuss the evolution of archaeological thinking over the past fifty years.

9. Heracles was believed to have defeated the many-headed Hydra at a nearby spring, the second of his twelve labors.

10. Wiencke, “Lerna.”

11. Binford’s prose is famously impenetrable, but in 1983, Cherry and Torrence transcribed his lectures in Sheffield, Southampton, and London, thus providing a very readable introduction to his ideas (Binford, *In Pursuit of the Past*).

12. The *Emergence of Civilisation* was based on Renfrew’s Ph.D. dissertation for the University of Cambridge, titled “Neolithic and Bronze Age Cultures of the Cyclades.” He is now retired from his post as Disney Professor of Archaeology and director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at Cambridge.

13. The results of Cherry’s survey on Melos were reported in Renfrew’s first book about Melos, *An Island Polity*, edited with the geographer Malcolm Wagstaff. *An Island Polity* had a profound impact on the development of Aegean prehistory by providing a social scientific framework for the study of regions of Greece.

14. Cherry and I studied settlement patterns and land use on Kea in collaboration with Mantzourani (*Landscape Archaeology*).

15. In the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, I had as co-directors John Bennet, Cynthia Shelmerdine, Yanos Lolos, Susan Alcock, and Eberhard Zanger. Sharon Stocker oversaw the reorganization of Blegen’s finds, represented Cincinnati in the roof excavations, a collaboration with the Greek Ministry of Culture, and now co-directs excavations at Pylos with me.

16. I use the term *state* in this book to refer to the complex political entities that came into existence in Late Bronze Age southern Greece. By the thirteenth century B.C., palaces supported literate bureaucracies, as well as armies, navies, specialized craftsmen, and dependent labor forces, all controlled by elite families who must have inherited their rank. This book is not concerned with the operation of the later Mycenaean states; it instead examines the foundations for these states established in preceding centuries—thus the term *origins* in the title.

17. See <https://classics.berkeley.edu/people/sather-professor/jack-davis>. Many who heard my lectures imagined that the University of California had asked me to speak about the grave of the Griffin Warrior and the finds that Sharon Stocker and I discovered in 2015. Berkeley had not. The invitation had been extended in 2014. Still, much of what I had to say in my 2019 lectures did concern the Griffin Warrior and his Early Mycenaean milieu.

18. The term *Mycenaean*, as I will discuss in chapter 1, has long referred to the culture characteristic of the Late Bronze Age on the southern Greek mainland, not exclusively to the site of Mycenae. The Early Mycenaean period, as the term is used in this book, refers to the initial stages of the Late Bronze Age. Wright, “Early Mycenaean Greece.”

19. Mee, “Death and Burial,” 284.

20. Dickinson, *Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation*, 107.

21. Renfrew and Cherry, *Peer Polity Interaction*, developed the concept of peer polity interaction in the 1980s to model how more or less equal societies became more politically and socially complex through interaction with each other over time.

22. On the origins of the state in Mycenaean Greece, and at Pylos more specifically, see Cosmopoulos, “State Formation in Greece”; Wright, “From Chief to King”; and Wright, “The Emergence of Leadership.”

23. Bennet and Davis, "Making Mycenaean," 107.
24. Chapin, "Mycenaean Mythologies," 465, believes that the representations are drawn from the mythological past of Pylos: "They offer a lens through which Mycenaean cultural beliefs could be understood, with the tales of war and heroism serving as paradigms for lives well lived. In sum, these frescoes offer the example of a mythologized past as an ideal model for the LH IIIB present." On ethnicity and language, see also Dickinson, "What Conclusions Might be Drawn?"
25. William McDonald, *Progress into the Past*, is a fine introduction to the excavations of the Mycenaean shaft graves uncovered by Heinrich and Sophia Schliemann in 1876 and of the Vaphio Tholos investigated by Christos Tsountas in 1889.
26. Wace and Blegen, "The Pre-Mycenaean Pottery," 188.

ABOUT THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE

1. Renfrew, *Emergence of Civilisation*, 34, 451.
2. Pullen, "The Early Bronze Age."
3. Watrous, *Minoan Crete*.
4. Wiener, "Minding the Gap," discusses disruptions at the end of the third millennium B.C.
5. Wright, "From Chief to King"; Wright, "The Emergence of Leadership."
6. Schliemann, *Mycenae*; Gere, *The Tomb of Agamemnon*.
7. Alden, *The Prehistoric Cemetery*.

