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The Evolution of Power and Politics in the Mycenaean World and its Reflection in the Homeric Epic: *the Iliad*

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Title:	The Evolution of Power and Politics in the Mycenaean World and its Reflection in the Homeric Epic the <i>Iliad</i>
Abstract:	<p>This study tries to go beyond the boundaries of present day issues and examine the evolution of power and politics of the Mycenaean people during the Bronze Age. At each stage, be it big-man leadership, chiefdom or state based society I examine how power and social complexity increases and what were the reasons behind such a phenomenon. I start with some few considerations regarding developments during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and then I <i>jump</i> to the question of the “coming of the Greeks.” I argue that any explanation of the political life shall start from early stages; it is only then that we might get a measured insight in respect to the workings of political and social institutions. Furthermore, I think that present International Relations scholarship should give more importance to previous international political systems and therefore should go beyond 1648. I also think that archeological and especially anthropological studies can furnish indispensable tools in order to understand how present day political formations behave. By studying the Mycenaeans of the Bronze Age we can examine how a people coming from the Eurasian steppes started to initiate a civilization; how they integrated themselves within the Near Eastern political system; how they acted as a hub between northern parts of Europe and more advanced cultures e.g. Hittite Empire, Egypt, or Babylon; and how a people's culture or civilization may <i>perish</i> as it happened by the end of the Late Bronze Age. I finally turn to a few considerations regarding the Homeric epic the <i>Iliad</i>, which tells the story of a war between the Mycenaeans and the Trojans. The oral tradition is an important source for understanding the past and I think that Homer must be considered in respect to the history of the Mycenaeans. I argue that we should study the epic as politics as practice and then establish whether the epic may be a consistent reflection of the Mycenaean power politics of the Bronze Age as reconstructed from the Linear B tablets and archaeological remains. By studying the Bronze Age we may better understand how politics came into being or how power was institutionalized, how an international system was formed and why it did collapse.</p>
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Figure 1: Map of the Aegean and surrounding areas showing regions during the Bronze Age, (Tartaron, 2007, p. 85)

Introduction

Why the Mycenaeans¹ are important? Firstly, from the perspective of state-formation and transmission of culture the Mycenaean civilization was like a hub that linked the Near East and Europe. Many Near Eastern cultural elements were transmitted to Europe through the intermediary of the Mycenaeans. The political evolution of the Mycenaeans is also important when we try to understand the subsequent political evolution during classical Greece. Could there be a connection between the advent of democracy² and the developments taking place in the Greek Bronze Age? In this study I try to understand the evolution of power and politics within the Mycenaean world. How does power evolve throughout ages? I bring into the discussion segments from the Homeric Epic the *Iliad* in order to see how leaders interacted. During the Bronze Age Mycenaean bards told stories of great achievements, e.g. the Mycenaean victory against the Trojans or Odysseus's journeys and the exploration of the Mediterranean Sea that had a tremendous impact upon the following generations.

Secondly, from the perspective of international relations³, by studying the Bronze Age, the database of international relations may be expanded, and theories within the field be tested. What was the place of the Mycenaeans within the Near Eastern political system of the Bronze Age? How did the Near Eastern civilizations influence developments in southern Greece? The chronological spectrum that I cover is extremely huge. My interpretations may be at times fragmentary and contradictory and I am aware that many of the following arguments would not be as strong and clear as they should be. However, it is a diachronic perspective that would enable us to look upon the roots of the Mycenaean civilization and its development.

1 The sources for understanding the Mycenaean civilization are many; there is archaeological research, Linear B tablets, Homeric epics, foreign diplomatic documents, e.g. Hittite and Egyptian.

2 The clearest attestation that the Mycenaean world mattered for the classical Greeks are the Homeric epics themselves. The power politics that, without any doubt, existed during the Mycenaean age, I shall argue, prepared the ground for political theory. Any Greek, child or adult, who listened to the Homeric epics or read them was presented with a world of heroes as political actors. Whoever knew the Homeric epics was invited to political debate and political questions. Why shall Agamemnon rule over the Achaeans? It may be that Achilles is politically right when he challenges Agamemnon (Agamemnon fails to comply to the normative framework) but it may be that he is ethically wrong (he has the power to stop the slaughter of Achaeans by the Trojans, but in his pride, he does not). Through oral tradition people of the past managed to keep alive political questions that originated within the Mycenaean world, which transformed their thinking and enriched political theory.

3 International relations scholars have suggested to enlarge the database of international politics by studying the past, e.g.: BUZAN, BARRY and RICHARD LITTLE (1994), "The Idea Of "International System": Theory Meets History," International Political Science Review 15.3, WATSON, ADAM (1992), The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis (London and New York: Routledge).

I start with the question of the origins of the Greeks; and their Indo-European heritage. I propose that the Greeks arrived within the Greek mainland from outside, after or by the end of EH II (c. 2200). I follow Service's terminology – tribe, chiefdom, and state – to differentiate between stages of social complexity as evidenced in the archaeological record. My application of his model is simple and general, however, it is a powerful tool for the discussion of the “evolution” of political organization. When I use the term evolution it is to denote the development or change in social complexity, power, and social and political organization. I follow recent studies where archaeologists bring in anthropological constructions in order to understand the development of the Mycenaean states. I also discuss the Bronze Age international system and some international relations theories, e.g. neorealism and constructivism that may be useful to understand the eastern Mediterranean ca. 3500 years ago. Having done this, I will return to the question of reading the *Iliad* as an important source for anthropological research and as an indispensable source to understand the Mycenaeans of the Bronze Age.

My interest in the subject started from my concentration around the year 1648, peace of Westphalia and a change from religious inter-state politics to secular inter-state politics. It is argued that the modern-state system was established in 1648, and it is this that international relations studies. It presumes such a significant break with the past that it almost dis-considers it, as irrelevant to the IR database. Imbedded within such a view is the idea that whatever followed after 1648 evolved to such a degree that the nature of domestic politics and international politics achieved a different level. I acknowledge such difference, and I also acknowledge a certain break, but I shall argue that in order to expand our understanding of the world that we live in we should go behind 1648. We need to study other international systems that existed in the past in order to acknowledge the diversity of such systems.

I shall argue furthermore that 1648 is a pain in the belly of International Relations. Today there are important political actors other than states. With the end of the Cold War there are several political organizations which behave differently than states do. What 1648 argues is that religious interconnections between political entities lost importance and were replaced by new secular ones. 1648 may very well represent a certain change in respect to the nature of inter-states connections but that does not mean that religious interconnections lost importance or faded away. In any case, it occurred to me that before I shall try to understand the present world, I shall first try to understand the remote past.

Of course, it is also important to analyze politics from a diachronic perspective; to ask such questions as to how a political system came into being, how for example was democracy created in ancient Greece. It would also be rewarding to ask how did the Mycenaean political system affect the political evolution in Greece during the Dark Age and Classical Period. I think the *Iliad* is an important factor for the emergence of Greek political thought during the 5th century BC.

Current international relations studies focus mainly upon relations among nation-states. Their core issues were developed during the Cold War: power politics, balance of power between the US and the SU. Other political formations have been left out of the picture or international system. Since the fall of the SU we see a proliferation of diverse political formations or organizations based on *ethnos*, religion, terrorist organizations. Chabal et. al. argue that:

“While there is general awareness of these political groups and some information about the way in which they operate, their political significance has not yet been fully grasped, even less analyzed. There is no adequate political theory to account for these trends within contemporary societies ... Nor are current theories of international relations able to cope with the emergence of independent and informal non-state formations, which do not care about the existence of borders and act in defiance of the sovereignty of existing states. International law itself is helpless in the face of these networks without territory or clear organizational framework.”⁴

It is therefore necessary to extend the field of interest back into the past, to examine and understand other forms of cultural or political formations. The Mycenaean culture and its development is an exemplary case. The present variety of political organizations can be better understood if we take political life as a constant varying phenomenon. Any understanding of the present international system has to be based, I would claim, upon an understanding of past intersocietal relations. It is only then that we may be justified to present any such postulations as the “End of History”, the inevitability of a “World State”, or “the Clash of Civilizations”.

4 CHABAL, PATRICK, et al. (2004), "Beyond States and Empires: Chiefdoms and Informal Politics," Social Evolution & History 3.1: 25.

As Cioffi-Revilla⁵ argues “since international politics did not begin in A.D. 1648, as every social scientist knows, the real challenge is one of coherence and consistency in implementing the scientific enterprise: we should 'walk our talk,' not just pay lip service to the proposition that, of course, world politics antedates the Peace of Westphalia.” The first international political system according to Cioffi-Revilla was formed between ca. 5500 and 4000 BC in Mesopotamia consisting exclusively of chiefdoms. The interstate political system that evolved from the inter-chiefdom system is dated to ca. 3700 BC (Middle Uruk period). City-states first emerged in Sumer c.3500 BC. There are other such systems that should be taken into consideration; systems from various continents; Mesoamerica, China, etc. This would enlarge the database of international relations fostering debate and an enlarged understanding of international systems through space and time.

The period from 4000-3000 BC is called *protoliterate* where some villages developed into urban centers through accumulation of political power. In Mesopotamia, c.3500 BC these settled villages “became more complex and with their increase in political and military power, some became cities”. The cities were generally comprised of a temple complex and a palace. Urban life evolved with royalty, administrators, military, police, temple functionaries, and so on. The Sumerians in southern Iraq were the first builders of city-states.

5 CIOFFI-REVILLA, CLAUDIO (2001), "Origins of the International System: Mesopotamian and West Asia Politics, 6000 B.C. To 1500 B.C.," Annual Meeting of the Asor.

1. Some Preliminary Remarks

1.1 Bronze Age Chronology

Recent research based on radiocarbon dating and dendrochronology has significantly changed the traditional (*low*) Aegean chronology. Many date issues are still disputed however. In this study I use a *high* chronology as devised by S. Manning. The chronology of Bronze Age Aegean is based upon the research of A. Evans (Crete) and Blegen & Wace (mainland Greece). They divided it according to pottery phases. Here is a table showing both *low* and *high* dates:

Phase	EH I– EH II	EH II– EH III	EH III– MH I	MH I– MH II	MH II– MH III	MH III– LH I	LH I– LH II	LH II– LH IIIA	LH III A– LH IIIB	LH IIIB– LH IIIC	LH IIIC– SubMyc/PG
HI Dates B.C. (Manning 1995)	3100– 2650	2650– 2200	2200– 2000	2000– 1900	1900– 1750?	1750?– 1675	1675– 1600	1600– 1435	1435– 1360	1360– 1200	1200– 1065
Range	450	450	200	100?	150?	75	75	165	75	160	135
LO Dates B.C. (Warren and Hankey 1989)	3100– 2650	2650– 2200	2200– 2000	2000– 1850?	1850?– 1700?	1700?– 1600?	1600?– 1500?	1500?– 1390?	1390– 1300	1300– 1200	1200– 1065
Range	450	450	200	150?	150?	100?	100?	110?	90	100	135

Table 1: Table by J.C. Wright: Aegean Bronze Age pottery phases and high and low calendar dates.

EH refers to Early Helladic (3100-2000); MH to Middle Helladic (2000-1750); and LH to Late Helladic to (1675-1200). Helladic designates the mainland of Greece.

1.2 Short Preview to Greek Bronze Age Archeology and Homer

Late in the 19th century Heinrich Schliemann excavated many places both in Turkey and mainland Greece⁶. He excavated the site of Troy (Hissarlık), western Turkey and the acropolis of Mycenae (hence the name for the Mycenaean civilization⁷) on mainland Greece among others. His enthusiasm for archeology and Greek history was due to the Homeric Epics. He believed that the Homeric world actually had existed and as a wealthy businessman he gathered scholars and people and financed archaeological projects to prove his theory right. To the south of the Lion Gate and Granary at Mycenae, within fortification walls, he discovered a grave circle, Grave Circle A (GCA). To his amazement various precious objects were found. He believed that one of the golden masks

6 SCHOFIELD, LOUISE (2007), *The Mycenaeans* (The British Museum Press) 15.

7 The adjective Mycenaean refers to the whole culture and centers of the Greek mainland during the Late Bronze Age and it should not be regarded as referring particularly to the acropolis of Mycenae.

he found there, covering the face of a skull, (Grave-V⁸) was of Agamemnon himself. In a telegram to a Greek newspaper he noted “today I gazed upon the face of Agamemnon.”⁹

This turned out to be an exaggeration since the graves in GCA are dated roughly from 1675 to 1500 BC,¹⁰ while the Trojan War is believed to have taken place within the 13th century BC. In the 1950s a second older grave circle (Grave Circle B¹¹) was discovered by I. Papadimitriou and G. Mylonas outside of the fortification wall to the west of the Lion Gate.¹² Both, are generally considered as shaft graves, but some scholars argue that these circles were in fact tumuli or burial mounds¹³. Other tumuli were reported from Lerna and Pylos nearby region. During the Late Bronze age other forms of elaborate burials are attested, namely tholoi and chamber tombs.

Both at Troy and Mycenae H. Schliemann discovered precious items, made of gold and silver, weapons, golden masks, jewelry, decorated pottery etc. He and other archaeologists saw the Homeric world, both Agamemnon and Achilles, and Hector, Paris (or Alexandros), and Priam as real people and the Trojan War as a real historical event. However Schliemann's interpretation did not last long. Generally Aegean archaeologists believe that the Homeric epics may not be relied upon for the historical, social and political reconstruction of the Aegean Bronze Age. The Trojan War is nothing but a fiction they argue. Some scholars use the Homeric epics to reconstruct the social world of the 8th and 7th centuries BC; a period preceding the appearance of the Greek-polis. They analyze the Homeric epics in order to reconstruct the reasons behind the formation of city-states. Berent¹⁴ has recently argued that the Greek polis of the 5th century BC was in fact stateless. Such studies prove the diversity of views in respect to the Bronze, Iron, and Classical Ages of Greece.

Since Schliemann's time our knowledge in respect to the Mycenaean world of the Bronze Age has improved significantly. The regions of Thessaly, Messenia, Argolid, Laconia, and other have been thoroughly excavated. In 1952 the Linear B script (the language of the Mycenaeans, a Greek

8 There were 6 shaft graves within GCA, numerated by Roman numerals.

9 GERE, CATHY (2006), The Tomb of Agamemnon (Harvard University Press) 76.

10 The contents of the graves, it is argued, were contemporaneous with the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt namely of the 17th century BCE. Aegean chronology was constructed in relation to Egyptian and Mesopotamian chronologies.

11 The graves within GCA are numerated by the letters of the Greek alphabet.

12 SCHOFIELD, LOUISE (2007), The Mycenaeans (The British Museum Press) 33.

13 HAMMOND, NGL (1967), "Tumulus-Burial in Albania, the Grave Circles of Mycenae, and the Indo-Europeans," The Annual of the British School at Athens 62, HAMMOND, NGL (1974), "The Tumulus-Burials of Leucas and Their Connections in the Balkans and Northern Greece," The Annual of the British School at Athens 69.

14 BERENT, M. (2000), "Anthropology and the Classics: War, Violence, and the Stateless Polis," The Classical Quarterly 50.1.

dialect) used for administrative record keeping was deciphered by Michael Ventris. Galaty and Parkinson¹⁵ rightly state that “Mycenaean archeology never will experience another revolution as dramatic as that which occurred in the 1950s, when Michael Ventris and John Chadwick discovered that Linear B was an ancient form of Greek.” This important discovery eliminated the belief that the Mycenaean civilization was established on the Greek mainland by the Minoans from Crete. The Minoans used an older script called Linear A; using a syllabary script, which was used in turn by the Mycenaeans to record administrative issues in their own language. This advancement also made it clear that the Greeks must have been present within the Greek mainland at least since 1435 BC.

It is generally believed that Homer c. 760-740 BC¹⁶, a bard, wrote down the epics (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*) which he learned from his ancestors, through an orally tradition using a Greek alphabet based upon the Phoenician one. There were singers or bards during the Bronze Age, playing a lyre and reciting great deeds and spectacular events such as the Trojan War. Each bard memorized thousands of lines and recited such epics during feasts or ceremonies. There was no writing during the Dark Age. Homer himself lived in the 8th century BC, probably on the island of Chios or in Ionia (Asia Minor). He inherited this oral tradition from generations of bards that extended some 400 years back in time when the Trojan War is thought to have taken place (13th century BC). The oldest available copies of the Homeric epics are probably from the 5th century BC. In total there are around 700 years between the Trojan War and a copy of the Homeric epics. Thus, it may be argued that a bard could have wrongly remembered a place or a name or an instance, transmitting a different version to the following bard; and that there were errors in coping the epics and possible insertions from 8th century BC to 5th century BC. Besides this, linguists, archaeologists, and classicists have argued that many representation in Homer are actually from different centuries; incorporated by each bard as he saw fit in order to please the mind of his audience. “Detectable in the language, physical objects, institutions and geography described in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the divisions between these strata may not be as hard and rigid as physical strata; still they are clear and numerous enough to suggest that even Homer may have been 'stratified'.”¹⁷

While, I find Homeric political action, and its consequences as real, there is the question of where actually to locate the political organization present within the *Iliad*. In this study I will concentrate mainly upon the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles and the interrelations among the best of

15 GALATY, MICHAEL L. and WILLIAM A. PARKINSON (2007), "Mycenaean Palaces Rethought," *Rethinking Mycenaean Palaces II* (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology) 1.

16 FOX, ROBERT L. (2008), *Travelling Heroes: Greeks and Their Myths in the Epic Age of Homer* (Penguin Books) 384.

17 THOMAS, CAROL G. (1993), "The Homeric Epics: Strata or a Spectrum?," *Colby Quarterly* 29.3: 273.

the Achaeans (Mycenaeans). Could we deduce a political hierarchy from the *Iliad* present in a battle field (the Trojan War took place in Asia Minor) that might resemble that of kings ruling archaic states? This is a troublesome topic. To disentangle this problem there is a need to go back into history and to find the real Mycenaeans whom Homer is thought to represent. It is only a diachronic perspective that would bring to the fore a multitude of possible political settings. I will not only discuss how the Mycenaeans managed to form a state-based society, but I will also try to connect some of the things that have been discovered through archeology and anthropology with the events in Homer's *Iliad*.

During the Early Helladic (EH I and EH II) the Greek mainland saw the appearance of chiefdoms. However the EH II culture collapsed because of various factors that scholars still debate. Was it climate change and erosion leading to internal war or was it a violent intrusion of a people coming from outside? The MH culture stagnated until we see a steady increase in social complexity during MH III. During LHI and LHII we see the reappearance of chiefdoms and by LHIIIA palace-states are formed. Around 1435 BC the Minoan culture falls at the hands of the mainlanders (Mycenaeans) who extend their power over the Aegean.

The roots of Mycenaean civilization are complex and contain many elements. The Mycenaean language, a Greek dialect, derives from proto-Greek, a branch of the Indo-European language family. The Late Bronze Age mainland Greek culture also has its roots within the Minoan or Cretan as well as the Cycladean cultures. At Lerna (EH II, Argolid) a complex building was excavated, namely the House of the Tiles. It is destroyed at the end of EH-II as many other sites. Therefore a civilization contains of many up and/or down stages. History is complex and manifold and it does not follow a predefined or predestined path.

To understand this there is an urgent call for the involvement of many disciplines, comparative archeology, anthropology, political theory, and international political theory among others. Nonetheless, a methodological and theoretical problem arises when many disciplines are involved. Each discipline is made up of different streams of thought. Even streams of thought of a common discipline barely communicate with each other and cross disciplinary studies have remained a task of the adventurer. Within the discipline of archeology there is processual archeology, postprocessual archeology, cognitive archeology; in international relations there is realism, neorealism (or

structural realism), constructivism, world-systems theory; in anthropology there is functionalism, structuralism, neo-evolutionary theory etc. I testify that my attempt to understand the Mycenaean society is fragile. My knowledge of the disciplines in question is also limited. I hope that the ideas presented in this study will remain perpetual questions and sometime later I might see the futility of at least some of the arguments. Trial and error is a must. The hypotheses are provisional subject to criticism and further research.

My study about the development of the Mycenaean society can not start by the time the Greeks are presumed to have entered Greek mainland or to be concerned only about the social, political, and economic development taking place within the Greek mainland and Aegean region, but much earlier, because I assume that the people who gradually appeared from the North or East brought with them a belief system and their own level of social complexity and culture that has to be taken into consideration. The way I see it is like a spiderweb sewed with many fibers. Linguistic and anthropological studies have suggested that the people in question (Mycenaeans) were patriarchal and not matriarchal. The development of a patriarchal society will consistently look quite different than the development of a matriarchal society. The culture of Europe today is highly patriarchal and has its roots back within time. The Greeks as other related cultures were endowed by their Indo-European ancestors with a pantheon ruled by a powerful male god. John Porter draws attention to the similarity between the Greek god *Zeus*, the Latin *Jupiter*, and the Sanskrit *Dyaus Pitar*. They are all male ruling the cosmos from the almighty sky.

1.3 The Neolithic and Secondary Products Revolutions

During the Neolithic permanent agricultural settlements appear¹⁸. Before discussing theoretical issues and before the beginning of our discussion of the roots of the proto-Greek it would be useful to mention some important technological, social, and economic advances. The Neolithic revolution appeared in Anatolia (c. 10.000 BC) at Çatal Höyük, where agricultural societies evolved and from where it is believed that agriculture spread¹⁹ (demic diffusion or simply transmission of ideas).

18 Prof. Jouni Suistola indicated to me that before agriculture was invented there is some evidence for permanent settlements even when the economy was that of hunting and gathering, e.g. Natufian culture in Palestine.

19 There is a fierce debate going on in regard to the appearance of agriculture in Greece. Some scholars argue for an indigenous origin of agriculture in Greece. For the debate see: SÉFÉRIADÈS, MICHEL (2007), "Complexity of the Processes of Neolithization: Tradition and Modernity of the Aegean World at the Dawn of the Holocene Period (11-9 Kyr)," *Quaternary International* 167, KOTSAKIS, KOSTAS (2005), "Across the Border: Unstable Dwellings and

There is a change from hunting and gathering to agricultural production and domestication. These are important changes that made possible the emergence of social complexity and political centralization. There is a shift from an egalitarian society to a ranked society; a movement from sharing to hoarding.²⁰ “In both, the domestication of a cereal crop allowed a massive increase in population, first in village communities and later in towns and cities.”²¹ There is also another important advancement termed as *the secondary products revolution*²²:

“The 'secondary products revolution' thus separates two stages in the development of Old World agriculture: an initial stage of hoe cultivation, whose technology and transportation systems were based upon human muscle power, and in which animals were kept purely for meat; and a second stage in which both plough agriculture and pastoralism can be recognized, with a technology using animal sources of energy.”

The earliest domestic stock animals (sheep, goat, cattle) were domesticated during the Neolithic for their primary products (meat, hide, and bone, extracted from animals once in their lifetime) and that more intensive exploitation for their secondary products (milk, wool, and traction, repeatedly extracted from an animal through its lifetime) appeared in the Near East during the Chalcolithic (a period preliminary to the Bronze Age). The secondary products brought dramatic changes in economic and political organization across the Near East (during the Neolithic), and Europe (during the Early Bronze Age). During the Chalcolithic the earliest states emerged in the Near East while later in the Early Bronze Age chiefdoms emerged in Europe. Food production, mobility, local and inter-regional exchange increased considerably. “The Neolithic and initial domestic origins were still important, but were not sufficient to explain the changes leading to the evolution of complex societies.”²³ The secondary products were of course not introduced at the same time, their inception

Fluid Landscapes in the Earliest Neolithic of Greece," *(Un)Settling the Neolithic*, eds. DW Bailey, AWR Whittle and V Cummings (Oxbow Books Ltd), KOTSAKIS, KOSTAS (2001), "Mesolithic to Neolithic in Greece. Continuity, Discontinuity or Change of Course?," *Documenta Praehistorica* 28, RUNNELS, C (1995), "Review of Aegean Prehistory IV: The Stone Age of Greece from the Palaeolithic to the Advent of the Neolithic," *American Journal of Archaeology* 99.4, PERLÈS, C (2004), *The Early Neolithic in Greece: The First Farming Communities in Europe* (Cambridge Univ Press).