ABOUT THE PALACE OF NESTOR

1. Blegen and Rawson, *Guide to the Palace*; Davis, "Pylos."
2. Bendall, *Economics of Religion*; Lupack, "The Northeast Building."
3. Shelmerdine, *The Perfume Industry*.
4. Zangger et al., "Landscape Evolution and Site Preservation."
5. Cline, 1177 B.C.
6. A recent study (Finné et al., "Late Bronze Age Climate Change") points to vacillations in climate in the later part of the thirteenth century that may have destabilized the palatial system.

1. MYCENAEAN ORIGINS AND THE GREEK NATION-STATE

1. Anthropological literature concerning the origins of the state is deep. Fundamental texts include Fried, *Evolution of Political Society*; Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization*; Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power*; Feinman and Marcus, *Archaic States*; and Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State*.
2. For so-called secondary states, see Parkinson and Galaty, *Secondary States in Perspective*.
3. The foreign schools in Athens, now numbering more than twenty chartered by the Greek Ministry of Culture, are a mix of private and governmental institutions that coordinate and facilitate research in Greece by foreign archaeologists. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Foreign_Archaeological_Institutes_in_Greece.

4. Handbooks summarize much of this information, including Cline, *Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*; Lemos and Kotsonas, *Archaeology of Early Greece*; and Shelmerdine, *Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*.

5. Anne Duray's Stanford dissertation, "The Idea of Greek (Pre)history," addresses some of the same questions.

6. Cherniss's scholarship continues today to shape discourse in the field of ancient philosophy, although he is perhaps better known for the role he played in defending Robert Oppenheimer's standing in the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and in supporting Berkeley colleagues who refused to sign the loyalty oath demanded by the University of California Board of Regents. Beazley would take up his post later, in 1949, publishing his lectures as *The Development of Attic Black-Figure* (Sather Classical Lectures 24).

7. Blegen was also available to travel, with teaching assignments in Cincinnati only in autumn term; soon he would join the war effort as an OSS officer, recruited to run the Greek Section of the Foreign Nationalities Branch in Washington, D.C.

8. For the quote, see Fotiadis, "Factual Claims," 22; see also "Aegean Prehistory without Schliemann."

9. Blegen, "Preclassical Greece: A Survey."

10. Blegen, "Preclassical Greece: A Survey." By "the Dorian flux," Blegen was referring to the so-called Return of the Sons of Herakles, known from ancient Greek legends, and once believed responsible for the establishment of the Dorian dialect spoken by the Spartans and others in the Peloponnese in historical times.

11. The ASCSA was founded as a private research consortium of American universities in 1887, its mission to educate, conduct excavations, and provide research facilities to students and scholars. Today the ASCSA, located in the heart of Athens, is the largest of the foreign schools of archaeology in Greece.

12. Blegen's *Korakou* was the first account of an excavation of a prehistoric archaeological site on the Greek mainland to be published by the ASCSA.

13. Semple formed the department in 1921, with himself as head, by merging programs in Latin and Greek and adding ancient history and archaeology. He had been smitten by archaeology as a student in Germany, Greece, and Rome and praised it for its ability "to clarify and vivify" Classical literature and philosophy and as a mechanism for promoting Classical studies to a general public by unearthing "new beauty": "When one digs one is always inspired by the feeling that the next spadeful will turn up something new, something tangible, some beautiful something that without further effort or further ado will immediately and rapturously increase the sum total of the beauty of life." Quotes are from an unpublished paper titled "Archaeology in General and Troy in Particular," delivered by Semple on November 19, 1934, to the Literary Club of Cincinnati (Papers of the Literary Club 57 [1934–1935]), 101–5.

14. Louis Charles François Petit-Radel (1756–1836) served as director of the Mazarin Library, the oldest public library in France, from 1814 to 1836.

15. By employing *τις*, the ancient Greek indefinite pronoun, Blegen informed readers that his object was the "everyman" of Homeric times, what we might today call "daily life."