20 HALSTEAD, PAUL (1995), "From Sharing to Hoarding: The Neolithic Foundations of Aegean Bronze Age Society?," *Aegaeum* 12: *Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier (Université de Liège).

21 SHERRATT, ANDREW (1981), "Plough and Pastoralism: Aspects of the Secondary Products Revolution," *Economy and Society in Prehistoric Europe : Changing Perspectives [1997]* (Edinburgh University Press) 158.

22 Ibid. 160-61.. It was S. Bököni (1974) *History of Domestic Mammals in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest, Akademiai Kiado, 1974) who first proposed the concept of a secondary revolution. See GREENFIELD, HASKEL J. (2010), "The Secondary Products Revolution: The Past, the Present and the Future," *World Archaeology* 42.1: 45..

23 Ibid.: 31.

and spread is dependent upon many factors, such as environment and diffusion.

This model presents a framework to understand changes in scale. Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations appeared around fertile river valleys, Euphrates and Tigris and Nile Delta respectively. It is here that the first states are formed, according to Fried's terminology these are *pristine states*. Agriculture probably appeared in Greece during the 7th millennium BC while a considerable exploitation of secondary products probably occurred by the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (c. 3100 BC). Palace-state (*secondary-states*) appear in Greece only c. 1435 BC, around 2000 years after the emergence of the first states in the Near East and Egypt. It is therefore important to understand the roots of agriculture and use of secondary products in order to see some of the necessary factors leading to the emergence of state-based societies.

2. Theoretical Considerations

Here, I will try to make some introductory remarks in respect to anthropological theory and international relations theory. First I propose a model to study the development of Mycenaean *polities* and secondly I discuss two competing theories of international politics (neorealism and constructivism) that may be tested for their applicability to understand the international political system of the Near East during the Late Bronze Age and for example the reasons behind the Trojan War. There are a sufficient number of written documents (e.g. Amarna diplomatic letters) that may be used in order to analyze interaction among archaic states.

2.1 Anthropology and Neo-evolutionary Theory

How should one understand evolution? There has been a lot of debate in respect to the reliability of neo-evolutionary theory; e.g. for its support for unidirectionality and inevitability of increasing social complexity.²⁴ However, recent anthropological studies, although still maintaining important aspects of neo-evolutionary theory, have acknowledged alternative pathways to state formation.²⁵ In respect to the Aegean the path of Minoan state formation is significantly different from the path of Mycenaean state formation.²⁶

There is no universal *prime mover* in the process of increasing social complexity but a multitude of factors diverging throughout space and time. E. Service for example argues:

"Down with prime-movers! There is no single magical formula that will predict the evolution of every society. The actual evolution of the culture of particular societies is an adaptive process whereby the society solves problems with respect to the natural and to the human-competitive environment. These environments are so diverse, the problems so numerous, and the solutions potentially so various that no

24 GIDDENS, ANTHONY (1984), The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (University of California Press).

25 BLANTON, RICHARD E. , et al. (1996), "A Dual-Processual Theory for the Evolution of Mesoamerican Civilization," Current Anthropology 37.1.

26 PARKINSON, WILLIAM A. and MICHAEL L. GALATY (2008), "Secondary States in Perspective: An Integrated Approach to State Formation in the Prehistoric Aegean," American Anthropologist 109.1.

single determinant can be equally for all cases.”²⁷ .

Technological and agricultural production, in the context of evolution, is an *enabler* “without which an increase in size and density could not take place. But a necessity or enabler is not necessarily a mover.” Furthermore Service asks and responds “could technology be *sometimes* a determiner of evolutionary changes in certain other aspects of culture? Yes. Could competition or conflict among individuals be *sometimes* ... ? Yes. Could competition or conflict among societies be *sometimes* ... ? Yes. Could consciously formed social and political schemes and plans be *sometimes* ... ? Yes. Are there unconscious “structures” of human thought and cognition that *sometimes* ... ? Nobody Knows.”²⁸

It follows therefore that one should concentrate on technological advances and production of food, conflict and competition between individuals on one hand, and between societies on the other, and upon particular factors unique to the society in question. Mycenaean *polities*²⁹ interacted and competed with each other, thus fostering social change. They also competed with *polities* outside the Greek mainland. Such interactions should be understood from the perspective of power relations, where the sources of power are both allocative and authoritative. Throughout the prehistory and history of the Aegean Bronze Age we can detect shifts in power from one center to another. We can also see gradual accumulation of power or radical or sudden accumulation of power, e.g. Mycenae. Interactions both inter-human and inter-societal may also be understood as within the framework of conscious actions, where individuals compete for status, power, and prestigious objects.

Rice defines 'the political' as the “relations, assumptions, and contests pertaining to power.” “Political organization then refers” argues Rice “to the hierarchically structured offices (or roles) of power and authority existing within, between, and among *polities* and their elites, whereby decisions about internal and external relations (including those with the supernatural realm) and allocation of resources (human, material, and ideational) are made and implemented”³⁰ A primary concern must be the issue of how power is generated, here I rely on the work of Giddens:

27 SERVICE, ELMAN R. (1968), "The Prime-Mover of Cultural Evolution," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 24.4: 406.

28 Ibid.: 407-08.

29 I use the term *polity* to designate any “autonomous” politically organized society.

30 RICE, PRUDENCE M. (2009), "On Classic Maya Political Economies," Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 28: 70.

"Power ... is generated in and through the reproduction of structures of domination. The resources which constitute structures of domination are of two sorts – allocative and authoritative. The Marxist description of human history sounds like a sequence of enlargements of the 'forces of production'. The augmenting of material resources *is* fundamental to the expansion of power, but mutation of authoritative resources, and the latter are undoubtedly at least as important in providing 'levers' of social change as the former."³¹ " ... authoritative resources are every bit as 'infrastructural' as allocative resources are"³²

Such an approach is clearly against Marxist thinking, since it does not define infrastructure (material world) as the base or motor of a superstructure (social life). In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, K. Marx argued that:

"The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life."³³

It should be stated therefore that agency and structure should be given equal importance. Structuration theory as proposed by A. Giddens argues against a Marxist understanding of social dynamics. In this study both sources of power are important: allocative resources (the material goods that can be stored as surpluses for building power); authoritative resources (the retention and control of information or knowledge). Therefore sources of power are both material (production forces) but also ideological and authoritarian (inter-human relations). Each of these work and collaborate together; primacy is given to neither of them. As a preliminary remark I should argue for the importance of trade, production forces, such as cultivation of olive, wheat, and wine as allocative resources and ideological e.g. *wanax*³⁴ ideology as an authoritative resource. Certain aspects of authoritative resources can be detected from symbolic representations of power, e.g. lion gates, griffins, sanctuaries, feasting. It is in the *Iliad* that we can see a world of inter-human

31 GIDDENS, ANTHONY (1984), The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (University of California Press) 260.

32 Ibid.

33 Quoted in EARLE, TIMOTHY (1994), "Political Domination and Social Evolution," Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity, Culture and Social Life, ed. Tim Ingold 946.

34 According to Kilian (1988) the ideology of kingship or *wanax* evolved from the beginning of the Late Helladic.

relations; how a king or ruler acts in respect to his equals and subordinates in order bring about a change or settle a dispute. Within the discipline of political science power is probably the most important:

“Politics, as a theoretical study, is concerned with the relations of men, in association and competition, submission and control, in so far they seek, not the production and consumption of some article, but have their way with their fellows ... What men seek in their political negotiations is power...”³⁵

But it is anthropology that tries to understand how power evolves within cultural frameworks throughout space and time. It is therefore important to study power and politics as a continuously changing phenomenon. Now, let us turn to the terminology proposed by Service in understanding the evolution of political organization. it should be taken into consideration however that this neo-evolutionary model has been under serious scrutiny³⁶:

	Bands	Tribes	Chiefdoms	States
Population	25-50	100's to 1000's	1000's	100,000's
Settlements	mobile, low population densities	semi-permanent	more than one permanent community	many permanent communities
Subsistence strategy	Food collecting	Horticulture, pastoralism	Non-mechanized agriculture	Intensive agriculture, trade
Economy	Generalized reciprocity	Reciprocity, some redistribution	Redistribution	Market
Social structure	Egalitarian, no institutionalized legal or political structure; situational leadership	Incipient status differences, but not rigid or permanent	Ranked lineages	Clearly defined classes; highly stratified
Political System	Non-centralized; decision by consensus; power by influence; informal and temporary leaders	Non-centralized; some part-time officials such as big-men or age-grades; power by skills, knowledge; “achieved status”	Centralized, but general authority; based on birth with divine legitimacy; “ascribed status”	Centralized authority, with formal offices and multiple governing bodies; power based on law

Table 2: The evolution of political organizations according to Elman Service.

35 Catlin, 1927. LASSWELL, HAROLD D. and ABRAHAM KAPLAN (1950), *Power and Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 75.

36 PEEBLES, CRISTOPHER S. and SUSAN M. KUS (1977), "Some Archaeological Correlates of Ranked Societies," *American Antiquity* 42.3, WRIGHT, HENRY T. (1984), "Prestate Political Formations," *On the Evolution of Complex Societies: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer*, ed. Timothy Earle (Malibu: Undena (for the UCLA Dept. of Anthr.)).

Such a model is useful for its generality; it is at least a general model that presumes a certain development, upon which we may bring our own impressions and criticisms. It offers a ground for asking-questions. M.H. Fried, in regard to the usefulness of definitions, concepts, or terms argues:

“It is a matter of utmost difficulty – probably impossible – to offer universally accepted solutions. For this reasons alone, it seems wise to give up the belief that definitions must be true or false; for the purposes suggested here they are better evaluated as more or less useful.”³⁷

In respect to the evolution of Mycenaean *polities* I should note that the economy of the *palace-states* is mainly redistributive although there might be some small markets outside a palace's control acting according to supply and demand. It has also been suggested that during the palace-states (LH III), there was an increase in tribute and taxation. During the chiefdom level a ruler has general authority and the goods and agricultural products may be more widely distributed to whole segments of the chiefdom. There is also a difference between wealth finance and staple finance being made during the Mycenaean state level. A staple finance would presume more centralization of almost all parts of the economy, while wealth finance refers to partial control over foodstuffs and presumes a concern mainly for prestigious objects and goods. The palatial-states during the LH III were mainly concern with wealth finance rather than with the control of every segment of the economy under their territorial control.

The archaeological record suggests significant difference in terms of settlement pattern, architecture, objects uncovered, and mortuary practice that may be classified socially and politically into stages. I understand the evolution of the Mycenaean *polities* in three general stages: tribal organization (EH III, MHI, MH II), chiefdom (MH III, LHI, LHII), and state organization (LHIII). I should also note that each society (either from Messenia, Argolid, or Laconia) has its own unique course, therefore when you try to put it into general stages, particular traits which nonetheless should be important might escape notice,. It is only during LHIII that we may confidently speak of some cultural homogeneity. Before these different *polities* had different spheres of interaction and different trajectories. Still, there seems to be some general uniformity even during the early stages of evolution, namely the rectangular building called the *megaron* with its posts and hearth. One of the problems is that the structures of the buildings that were present during the MH III and LHI-II

37 FRIED, MORTON H. (1967), "The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology," 4.

were destroyed with the construction of the palaces over them. Nonetheless, those are few structures that might tell us something about how a society was organized during the early stages (e.g. from Menelaion in Laconia). Wiencke³⁸ argues that “the criteria by which the ethnographer establishes the degree of specialization are not generally available to the archaeologist” who must look for functionally divided spaces, workshops, production, and for possible identifiers for the restriction of access to resources. For example, archaeologists analyze structural remains, measure the length and elaboration, identify rooms for storage and the like, and reconstruct various social, political, and economic, aspects, e.g. was there a throne? where there seals?

Chieftdom is defined by Cioffi-Revilla³⁹ as a “system of government of ranked society with centralized leadership, undifferentiated institutions, and claimed but unreliable control over territory” while a state as a “system of government of a ranked and stratified society with centralized (and often hereditary) leadership, differentiated institutions with authoritative decision-making, and putatively reliable control over territory and its resources.” Here I present a table in respect of various studies that divide the evolution of political organization during the Bronze Age into stages:

Phase	MH III	LHI	LHII	LHIIIA	LHIIIB
Dates	1750-1675	1675-1600	1600-1435	1435-1360	1360/1300-1200
J.C. Wright (1995)	Local societal groups being variously in transition to the chieftdom .		Chieftdoms on a continuum of varying complexity & emerging states.	Mycenaean palace-states .	
K. Kilian (1988)		Proto-Palatial Period: quasi-wanax ideology ; some of the institutions of the wanax-system are operating.		Palatial Period: Wanax ideology operating.	
Parkinson & Galaty (2008)	Chieftdoms /incipient chieftdoms; (peripheral to Crete)	Incipient states : first-generation secondary state, formed via direct interaction with Crete; (peripheral to Crete, Near East, and Egypt)		State (incorporates Crete; semiperiphery to Near East and Egypt)	

Table 3: The evolution of Mycenaean political organization according to different authors.

38 WIENCKE, M.H. (1989), "Change in Early Helladic II," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93.4: 506.

39 (Cioffi-Revilla, 2001).

The political and social evolution of the Mycenaean societies also should be understood from the perspective of world-systems. In their study Parkinson and Galaty, propose a model where during the MH and LH I-II period chiefdoms or incipient states are peripheral to Cretan palace-states. There is a core-periphery relationship. From the the core (Crete) various technological and administrative systems irradiate towards periphery (mainland Greece). As social complexity increases, the Mycenaeans develop the means to interact with other cultures from the Near East. During the LHIII the Mycenaeans succeed to conquer the island of Crete and control much of the Aegean. The core-periphery relationship should not however be understood as envisaged by Wallerstein in his discussion of the modern world system, where a periphery is economically depended or/and exploited by core areas. In this study, I simply employ world-systems theory, to understand the transmission of technology and knowledge from core areas, and the framework of trade relations. The core (Egypt, Near East) was developed enough to stimulate economic developments outside of its territorial boundaries.

2.2 Neorealism versus Constructivism

Usually I see the world as a socially constructed entity; there is no immutable or unchangeable social structure. At the heart of international relations theory is the question of why human beings or states wage war and why at times there is peace. Realists have argued for the selfishness or greed of state-actors. Human beings are selfish and seek to maximize their interest at the expense of others. They cheat, lie and wage wars. Waltz⁴⁰ argued against such a view and proposed what may be termed a structural-realism. It is the anarchical structure that forces states to behave the way they do. There is no centralized authority; there is a self-help system in which states try to survive. There is a balance of power where states ally or wage wars in order to keep a hegemony to rise to power. The question is however whether the same anarchical structure existed throughout history. Today there is the industrialized capitalist world quite different mechanical and agricultural worlds of the past. There is a difference in culture, religion, and many other things.

However, Waltz⁴¹ argues that “the enduring anarchic character of international politics accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of international life through the millennia, a statement that will

40 WALTZ, KENNETH N. (1979), *Theory of International Politics* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company).

41 Ibid. 66.

meet with wide assent". While a system-wide anarchical structure (absence of centralized authority) seems to be present throughout space and time constraining and influencing the behavior of political actors, such an anarchical structure should be understood I shall argue as a construction of political actors and their identities; and not as a framework independent of political actors' identities and cultural forms throughout history. Wendt⁴² has argued that *anarchy is what states make of it* and not the other way around namely, states are what anarchy makes of them. Such a view is extremely useful in understanding how archaic states behaved, interacted, made coalitions and waged wars. A. Wendt argues for intersubjective knowledge that forms identities and interests, which in turn affect behavior. Therefore behavior changes as identities change. For K. Waltz identities do not matter; what matters is simply the anarchical structure that forces states to behave in predictable manner. According to Waltz the anarchical structure constrains processes and practice. Wendt claims that processes create or generate structure. The identity of a political actor is indeed an important aspect. The constructivist perspective, I think, is also more flexible and applicable to past societies as well while neorealism is mainly applicable to the modern Westphalian system.

There is the intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests in the system. It must be so the case, since interdependency does matter in international politics, by dropping the second component (the nature of the domestic political system) neorealism is unable to explain the current modification or changes in international politics. What if there was centralized authority and war still occurred? Why does civil war occur? Steve Forde argues that 'anarchy by itself does not account for the political consequences neorealism describes, for example there can be an anarchic structure inhabited by angels. The difference in identity between the Mycenaeans and Minoans has always intrigued Aegean scholars. While the style employed in making-frescoes is the same in both Minoan and Mycenaean palaces, there is little representation of Minoan warriors on walls, while Mycenaean palaces, ceramics, are plenty with representations of warriors.

(i) Fortification walls have been found in Crete, however they predate the Minoan palaces which lack fortification. John Porter suggests that this lack of fortification arises from Minoan reliance upon naval power. (ii) Mycenaean art often contains representations of soldiers, weapons, chariots, and military exploits while Minoan art focuses on scenes from nature, religious ritual, and daily life, with relatively few instances of military motifs. Therefore we have two distinct types of civilizations,

42 WENDT, ALEXANDER (1992), "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," International Organization 46.2.

one that is militaristic and the other that is more peaceful.

Therefore, it may be argued, identity is important in understanding the causes of war. In the end it is not the state apparatus that keeps order or peace, but it is the expanded field of the norms, and their implementation within the psychology of the individuals, forming the new culture. As Wendt argues, neorealism does not predict why some states are friends or foes. These can be explained, Wendt argues, by the intersubjective knowledge among states and by how one actor perceived the identity or intentions of the other. States act on the basis of meaning that objects (other states, problems etc.), have for them and not necessarily in terms of the number of weapons each states has (distribution of capabilities).

3. The EH II Culture and its Collapse

In this chapter I focus on the social complexity of the EH II culture and then discuss the reasons behind its collapse.

3.1 The EH II culture

In the graph below the distribution of sites may be seen from the Peloponnese throughout the EH, MH, and LH phases. It is important to note also that political evolution may at times be impeded or even reversed.

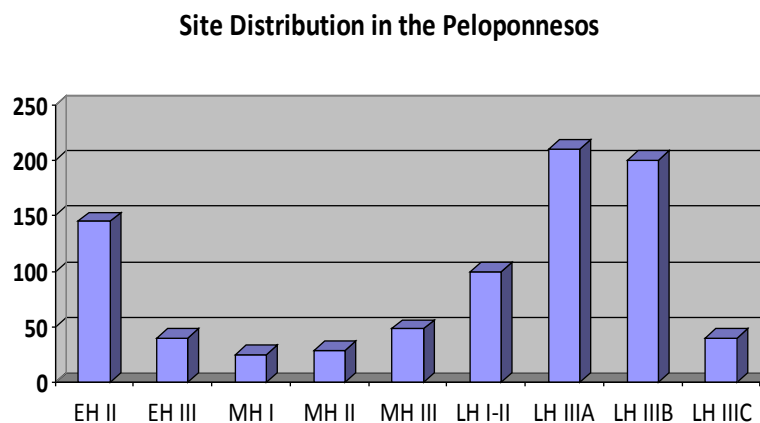


Figure 2: Graph of site distributions for North-East Peloponnese, Laconia, and South-West Messenia, after J. C. Wright (2008, 234).

An increase in population during EH-I is attested in the areas with the most fertile soil, e.g. southern Greece. Therefore one of the requirements of social development is based upon the fertility of land:

“The development to a more complex society was “essentially one from an abundance of small egalitarian settlements in EH-I and early EH-II ... through a period of gradual concentration of power and population in certain central places, each with a surrounding cluster of small dependent sites ... We have no evidence to show that there was very much political differentiation as yet among sites, or social ranking among persons, in EH I or even in the earliest EH II” (Wiencke 1989, 499-502).

Among the activities that might have led to an increase in social complexity the following may be enumerated: terracing for agriculture or for the prevention of erosion; exploitation of more territory; crop diversification such as vine and olive; introduction of the plow and beasts of burden; increased herds of sheep and goat; dairy products, regional exchange, trade in obsidian (especially found on Melos), millstones, and metal; ship technology.

One of the essential feature of such centers that emerged during the EHII are the so-called corridor houses: Lerna in the Argolid (House of the Tiles, Lerna-III), at Akovitika in Messenia, at Kolonna on the island of Aegina (Weisses Haus), at Boiotian Thebes, and probably at Zygouries in Corinthia. The House of Tiles and Weisses Haus each have a predecessor, Building BG (Lerna III), and Haus am Felsrand respectively. This suggests a similar architectural tradition from earlier times.⁴³

The arrangement of the settlements, and the complexity of the buildings, indicate a powerful class that had the role of coordinating the administrative, political and economic activity. The corridor house from Lerna⁴⁴ is interpreted to represent either (i) the residence of powerful families along with workshops and storerooms. These families control production, sustain and coordinate the building of roads, e.g.: Tirynthian “Rundbau”, ensure trading of goods under a system of seals; or (ii) with the discovery of 143 clay sealings in a room of the *House of Tiles*, it is thought that it was a public building of an administrative and economic character. The main room of a corridor house is generally equipped with a central clay hearth of a 1.5 meter in diameter. Its rim is elaborately decorated by a clay cylinder seal.

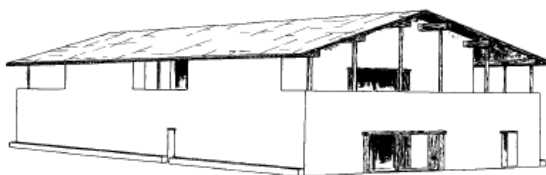


Figure 4: Reconstruction of the House of Tiles (Lerna) EHII, (Wiencke, 2000, p. 310).

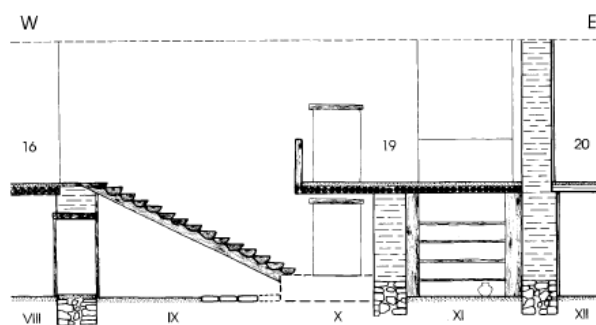


Figure 3: House of Tiles, Rooms VIII-XII.

43 SHAW, JOSEPH W. (1987), "The Early Helladic II Corridor House: Development and Form," American Journal of Archaeology 91.1: 64.

44 WIENCKE, M.H. (2000), Lerna: A Preclassical Site in the Argolid. Results of the Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens IV: The Architecture, Stratification, and Pottery of Lerna Iii (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

The change that brought the appearance of the corridor houses goes back to later Neolithic and to earlier times of EH-II. The background of this change is well summarized by Wiencke in her essay *Change in Early Helladic II*.⁴⁵ The gradual complexity of the sites suggests urbanization, thus an increase in population. Increased agricultural exploitation and the introduction of bronze bring about dramatic changes intensifying exchange-networks with a wide involvement of cultivators, craftsmen and traders under the governance of some chiefdom system.

The size of the houses, the exterior benches, the existence of a hearth in some of the houses suggest that “groups of people might have gathered in them”. If compared with other buildings of the era, their size, the discovery of sealings (at Lerna III), the occasional existence of a second story suggest a socioeconomic function and possible elite residence. In the image presented above, we thus, have clusters of emerging and more advanced equal chiefdoms. By the end of EH-II the centers along with their corridor houses, with their monumental architecture suggesting an incipient civilization were doomed to destruction and this architectural type disappeared. Likewise, it should be noted that the EH-II chiefdom society under various reasons collapsed, and that it was only in LH that the more evolved Mycenaean society appeared.

3.2 Reasons behind EH II Culture's Collapse

It has been suggested that the EH II culture collapsed (ca. 2200 BC) as a result of a violent intrusion of a new people into the Greek mainland. It has been argued that these people were actually the Greeks or proto-Greeks, an Indo-European people.⁴⁶ However, there are many theories which do not agree with this date for the coming of the Greeks. For example, Renfrew argued that the Indo-European people dispersed from their homeland in Anatolia along with the dispersal of agricultural technology, around 7000 BC. J. Coleman proposes that the Greeks did not actually enter the Greek mainland c. 2200 BC but at the beginning of the EH, ca. 3200 BC, and that their intrusion was not violent.⁴⁷ Drews⁴⁸ proposed a scenario where a warrior class of Indo-European origin (the Greeks)

45 WIENCKE, M.H. (1989), "Change in Early Helladic II," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93.4: 497.

46 CASKEY, JOHN L. (1973), "Greece and the Aegean Islands in the Middle Bronze Age," *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol.2, Pt.1, *History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region C.1800-1380 B.C.*, eds. IES Edwards, C.J. Gadd, NGL Hammond and E Sollberger, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), CASKEY, JOHN L. (1960), "The Early Helladic Period in the Argolid," *Hesperia* 29.3.

47 COLEMAN, JOHN E. (2000), "An Archaeological Scenario for The "Coming of the Greeks" Ca. 3200 Bc," *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 28.1-2.

48 DREWS, ROBERT (1988), *The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the near East* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

invaded the Greek mainland during the 17th century BC⁴⁹ establishing themselves for example at Mycenae, where the rich Shaft Graves have been discovered. J. Makkay argues that the Greeks arrived in the Greek mainland probably after 2200 BC, but he concludes that the builders of the Shaft Graves from Mycenae, were Indo-Iranian warriors who brought in the chariot and horse, but whose language was faded under the pressure of the already present Greeks. These are only a few examples of the theories that have been proposed.

In 2007, D.W. Anthony published a book entitled *The Horse, the Wheel and Language: how the Bronze-age riders from the Eurasian steppes shaped the modern world*, where he connects linguistic research with archaeological research in settling the matter for the Proto-Indo-European homeland and proposes a chronology for the dispersal of the Indo-European branches. Research based on the method of glottochronology has shown that the period from 2400 to 2200 BCE is the minimal age for the separation of Greek from late Proto-Indo-European language. Proto-Greek might be dated at the latest between about 2000 and 1650 BC. Thus, based on linguistic research, the earliest possible date for the coming of the Greeks is c. 2400 BC while the latest possible date is 17th century BC.⁵⁰ If we follow this interpretation we should concentrate on Caskey's suggestion, Drews suggestion or Makkay's suggestion. I think Drews' theory is not persuasive, since there is clear evidence for the continuation of material culture starting from EH III to MH III. The Shaft Graves from Mycenae may be derived from local mortuary practices. Tumuli are already present in Greece during MH II (1900-1750). Therefore the phase that we should concentrate on is EH II and EH III as a possible period for the coming of the Greeks. The majority of Aegean scholars argued for 2200 BC as a convincing date for the arrival, however, more recent research has diminished credibility in this date. Let us first see how the 2200 BC date was established by archaeologists and linguists.

Paul Kretschmer,⁵¹ by studying the Greek language from a comparative linguistics perspective, proposed that place names of the Aegean that ended in *-nthos*, *-ssos*, or *-ndos* (e.g. Corinth, Knossos) were Anatolian in origin and not Indo-European. Furthermore, he assumed that there were probably three Greek invasions (Ionian, Achaean (Aeolic and Arcado-Cypriote), and Dorian) into

49 18th c. according to the high chronology.

50 MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2003), Origins of the Proto-Greeks and Proto-Anatolians from a Common Perspective (Budapest).

51 Paul Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, 1896 (Introduction into the history of the Greek language, 1896) and *Zur Geschichte der griechischen Dialekte*, 1909 (The History of the Greek Dialects), quoted in (Drews, 1988, notes 6. and 19.)

the Aegean during the Bronze Age, the Ionian invasion ca. 2000 BCE and Dorian invasion ca. 1200 BCE (drews,8). “The English "labyrinth" comes from the Greek *labyrinthos*. The ending of this word (-*inthos*) associates it with a family of words that predate the Greek language: that is, it survives from the (unknown) language spoken by indigenous people of the region prior to the arrival of the "Greeks" (compare below). It closely resembles another Greek "loan word," *labrys* (a type of double ax).

Relying on linguistics and myth-making comparisons K.J. Beloch and Eduard Meyer “regarded 2000 BC as the latest possible date for the Greeks’ arrival in Greece” (drews, 9). In the early 20th century, James Breasted, K.J. Beloch, Eduard Meyer among others and I.M. Diakonoff (1985) saw the Indo-European dispersal as an expansion of pastoral tribes seeking pasture for their flocks. Diakonoff argues that the motive behind their dispersal was the exhaustion of the steppe they inhabited thus being forced to resettle within grassy plains.

Wace and Blegen, during the early decades of the 20th century, argued that “it must be admitted from the evidence at present before us, that there is a distinct break between the two, Early Helladic Ware disappearing almost completely on the advent of Minyan” ca. 2000 BC (Wace & Blegen, 1916-1918). The distinction between the Early Helladic to Middle Helladic was established by the two scholars with the appearance of Minyan Ware at Orchomenos, Boetia, Attica, the Peloponnese and elsewhere. Later on, in 1928 did Carl Blegen in association with the linguist J.B. Haley, relying upon the work of previous German linguists such as Paul Kretschmer and August Fick, tie the “distinct break” and “new cultural strain” between EH and MH to the coming of the Greeks, that being in c. 2000 BC.⁵² What they said was mainly that mainland Greece, the Aegean, Crete and Anatolia were more-or-less populated by a common culture before Greeks arrived. However, since ca. 2000 BC mainland Greece developed, they argued, new features such as Minyan Ware; apsidal houses, tumuli, and hammer-axes etc. By linking non-Greek place names with archeological remains such as pottery it was concluded that there existed a cultural homogeneity in the area until 2000 BC; a date after, Greek mainland culturally diverges from Crete.

In 1952, John Caskey began excavations at Lerna, in the Argolid, “a town that may well have been

52 BLEGEN, CW (1928), "The Coming of the Greeks: II. The Geographical Distribution of Prehistoric Remains in Greece," American Journal of Archaeology 32.2, HALEY, JB (1928), "The Coming of the Greeks: I. The Geographical Distribution of Pre-Greek Place-Names," American Journal of Archaeology 32.2.

the most important EH center in all of Greece.” There he discovered Minyan Ware already during EH III phase. Minyan Ware was also attested from other places. He therefore shifted the date for the coming of the Greeks backwards to 2200 BC. Sites in the Argolid, Attica, and southern Laconia seemed to have been destroyed ca. 2200 BC between EH II and EH III. It was therefore believed that there was a violent intrusion.

“Transition from the Early to the Middle Bronze Age in Aegean lands came about gradually at some places but suddenly and with violence at others. There can be no doubt that new people came into the land. The process of change, which is reflected by archaeological evidence from many parts of the region, cannot have been simple. Rather, as was generally the case when migrations took place, the newcomers arrived in groups of various sizes, probably over an appreciable period of time. The people whom they found in possession also varied in the size and prosperity of their communities, some ready to resist while others deemed it necessary or prudent to make terms with the foreigners. Unquestionably the immigrants in the present instance were strong and the pressure of the movement was unrelenting.”⁵³

Therefore let me summarize briefly some of the sites considered by Caskey⁵⁴ to be invaded, burned, or resettled: **Argissa** on the Peneus River in Thessaly: A fire destroyed the town at the end of the Early Bronze Age, and over the ashes there are remains of at least seven successive rebuildings. FIRED and RESETTLED; **Corinth**: In the central area of the city itself, earlier settlements seem to have ended abruptly with EH II, but other places in the vicinity continued to be occupied. ABANDONED.; **Korakou**: (Corinthia) The sixth stratum of EH was covered by ASHES of a fire that had DESTROYED the houses; this was followed by three MH levels. (grey Minyan, black Argive Minyan, and the coarser varieties of Matt-painted wares were dominant, later followed by yellow Minyan and Matt-painted pots); **Lerna**: Burned at the end of EH II, settled anew in EH III, and occupied continuously in the Middle Bronze Age. “Grey Minyan pottery, bored stone hammer-axes, and apsidal houses appear here in EH III” then later on Matt-painted, Argive Minyan, and lustrous-patterned wares came into use; **Asea**: in Arcadia inhabited by new settlers after the place had been destroyed by fire in a late phase of EH, (Black Minyan ware, chiefly of Argive type, was

53 CASKEY, JOHN L. (1973), "Greece and the Aegean Islands in the Middle Bronze Age," The Cambridge Ancient History. Vol. 2. Pt. 1, History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region C.1800-1380 B.C., eds. IES Edwards, CJ Gadd, NGL Hammond and E Sollberger, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 171.

54 Ibid.

attested, later on Matt-painted ware but scarce, incised coarse ware of the 'Adriatic' (mainly at Malthi, in Messenia) kind is abundant). In **Laconia** some sites had been inhabited in EH times, but an appreciable number of the older sites were given up and new were chosen, frequently on high ground.

This theory has been strong for around 3 decades; the archaeologists who once might have sustained it, are today skeptical towards it. It is therefore important to present some of the arguments against this theory. There were probably two loosely linked networks of interaction and exchange, one in central and southern Greece, the Aegean islands, and western Anatolia and the other along the Adriatic coast and western Greece. Competition for raw materials between these networks could have led to violent conflicts over the distribution of resources. I believe that this theory is incapable of answering the reasons behind the EH-II collapse. Even if there was an internal war because of resources there must have been losers and winners. However there is no indication of any site on mainland Greece to continue its previous evolution. The gradual expansion of a new people would however explain the reduction in trade for example. The trading networks must have been based upon close elite family relationships or various clans.

Some scholars have argued that the decline in the distribution of sites during EH-III was the result natural causes. Evidence from ice cores on Mt. Kilimanjaro and dust deposits in Oman suggest a 300-year-long drought in Africa affecting the Mediterranean and the Near East. Such a drought could lead to a scarcity of resources⁵⁵ thus forcing groups of people into violent conflicts.⁵⁶ Climate change will not explain it either, because several centers within the Cyclades continued their evolution. For example, Kolonna on the Aegina island "displays a magnitude of wealth unparalleled until the shaft graves of Circle B at Mycenae in MH III."⁵⁷

The attested climate change during the late third millennium BC is attested in many parts of the Mediterranean. It has been suggested that during the same phase (c. 2200 BC), the Old Kingdom of Egypt, and the Akkadian Empire, and other Near Eastern centers saw their demise as EH II culture. A series of cultural regressions or collapses have been reported from around the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The water level of the Nile decreased around 2180 BC. An inscription of from Ankhtifi's

55 LeBlanc argues that the overwhelming reason for wars is what he calls *resource stress* (especially food stress), e.g. the shortage of resources: LEBLANC, STEVEN A. and KATHERINE E. REGISTER (2003), Constant Battles: Why We Fight (St. Martin's Griffin) 69-71.

56 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 232.

57 Ibid. 242.

tomb at Mo 'alla describes the phenomenon as such: “all upper Egypt was dying of hunger, to such a degree that everyone had come to eating his children, but I managed that no one died of hunger in this nome [Ankhtifi was nomarch over Hierakonpolis and Edfu] ... the entire country had become like a starved grasshopper, with people going to the north and to the south in search of grain.”⁵⁸ This scarcity in water and the resulting famine probably was the main factor that led to the end of Dynasty VI and beginning of the First Intermediate period in Egyptian history, referred to as an age of chaos. About the same time the Akkadian Empire had fallen apart. Byblos and other sites from Syria and Palestine, the wealthy citadel of Troy II, and Lerna from Greece were burned and destroyed. A similar scenario could have happened in c. 2200 BC in Greece. But such a famine would not only trigger internal conflict but also set migrations in motion.

Krementski⁵⁹ from the Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences has presented arguments in favor of climate change during the second half of the third millennium (4500-4300 BP) led to the collapse of cultures from the North-west of the Black Sea, and intrusion of nomadic people. According to Krementski “nomad economy dominated the steppe belt thanks to the domestication of the horse” (p. 367). The climate oscillations in the area led to significant changes in vegetation. This had an important impact upon the cultures of the region. From this perspective climate change could have led to a dispersal of nomads in search for plains. (see also Chernykh, p. 100). This proves that 2200 BC was not only a phenomenon taking place within the Near East and southern Europe, but also in Central Europe. Therefore, although there could have been drought and erosion, these do not obviate the possibility of the coming of a new people but actually enforces it.

In the Cyclades for example only minor disruptions occurred and some minor ones on Crete, but development continued on a considerable scale as compared to mainland.⁶⁰ On Crete “there were no apparent disruptions in occupation at any of the major Cretan settlements in EM III.”⁶¹ It may be the case that there could have been both internal war and violent intrusion from outside of the Greek mainland. Therefore the arguments proposed against a 2200 date seem weak to me. Let us now turn to the question of Indo-European culture and what might be learned in order to settle the the first stage of political evolution of the Greeks.

58 BELL, BARBARA (1971), "The Dark Ages in Ancient History. I. The First Dark Age in Egypt," American Journal of Archaeology 75.1: 9.

59 DALFES, H. NÜZHET, et al., eds., Third Millenium Bc Climate Change and Old World Collapse (NATO ASI Series, 1997).

60 BROODBANK, CYPRIAN (2008), "The Early Bronze Age in the Cyclades," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 69.

61 WILSON, DAVID (2008), "Early Palatial Crete," The Cambridge Companion to Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (Cambridge University Press) 98.

4. Proto-Indo European Culture and the Greeks

Wheeled vehicles such as wagons (four-wheeled) or carts (two-wheeled) were not invented until after 4000 BCE. Studies of reconstructed Proto-Indo-European words describing the wagon or cart, indicate that the vocabulary for wagons and wheels was not imported from outside. Archaeological and inscribed evidence for wheeled vehicles suggest their appearance c. 3500 BCE. The Bronocice wagon image (3500-3350 BCE) found in Poland is the oldest well-dated image of a wheeled vehicle in the world, whereas the wagon models of the Baden culture found in Hungary seem to be the oldest well-dated three-dimensional models of wheeled vehicles. In the steppe grasslands of Russia and Ukraine, remains of about 250 wagons and carts have been found within the burial mounds (kurgans), dated about 3000-2000 BCE.

The introduction of the wheel has many interesting consequences. One of them is the reduction of “the need for cooperative communal labor”, since a single-family now could use the wagon and with the help of animals, could transport firewood, supplies, crops, and people much more easily. Secondly wagons contributed to the dispersal of many farming populations across the European landscapes after about 3500 BCE (Anthony, 2007, p. 72). Thirdly, since the steppe economy depended mainly upon herding, with the wheel, transportation and resettlement was now possible, people could look for better grasslands and thus increase their production and thus power. The wheel therefore stands as one of the reasons behind the dispersal of Indo-Europeans and the advent of the early Greeks within the Mediterranean.

David W. Anthony believes that the Proto-Indo-European homeland was located in the steppes north of the Black and Caspian Seas in what is today southern Ukraine and Russia. “A continuous belt of steppes extends from eastern Europe on the west (the belt ends between Odessa and Bucharest) to the Great Wall of China on the east, an arid corridor running seven thousand kilometers across the center of the Eurasian continent. This enormous grassland was an effective barrier to the transmission of ideas and technologies for thousands of years. The key that opened the grasslands was chiefly the horse. The opening of the steppe (its transformation from a hostile ecological barrier to a corridor of transcontinental communication) forever changed the dynamics of Eurasian historical development. (p. 6)”

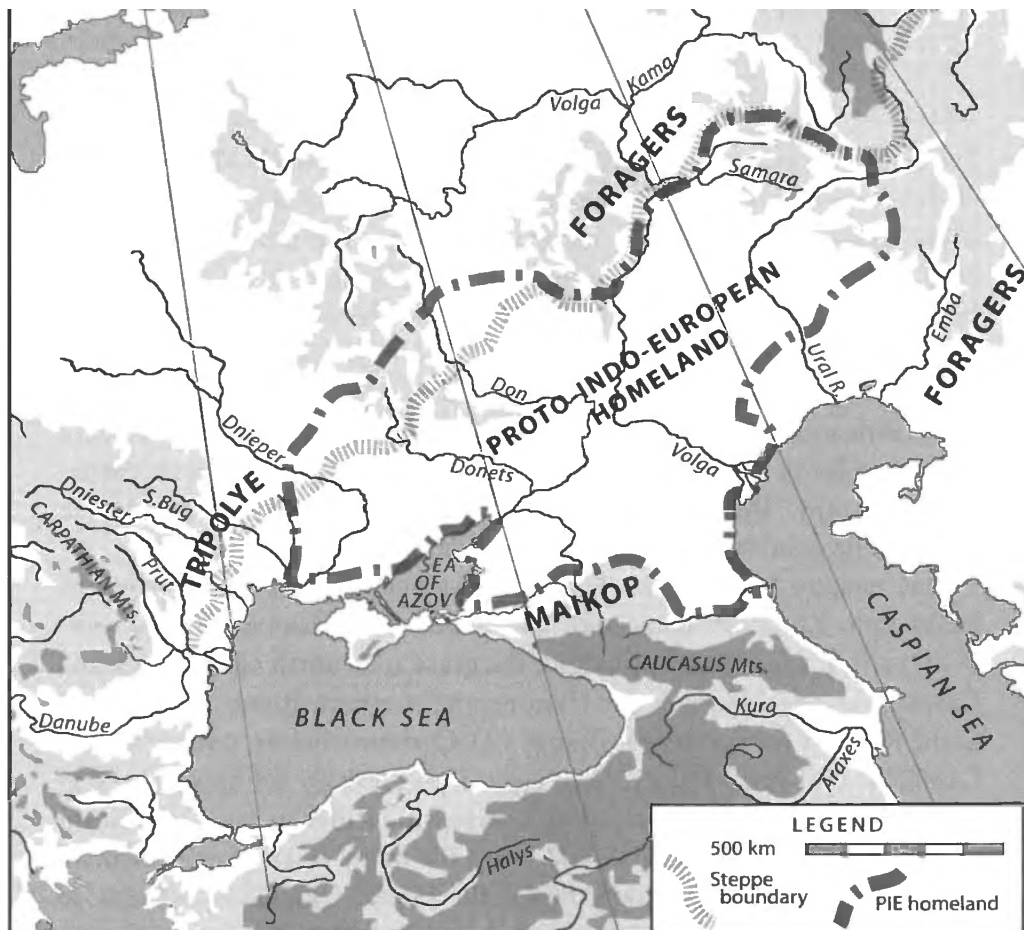


Figure 5: Proto-Indo European Homeland between 3500-3000 BC (Anthony, 2007, p. 84)

“PIE [Proto-Indo-European] was spoken and IE language dispersal began in the fourth millennium”⁶² contrary to Colin Renfrew's hypothesis. This perspective is based upon glottochronological or lexicostatistical study which offers a *time depth* for PIE and subsequent IE dispersal. Linguists who carry out this method work backward from modern IE languages and from known IE languages known from ancient texts towards the presumed mother language (PIE), thus they are able to postulate as to when PIE was spoken and when its offsprings diverged from it.

In the diagram below the process of migration is presented by D.W. Anthony⁶³. This model is important since it brings essential insights in respect to how and why migration takes place. From the diagram it may be seen, how a fraction of a community splits. There are persons among this

62 GARRETT, ANDREW (2006), "Convergence in the Formation of Indo-European Subgroups: Phylogeny and Chronology," *Phylogenetic Methods and the Prehistory of Languages*, eds. Peter Forster and Colin Renfrew (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research) 143.

63 ANTHONY, DAVID W. (1990), "Migration in Archeology: The Baby and the Bathwater," *American Anthropologist* 92.4.

fraction who have information about possible routes, or lands more favorable than the ones they occupy. There is a process of decision-making and a variety of factors classified into pull and push factors. It is also important to note that there must have been an important organizational structure for such a migration to happen.

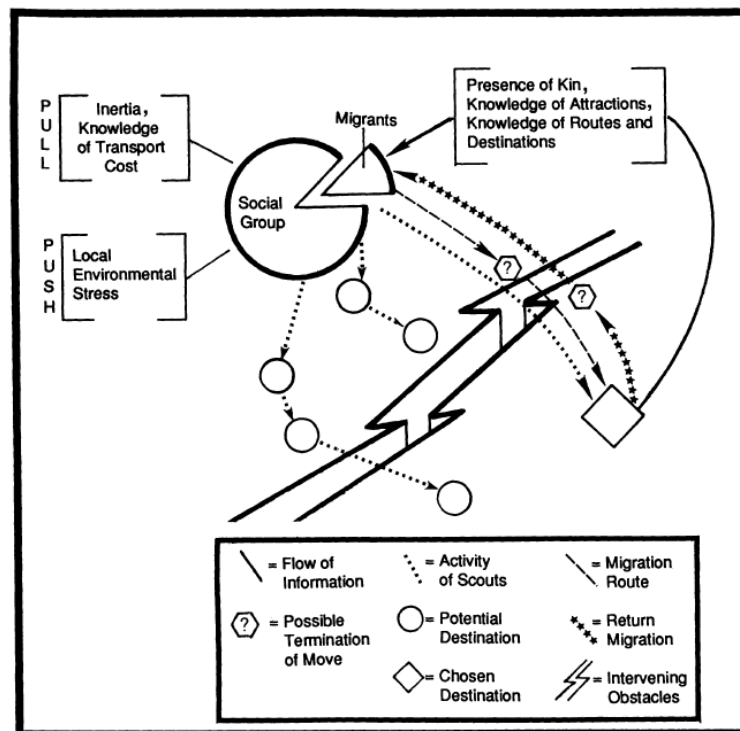


Figure 6: A Diagram of the Migration Process (Anthony, 1990, p. 900).

The steppe peoples with the domestication of the horse and its use as a mount gained extreme mobility. The horse and wheel enlarged the horizons for new land to be colonized, exploited, or even plundered. Nomadic groups in search for new pastures increased. It also led to military operations with the aim of enlarging the sphere of influence and power and of creating remote dependencies that could pay a tribute. These factors led to expansion of some of the people of Indo-European descent to the Aegean region. Many cultures came into contact. The rulers and their families established relations with one another even if at a distance. Trading is an important economic activity with its effects upon society and its belief system existent since very early times. Raw, semi-finished, or finished goods were traded over long distances. Luxury goods are also important since they represent status and power.

There is also the question of transportation of these new comers. Did they have horses or oxen and whether they had wagons that would have facilitated the transportation of families along with tents, pots, and tools. D.W. Anthony has argued that the peoples who spoke the Indo-European language had words for *wheel*, *axle*, *thill*, and a verb meaning 'to go or convey in a vehicle.' The Greek language preserved within its vocabulary two words relating to wagons of an Indo-European origin, namely for *wheel*, *axle*, and *yoke*; (*kukla*, *axon*, *zugon* respectively in Homeric Greek) It would have been therefore possible that the Greeks knew and utilized the wagon. There is also archaeological evidence that the horse was introduced in the Greek mainland by the end of EH II.