16. Leeb, *Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer*, 55. Fallmerayer (1790–1861), a Tyrolean politician, travel writer, and historian, first presented this theory in the foreword to the first volume of his *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea*.

17. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 74. Herzfeld explores this conflict in his history of folkloric studies in modern Greece.

18. Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), leader of the Liberal Party of Greece, was committed to the incorporation of territories of the Byzantine Empire into the modern Greek state, including Istanbul/Constantinople. On his relationship with Blegen, see Davis, “Politics of Volunteerism.”

19. Wace and Blegen, “The Pre-Mycenaean Pottery,” 188.

20. For Cyriacus of Ancona and Venetian sources, see *Archaeological Atlas of Mycenae*; and Moore, Rowlands, and Karadimas, *In Search of Agamemnon*. For the Italian doctor, see Malliaris, *Alessandro Pini*, 45 (the translation is mine).

21. Review of *The Mycenaean Age* in *The American Journal of Theology* 2, no. 3 (July 1898), 646–48.

22. No Greek archaeologist had greater influence on the development of the field of Greek prehistory than Christos Tsountas (1857–1934). Tsountas not only excavated at Mycenae and Tiryns but contributed to an understanding of the Neolithic and Bronze Age through excavations at Dimini and Sesklo in Thessaly, Vapheio in Laconia, and in the Cycladic islands. Voutsaki, “Hellenization of Greek Prehistory.”

23. Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B*; more recently, Fox, *The Riddle of the Labyrinth*, rightly crediting research by Alice Kober that was fundamental to the decipherment.

24. Paparrigopoulos, *Ιστορία του ελληνικού έθνους*.

25. Lalaki, “Social Construction of Hellenism,” for discussion; for the book itself, <http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/archives/blegens-united-states-and-greece>.

26. Blegen, “The United States and Greece,” 27.

27. Blegen, “The United States and Greece,” 27.

28. Blegen to Wace, February 17, 1954, University of Cincinnati Classics Department, Carl W. Blegen Papers, folder 594i.

29. Wace, “The Arrival of the Greeks,” 217–18.

30. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, trans. John Skelton (ca. 1487), ed. Frederick M. Salter and H. L. R. Edwards, v. 371.

31. Schliemann, *Mycenae*.

32. Tsountas and Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age*, 340.

33. I retain *Mycenaean* and *Mycenaeans* to refer to the culture of the southern Greek mainland in the Bronze Age, although others have expressed a preference for the terms *Helladic* and *Helladics*.

34. Tsountas and Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age*, 10–11.

35. Gardner, “Stephani on the Tombs at Mycenae”; Helbig, “Sur la question mycénienne.” Helbig’s theory was quashed by Solomon Reinach in *Le mirage oriental*.

36. Taylour, *The Mycenaean*, 15.

37. Taylour, *The Mycenaean*, 22.

38. Gardner, “Annual Report of the Council.”

39. Lemos and Kotsonas, *Archaeology of Early Greece*.

40. Cavanagh, “Sparta and Laconia,” 649.

41. Pausanias, Book 4.36.1–3.

42. Davis and Stocker, “Messenia,” 679.

43. Bennet, “Leuktron as a Secondary Capital.”

44. *Odyssey*, Book 3.488–90.

45. Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 688.

46. Tyrtaios, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* fragment 266.5. trans. by the author.

47. Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel I, no. 15 and no. 16.
48. Schliemann, *Mycenae*, 227.
49. Vermeule, "Priam's Castle Blazing," 88.
50. Warren, "The Miniature Fresco from the West House."
51. Sherratt, "Reading the Texts."