“Domesticated horses appear to have been introduced into Greece by the people who arrived at the end of Early Helladic II and the beginning of the Middle Helladic period.”⁶⁴ Horse bones were found at Lerna in the Argolid and at Argissa and Nichoria in Messenia.

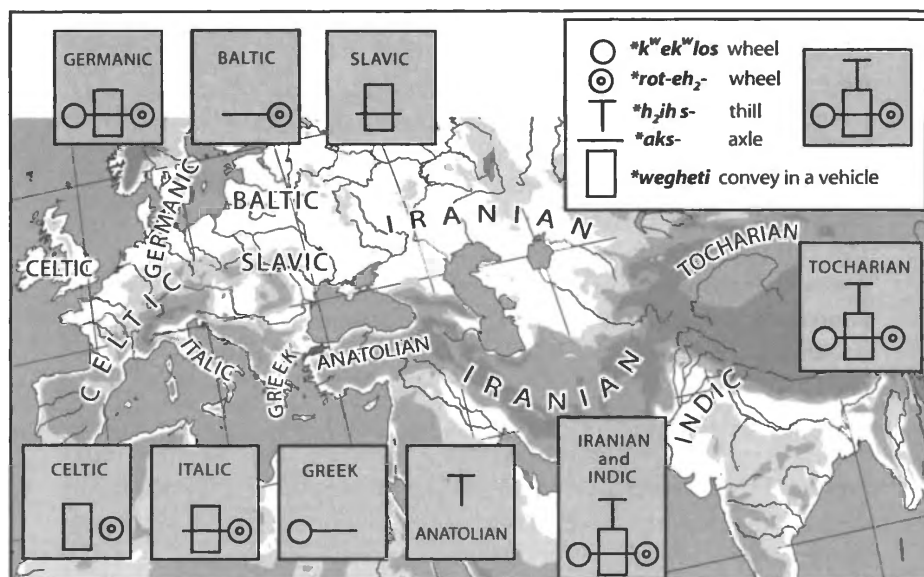


Figure 7: The geographic distribution of the Indo-European wheel-wagon vocabulary, (Anthony, 2007, p. 64).

The political organization of the people who spoke the Indo-European language was tribal. And if we assume that the Indo-European tribal system was inherited by the Greeks and that by the time when the Greeks arrived within the Greek mainland still were organized along tribal lines, then we may start from somewhere in understanding the political and social evolution of this people. This

64 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 151., note: 548

approach is however extremely fragile, but it is at least a start in the scholarly process of reconstruction the political framework of a prehistoric people.

It would be also very useful to note that the Greeks could not have become Greeks within the Greek mainland because of certain considerations. Among the most important aspect is that many words for fauna and flora specific to the Greek mainland are of non-Indo European origin. If the Greek language would have developed within the Greek mainland then we wouldn't have found these words as to be of non-Indo European origin. In other words, by the time the Greeks arrived within the Aegean they adopted many words for the things that they did not know before. While Greek morphology and syntactic structure is extremely conservative approximately 50% of the Greek vocabulary⁶⁵ can not be compared with that of other Indo-European stocks.⁶⁶ For example, within the Linear B tablets (LHIIIB), linguists identified adopted words of non-Indo European languages. Words for spices such as cummin (Mycenaean, *ku-mi-no*) and sesame (*sa-sa-ma*) were probably imported from Semitic languages, particularly Phoenician. From this perspective, the Greek language incorporated many foreign words as it saw necessary; also probably from the language of the Minoans, thought to be a Semitic language.

Now let us define what a tribal system is and see what can be derived from the Indo-European tribal system in our reconstruction of the early Greek political system as it probably existed during the early 2nd millennium BC. There is a tendency towards status differentiation. However such status is neither rigid or permanent. Leadership depends, as I have stated, on personal abilities, skills and knowledge (ritual or organizational knowledge). The exchange of goods is based on reciprocity; however by the time some centralization occurs, some redistribution may also occur. "In rank society the major process of economic integration is redistribution, in which there is a characteristic flow of goods into and out from a finite center ... the articulation of most interpersonal relationships is rank society is an aspect of the kinship system."⁶⁷

This scheme would also be useful for understanding the consequent evolution of the Mycenaean

65 J. Makkay MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2003), Origins of the Proto-Greeks and Proto-Anatolians from a Common Perspective (Budapest) 7. argues that "probably on less than eighty per cent of the entire lexicon is of foreign origin, belonging mostly to pre-Greek – i.e. Mediterranean –, early Semitic and other substratum and adstratum, suggesting that the population that spoke Indo-European Greek had arrived to Hellas from some other – surely not Semitic – region."

66 MALLORY, JP and DQ ADAMS (1997), Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture (Routledge) 243.

67 FRIED, MORTON H. (1967), "The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology."

polities. Having settled that definition and a few general sketches in regard to tribal organization let us look at Indo-European culture in general. Linguists have managed to reconstruct some of the Proto-Indo-European lexicon through a comparison of various IE languages. David Anthony in his work combines the Proto-Indo-European vocabulary with a specific set of archaeological knowledge remains to reach a much richer knowledge of the Indo-Europeans. He agrees with Edward Sapir on the point that “the complete vocabulary of a language may indeed be looked upon as a complex inventory of all the ideas, interests, and occupations that take up the attention of the community.”⁶⁸ Languages contain many fossils that are the remnants of surprisingly ancient people. The reconstructed words may tell us something about the flora, or the fauna that surrounded the IE inhabitants. It also tells about their social setting and about their rituals, things that archeology alone fails to find out. Cluster of words suggest that “the speakers of PIE inherited their rights and duties through the father’s bloodline only (patrilineal descent); probably lived with the husband’s family after marriage (patrilocal residence); recognized the authority of big-man or chiefs who acted as patrons and givers of hospitality for their clients; likely had formally instituted warrior bands, practiced ritual sacrifices of cattle and horses; drove wagons; recognized a male sky deity (p. 15).

The Indo-European society was understood by Georges Dumézil in his significant work *L’Ideologie Tripartite des Indo-Europeens* as being divided into three divisions, not classes however, that of the priests, warriors, and herders or cultivators. There was a lot of flexibility between these divisions, membership being limited generally by age.⁶⁹ During their young age males could have occupied the function of herders or cultivators then could easily jump, given that they were skillful, into the warrior division and finally could become a priest or ritual specialist, given that they were knowledgeable in ritual and organizational matters. Tribal herders and/or cultivators cultivated grain, looked after cattle and sheep, searched for honeybees, made wool or felt textiles, sacrificed sheep, cattle, and horses to gods of the sky and used the wagon as their basic transportation of people and goods. The Proto-Indo-European people had wagons, looked after domesticated sheep and cattle, cultivated grains, sacrificed animals such as sheep, cattles and horses. The relation between humans (clients) and gods (patrons) gained meaning through the former’s initiative to sacrifice in favor of the later. Thus the gods received great words of praise and humbleness while humans hoped for the mercy of their patrons and looked for prosperity and good life. This relationship between the two constitutes a reciprocal exchange of gifts and favors.

68 SAPIR, EDWARD (1912), "Language and Environment," *American Anthropologist* 14.2.

69 ANTHONY, DW (2007), *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton Univ Pr) 92.

The speakers of Proto-Indo-European lived in a world of tribal politics and social groups united through kinship and marriage. This is a valuable information since it may tell us something about the political organization of the Greeks when they dispersed. The Proto-Indo-Europeans had no word for *city*. Households appear to have been male-centered. Judging from the reconstructed kin terms, the important named kin were predominantly on the father's side, which suggests patrilocal marriages. Patriarchy is well attested during the Late Bronze Age in Greece. A group identity above the level of the clan was probably *tribe* (**h₄erós*), a root that developed into *Aryan* in the Indo-Iranian branch" (Anthony, 2007, p. 92)

"The speakers of Proto-Indo-European were farmers and stockbreeders: we can reconstruct words for *bull, cow, ox, ram, ewe, lamb, pig* and *piglet*. They had many terms for milk and dairy foods, including *sour milk, whey*, and *curds*. They knew how to *shear wool*, which they used to *weave* textiles (probably on a horizontal band loom). They *tilled* the earth (or they knew people who did) with a scratch-plow, or *ard*, which was pulled by oxen wearing a *yoke*. They divided their possessions into two categories: movables and immovables; the root for *movable wealth* became the term for *herds*. Finally, they were not averse to increasing their herds at their neighbors' expense, as we can reconstruct verbs that meant "to drive cattle," used in Celtic, Italic, and Indo-Iranian with the sense of cattle raiding or "rustling."⁷⁰

According to Anthony, since Greek and Indo-Iranian shared a series of linguistic features, these two languages must have developed in neighboring regions. For example in "weapon vocabulary they shared common terms for *bow* (**taksos*), *arrow* (**eis-*), *bowstring* (**jya-*), and *club* (**uagros*), or *cudgel*, the weapon specifically associated with Indra and his Greek counterpart Herakles."⁷¹ "In ritual they [Greek and Indo-Iranian] shared a unique term for a specific ritual, the *hecatomb*, or sacrifice of a hundred cows; and they referred to the gods with the same shared epithet, *those who give riches*". It is therefore clear the many analogies may be made between the Indo-Iranian and Greek branches of the Indo-European culture. It is important to note the Greeks did not only bring

⁷⁰ Ibid. 91.

⁷¹ Ibid. 55.

with them and Indo-European language-package, but also a package of myths and cosmological understanding of the universe. Such an approach also tells us that the Greek tribesmen probably sacrificed oxen or bulls in order to appease the gods and to bring welfare to their people.

Anthony tells us that Greek and Indo-Iranian] retained shared cognate names for at least three deities: (1) *Erinyes/Saran, yū*, a horse-goddess in both traditions, born of a primeval creator-god and the mother of a winged horse in Greek or of the Divine Twins in Indo-Iranian, who are often represented as horses; (2) *Kérberos/Śárvara*, the multihead dog that guarded the entrance to the Otherworld; and (3) *Pan/Pūsán*, a pastoral god that guarded the flocks, symbolically associated in both traditions with the goat. In both traditions, goat entrails were the specific funeral offering made to the hell-hound *Kérberos/Śárvara* during a funeral ceremony.

We do not know the route by which the Greeks came to mainland Greece. J. Makkay has suggested that the proto-Greeks moved southwards from somewhere in the Balkans (see Image!). “The Proto-Greeks are believed to have arrived from the north – from the Balkans – independently of the Hittite tribes” [who arrived in Anatolia earlier than the Greeks, probably during the beginning of the 3rd millenium BC].⁷²

72 MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2003), Origins of the Proto-Greeks and Proto-Anatolians from a Common Perspective (Budapest) 9.

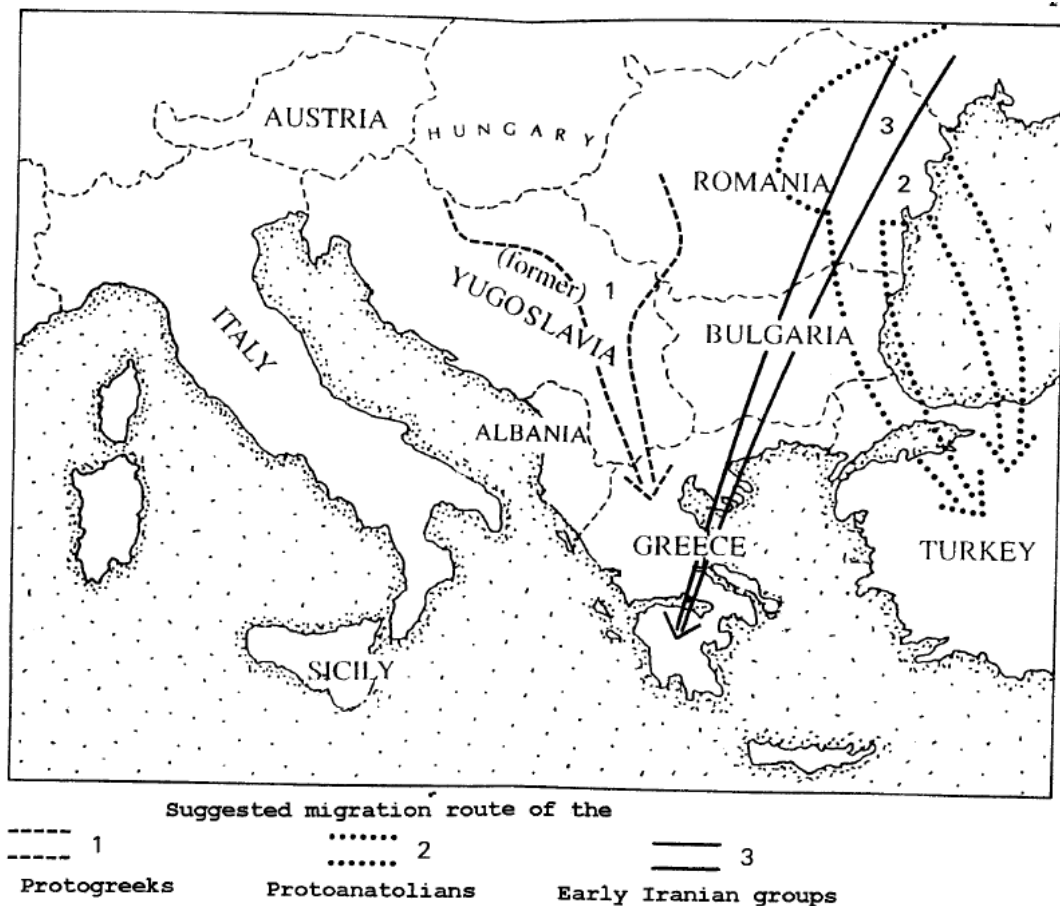


Figure 8: The route for the Coming of the proto-Greeks (ca. 2200 BC) as proposed by J. Makkay. The route he proposes for the Early Indo-Iranian I will sustain as a possible route for the coming of the chariot and horse, but I am reserved in respect to the coming of the an Indo-Iranian people, however it is an interesting approach.

“The question most often debated concerns the origin of the royal shaft graves at Mycenae, some of which belong quite certainly to the late phase of M.H. culture. In form they obviously resemble cist graves and thus logically constitute a development of the established type, illustrating continuity of customs from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age.”⁷³

The dispersal of the Greeks could be explained by conflicting interests over a region; war; or search for pastoral lands. As I have argued above a climate change during the end of the 3rd millennium BC could have triggered migrations. An interesting aspect of the problem would be to speculate what happens in terms of leadership when a people move from one region to a different one. For example, how did leaders compete within the process of migration, how did they settle disputes, and

73 CASKEY, JOHN L. (1973), "Greece and the Aegean Islands in the Middle Bronze Age," *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 2, Pt. 1, *History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region C.1800-1380 B.C.*, eds. IES Edwards, C.J. Gadd, NGL Hammond and E Sollberger, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 135.

on what criteria did they decide to settle down in a particular area. Another question would be, how does a nomadic pastoralist society transform into an sedentary agriculturalist one. These are tough question to which there is no concrete answer. While several assumptions may be made on the basis of archeological and linguistic evidence in regard to the places a people might have moved through or in regard to the people they might have interacted with, an anthropological reconstruction of the political and social dynamics is difficult to make. Unfortunately, archaeologists do not treat the matter of migration also from an anthropological perspective. The Indo-European tribal system should be used only as a tool to understand the political and social background of the Greeks.

5. Tribal System and Big-Men on the Greek Mainland (EH III, MHI and MHII)

Undergoing an array of social changes Crete experienced the formation of palatial and urban centers (19th century BC) forming the first Aegean states ca. 1750 BC. By the end of the 3rd millennium BC the Cyclades saw the emergence of prosperous settlements. In mainland Greece the material cultural picture uncovered by archaeologists is significantly poorer than Crete and Cyclades during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. Several important centers evolved during the 2nd millennium BC within the Cycladean islands and Crete, however such centers would only develop within mainland Greece by the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. As I have argued above the coming of the Greeks probably suffocated any possible attempts of the indigenous population to relaunch economic production and political centralization.

During the late MH there is practice of tumuli-making, extending from northern parts (Albania, Macedonia) to Greece. There is resemblance between the tumuli of Greece with the ones found near Krotoszyn in west Poland, and Helmsdorf in Saxony and the ones found in Albania. A tumulus found in the Caucasus at Novyi Arshti (c. 2200 BCE) shows similarities with the tumuli from Vodhinë and Marathon (Albania). A particular characteristic of these burials was the placing of the corpse on an animal pelt.⁷⁴ Evidence from a grave from Grave Circle B at Mycenae suggests a similar characteristic.

5.1 Archaeological Considerations and Tribal Organization

There is an ongoing project directed by S. Voutsaki from the Gronningen Institute of Archaeology that intends to “interpret the important social, political, and cultural changes that took place in the southern Greek mainland during the Middle Helladic period and the transition to the Late Helladic”⁷⁵ through an analysis of imagery, funerary data, settlement data, osteological material, DNA analysis, etc. Such projects are important for our understanding of the period. The palace-states of LH III that were constructed over previous MH settlements have destroyed much of the

74 KOMITA, NOBUO (1982), "The Grave Circles at Mycenae and the Early Indo-Europeans," 62.

75 See the webpage of the project “Social Change and Cultural Interaction in the Middle Helladic Argolid,” www.mhargolid.nl, accessed 2010.

archaeological evidence concerning the period. Therefore, much of the archaeological evidence that we have is mainly from burials, tumuli, shaft graves, tholoi and chamber tombs etc.

Given the destruction of EH II, a set of changes arose on the Greek mainland in terms of settlement patterns; in terms of intra-community and inter-community levels. Given the scarcity of archaeological evidence for the reconstruction of early MH culture it is indeed difficult to offer a clear image of its social structure and economy. In a recent study M. Hielte (2004) has argued that the period was characterized not only by sedentary life-style but also she argued for the possibility of semi-nomadic life-style. She suggested for the existence of non-permanent settlements in the form of camp-sites in such regions as in Messenia, Attica, and northern Greece.⁷⁶ She bases her argument also on the fact that particularly during the Bronze Age there is evidence for forest degradation through intensive grazing.⁷⁷ This may fit well with the argument for 'the coming of the Greeks'. As I have stated above there are a plenitude of theories concerning the matter. The recent arguments brought by D.W. Anthony for the terminus post quem for the arrival, M. Hielte's suggestions for a presence of nomadic-life style or pastoralists within the MH Greece, and other archaeological evidence I think fit well in supporting the appearance of a new people. In this case, early and middle Middle Helladic Greece was characterized by social, political, and economic instability. Indigenous population would have been under the immediate threat of the nomads roaming around with their herds.

It is not clear what happened during this period. My impression is that although there was conflict and calamity, within time, the newcomers (whether invaders or immigrants) imposed their own culture and language upon the indigenous population; but nonetheless, they learned much from the indigenous people as well. The environment must have been very different for them if we speculate that they came from the north. In my view the newcomers would have used the same techniques for construction as the indigenous people (different rocks necessitate different handling and knowledge); would have used almost the same pottery (there was suggestions that Minyan Ware was brought in Greece by a new people; however there is much debate upon such a perspective); would have adopted same clothing, given that they came from a colder and unfriendly environment; etc. There was new fauna, and flora about which, I speculate they did not know much about. There

76 HIELTE, MARIA (2004), "Sedentary Versus Nomadic Life-Styles: The 'Middle Helladic People' in Southern Balkan" *Acta Archaeologica* 75.2: 34.

77 For excavations in central and northern Greece see: ANDREOU, S, et al. (1996), "Review of Aegean Prehistory V: The Neolithic and Bronze Age of Northern Greece," *American Journal of Archaeology* 100.3: 559.

were different types of foods and spices, and places for which they did not have a word for in their own language, and therefore many words were adopted from the pre-existing or indigenous language. In the same manner, they interacted with the indigenous people, and their nomadic life style in time changed to a sedentary life style. Another important aspect, is the question of how or with what did these people from the north arrived. Did, some of their leaders rode horses, did their families have wagons? They most probably did. As I have discussed above with respect to the Indo-Europeans; the proto-Greeks had at least some words in regard to wagons, which are of Proto-Indo-European origin.

Furthermore, the presence of new migratory people (probably organized as tribes on the Indo-European model), would explain the long period (ca. 300 years) of stagnation. I believe that the trading relations that the EHII chiefdoms had, collapsed. Old lines of connections or exchange networks were diminished by the fact that the new people lacked the communicative skills necessary for such interaction. Besides this, there was not much left to trade with; craft specialization decreased, and there is no evidence for storage facilities. Over the imposing House of Tiles at Lerna, which acted as a redistributive and probably economic center during EH II, a tumuli was built. This act is clearly an act of a new people through which they sought to present themselves as the new rulers and inhabitants over the parts they had conquered. It had both the function to establish their power and to impose their will upon the previous inhabitants.

In any case the migration should not be understood as a one way and sudden phenomenon. The tribes could have settled in different regions at different times. A migratory people would generally have a basic herding economy and a semi-nomadic life style; also they could sustain themselves through plundering. It would have required a considerable time until the political framework would have been stabilized. Some of them may have settled down in Greece as soon as they arrived, others could have continued their nomadic life-style. It is difficult to speak of anything certain here beyond some logical deductions. If we speculate even further, the new people's political organization was tribal, with their clans, religion, families; bearing upon an Indo-European culture. If they were nomads, as I say they were, their mobility must have ensured contact with other people from the north (from Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Carpathian Basin). It is through this route, I think, that the horse and chariot finally arrived within the hands of the Mycenaeans. Such, a model is difficult to support however, since a nomadic people would have left behind only minimal archaeological evidence, nothing much than potsherds.

As far as I know there is only one tumuli dated to EH II, that from the island of Leukas, not far from Albania where similar tumuli were found. The earliest tumuli/R-graves was found at Steno on Leukas, which seem to have much in common with the tumuli/graves (dated to?) from Kriaritsi Sykias in central Macedonia (Greek Macedonia?). These types of burials, also called burial mounds, have been abundantly found in the Carpathian Basin, Northern Europe, and Eastern Europe; these are sometimes referred to as kurgans in Russian literature. Actually, the whole of Europe was full with tumuli, and it seems that during the MH II these burial practices started to increase significantly within the mainland of Greece. As M. Hielte argues the tumuli were “a hallmark of the Middle Helladic culture” being important “symbols of identification and social stratification.”⁷⁸ Especially from MH II onwards there were tumuli scattered all over mainland Greece and people could see these from a distance, and be impressed by its form, and symbolic meaning. These burial mounds with their circular structure meant some sort of territorial authority over the region. There are twenty-five known sites with MH tumuli. The first ones that were discovered were from Aphidna, Athens, Elateia-Drachmani, Kokkolata on Kephallonia, and from Steno on Leukas. The tumuli from Lerna, Olympia, and Thebes have been interpreted to hold a sort of symbolic or ritual character (Hielte, 2004, p. 33).

Intensive archaeological surveys of the Greek mainland during the MH suggest a reduction in both coastal and inland settlements. The inland settlements were more seriously affected. If we consider the transition from EH to MH, the widely distributed settlements of EH seem to contract during the MH, where a process of nucleation is observed. This nucleation some scholars argue demonstrates the seeking for more secure places, possibly within fortified walls or citadels. The settlements “are usually situated on eminences that are naturally defensible or command controlling views of the landscape” (Wright 2008, 235).

We do not know, for example, how the settlements of Mycenae, Pylos, or Tiryns, looked like in their early stages, making it difficult to tell anything certain about their social organization. However there is some archaeological evidence coming from a few MH sites in respect to architecture and settlement hierarchy. The early MH settlements were small (no more than 1-2 hectares) in the form of hamlets or villages.⁷⁹ Most of the villages had no more “than seven to

78 HIELTE, MARIA (2004), "Sedentary Versus Nomadic Life-Styles: The 'Middle Helladic People' in Southern Balkan" *Acta Archaeologica* 75.2: 27.