2. FARM, FIELD, AND PYLOS

1. See Bennet, "Geography of the Mycenaean Kingdoms," for a recent discussion of the human geography of the Kingdom of Nestor.
2. McDonald and Rapp, *Minnesota Messenia Expedition*, 121.
3. Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*.
4. Rapp and Aschenbrenner, *Excavations at Nichoria*.
5. Palaima, "Θέμις in the Mycenaean Lexicon."
6. Bintliff, *Mycenaean Geography*.
7. Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, <https://oardc.osu.edu>.
8. Midwest Dairy, "Dairy Cows," <https://www.midwestdairy.com/education/farm-life/dairy-cows/>
9. Linklater, *Measuring America*. The U.S. Congress saw an opportunity to pay down the astronomical debt accumulated in the course of the American Revolution, but land first needed to be surveyed—a dangerous and difficult proposition, although profitable for the surveyors themselves.
10. For a more detailed description of the patchwork settlement of Ohio, see George W. Knepper, *The Official Ohio Lands Book*, <http://ohioauditor.gov/publications/OhioLandsBook.pdf>. The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 had largely cleared the Ohio Country of its Native American population, following General "Mad" Anthony Wayne's decisive defeat of confederated tribes of Ohio Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in northeastern Indiana. Wayne County took its name from his. On the disgraceful deportation of most remaining Native Americans east of the Mississippi, see Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*.
11. Wagstaff, *Development of Rural Settlements*, offers an entry point to the form and evolution of modern villages in Greece.
12. Renfrew was in line with developments in American archaeology in the later 1960s, which approached the study of ancient societies by examining the interaction of their several components. Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 303–12, sets systems theory in archaeology in the context of the milieu of its popularity.
13. Cherry, "Chapter 14 Revisited."
14. Renfrew asserted (*Emergence of Civilisation*, 226), "Recent systematic and intensive site surveys in different regions have made the Aegean one of the most intensively surveyed areas in the world."
15. Renfrew, *Emergence of Civilisation*, 255–57.
16. Wiener, "Minding the Gap"; Finné et al., "Late Bronze Age Climate Change"; Stocker, "Deriziotis Aloni."
17. Blegen, "Preclassical Greece," 22.
18. Caskey, "Early Helladic Period," 301–2.
19. Bennet and Shelmerdine, "Not the Palace of Nestor"; Shelmerdine, "The Evolution of Administration at Pylos."

20. Renfrew, *Emergence of Civilisation*, 262.
21. Wagstaff and Cherry, "Settlement and Resources," 259–64.
22. Cherry, Davis, and Mantzourani, *Landscape Archaeology*, 5.
23. Forsén, "The Contribution of Non-Written Sources," 74.
24. Osborne, *Demos*.
25. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures*, ch. 3.
26. Alcock, Cherry, and Davis, "Intensive Survey, Agricultural Practice."
27. Knodell, Fachard, and Papangeli, "2015 Mazi Archaeological Project."
28. Galaty et al., "Excavation of a Hellenistic Farmhouse."
29. Acheson, "Economic Explanation," 166.

3. A TRULY PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF GREECE

1. Balta, *Ottoman Studies and Archives*.
2. Even an interest in the Byzantine Empire was slow to take hold. Athanassopoulos, "Byzantine Monuments."
3. Miller, *Latins in the Levant*.
4. Zarinebaf, Bennet, and Davis, *Historical and Economic Geography*.
5. The Gennadius Library, built in the 1920s to house the collection of John Gennadius, Greek diplomat and bibliophile, is one of the premier research centers in Europe, <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/research/gennadius-library>.
6. "Greece: The Bay of Navarino. Antient Pylos" (1823).
7. MacKay, "Evliya Çelebi's Account of Anavarin," 217.
8. Cherry, Davis, and Mantzourani, *Landscape Archaeology*.
9. Whitelaw, "Recent Rural Settlement."
10. By "gray literature," I mean books and articles written in Greek and intended for a nonacademic readership.
11. Manthos, *Αρχαιολογία της Νήσου Κέα*.
12. Davis, "Mediterranean Rural Archaeology."
13. Davis and Davies, "Introduction."
14. The Ottomanist and student of landscape archaeology Thurstan Robinson travelled to Istanbul on behalf of our project, where he examined documents in the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives. More recent studies by Mohammad Shariat-Panahi (*Ottoman Corinthia*) and Georgios Liakopoulos (*Early Ottoman Peloponnese*) have added much to the picture.
15. Longnon and Topping, *Documents sur le régime des terres*; Davies, "Administration and Settlement in Venetian Navarino."
16. Bennet, Davis, and Zarinebaf-Shahr, "William Gell's Itinerary."
17. Gell, *Narrative of a Journey*, 59–60.
18. Sutton, "A Temple Worth Seeing."
19. Kiel, "Rise and Decline," 317.
20. A book resulting from a decade-long collaboration between Fariba Zarinebaf, an Ottomanist; John Bennet, an archaeologist and Linear B expert; and me: *Historical and Economic Geography*.
21. In general Ottoman usage, a *mazra'a* is an agricultural estate capable of supporting a settlement, but which has been abandoned.