79 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 234-35.

twenty families, rarely exceeding a population of about 100.”⁸⁰ (Wright 2008, 241) At Malthi a settlement over an area nearly one hectare may have had as many as twenty-five households suggesting a population density between 125 and 175. According to the investigations made by Nordquist⁸¹ (1987) Asine was a settlement established over an area between 1.5 and 2 hectares with a population of about 300-530. The family constituted the basic unit of the society, made of five to seven persons, living in small houses.

Excavations conducted at Lerna, Asine, and Eutresis have reported that the houses were loosely arranged. In the early phases of MH, it should be noted, the settlements that were optioned for and that later developed more complexity were located near fertile agricultural land and sources of water. The material basis for the consequent development of a settlement is of high importance. The early MH people had probably a mixed economy of farming and herding, collecting and hunting. More advanced settlements of the early MH phase could have tilled the land by plow. The expenses of having a plow and oxes were high, and therefore more simpler devices such as the ard were probably used. Wine, oil, and crops were cultivated although on a lesser scale. Though hand-made pottery still dominated the mainland, the potter's wheel came slowly into use for the fabrication of some vessels.

There was no important social or economic differentiation between households. In other words, there is no evidence to support the idea that settlements were divided on a functional basis. There are some exceptions however, for example at Malthi, where a few large houses have been attested. The general picture suggests that the households were simple and there was relative equality between them. The cemeteries or burials show no signs of social stratification. These factors as well as others have persuaded archaeologists to indicate a society characterized by simple self-subsistence economies, living in more-or-less similar houses. One possibility is that the main mode of exchange was reciprocal.

5.2 Anthropological Considerations

5.2.1 Intra-Community

⁸⁰ Ibid. 241.

⁸¹ NORDQUIST, GULLÖG (1987), "Asine: A Middle Helladic Society," *Hydra*.3.

In this chapter I discuss “how the kind of achieved authority some call “big-man” leadership ... could be transformed into a permanent, institutionalized chiefly office in the trajectory of long-term (inter-generational) social reproduction” Tribes lack formal institutions of central authority. “Social status in such systems is based primarily on achievement during the course of an individual's life-time, rather than on ascription at birth.”⁸² I shall call the leader within a tribal society the big-man. “The indicative quality of big-man authority is everywhere the same: it is *personal* power. Big-men do not come to office; they do not succeed to, nor are they installed in, existing positions of leadership over political groups. The attainment of big-main status is rather the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract about him a coterie of loyal, lesser men.”⁸³

Now, let us look more closely to process through which tribal leaders gained power and which had the effect for establishing chiefdoms (I define a chiefdom as characterized by one or two levels of control over its population). Here I would like to look more closely at how tribal leaders interacted and competed. As I have shown above the tribal societies which arrived in Greece were patrilineal and patrilocal. There were three main divisions (not classes) within the society, e.g. priests, warriors, and herders or/and cultivators. The ideas I propose here are general. According to Spencer in tribal systems classes are absent, and a leader attracts followers by supplying them with the greatest immediate benefits. “Often at the core of these societies are factions operating within and among communities, with each faction headed by an emerging leader.”⁸⁴

As I have stated, there were two types of communities, sedentary and semi-nomadic. During the early and middle MH there was a tendency towards nucleation. Given the instability and insecurity of the times, (e.g. coming of the Greeks, internal war, climate change, famine or drought), people tended to seek security. It appears, argues J.C. Wright⁸⁵ “that this is the time when the focus of settlement was on and around the citadels that later became the centers of Mycenaean civilization.” I would try to explain the effect of such nucleation in terms of circumscription by war. By the time a

82 SPENCER, CHARLES S. (1994), "Factional Ascendancy, Dimensions of Leadership, and the Development of Centralized Authority," Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World, eds. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and John W. Fox 31.

83 SAHLINS, MARSHALL D. (1963), "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," Comparative Studies in Society and History 5.3: 289.

84 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2004), "The Emergence of Leadership and the Rise of Civilization in the Aegean," The Emergence of Civilisation Revisited, eds. Barrett J.C. and Paul Halstead (Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology) 70.

85 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 234.

population's security is threatened it seeks protection. There was a process towards nucleation but also a process by which people settled on higher elevations, naturally defensible.

It is asked “how people succeeded in deceiving themselves into accepting the rise of the state round and above them, until the point was reached when they no longer had any choice and had lost the power to reject it.”⁸⁶ There is the question of how the chief manages to gain power and subdue others. The pre-chief is strategist who rises from an more-or-less equal background. Presumably by the time a leader has already made advances in gaining power the people's power to choose or decide by themselves decreases. The process of nucleation forced people to seek protection offered by powerful men.

The people that we may call tribesmen or big-men, having the support of his kinsmen, strong, and skillful could have laid claim over the administration of a growing society within the confines of a naturally defensible environment. The population would have not resisted in accepting requests their leaders made because it would have been unpractical to disobey and leave the settlement given the external insecurity. This does not mean that there were no smaller settlements, hamlets, outside of such citadels, but within such places an increase in social complexity could have barely occurred. Here is a model of how this process could have led to political centralization and the formation of classes.

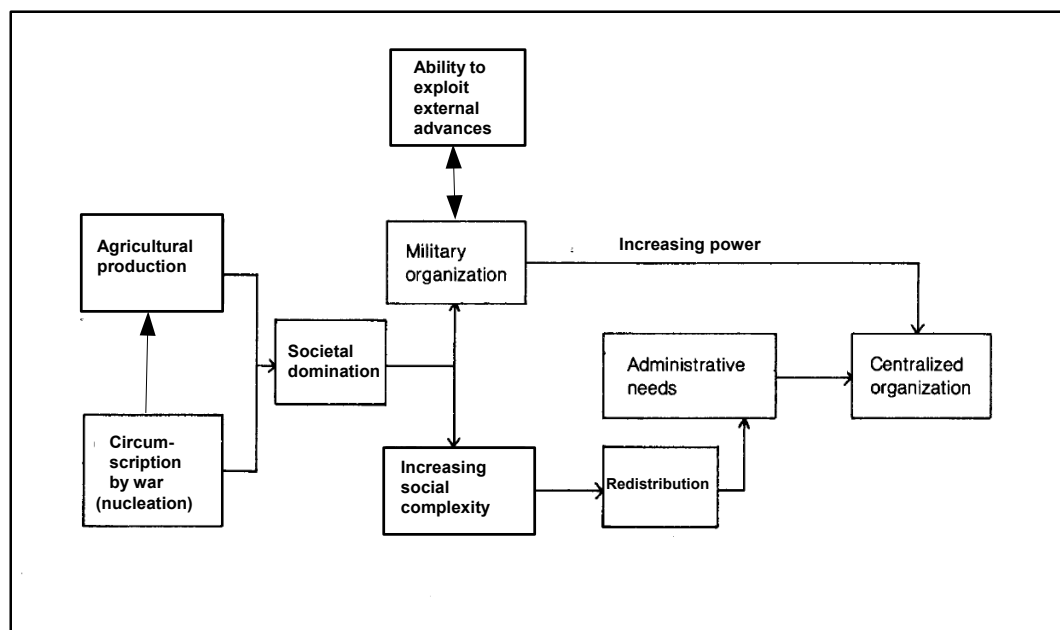


Figure 9: This model is adapted from H.T. Wright's representation of R. Carneiro's circumscription theory, (H.T. Wright, 1978, p. 53).

86 CHABAL, PATRICK, et al. (2004), "Beyond States and Empires: Chiefdoms and Informal Politics," Social Evolution & History 3.1.

As it can be observed from the model above, leaders⁸⁷ could have exploited the fear of the population (circumscription by war), in order to increase their power within the settlement. Also, leaders could have forced commoners to increase agricultural production. “It seems likely that incipient [leaders] may have intentionally provoked and promulgated confrontations between communities in order to motivate others in their own communities to seek protection.”⁸⁸

Access to well-watered and naturally drained soils have a direct impact upon the development of communities. The MH economy was dependent upon the cultivation of grains, olives, and grapes and animal husbandry (sheep, goat, pigs, cattle). An increase in agricultural production probably led to the need for larger storage rooms and a redistributive economic system. There is a proliferation of tumuli throughout MH II and continuing within MH III. This may indicate that many communities had strong big-man leadership. Through symbols of power and acclaimed support from deities a big-man of one lineage could establish formal centralization and the necessary framework for his successor to hold office when the leader passed away⁸⁹.

During the late MH many existing settlements were consolidated and defensive structures were built as at Argos, Kiapha Thiti, Malthi, Pylos, Peristeria, and possibly at Brauron and Mycenae. The structure of the settlements at a few sites indicate that buildings were “divided into different areas both functionally and socially” meaning that “economic, political, social, and religious activities were beginning to be centralized.”⁹⁰

5.2.2 Extra-community

It was through such a process that the Mycenaeans established themselves as rulers and achieved chiefdom-based societies over parts of the Greek mainland. The leaders of the tribes had not only to control their own people and the indigenous population they found within the Greek mainland, but

87 See BRUMFIEL, ELIZABETH M. (2003), "Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World: An Introduction," Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World, eds. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and John W. Fox. where the author discusses the importance of agent-centered explanations for social change. She emphasizes the need to see that social change is brought by individuals or human agents acting within a context, a particular ecology or material structure.

88 HAYDEN, BRIAN (1995), "Pathways to Power: Principles for Creating Socioeconomic Inequalities " Foundations of Social Inequality, eds. Theron Douglas Price and Gary M. Feinman (New York: Plenum Press) 31-32.

89 This approach is generally referred to as an explanation based on conflictual inter-human relations. An integrative approach would underline support and collaboration on the part of the followers. A big-man may be *selected* and *approved* by a population on the basis of personal abilities, such as intelligence, knowledge of customs and crafts, fighting ability, generosity, fecundity, breadth and depth of experience, age, and even physical size.

90 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 237.

also to ensure their position vis-a-vis other political centers outside of the Argolid, Messenia, or Laconia. As interaction increased there must have been international rules or customs that would have to be followed; to the south of the Greek mainland there was the islands of Aegina, Kythera, Crete from which the Mycenaeans would learn a great deal; on the northern coast of Africa, there was Egypt, from where civilization irradiated; between Euphrates and Tigris there was Babylonia; on the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean there were Levantine centers, much more developed than any culture that the Greek mainland had seen before. During the transition from the third to the second millennium BC the Cycladians and Cretans adopted new nautical technology, namely the seagoing sailing ship, having its origins in the third millennium between the Nile delta and the Levant. This adoption gave way to exchange networks between the Aegean islands and the Near East fostering economic development.⁹¹ Likewise intensive exchange networks across eastern Mediterranean had also reached the mainlanders.

There is one important process irradiating from the Cyclades and Crete that I shall mention before going to a discussion of chiefdoms. In order to understand the influence of external processes, I will first make a distinction between the internal dimension and the external dimension⁹² of a big-man or emerging leader. Until now I have emphasized the internal dimension of a leader; the process through which a leader locally gains power. I will now turn to the external dimension which I use to refer to the ability and skill of a leader and his followers to attract and sustain external relationships e.g. trade, alliances and his ability to adopt and implement technological advances taking place outside of his territory. A leader or his followers or kinsmen interacted with other leaders of different communities, tribes, or state-based societies and could consolidate their position by establishing contacts with more advanced cultures, and by attracting supporters from different communities. Here is a diagram representing both intra-community, inter-community and extra-community interaction. Within a community leaders compete for prominence. While there is low inter-community competition, intra-community competition is high.

91 BROODBANK, CYPRIAN (2008), "The Early Bronze Age in the Cyclades," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 69.

92 M. Sahlins SAHLINS, MARSHALL D. (1963), "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," Comparative Studies in Society and History 5.3. working on Melanesian political organization understood big-man leadership as having both internal and external dimensions, which he termed "center-man" and "man of renown" respectively. "Center-man" refers to the internal political bond between the aspiring big-man and the local population. "Man of renown" refers to the external sector of political power. Also see SPENCER, CHARLES S. (1994), "Factional Ascendancy, Dimensions of Leadership, and the Development of Centralized Authority," Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World, eds. Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and John W. Fox.: "Sahlins argued that the dynamics of achieved leadership are to a large extent expressed through the inter-relationships – at times mutually reinforcing, at times mutually contradictory – between the internal and external dimensions of authority."

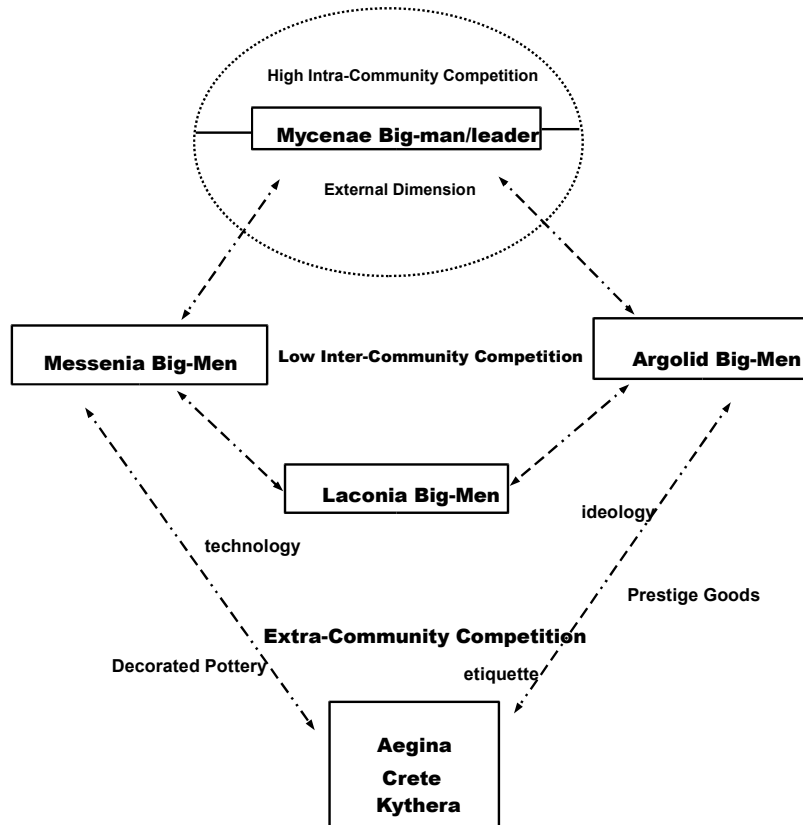


Figure 10: Intra-community and extra-community interaction of Mycenaean Big-Men.

From MH II and throughout MH III and LH two groups of ceramic fabrics were identified to be imported from outside of the Greek mainland (i) 'Gold Mica Fabric' which was fabricated probably on Aegina and distributed all around the Saronic Gulf; and (ii) 'Lustrous Decorated', seemingly under Minoan influence in terms of style, was probably produced on the coast of southern Peloponnese or on the island of Kythera. This indicates “two remarkably widespread ceramic distribution networks”⁹³. The first group of pottery is scattered mainly throughout the Argolid, Corinthia, Boeotia, Attica, and Euboea attested from MH and LH I-II. Mainland entrepôts were established on the coasts and sustained exchange networks with Keos, Aegina, and Kythera. The distribution network of the second type is however more limited mainly to more southerly parts. Therefore the islands of Aegina, Kythera and Crete seem to play an important role in respect to the rise of Mycenaeans, who interacted with their more advanced Aegean counterparts not only by importing pottery but also by receiving knowledge, prestige goods⁹⁴, and technology.

93 RUTTER, JB (1993), "Review of Aegean Prehistory. Ii: The Prepalatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland," *American Journal of Archaeology* 97.4: 776. See also: PULLEN, DANIEL J. (2008), "The Early Bronze Age in Greece," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (Cambridge University Press).

94 J.C. WRIGHT, JAMES C. (1995), "From Chief to King in Mycenaean Society," *Aegaeum* 11: The Role of

6. The Chief and Chiefdom-based Society (MHIII, LHI and LHII)

Before going into the discussion of chiefdoms it would be useful to note the appearance of the chariot and horse. From an international relations perspective chariots enabled chiefdoms or states to wage wars or to prevent invasions from outside. Simply put, a civilization that was not able to implement the chariot complex was vulnerable to invasions and therefore prone to collapse. The chariot was probably invented by people from Sintashta (Russia) in the Eurasian steppes. Horse cheek-pieces and the stelae with chariot depictions, and amber of Baltic origin from GCA attest their presence on the Greek mainland early in the Late Bronze Age. It is not clear how the chariot was imported into Greece. Kristiansen and Larsson suggest that over a period of 200 years from ca. 1700 to 1500 BC a series of long-distance travels connected Scandinavia (south-east coast of Scania) to a long-distance trade network connecting the Carpathian Basin and the Aegean. "Amber was moving south, metal and new esoteric knowledge in the opposite direction. And foreign chiefs from the south might sometimes stay in the north and vice versa"⁹⁵ The objects and iconography from the Kivik burial in southern Scandinavia shows many similarities with the cultures of the Aegean Bronze Age. Probably there was a trade network of chiefly alliances connecting the Baltic and southern Scandinavia via the Carpathians and the Aegean.

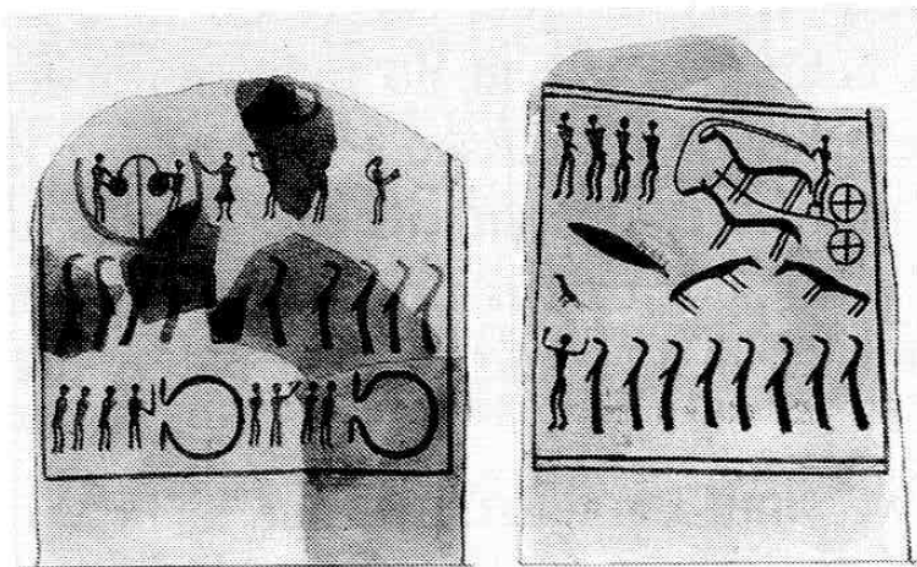


Figure 11: Depictions of chariots from the Kivik burial (late 16th century BC) of the Nordic Bronze Age culture, 1500-1300 BC, (Kristiansen & Larsson, 2005, p. 188).

the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean, ed. Paul Rehak. has presented how a Mycenaean leader could adopt and implement Minoan prestige goods in order to increase his power at home.

95 KRISTIANSEN, KRISTIAN and THOMAS B. LARSSON (2005), "The Rise of Bronze Age Society: Travels, Transmissions and Transformations," (Cambridge) 186.

The major heroes drive up to the battle lines in two-horse chariots, dismounting to fight on foot. However, in the *Iliad* we have some representations where the Homeric heroes throw their spears from the chariot. It seems to me that the chariot offered extreme mobility and ability to attack suddenly but also to flee in case of danger. In the *Iliad* there is evidence that horses were kept in the houses or megara of Lykaon and Aineias⁹⁶. The Linear B tablets from Knossos list some 400 chariots at the disposal of the palace. Chariots were important in waging war, for example a "Hittite document discussed a man from Ahhiya (i.e. Ahhiyawa [Achaea]) who was causing trouble with his land force and his chariots."⁹⁷

6.1 The Horse and Chariot Complex

J.C. Wright argues that "the rise of major settlements was unpredictable, dependent upon the vagaries of social interaction and opportunism as much as (if not more than) upon proximity to exploitable resources."⁹⁸ Opportunism and nearby exploitable resources, off course, play their role but the process of the rise of the Mycenaeans to power during LH, in order to be understood, must be connected with processes taking place outside of mainland Greece. By LH there are several peoples who rise to power almost concomitantly. The horse and the chariot played a major role in the international affairs of the Late Bronze Age.⁹⁹

The appearance of the chariot and horse during the Late Bronze Age within the eastern Mediterranean is an important phenomenon for the present study. A chariot and horse could be used for prestige objectives in order to aggrandize the population and instigate fear and loyalty. There is also a military dimension. The chariot and horse became an important war waging device that would have been necessary to preserve a strong army against an invading enemy. Many centers of the Near East and Mesopotamia, even Egypt fall at the mercy of charioteers.

There was an ethnic group in Mesopotamia called the Kassites¹⁰⁰, charioteers, who came to rule

96 II.5.193 and II.5.270.

97 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 135.note: 330.

98 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 242.

99 DREWS, ROBERT (1988), The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the near East (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), LICHARDUS, J. and J. VLADAR (1996), "Karpätenbecken - Sintasta - Mykene: Ein Beitrag Zur Definition Der Bronzezeit Als Historischer Epoche," Slovenska Archeologia XLIV.1.

100 In Grave Circle A, Grave III, at Mycenae, a gold diadem was discovered and it was probably Kassite in origin BURNS, BRYAN EDWARD (1999), "Import Consumption in the Bronze Age Argolid (Greece): Effects of Mediterranean Trade on Mycenaean Society," University of Michigan, 1., note: 3. It is not clear how or from where did the Mycenaeans procure such an object, probably by trade or by plunder.

Babylon. They succeeded to overtake Babylon and rule there from the 16th century until 1155 BC. During the Late Bronze Age, several peoples rose to power; this regional phenomenon is not thoroughly understood even today. The Hyksos a Semitic people owned an army based upon chariots, and established themselves as rulers over some part of the Lower Egypt. They established their capital at Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a) in the Nile Delta.¹⁰¹ (Burns 1999, 6) The main time of the Hyksos period, i.e. the XV-XVI Dynasties (1684-1567 BC) was roughly contemporary with the Shaft Graves at Mycenae.¹⁰²

There were also Indo-European peoples who managed to impose their rule by using the chariot and horse. The most important of all are the Hittites. The Indo-European Anatolian branch had itself three early branches, Hittite, Luwian, and Palaic. Hittite was the palace and administration language of the Hittite Empire. The Hittite kingdom lasted for approximately four hundred years (ca. 1650 to 1180 BC).

The Hittite cuneiform script was deciphered by the Czech scholar Bedřich Hrozný, professor at the University of Vienna (1905) and also professor of cuneiform research and ancient Oriental history at Charles University, Prague (1919–52). He published his culminating article “The Solution to the Hittite Problem,”¹⁰³ before the German Oriental Society in 1915 and proved the position as presented first by Jørgen Alexander Knudtzon (*Die Zwei Arzawa Briefe: Die ältesten Urkunden in Indogermanischer Sprache*, 1902). He centered his presentation upon the following Hittite sentence: *nu ninda-an ēzzatteni wātar-ma ekutteni*, which means “then you will eat bread and you will drink water” (Collins, 2007, pp. 7-8). He understood the sign *ninda* as an ideogram representing *bread*. Then he made comparisons of the unknown words with other Indo-European language words. For example the word *wātar* resembles the English word *water* and the German word *Wasser* or the Sanskrit word *vaar*, while the word *ēzzatteni* the English verb *eat*, the German verb *essen*, or the Latin verb *edō*.¹⁰⁴

The Hittites looted Babylon, took other cities from the Assyrians, and fought the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II to a standstill at the greatest chariot battle of ancient times, at Kadesh, on the banks of the Orontes River in Syria, in 1286 BC. The Trojans or Luwians are themselves of IE origin, a people whom the Mycenaeans fought against according to the Homeric epics. Greek mainland, Asia Minor,

101 Ibid., 6.

102 MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2000), The Early Mycenaean Rulers and the Contemporary Early Iranians of the Northeast (Budapest).