22. Balta, *Population and Agricultural Production*, 19. Such small holdings were entirely different from the much larger estates in northern Greece discussed by Halstead in "Surplus and Share-croppers."
23. Pouqueville, *Voyage dans la Grèce*.
24. Leake, *Travels in the Morea I*, 401.
25. Cherry and Davis, "Under the Sceptre."
26. Cosmopoulos, *Political Geography of a Mycenaean District*.
27. Killen, "Mycenaean Economy," 162–63.
28. Palaima, "The Mycenaean Mobilization of Labor."
29. Nakassis, *Individuals and Society*, 181–83, with references.

4. PRESERVING AND CONSERVING NESTOR

1. Quoted in Harrison Eiteljorg II, "The Archaeological Data Archive Project Ceases Operation," *CSA Newsletter*, Fall 2002, <https://csanet.org/newsletter/fallo2/nlfo2o1.html>.
2. *Chicago Tribune*, October 1, 1998, evening update, 7.
3. Blegen et al., *Palace of Nestor III*.
4. Pounder, "The Blegens and the Hills."
5. Blegen's papers alone amount to 8 linear meters (excluding the Pylos excavations) and range in date from 1906 until 1971: <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/archives/blegen-finding-aid>.
6. In her Harvard dissertation (published as *The Perfume Industry of Pylos*), Shelmerdine drew on physical evidence from Blegen's excavations, particularly oil transport jars ("stirrup jars"), as well as Linear B recipes for the production of perfume.
7. Davis and Vogeikoff-Brogan, "Introduction: Philhellenism."
8. *Odyssey*, Book 3, ll. 1–6. The translation is mine.
9. Isaakidou et al., "Burnt Animal Sacrifice"; Stocker and Davis, "Animal Sacrifice, Archives, and Feasting."
10. Blegen and Rawson, *Palace of Nestor I*, 91.
11. Palaima, "The Last Days."
12. Papadopoulou, *Piet de Jong*.
13. Brecoulaki et al., "Archer from the Palace."
14. Brecoulaki et al., "Unprecedented Naval Scene."
15. Hiller, "Scenes of Warfare."
16. Bennet and Shelmerdine, "Not the Palace of Nestor."
17. Stocker and Davis, "The Petropoulos Trench."
18. Stocker, "Deriziotis Aloni."
19. Nelson, "Architecture of the Palace."
20. Karapaniotou, Kosmopoulos, Stocker, and Davis, "Archaeological Investigations and Research"; Egan, "Early Mycenaean Wall-Paintings."
21. Vitale, Stocker, and Malapani, "Late Helladic IIB Pottery Deposit."
22. Entered into law on 28 June 2002.
23. See "Search Our Resources," American School of Classical Studies at Athens, <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/resources-landing/>.
24. Mackenzie, "Daybook of the Excavations at Phylakopi."

25. “The Durrës Regional Archaeological Project,” University of Cincinnati | scholar@uc, <https://scholar.uc.edu/collections/j96021ot?locale=en>.

5. SCIENCE AND THE MORTUARY LANDSCAPE OF PYLOS

1. Renfrew, *Emergence of Civilisation*, 17–26.
2. Renfrew, *Emergence of Civilisation*, 36–44, 485–89, 496–500.
3. McDonald and Rapp, *Minnesota Messenia Expedition*, 16.
4. Murphy et al., “Late Bronze Age Tombs.”
5. Cavanagh and Mee, *A Private Place*.
6. Kourouniotis and Blegen, “Excavations at Pylos, 1939.”
7. Davis and Stocker, “Lord of the Gold Rings”; Stocker and Davis, “Combat Agate”; Davis and Stocker, “Necklace.”
8. Stocker and Davis, “An Early Mycenaean Wanax at Pylos.”
9. Wright, “Emergence of Leadership.”
10. Schepartz et al., “No Seat at the Table?”
11. Bennet and Shelmerdine, “Not the Palace of Nestor.”
12. Hatzaki, “Turn of the Labyrinth.”
13. Alberti, “Late Minoan II–III_{A1} Warrior Graves.”
14. Nafplioti, “Late Minoan IB Destructions.”
15. Driessen and Macdonald, *The Troubled Island*; Watrous, *Minoan Crete*, ch. 9.
16. Tomas, “Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A.”
17. Lazaridis et al., “Genetic Origins,” 214.
18. Yannis Hamilakis, “Who Are You Calling Mycenaean?” *London Review of Books*, blog, August 10, 2017, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2017/august/who-are-you-calling-mycenaean>.
19. Lazaridis et al., “Genetic Origins,” 218.