103 Bedřich Hrozný, “Die Lösung des hethitischen Problems” which was published in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft* 56, 1915.

104 COLLINS, BJ (2007), “The Hittites and Their World,” Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature: 7.

Crete, the Cyclades were totally invaded or conquered by people of IE origin.

The Mitanni dynasty, also charioteers (*maryanna*, young-men), ruled over what is today northern Syria between 1500 and 1350 BCE. The Mitanni kings regularly spoke a *non*-Indo-European language. But all the Mitanni kings, first to last, took Old Indic (Indo-European) throne names. Tus'ratta I was Old Indic *Tvesa-ratha* 'having an attacking chariot', Artatama I was *Rta-dhaaman* 'having the abode of r'ta', Artas's'umara was *Rta-smara* 'remembering r'ta'¹⁰⁵ (D. Anthony, 2007).

From late MH several horse skeletons were discovered throughout the Greek mainland. With the retreat of glaciers the species making up the equid family were roughly the zebras in southern and central Africa, the ass (*equus asinus*) in northern Africa and southern Europe, the onager or wild ass (*equus hemionus*) in southwestern Asia, and the horse (*equus caballus*) present from the steppes of central Asia to the Carpathian Basin in Europe.¹⁰⁶ The horse was probably domesticated during the neolithic and chalcolithic in Central Asia and eastern Europe at least at five separate locations. By the end of the third millennium, the horse was a common domestic animal from France to Turkestan .

"The only domesticated equids attested for Greece and western Anatolia in the neolithic and Early Bronze periods were onagers or asses."¹⁰⁷ EH II and EH III dated ass (*Equus asinus*) bones were found at Lerna. According to Gejvall the horse is first attested at Lerna during MH settlement V (MH) (Gejvall, 1969, p. 54). At Argissa Magula, one horse molar from Middle Thessalian I was attested. At Dendra (Argolid) two pair of horse were found: (i) one pair uncovered near tumulus C, MH and (ii) one pair (tumulus B), was found dating from LHI. Most of the horse finds came from burials, usually from graves in the Argolid (Nauplion, Dreiras, Lerna, Aidonia near Nemea, Argos and Mycenae) date from the LH period. The earliest horse skeletons are from Mycenae, Vrana and Dendra and it is thought that the horses are from the steppes (*equus caballus*).

The rapid rise of Mycenae is thought by J. Makkay to be a result of an Indo-Iranian invasion from the north. He bases his arguments on several relationships between the objects found within the Grave Circles and objects from the north, e.g. Catacomb Culture, and Sintashta-Arkaim Complex. It is not clear how the MH II culture obtained the chariot and horse complex. Some scholars have

105 ANTHONY, DW (2007), The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World (Princeton Univ Pr).

106 DREWS, ROBERT (1988), The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the near East (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

107 Ibid.: 81.

pointed to a transmission of ideas while others to demic diffusion¹⁰⁸. It was a demic diffusion, argues J. Makkay, that brought the horse and chariot within the Greek mainland. Although I think of a cultural transmission of ideas that brought within the Aegean region, the horse and the chariot, rather than a demic diffusion. At Mycenae in Grave Circle A several stelae depicting chariots were discovered. I think the bellicosity of these people, their thirst for war, and honor is clearly depicted in the stelae:



Figure 12: Stele I from Grave Circle A, Grave V, (Wace, 1923)



Figure 13: Stele V, from Grave Circle A, Grave V, (Wace, 1923).

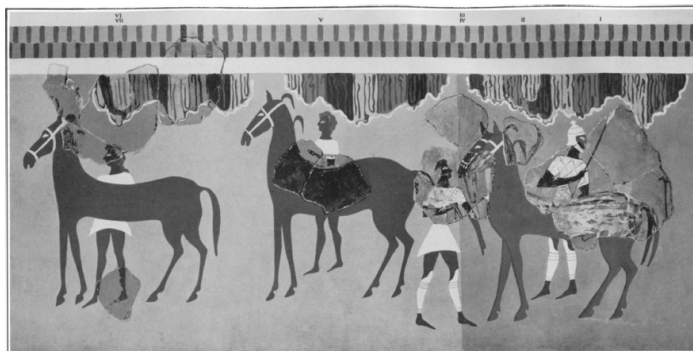


Figure 14: Palace: Reconstruction of Fresco Frieze of Warrior, Grooms and Horses, (Wace, 1923, Pl. XXVII).

108 J. Makkay argues for an Indo-Iranian origin of the warriors buried at Mycenae. The Greek population according to his scenario arrived earlier. "The Early Iranian and/or Indo-Aryan groups arriving in Greece at the turn of the MH and LH were soon assimilated by local inhabitants speaking dialects of early Greek, because they were few in number (as conquering warriors used to be), and mostly consisted of male warriors. This circumstance resulted in a sudden amalgamation with natives, and it was further speeded up with intermarriage and concubinage." MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2006), *The Oar of Odysseus* (Budapest) 82-83.

6.2 The Chieftdom and Grave Circles from Mycenae

Powerful lineages rose above the common population. As I have indicated above there were trade networks to the north of Greece (southern Scandinavia - Carpathian Basin – Sintashta). Through such routes successful chiefs could have imported the chariot, established alliances with northern people, and increased their power at home. They also became highly involved within Aegean affairs; traded with Crete and the Cyclades, and probably offered military service to their more advanced counterparts.

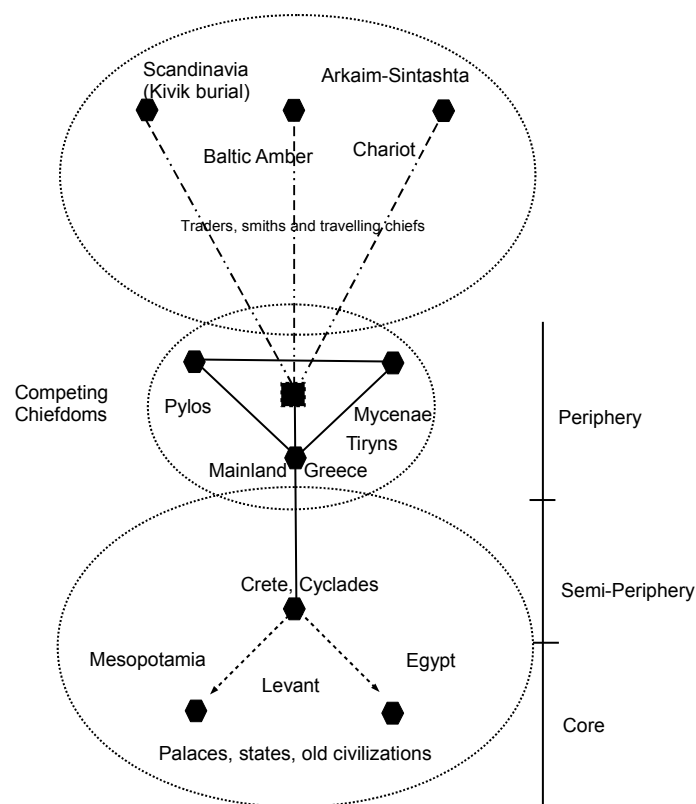


Figure 15: The Mycenaeans and core - periphery relations in eastern Mediterranean and connections to the North (early Late Bronze Age). During LHIII (ca. 1450 BC, the Mycenaeans conquered the Minoans, and their civilization became a semi-periphery to the core.

Thus, the Mycenaeans were successful in adapting to the requirements of the age which had pushed them higher on the scale of social complexity. Through a process that was called “colonization of the interior” that started during the late MH settlements increased and expanded. During this phase, political complexity increased, and mainland Greece re-experienced the rise of chiefdoms signaling a centralization of power and authority. Citadels were consolidated and fortifications enlarged. The

archaeological evidence from this period comes mainly from mortuary practice at the sites that in the end became state-based societies.

“In classic discussion of the rise of political complexity, the appearance of chiefdoms signals a centralization of power and authority, often by a predominant lineage, replacing the factional and unstable leadership of Big Men. The development on the mainland of Greece from the end of MH through the early phases of LH are a good archaeological case study of this process.”¹⁰⁹

There is no archaeological evidence for site-plans from most prominent sites (e.g. Mycenae or Pylos) during the MHIII and LHI-II since the construction of palaces during LH III destroyed previous remains. However, there are site-plans dated to the early Mycenaean period which did not evolve into palace-states and therefore could give us some information in respect to political organization as based on architectural evidence. There are two grave circles attested from late MH namely and early LH, at Mycenae (GCB) and one grave circle from Pylos which did not furnish riches as attested at Mycenae. During the Late Bronze Age the tholos tomb was introduced and there is an increase in chamber tombs during LH II. The tholoi and chamber tombs are more elaborately built than the grave circles, signaling an increase in power. This change in mortuary practice during LH I-II may be linked to the inception of a *wanax* (or kinship) ideology as proposed by Kilian.¹¹⁰ As I have mentioned that the sources of power are both allocative and authoritative, here, in the guise of several processes during LHI-II that seem to signal the institution of kinship: (i) rise in population, (ii) tholoi tombs, (iii) elaborate fortifications, (iv) proto-*wanax* ideology, (v) agricultural production, (vi) chariots, (vii) some Linear B record keeping.

Subsequent to the grave circles a series of nine tholos tombs are attested from Mycenae. “The chronology and increasingly elaborate construction of the tholoi at Mycenae seem to indicate the existence of a ruling family during most of the Late Helladic II and III periods.”¹¹¹ It is difficult to argue for the office of a *chief*, because within the grave circles from Mycenae no single burial stands out from the others to mark an individual as a supreme ruler. However, we may assume that the Mycenaean society of the late MH and early LH, was chiefdom-based since what we find during

109 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 244.

110 KILIAN, KLAUS (1988), "The Emergence of Wanax Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces," Oxford Journal of Archaeology 7.3.

111 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 17.

late LH is monarchical rule, and therefore we may argue that the institution of kingship develops from the institution of chiefship. This does not rule out the possibility of powerful oligarchs ruling over communities throughout the history of the early Mycenaeans.

In the previous stage big-men or leaders competed with each other for ascendancy; during the chiefdom stage a lineage consolidated its position and inter-community competition increased. The chariot and horse could have been valuable means to impose ones views or settle disputes. Elite members were interred within reserved burial areas, from tumuli to tholoi tombs (containing gold diadems, weapons, jewelry, and imported pottery), e.g. at Mycenae and Asine in the Argolid, Attica, and Messenia. During MH III into LH I there seems to have been a progression from less developed burials to more elaborate burials. J. C. Wright notes three phases which indicate increasing social differentiation: (i) there are ordinary scattered cemeteries; (ii) burials in tumuli or mounds; and (iii) large cist graves and deep shaft graves in the Argolid and tholos tombs in Messenia. Thus the structure of the burials discovered through mainland Greece “reflects a social structure evolving toward a lineage-based society.”¹¹²

Since many of the items from the tholoi tombs were removed or throughout history were robbed there is little evidence left. In terms of architecture these tombs following the grave circles, were surely, more elaborate and richer even than the GCA. Here I will concentrate upon the grave circles at Mycenae since the graves there have been well preserved. If we take a look at the Grave Circle B and the people interred within it a powerful lineage appears. There is clear evidence for the existence of an elite class; and that leadership was ascribed. Below you may see facial reconstruction of seven people interred within the grave. “The graves in this cemetery appear to be laid out in four groups, each group spanning the different phases of the site, reminiscent of family plots.”¹¹³ For example, Γ55, a male was buried with a face-mask made of electrum.

It is believed that the people interred with many riches within Grave Circle B and Grave Circle A must have been part of the leading warrior or elite status families. Some scholars from the University of Manchester have carried an ancient DNA study of the 22 of the skeletons, obtaining

112 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine.

113 BOUWMAN, AS, et al. (2008), "Kinship between Burials from Grave Circle B at Mycenae Revealed by Ancient DNA Typing," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35.9.

authentic mitochondrial aDNA sequences for four individuals; also the results were compared with facial reconstructions of the skulls and archaeological data. By maternal relationship, it was concluded that male $\Gamma 55$ (electrum face-mask) and female $\Gamma 58$ (from the same grave) were brother and sister. Facial reconstruction has been carried out on the seven best preserved skulls indicating three groups, the 'heart-shapes' $\Gamma 55$, $\Gamma 58$ and A62, the 'long faces' $\Gamma 51$ and Z59, and the 'beaky face' B52, with $\Sigma 131$, being the earliest of these seven, having features in common with both of the first two types (Bouwman, et al., 2008). "Person Z59 (relatively early burial) has a different haplogroup to $\Gamma 55$ and $\Gamma 58$ thus belonging to a different maternal lineage". A62 does not share maternal descent with the two ($\Gamma 55$ and $\Gamma 58$) but a paternal descent is not excluded. Both female and male family members therefore, it is argued, held a position of authority by right of birth.

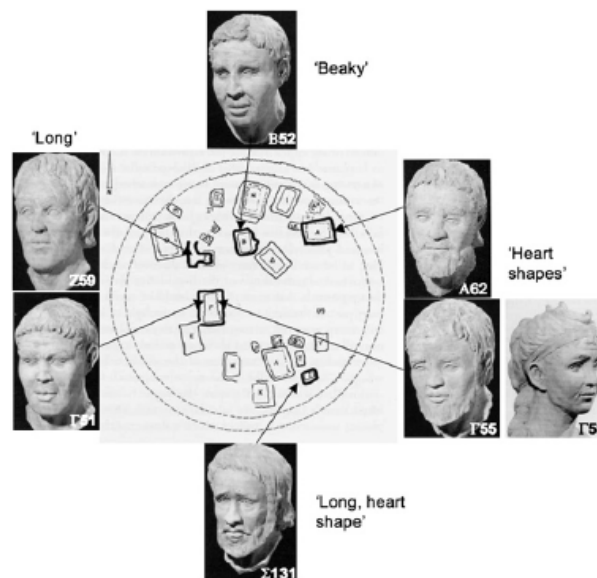


Figure 16: Facial reconstructions of seven individuals buried in Grave Circle B at Mycenae. The faces are grouped according to their perceived similarities and the positions of the skeletons within the Grave Circle are shown. (Bouwman et. al., 2008, p. 2581).

In a chiefdom based society status is hereditary and therefore ascribed. Agricultural production and exchange economic systems are under the administration of a chief. He rewards his followers and his power depends upon his ability to keep his population loyal.

“ ... chiefdoms refer to those traditional social forms that measure in the tens of thousands of people, have inherited (as opposed to achieved) forms of leadership, are integrated through kinship or fictive kin ties, and have non-bureaucratic structures. That is, in chiefdoms, one typically finds only one or two tiers of decision-making above the general populace. Authority tends to prevail over raw military might or institutionalized power.”¹¹⁴

What are the common features of 'almost' all chiefdoms? J.C. Wright¹¹⁵:

- Chiefdoms are organized along hereditary lines.
- Power is vested in the chief, who is the center of the coordination of economic, social and religious activities.
- His principal concern, however, is oriented towards maintaining his position of dominance.
- His focus is to utilize resources at his command to consolidate his authority
- Rules are established that favor his position, through rituals and succession
- Central to the maintenance of the chief's authority, as defined by Elman Service, is the notion of redistribution, through which the chief receives goods from commoners and redistributes them to his supporters.

“The great change in chiefdom level [as compared to bands and tribes] is that specialization and redistribution are no longer merely adjunctive to a few particular endeavors but continuously characterize a large part of the activity of the society. Chiefdoms are *redistributional societies* with a permanent central agency of co-ordination. Thus the central agency comes to have not only a economic role – however basic this factor in the origin of this type of society – but

114 CHABAL, PATRICK, et al. (2004), "Beyond States and Empires: Chiefdoms and Informal Politics," Social Evolution & History 3.1.

115 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (1995), "From Chief to King in Mycenaean Society," Aegaeum 11: The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean, ed. Paul Rehak.

also serves additional functions which are social, political and religious.”¹¹⁶

There is some indication for the existence of a *council of elders*, if we rely upon the evidence from the Linear B tablets. The *qa-si-re-u* is subordinate to the *wa-na-ka* and it is interpreted as a vassal or chief, a local ruler dependent to some extent upon the palace. A paramount chiefdom finally evolved into state; while other lesser chiefdoms within time were incorporated under the rule of a state. Probably, different locations were ruled by these leaders or chiefs subordinate to the *wa-na-ka*, and were payers of tribute and when required they would supply the palace with a contingent of soldiers for war or security issues. Whatever the difficulties for the reconstruction of the political organization during the MHIII, LHI-II, it is clear that main sites were ruled by powerful lineages. War, famine, and high mortality rates impeded a process of ascribed leadership from father to son. Leadership could have passed from father to son, from uncle to nephew, or from father-in-law to a groom.

Power could also be transmitted through the intermediary of women. In GCA women with rich objects were interred. If a chief had no sons and was killed in war a prominent peer or leader from a different lineage could marry one of his daughters, thus becoming the new chief over a community. Therefore, although leadership was ascribed, the leader or chief was selected from multiple powerful lineages. It is not clear how the institution of the *council of elders* evolved, but probably there were older men either priests or counselors who were consulted in times of crisis. As I have showed, there was the institution of priests in the Proto-Indo-European political organization. Both ritual or organizational knowledge was probably concentrated in the hands of elder members of an elite class.

I would also like to stress out my belief that the institution of the *chief* was not quite different from the institution of the *king*. Both the chief and the king had to assert their power constantly since there were other elite members which would have competed for the throne. The difference is however that the *chief* ruled his *big-house* without the existence of a well-based government (not internally specialized), while the office of a *king* ruled over a palace-state with the support of officials, and resided over a much more powerful government (internally specialized). If a *king* died or was assassinated the apparatus of the state would have acted as a stabilizer of political affairs and

116 RENFREW, COLIN (1972), The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium Bc (London: Methuen and Co Ltd.) 364.

minimizer of risk of internal warfare. The office of a *chief* however without the support of a state-apparatus was extremely fragile and unstable. While in a big-men society a leader was selected on the basis of skills and knowledge, a leader in a chiefdom was selected both on the basis of membership within a powerful lineage and on the basis of skills and knowledge. The selection of a king depended on the basis of membership of an elite class (much more contracted than the elite class in a chiefdom), on the fact whether his father was worthy of honor, on his ability to influence state-officials to gain support; e.g. support from both military leaders and priests who could authenticate a person as able to bear the name of a *king* or *wa-na-ka*. The selection of a king depends on many factors, the offices within a state compete with one another, and the most powerful in the end select a *king* whom they believe to be of the same ideological or political orientation. While in a chiefdom the interest of a chief is more important than that of officials, in a state-based society the interest of a state is more important than that of a king.

Many artifacts, pottery, gold ornaments and weapons have been found within GCB however the luxury objects found within GCA by far exceeds the riches found anywhere in the Greek mainland. The richness of both graves suggests that the buried were elite members of the early Mycenaean society. The number of people interred within the GCB is much more larger than the people interred within GCA suggesting a decrease in elite members and an increase in the concentration of power.

Grave	People Interred	Some Grave Contents
I	3 women	Gold jewelry, faience pottery (i.e., tiny glazed ceramic jars), ivory pyxis (i.e., jars with carved scenes around outside), silver cups, bronze vessels, clay vases
II	1 man	Gold cup, gold diadem, bronze weapons, clay vessels, and faience pottery
III	3 women and 2 infants	Gold jewelry, massive gold crowns, (infant remains were covered in gold foil), elaborate embroidery on burial shrouds, amber beaded necklaces, gold seals with hunting scenes, gold scales
IV	3 men and 2 women	Gold death masks (i.e., gold masks presumably in the form of the deceased's face), gold breastplate, gold silver and stone vases, libation vases, decorative weaponry.
V	3 men	Gold death masks (one of which has become known as the 'Mask of Agamemnon'), amber beads, decorative weaponry, gold and silver vessels, libation vessels, three stelae depicting chariots.
VI	2 men	Gold cups, golden knee bands, bronze weapons and clay vases

Table 4: Grave Circle A contents.

A chiefdom is externally specialized, meaning that a chief rules over a subsystem but not “internally specialized in terms of different aspects of the control process”, such as observing, deciding, coercing.¹¹⁷ Within this set there is a continuum of varying complexity¹¹⁸ Simple chiefdoms are those in which such control is exercised by figures drawn from an ascribed local elite subgroup. A simple chiefdom consists of two levels, (i) level of control (chief) and (ii) level of the local community or level of producer communities. While a complex one: (i) paramount chief, (ii) lesser chiefs, and (iii) local communities.

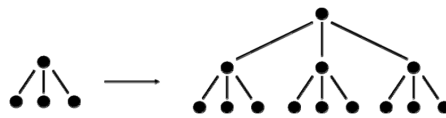


Figure 17: (a) a simple chiefdom, and (b) a complex chiefdom; after (Turchin & Gravilets, 2006, p. 19).

The leaders of the emerging centralized settlements, probably had at a previous stage established themselves as warriors, hunters, or experienced traders but now they had to acquire political prowess and translate this into social and economic power. They not only needed the necessary means to secure their position but also the authority to designate heirs. Studies within the ethnographic field have shown that “the translation of sociopolitical reputation into durable power and authority is accomplished through alliances and coalitions”. As presented by J.C. Wright these relationships among leaders is established and maintained through marriage and descent, through feasting and gift-giving, through manipulation of rituals. “The power of these elites was based on control of, or at least preferential access to, a range of resources including ritual knowledge, symbols of power, exotic and local raw materials, specialist craft skills, land, human labor and agricultural staples.”¹¹⁹ A particular lineage thus became an upper class and could achieve the level of a simple chiefdom or complex chiefdom. The paramount chief may extract tribute from lesser chiefs, to whom he would offer protection. Most probably, Pylos, Mycenae, probably Tiryns, and

117 WRIGHT, HENRY T. (1984), "Prestate Political Formations," On the Evolution of Complex Societies: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer, ed. Timothy Earle (Malibu: Undena (for the UCLA Dept.of Anthr.)) 42.

118 TURCHIN, PETER and SERGEY GAVRILETS (2006), "Evolution of Complex Hierarchical Societies," University of Connecticut.

119 HALSTEAD, PAUL (1995), "From Sharing to Hoarding: The Neolithic Foundations of Aegean Bronze Age Society?," Aegaeum 12: Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier (Université de Liège).

other centers attained the level of a complex chiefdom. While a chiefdom maybe be externally specialized it is not specialized internally.

Various settlements, from various regions, such as the Argolid, Messenia, Laconia, etc. begin to gain form and structure similar to those of emerging chiefdoms. Below is a late Middle Helladic site from Malthi. There was a big house identified in the middle of the citadel, probably the residence of a chief.

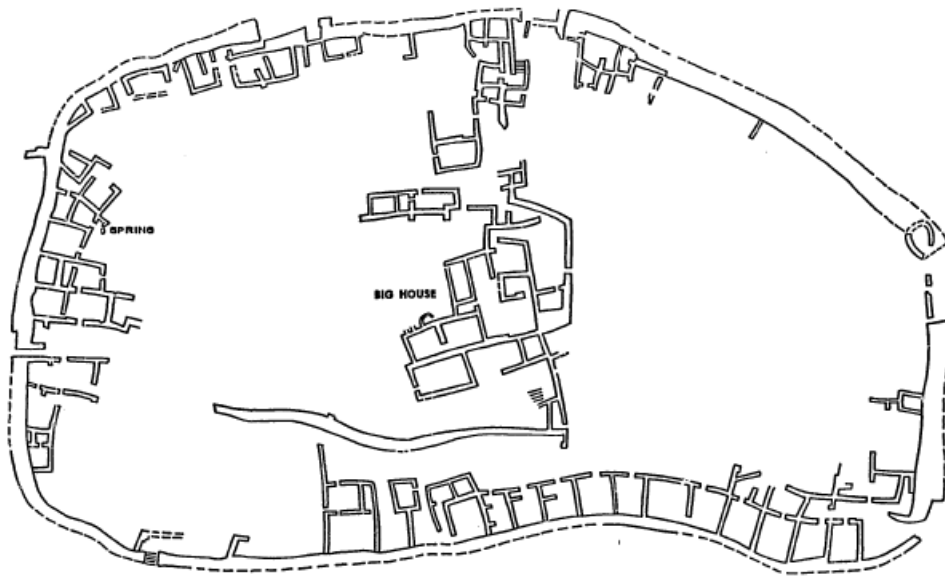


Figure 18: Site-plan of Malthi settlement (Messenia), with a Big-House at the center.

The weapons, e.g. daggers, swords, knives, boar's tusks, obsidian points, arrows and spears, and chariots attest the bellicosity of the rulers of LH I and LH II. The chief and his followers administer agricultural production and animal husbandry. The local economy is fed by territorial expansion and exploitation of new resources. Probably, the chiefdom extends his power over an wider area requiring more centralized control. Villages or smaller hamlets around the chief's domain begin to be incorporated into a larger economic system. The chief limits the items that may be reciprocally exchanged and monopolizes the economy through a system of redistribution. Goods and food are supplied in return by the chief. If an economic crisis occurs, e.g. bad crop year or a drawback in trade, the chief and his military contingents may supply the deficit by raiding. Only the most successful leaders or chiefs would resist the vagaries of time.

By LH I and II the Mycenaeans expanded behind the boundaries of mainland Greece and interacted with the peoples of the Cyclades and Crete. At Akrotiri, on Thera, in a room of the West House there is a fresco believed to represent Mycenaean warriors.¹²⁰



Figure 19: Fresco from Akrotiri
(<http://www.salimbeti.com/micenei/>).

Organized into troops, the soldiers are equipped with long sword and scabbard, pikes of lances, tower shields, and boar's tusks helmets. J.C. Wright argues that the items they carry, indicate that they were mainlanders. In the *Iliad* we are told how Meriones gave to Odysseus a boar's tusk helmet. “And Meriones gave to Odysseus a bow and a quiver and a sword, and about his head he set a helmet made of hide, and with many a tight-stretched thong was it made stiff inside, while on the outside the white teeth of a boar of gleaming tusks were set thick this way and that, well and skillfully, and on the inside was fixed a lining of felt. This cap Autolycus had stolen out of Eleon when he had broken into the well-built house of Amyntor, son of Ormenus; and he gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandeia, and Amphidamas gave it to Molus as a guest-gift, but he gave it to his own son Meriones to wear; and now it was set on the head of Odysseus and covered it closely” (Il.10.260-269).

During the Neopalatial period in Crete, the Mycenaeans were important participants along with Cretans and islanders within Aegean affairs. The close contacts of the Mycenaeans with the Aegean is demonstrated by the jewelry, seals, scepters, standardized weights, and pottery imported from Crete and Cyclades. A beautiful silver and gold rhyton was found within GCA-Grave-IV created by a Cretan craftsman. Amber from the Baltic, a lead-tin stag of Anatolian type, bear witness contacts

120 SCHOFIELD, LOUISE (2007), *The Mycenaeans* (The British Museum Press) 67.

further afield. During the second millennium BC the Cyclades, rich in culture, acted as intermediaries between Crete and the Greek mainland. The Minoans established *entrepots* throughout the Aegean. Minoans stimulated interaction spheres of exchange throughout the Aegean, from the nearby Cyclades to the shores of the Greek mainland and Anatolia. The Minoan world itself gained momentum from Egypt and Near Eastern centers. M. Weiner argues that Minoans probably settled on some of the Cycladian islands and Dodekanese. The nature of Minoan expansion “may include causal, unofficial, small-scale migration involving merchants ... or an expanding Minoan elite seeking to carve out baronies, or a Cretan nobility exercising loose diplomatic control.”¹²¹

The formation of Mycenaean states should also be approached from the perspective the belief system. The legitimation of rulers whether in a state or chiefdom as Claessen suggests was “a matter of shared beliefs and convictions.”¹²² The mythological framework of the MH society already contained elements that legitimized that certain individuals should have certain rights. In the Iliad we see how gods support leaders. I do not believe that the chief of MH III or LH I sought to increase its power by adopting a new set of Minoan beliefs as J.C. Wright suggests. A powerful religious belief system was already present within the early Mycenaean society that would legitimate power and coercion on the side of the chief and his special status.

If Minoan religious elements were present within the Mycenaean society it was not a strategical move in order to increase his power at home. Rather I believe that this was a result of inter-societal connections, trade and exchange. If we today find an amplitude of Minoan elements within the Mycenaean society those were not present there as a result of a chief's strategy to legitimate his status or place within a society. This was a result of guest-friendship relations where the leader might have sought to establish himself as an equal among the elite members in Crete.

I will argue that the peer-polity interaction model not only brings about a certain uniformity in all the successfully emerging political entities, but creates an intersocietal structure. This structure defines how a political actor should act. It is not natural or universal but it is simply created by the actions, and decisions of political actors. The regional structure, on the lower level was strongly

121 WEINER, M. (1991), "The Isles of Crete? The Minoan Thalassocracy Revisited," *Thera and the Aegean World Iii*, eds. D.A. Hardy, C.G. Doulas, J.A. Sakellarakis and P.M. Warren, vol. 1 (London: The Thera Foundation).

122 CLAESSEN, HENRI J.M. (2002), "Was the State Inevitable?," *Social Evolution & History* 1.1: 104.

influenced by the world-system. Here I refer mainly to the process by which Mycenaean rulers entered the Near Eastern political system (world-system) and were acting accordingly to the rules and customs imposed by it. The pressure of the world-system could have been so great that it may have almost entirely changed the rules of conduct between Mycenaean states, but a regional structure may have also challenged a world-system. Thus, the political actors were constrained in their conduct by the regional or world system that they created. As soon as a Mycenaean chiefdom or state began to interact with the outside world it faced several problems. These problems may have been resolved bit by bit unconsciously or consciously not only by the actors but also by traders, merchants, officials, and heralds etc. The Hittite or Egyptian Great Kings would have required a certain behavior on the part of the Mycenaean rulers.

The ideology of the wanax (as defined by Kilian (1988)) I suggest evolved through a process of polity-interaction. Kilian's study is exemplary. He starts from the architectural remains and succeeds to build up a common ideology, that of the *wanax*, all powerful, paramount, central to the palace-center. The process is extremely important in understanding the formation of Mycenaean states and their palace on the edge of prehistory and history. By implying the concept of secondary-state formation as defined by Fried we may understand how various elements were transmitted from the Minoans to the Mycenaeans. There was already a model for state organization that the Mycenaean could copy according to their own needs and intersocietal structure.

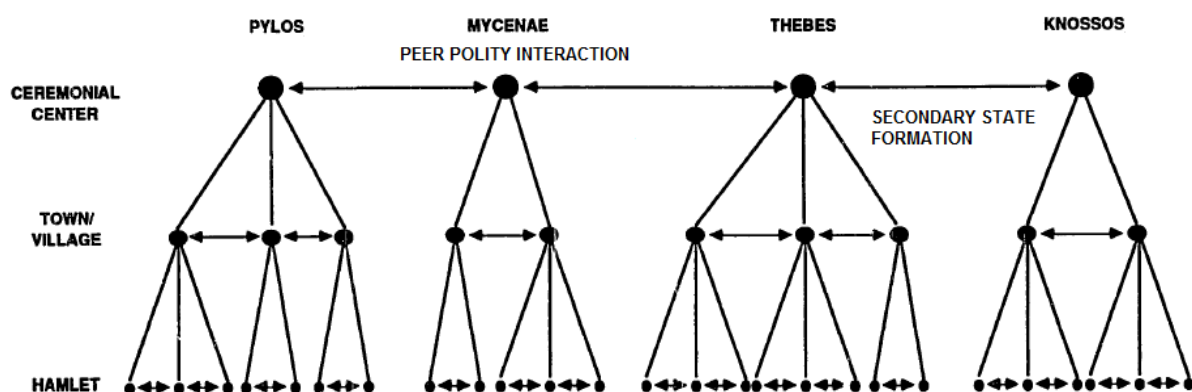


Figure 20: Peer-Polity-Interaction after Colin Renfrew.

The interaction of a less highly organized society (B) with a highly organized society (A) results with the latter influencing the other. Various traits are therefore transmitted from A to B. In a certain manner peculiar to its own geography, mythology, and culture society B adopts and imitates certain institutions of society (A). This a simplistic model. Society (B) might interact with various highly organized societies, adopting different elements from each of them. The way I see it is that there are two dimensions of the process. (i) level one: certain elements are transmitted from A (highly organized society, Crete) to less organized societies B (Mycenae), C (Tiryns), and D (Pylos); (ii) level two: B, C, and D, being more or less on the path towards state-formation, under the pressure of Crete, interact as peer-polities. The result is a sort of uniformity that characterizes each of them. It has been argued that certain features of the palace-state from Pylos was in a sense more Minoan than Mycenae or Tiryns. Mycenae and Tiryns reside in the Argolid, they are close to each other, and Crete is much more closer to Pylos than to the former. As J.C. Wright argues this process of secondary-state formation is contagious and chaotic. It depends upon each society how it reacts and adapts to the new model of state-based society.¹²³

Through their increasing interaction since LH I, the Mycenaeans learned a lot from their Cretan counterparts. They adapted customs, technology, and administrative systems for use at home. These interactions are of fundamental importance for the formation of the Mycenaean palatial system of administration. The Mycenaean Greek script namely Linear B deciphered in 1952 developed from the Minoan script Linear A around LH II.

There are two types of state formation, (i) pristine state formation and (ii) secondary state formation.¹²⁴ Pristine state formation refers to stateless political organizations that emerge as states without having an already formed state around from which they could copy from. Following this definition a secondary state refers to a polity that generally adopts from a state-based society certain institutions, without having to go into the trouble of finding them by itself. A chiefdom may learn from a state-based society how to achieve a level similar to that of a state control level. There is the need for a specialized bureaucracy, of record keeping, of magistrates... etc. It has been argued by Kilian that many of the components of the *wanax*-system started to appear during the LH I and LH II. His study is important since it offers a view that describes when the Minoan state's influence starts to take form within the Greek mainland. Such a process, may even have its roots within the

123 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (1995), "From Chief to King in Mycenaean Society," Aegaeum 11: The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean, ed. Paul Rehak.

124 FRIED, MORTON H. (1967), "The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology."

Shaft Graves at Mycenae, where several Minoan objects were found, e.g. Minoan rhytons, etc.

There are two dimensions therefore – the regional peer-polity interaction among autonomous units leads to imitation and emulation, forming an intersocietal structure highly influenced itself by the world system. Cultural elements are important. Most importantly, diplomatic conduct, a system of heralds, writing, trade and exchange, a certain quality of products as expected by counterparts. For example the Minoan intersocietal structure was different in several respects than the intersocietal structure of the Mycenaeans. A warrior identity is conspicuous in the palaces of the Mycenaeans but not in the Minoan palaces.

7. The Archaic State or Palatial Period (LHIII)

7.1 Domestic Developments

During LHIIIA tholoi at Mycenae increased in elaboration and number while “in the rest of the Argolid, tholoi gradually ceased to be built, and the earlier wealth buried with the dead also diminished.”¹²⁵ This is an important consideration, since it may indicate that Mycenae became to rule much of the Argolid.¹²⁶ Tombs, such as grave circles, tholoi, or chamber tombs, are an indication of rulers or powerful leaders. It is probable that the leaders or chiefs from surrounding areas fall under the rule of the leaders from Mycenae and therefore were deprived of the right to be buried within elaborate tombs. That Mycenae, indeed rose above others in the Argolid, is indeed highly indicative. By LHIIIB there were elaborate fortifications built at Mycenae. At Tiryns a megaron with hearth and throne room was found indicating the institution of a *wanax*. It is impossible to tell however the relationship between the *wanax* from Mycenae and the one from Tiryns.

Hittite documents attest that there was a place called *Ahhiyawa*¹²⁷ ruled by a powerful king, brother of the Hittite king. Therefore, archaeological evidence, foreign diplomatic documents (Hittite, Egyptian), and the Homeric epics all point to the same direction, namely the preeminence of Mycenae, both in internal Mycenaean affairs and in external foreign affairs. Archaeologically, there is no indication that Pylos was under the rule of Mycenae, neither it is clear whether Knossos was under the rule of some Greek mainland palace-state. Whatever the case, the power of Mycenae should be seen as varying, and not as constant. At times, it could have subdued other polities, while at other times it could have lost the power to influence them. There is also a big problem in defining the sources of Mycenae's powers, e.g. Linear B records from Mycenae do not furnish a list of chariots as the records from Pylos do, and therefore a comparison between power capabilities is indeed difficult to make¹²⁸. However, it is clear that one Mycenaean king attained the status of a Great King within the Near Eastern system of Great Kings, and the best candidate is indeed

125 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), *Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition* (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 18.

126 This point is made by Ibid, THOMAS, CAROL G. (1995), "The Components of Political Identity in Mycenaean Greece," *Aegaeum 12: Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier.

127 A name resembling the Homeric term Achaea.

128 I should reiterate the fact that the earliest evidence for chariots comes from Mycenae.

Mycenae¹²⁹. External relations of the king of Mycenae would have been regarded with aggrandizement by other Mycenaean kings. Myths and lineage histories could indeed be a source of power of the king of Mycenae, e.g. a special relationship with Zeus, father of gods and men. Therefore, the power of a king should not be approached only from the perspective of military prowess or economic strength but also from the ideological, mythological, and inter-humane relationships perspective¹³⁰.

“The most successful polities became stratified sociopolitical entities characterized by the emergence of a functionary order of specialists who managed the administrative, economic, and religious activities of the community. This marks the formation of the formal structure of a state.”¹³¹ The existence of a throne room and the evidence from the Linear B tablets highly suggests the existence of kingship or monarchical rule. There is no evidence for an oligarchy.

There are three important aspects that lead to the establishment of states: (i) internal competition among chiefdoms; (ii) Minoan and Cycladean influence and (iii) the warrior culture and its connections with Northern Europe. It is generally agreed that 1435 BC marks the beginning of a Mycenaean state-based society. By the beginning of LH III (c. 1435) the most successful chiefdoms or centers “developed into full-fledged states (see Image!-map of states), political structures administered from central places of power”¹³². Central in identifying such states is a palace and in most cases a bureaucracy suggested by administrative records inscribed on clay tablets. Such palace-states were discovered in the Argolid (Mycenae, Tiryns), Thessaly (Ilkos), Boeotia (Thebes) and Messenia (Pylos) etc. Historically, states “underwent their first attested formative development in the Near East (Egypt and Mesopotamia) around the end of the fourth millennium BC.”¹³³ A state has two or more levels of control over a population. Renfrew's characterization of the Mycenaean political organization of LHIII as “something more than chiefdoms, something less than states” – or “palace principalities” or “minor states” – may seem appropriate.

129 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 43.

130 Here again, I should emphasize the difference I have made between the allocative and authoritative sources of power, see: GIDDENS, ANTHONY (1984), The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (University of California Press).

131 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 249..

132 SHELMEERDINE, CYNTHIA W. and JOHN BENNET (2008), "Mycenaean States: A. Economy and Administration," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (The Cambridge University Press) 289.

133 LIVERANI, MARIO (2001), International Relations in the Ancient near East, 1600-1100 Bc, Studies in Diplomacy (Palgrave Macmillan) 1.

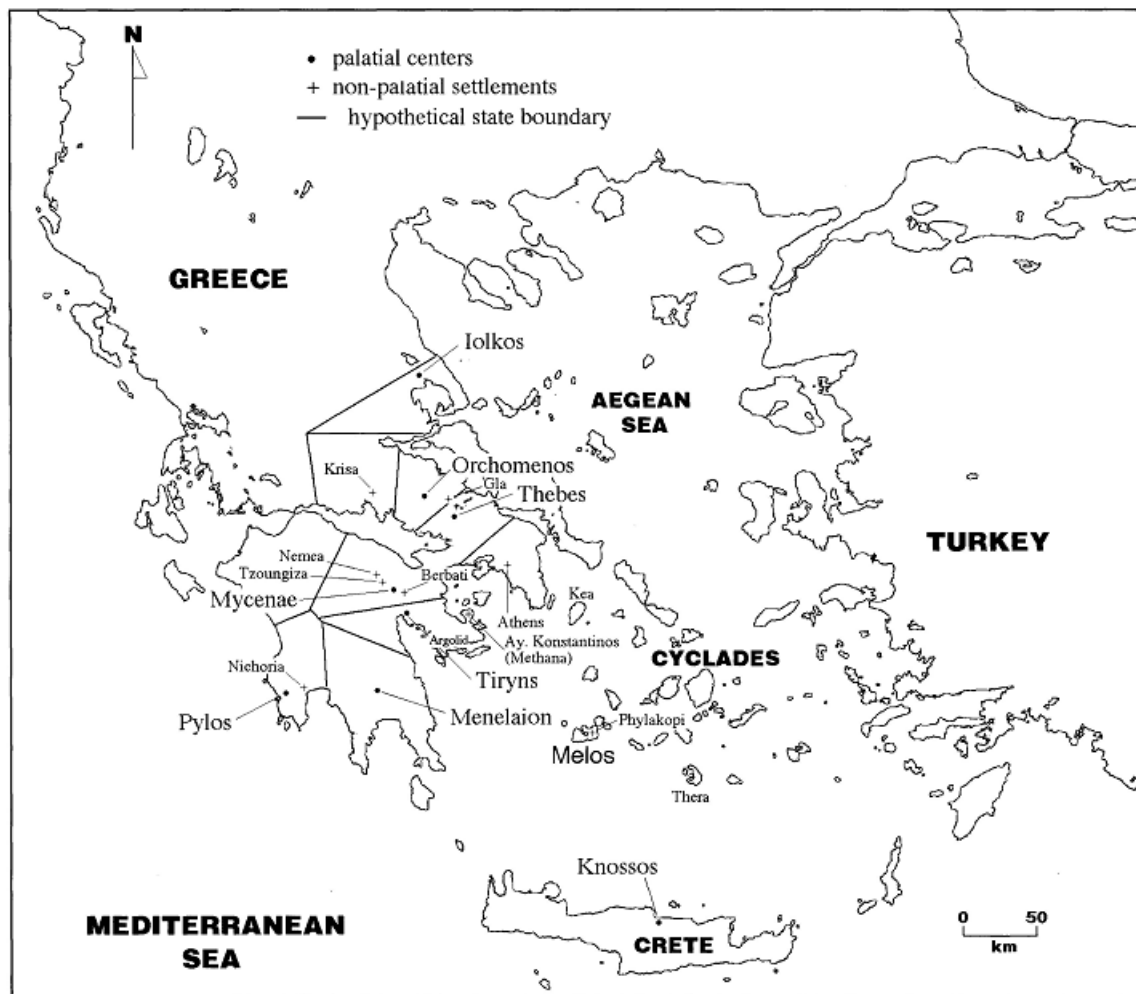


Figure 21: Aegean Map showing palatial centers, other important sites, and hypothetical state boundary, (Galaty and Parkinson, 2007, p. 2).

Carol G. Thomas “suggests that the Mycenaean system was a variation of a basic Indo-European monarchy type, and that it was likely similar to the Hittite system ... the picture she paints is a confederacy of several separate independent states, each with a sole king with absolute political power in his territory. The king is the war leader and has judicial authority. He is supported by a council of royal aristocrats who provide him with men for the military, as well as labor for public works and agricultural goods, in exchange for rights to the local land and access to luxury goods through the king.”¹³⁴ Referring to evidence from the Linear B tablets Kilian states that it has been clear beyond doubt, from the references in the tablets to the king (*wanax*), that the regions around Pylos and Knossos were subject to a monarchical system of government. As a result of the excavation of the palace from Mycenae in 1886, Tsountas cited in K. Kilian stated “that monarchy

¹³⁴ MORRIS, HOLLY J. (1986), "An Economic Model of the Late Mycenaean Kingdom of Pylos," University of Minnesota, 10.

was the Mycenaean form of government is sufficiently attested by the strong castles, each taken up in large part by a single princely mansion [e.g. the *megaron*].” The Linear B administrative records tell us that the *wanax* (king) was at the head of a hierarchical society. He was responsible for the organization of state territory in the political, economic, military and religious spheres. The structural patterns of the citadels (rooms, thrones) reveal the fact that there was “an elaborate conception of royal dignity with regal power highly concentrated in the person of the *wanax*.”¹³⁵ The *wanax* ideology is in its place from LHIIIA to the end of LHIIIB.

The state is defined here as a “centralized and hierarchical system of authority relations in which local political units lose their autonomy, becoming districts whose local or regional heads or chiefs are subordinate to central government ... E. Service also uses this approach, emphasizing as well the notion that the centralized government has a monopoly over the use of force” (Cohen 1978, 3). Characteristics useful in distinguishing archaic states from other kinds of societies with institutionalized ranking, such as chiefdoms are¹³⁶: (i) four-tiered settlement hierarchy; (ii) three or more-decision-making levels; (iii) an ideology of stratification and descent that separates rulers and the elite from commoners; (iv) endogamous social strata that separate the ruling class from the ruled; (v) the formalization of a ruler's official residence as a “palace”; (vi) a government that employs legal force; and (vii) governmental laws and the ability to enforce them. The database for reconstructing the Mycenaean palace-state comes from archaeological evidence, and from the Linear B script.

7.2 Mycenaean Palace-states as Architecture

By looking at the architectural structure of the palaces¹³⁷ (Tiryns, Pylos, Mycenae) (a rectangular structure or *megaron*, consisting of porch, anteroom, central room with hearth and surrounding colonnade, and throne) it is assumed that the palaces evolved uniformly. The familiar plan of the palaces resulted from the process of peer polity interaction. The hearth, throne, and interior columns represent the Helladic architectural tradition but there are other features borrowed from or shared

135 KILIAN, KLAUS (1988), "The Emergence of *Wanax* Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces," Oxford Journal of Archaeology 7.3: 291.

136 PARKINSON, WILLIAM A. and MICHAEL L. GALATY (2008), "Secondary States in Perspective: An Integrated Approach to State Formation in the Prehistoric Aegean," American Anthropologist 109.1: 116.

137 FIELDS, NIC and DONATO SPEDALIERE (2004), Mycenaean Citadels C. 1350-1200 Bc (Osprey).

with Minoan (orthostats), Cycladic, and Hittite (corbelled vaults) architectural structures.