6. MINOAN MISSIONARIES IN PYLOS

1. Jo Marchant, “This 3,400-Year-Old Greek Tomb Upended What We Thought We Knew about the Roots of Western Civilization,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2017, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/golden-warrior-greek-tomb-exposes-roots-western-civilization-180961441/>.
2. Marchant’s article was in press long before Trump was elected.
3. James Hooker (1931–1991), *Origin of the Linear B Script*, once argued that Linear B was not purely Greek but had been invented to serve trade as a lingua franca. Now see Salgarella, *Aegean Linear Script(s)*.
4. Broodbank, “Minoanisation.”
5. Gorogianni, Pavuk, and Girella, *Beyond Thalassocracies*.
6. Huxley, *Minoans in Greek Sources*.
7. Thucydides, Book I, 4, ed. Henry S. Jones; trans. by Davis.
8. Bacchylides, Ode I, 113–27, ed. Richard C. Jebb; trans. by Davis.
9. Caskey conducted campaigns at Ayia Irini between 1960 and 1969. The results have been published in twelve volumes. Caskey, “Excavations and Explorations, 1966–1970” and Caskey, “A Conspectus of the Pottery,” summarize the work.

10. Cummer and Schofield, *Ayia Irini: House A*.
11. Hymn to Apollo, ll. 388–99. With permission, we reproduce Rodney Merrill’s translation for the Center for Hellenic Studies.
12. Evans, *Shaft Graves and Bee-hive Tombs*, 49.
13. Sakellarakis, “Ο χαρακτήρας και η λειτουργία των νεοανακτορικών κτηρίων.”
14. Rutter, “Southern Triangles Revisited,” has proposed “dynasty” shifts ca. 1400 B.C., between the LH IIIA and LH IIIB phases.
15. Marinatos, “Μυρσινοχώρι,” 108, in Marinatos, *Ανασκαφαί*. Many clay sealings found in the final destruction levels of the Palace of Nestor had been impressed with much older hardstone seals and gold signet rings (Pini, *Tonplomben aus dem Nestorpalast*, 82–91; Krzyszkowska, *Aegean Seals*, 295–96). These also were likely recovered from Early Mycenaean graves, rather than having been treasured for centuries by families as heirlooms.
16. Galanakis, “Islanders vs. Mainlanders.”
17. Dietrich, “Uniformity and Change.”
18. Palaima, “Nature of the Mycenaean Wanax,” 122.
19. Palaima, “Nature of the Mycenaean Wanax,” 128n29.
20. Kilian-Dirlmeier, “Das Kuppelgrab von Vapheio,” 197–212.
21. An axe type of Near Eastern origin: Yasur-Landau, “From Byblos to Vapheio.”
22. Davis and Stocker, “Lord of the Gold Rings.”
23. Stocker and Davis, “Early Mycenaean Wanax.” See also Wiener, “Helladic Pairs,” for his important observations.
24. Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS) I 231, <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zaw/cms/>.
25. Powell, “Horns of Consecration.”
26. Marinatos, *Minoan Kingship*, 9.
27. Blakolmer, “Minoan Genius.”
28. Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 303–11.

EPILOGUE

1. Now see Bintliff, *Complete Archaeology of Greece*.
2. Bintliff, *Annales School and Archaeology*; Knapp, *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory*.
3. Valamoti, “More than Meets the Eye”; Malapani et al., *Excavations at POTA Romanou*.
4. Zangger et al., “Landscape Evolution and Site Preservation.”
5. Shelmerdine, *Perfume Industry of Pylos*.
6. Driessen, “Statements in Stone.”

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