“In architectural terms a palace is characterized by monumentality, complexity of plan (for a diversity of functions) and the use of specialized techniques of construction.”¹³⁸ Furthermore as Wright tells a palace-centered society “demands that some segments of the population work to support others who are engaged in specialized activities focused on a central place.” There is no clear evidence that the monumental palaces on the mainland were constructed before LH IIIA. “States are defined by their 'political landscapes' – simple or complex networks of settlements and communities, buildings and monuments, roads and boundaries – which reflect the actions of authority and control the flow of people and commodities.”¹³⁹

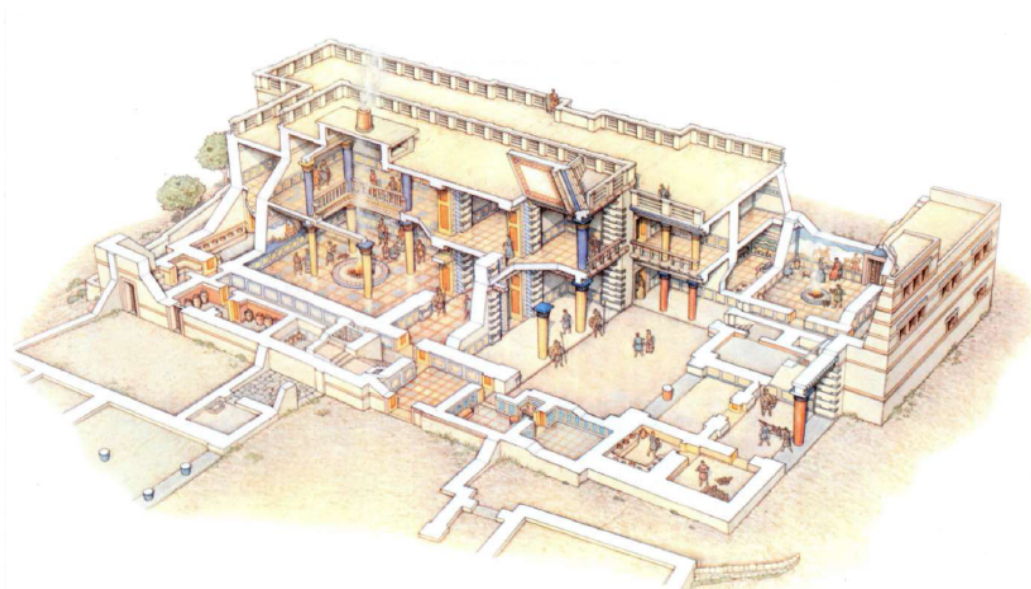


Figure 22: A reconstruction of Nestor's Palace showing a “cutaway view of the palace at Pylos. Its most conspicuous feature is the megaron, which is the idiosyncratic Mycenaean architectural unit composed of a porch with two wooden columns between antae, an anteroom and the throne room sumptuously decorated by means of frescoes. Although the throne of the wanax stands against the middle of the right-hand wall, the main feature of the throne room is its circular fixed hearth. Symbolic and not simply a source of heat, this enormous hearth is surrounded by four stuccoed wooden columns that support the ceiling leaving an open space at its centre. A balcony surrounds the hearth on the second floor, which ends in a lantern above the roof to draw off the smoke. There are private quarters on the first floor for the ruler and his family. On the ground floor, besides the megaron, there are archive rooms, olive-oil magazines and a wine-pantry” (Fields and Spedaliere 2004, 47)

138 DABNEY, MARY K. and JAMES C. WRIGHT (1990), "Mortuary Customs, Palatial Society and State Formation in the Aegean Area: A Comparative Study," *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid*, eds. Robin Hägg and Gullög C. Nordquist (Stockholm) 47.

139 COSMOPOULOS, MICHAEL B. (2006), "The Political Landscape of Mycenaean States: A-Pu2 and the Hither Province of Pylos," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110.2: 205.

The Greek mainland experiences the construction of large-scale buildings during LH IIIA and they were further extended in LH IIIB. There is a difference in architectonic size between early Mycenaean chiefdom-phase and palace-centered Mycenaean state phase. This aspect is taken to mark one phase from another not only in architectural terms, but also in terms of political organization.

The currently known Mycenaean palaces are Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea, Athens, Eleusis, Thebes (Boeotia) and Pylos (Messenia); and late Knossos¹⁴⁰ in Crete. Palaces compared to the ones just mentioned have not been discovered from Achaea and Laconia. It is argued that these regions did not develop such palace-centered states but “continued to operate at the level of the Early Mycenaean village-centered societies, outside the control of any particular center” (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 289). Therefore we can imagine political centers or *polities* scattered throughout the Greek mainland operating at the state or chiefdom level. Interregional politics must be seen as a dynamic process extending over 235 years if we consider LHIIIA-LHIIIB phases. The Iliad is a good source to see how political processes might have occurred e.g. quarrel among elite members or alliances and war.

So-called Warrior Graves dated to LM II-III were scattered around Knossos, at Archanes, at Phaistos, and at Khania in Crete. These graves are characteristic of the mainland (chamber, shaft, and tholos tomb) and indicate that they belong to Mycenaean conquerors or elites “adjusting to a new political and economic reality.”¹⁴¹ Around 1450, the Mycenaeans conquered Knossos and other parts of Crete and colonized many other places around the Aegean, such as the island of Rhodes. By this time, there were autonomous Mycenaean polities at times allied and at other times involved in disputes.

Argolid: A number of strong local settlements evolved into dominant citadel-centered polities during LH III. There are many chamber tombs and tholoi within the area (Argos, Mycenae, Tiryns, Dendra-Midea etc.). Only Mycenae and Tiryns seem to have developed monumental and architecturally diverse palace complexes in LH III. During the LH III the palace from Mycenae probably extended its reach in to the Berbati valley, to Tsoungiza and Zygouries, to the Nemea and

140 The Minoan palace of Knossos and other places in Crete were conquered or colonized by the Mycenaeans in LMII-LMIIIA.

141 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (2008), "Early Mycenaean Greece," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine 252.

Longopotamos valleys and Aidonia. (See image after Kilian!). If we compare the distribution of tholos tombs during the LH II we may see a higher number at Mycenae: at Mycenae 6 tholoi while at Tiryns 1, Berbati 1. It may therefore be concluded that the Mycenaean from Mycenae disposed of a larger elite class and power as well as wealth. Relying on settlement pattern the dominance of Mycenae is also well attested during the LH III. Many of the architectural styles from Mycenae were adopted by other surrounding centers which may support the idea of an extended control from Mycenae. If one compares the LHIIIB tholos tombs from the kingdom of Pylos with the ones from Mycenae these “do not rival the final three at Mycenae”, namely Aegisthus, Clytemnestra and Atreus.¹⁴² Probably Mycenae had the power to dominate or at least to influence the political framework within the Greek mainland.

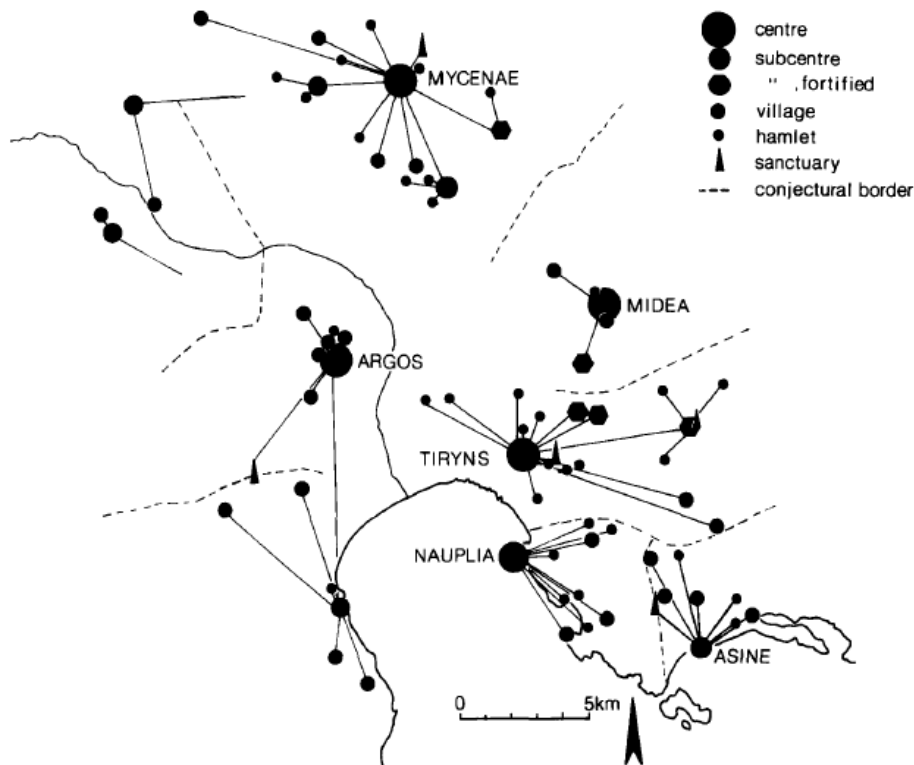


Figure 23: Hierarchy of Mycenaean settlements in the Argolid, (Kilian, 1988, p. 297).

142 THOMAS, CAROL G. (1995), "The Components of Political Identity in Mycenaean Greece," *Aegaeum* 12: *Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier 353-54.



Figure 24: The Lions Gate at Mycenae, 13th c. BC, (Yalçın et. al. 2005, p. 266)

Messenia: In Messenia in the core area on the Bay of Navarino there were many centers that reached their acme by LH II. However, the elite class from the center of Ano Englianos overpowered these centers during LHIII. Thus the archeological evidence suggests that Pylos developed into a highly centralized and powerful center. By LH IIIA2 the Messenian Valley to the east (on the other side of the Aigaleon mountain range and containing the Messenian Gulf) was consolidated into the State of Pylos, including the establishment of secondary administrative centers with their associated villages and hamlet. The territory of the Mycenaean state at Pylos “extended from the Ionian Sea in the west to Mount Taygetos in the east, and from Cape Akritas in the south to the Nedhas River/Kyparissia area in the north.”¹⁴³

Laconia: Ayios Stephanos even by LH III did not attain a size larger than a village, because, as J.C. Wright speculates, it was strongly controlled by the island of Kythera. To the north of Ayios Stephanos, within the Eurotas plain a settlement at Menelaion established in MH II developed into a palace through LH II and LH III. Within the region chamber tombs at Pellana, a tholos at Vapheio were found indicating some sort of extensive controlling authority of Menelaion center. However, the palace here does not suggest a center of the scale of others in the Peloponnese and central

¹⁴³ COSMOPOULOS, MICHAEL B. (2006), "The Political Landscape of Mycenaean States: A-Pu2 and the Hither Province of Pylos," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110.2: 205-06.

Greece.

Other Mycenaean settlements from Attica, Boeotia, and Thessaly (Midea, Athens, Eleusis) according to the scanty evidence are less elaborate. Other attested Mycenaean palace-centered states are at Thebes (Boeotia). At Iolkos, in Thessaly, the northernmost Mycenaean palace of LH III is attested while the southernmost quasi-Mycenaean palace is at Knossos. The Mycenaeans took over Minoan centers without destroying the ongoing tradition there but added to it.

When we compare the political landscape based upon archaeological evidence and the descriptions in Homer in respect to how much power a particular region had, there is significant similarity. Homer describes Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, as the most powerful of all the Achaeans (Mycenaeans) and this is exactly what we also see in the archaeological record. At least four of the centers of the rulers who are within the circle of the most powerful in the *Iliad* e.g. (Idomeneus (Knossos), Nestor (Pylos), Diomedes (Tiryns or Argos), Agamemnon (Mycenae); are also imposing and elaborate within the archaeological record.

7.3 Mycenaean Palatial Economy

D. Page argues that the Mycenaean monarchies were “unlike anything we associate with the Greeks or anything that ever again existed in Hellas.”¹⁴⁴ Here Page makes reference to the “highly” centralized Near Eastern palace-centered states. In a similar fashion, Killen¹⁴⁵ drawing on the work of M.I. Finley, suggests that the Mycenaean palaces were 'Asiatic' states.

“The Near Eastern economies were dominated by large palace- or temple-complexes, who owned the greater part of the arable, virtually monopolized anything that can be called 'industrial production' as well as foreign trade (which includes inter-city trade, not merely trade with foreign parts), and organized the

144 Cited in: THOMAS, CAROL G. (1995), "The Components of Political Identity in Mycenaean Greece," Aegaeum 12: Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier.

145 MORRIS, HOLLY J. (1986), "An Economic Model of the Late Mycenaean Kingdom of Pylos," University of Minnesota.

economic, military, political and religious life of the society through a single complicated, bureaucratic, record keeping operation for which the word “rationing”, taken very broadly, is as good a one-word description as I can think of. None of this is relevant to the Graeco-Roman world until the conquests of Alexander the Great and later of the Romans incorporated large Near Eastern territories ... I do not wish to over-simplify. There were private holdings of land in the Near East, privately worked; there were “independent” craftsmen and pedlars in the towns. Our evidence does not permit quantification, but I do not believe it is possible to elevate these people to the prevailing pattern of economy, whereas the Graeco-Roman world was essentially and precisely one of private ownership, whether of a few acres or of the enormous domains of Roman senators and emperors, a world of private trade, private manufacture.”¹⁴⁶

Killen suggests that the Mycenaean economy, as described within the Linear B tablets, was of an Near Eastern type. In this respect it is important to note how some scholars understood the economic structure and political superstructure. However, even the attempt to try to compartmentalize the economic world into different economic trajectories or systems without taking into consideration variation in the Near East is questioned.

This model presupposes a strong centralization on the part of the palace. Such a view constructs a political hierarchy, with the *wanax* at its top, controlling almost all aspects of economic (internal and external trade), social, and political (political dependency). The palace owns the land and allocates it to officials, local chiefs, etc. in return for services, goods, and products to the center. Goods, products, raw materials, are collected and stored and then redistributed to privileged people; a market did not exist to any significant level.

Thus, some scholars have followed M. Finley in describing the palace-states as controlling all aspects of the economy within the region it ruled. For example D.L. Page argued that:

“One would suppose that not a seed could be sown, not a gram of bronze worked, not a cloth woven, not a goat reared or a hog fattened without the filling of a form in the Royal Palace; such is the impression made only part of the files for a single

146 FINLEY, MOSES I. (1973), The Ancient Economy (Berkeley: University of California Press) 28-29.

year.”¹⁴⁷

In other words, the palace is the center of exchange, it is a machine that controls and administers, through record keeping, all sectors of the economy. Under the title of 'Asiatic' state there are two types of government or bureaucracy, as suggested by J. Hicks: (i) *classical bureaucracy* and (ii) *limited bureaucracy*. The former suggests central authority over a wide region “by controlling the collection of taxes”, while the later “allows tax collection to become decentralized. In this system, the collection of local surplus is delegated down to the local authorities, thereby dispersing some of the central power's authority. The result of delegating this authority is that the regions of the kingdom become more fractured and independent, making it more difficult for the center to maintain control.”¹⁴⁸ Killen, attributes the classical bureaucracy model as representative of the Mycenaean economy.

However such a centralization of a Mycenaean palace-state is disputed. Aegean scholars have suggested that various sectors of the economy were much more independent than an 'Asiatic' model of the economy would postulate. The bureaucracy of the palace-states was of a limited kind. Against the oriental monarchy view Thomas argues that “the evidence of the [Linear B] tablets and Bronze Age mortuary practices suggest social/political developments far less centralized and absolute than monarchical power in contemporary eastern Mediterranean kingdoms. In Greece, the force of centralization was limited in several fundamental respects.”¹⁴⁹

Economic transactions were recorded by palatial scribes for at least two hundred years. The earliest records from Knossos are dated to LM IIIA1 (c. 1400 BC) while in regard to the Greek mainland the earliest records are dated to LH IIIA2 and were discovered at Mycenae. Those that were discovered at Pylos and Tiryns are from the end of LH IIIB. The Linear B script developed from the Linear A script; probably as a result of the requirements of administration and trade. M Weiner has argued that “any amount of trade at a given time can take place without writing, but both complex administration and investment *over time* require literacy.”¹⁵⁰

147 D.L. Page cited in BURNS, BRYAN EDWARD (1999), "Import Consumption in the Bronze Age Argolid (Greece): Effects of Mediterranean Trade on Mycenaean Society," University of Michigan, 24..

148 MORRIS, HOLLY J. (1986), "An Economic Model of the Late Mycenaean Kingdom of Pylos," University of Minnesota, 24.

149 THOMAS, CAROL G. (1995), "The Components of Political Identity in Mycenaean Greece," Aegaeum 12: Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier 350.

150 Cited in KARDULIAS, NICK P. (1996), "Multiple Levels in the Aegean Bronze Age World-System," Journal of World-Systems Research 2.11: 16.

“The Mycenaean palaces were redistributive centers, into which commodities moved from territory to center in the form of taxes, obligatory donations, trade, and gifts. Some goods were stored at the center ... in turn, resources were then disbursed as payment or subsistence for workers, offered to deities, distributed to workers for specific jobs ... Because the palace dictated the commodities that traveled, and in what quantities, and controlled their modification into products, this economy is often termed a 'command economy,' and the process by which movement was managed 'mobilization,' a term that describes a subset of the broader range of practices termed 'redistribution.' However, the Linear B documents only cover those activities of interest to the palace, and scholars recognize that much economic activity went below or alongside the palatial economy.”¹⁵¹ A significant portion of the crop was collected to the palaces, “from where rations were meted out to slaves and others who labored in the palace workshops.”¹⁵² Besides the palace economy there were probably markets; however it would be difficult to speak of a regular merchant class.

“Models of Mycenaean states are invariably built from the top down, assuming near total control of all facets of society on the part of the elite. Such models envision a central authority that projects indisputable command over the regional economy and ensnares the countryside in a repressive tangle of bureaucracy.”¹⁵³ The economy of the palace-states of based on *wealth finance*: the palace administration converted un-specialized labor and food into highly valuable commodities such as textiles, ceramics, precious metal objects. These could be stored and used for trading or to display wealth and status and the social position of the rulers.

A central Archive Complex was discovered at Pylos within which probably information was received by scribes and recorded for later reference. Storage rooms, pantries full of crockery, large jars, oil storerooms, and wine magazines but also leather workshops, chariot equipment, workshops for exotic materials such as blue glass workshops, sealings marking the arrival for animals and other supplies for communal banquets and clearing houses where goods moved in and out, have been attested at such palaces as at Pylos, Mycenae, Tiryns, and Thebes. Throughout the lifetime of the palaces there is archeological evidence for the enlargement storage space; this may be seen as a

151 SHELMEERDINE, CYNTHIA W. and JOHN BENNET (2008), "Mycenaean States: A. Economy and Administration," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (The Cambridge University Press) 291-92.

152 KARDULIAS, NICK P. (1996), "Multiple Levels in the Aegean Bronze Age World-System," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 2.11: 12.

153 GALATY, MICHAEL, L. (1998), "Nestor's Winecups: Investigating Ceramic Production and Distribution in a Late Bronze Age "Mycenaean" State," University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1.

response to economic constraints and/or military threats. There is reference in the Linear B tablets to specialized craftsmen such as the “blue glass worker” or the “gold worker”. There are also bronze smiths both full-time and part-time. The services of part-time bronze smiths were probably called by the palace for when conditions required a larger professional work force. Copper and tin was probably collected by the palace and then distributed to bronze smiths who in turn produced weapons and artifacts as the palace requested.

Most of the commodities that were recorded belong to the elite sphere of society; which has been interpreted by some scholars that the palaces were concerned with “wealth finance” economy instead of a “staple finance economy”. This means that there was not so much centralization as it has been once thought. The collection of goods and their redistribution was probably centralized to the extent of supplying the inhabitants of the palace with sufficient food and services. In other words the palaces did not control every aspect of the economy; but there was much independent transactions outside of state control. The commodities recorded are for example, perfumed oil, bronze, carved and inlaid furniture, decorated vessels etc. These commodities were exchanged for other commodities outside of the Greek mainland. For example, olive oil, and perfumed oil was probably traded with Cyprus, Egypt and other Near Eastern centers. Some of these goods were marked by the word *xenwoi* (for foreigners; e.g. cloth or perfumed oil) and others by the word *hequesia* (for the Followers, e.g. cloth or chariot wheels).

7.4 Linear B tablets and Palatial Officials

The decipherment of Linear B has enabled scholars to reconstruct some of the aspects of political organization of Mycenaean states. Most of the reconstruction is based upon the tablets found from Knossos and Pylos. The Linear B tablets and architectural evidence suggests that there was a powerful monarch ruling the palace-state. The tablets however do not furnish information in regard to the judicial system or how controversies were settled. There is also no evidence for the identification of a queen or the role and status of king's children¹⁵⁴.

Kingship is defined by J.C. Wright “as an inherited, superior, political authority vested in a single

154 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 40-41.

person, the king, who holds his position for life and who maintains his power through a manipulation of economic, militaristic and ideological forces that reinforce relationships determined by value and belief systems in a society. On the one hand, these relationships are kin-based and extend backwards in time through lineal kin-groups. On the other hand, the balance of these relationships is maintained by another source of power, namely the ability of the leader to assert continually his access to external and higher sources of power that exist outside the internal landscape he controls.”¹⁵⁵

For Kilian the attributes of the king are as follows¹⁵⁶ :

- His *oikos* is at the center of a redistributive economy;
- He has workshops at his disposal which provide him with surpluses;
- He is also involved in religious ceremonies.

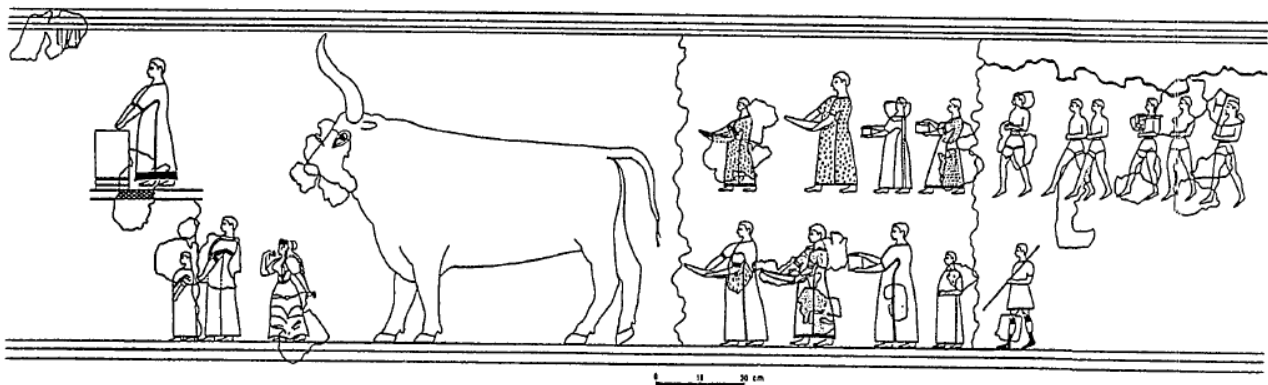


Figure 25: A fresco from the palace of Pylos depicting a procession. The first person from the left was identified as the wanax himself.

Let us start from the top to the bottom. At the top of the Mycenaean state is the *wa-na-ka* (Linear B) or the *wanax* (Homeric Greek). It is difficult to say anything substantial about the *wanax*'s power, duties or responsibilities. The *wanax* occurs in thirteen different Linear B documents – one from Knossos, one from Thebes, and the rest from Pylos. The fact that the power of the *wa-na-ka* is greater than that of other officials is indicated by the large share of land (*temenos*) attributed to him, three times the size of that of the *ra-wa-ke-ta* or *te-re-ta*. The rest of the land was controlled by the

155 WRIGHT, JAMES C. (1995), "From Chief to King in Mycenaean Society," *Aegaeum 11: The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean*, ed. Paul Rehak 65.

156 KILIAN, KLAUS (1988), "The Emergence of Wanax Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 7.3.

the sanctuaries, private individuals, craftsmen, and *damoi*¹⁵⁷ (commoners). Even, this being said, scholars have tended to see the *wa-na-ka* as a state official while the Homeric *wanax* as a chiefdom official. The *wa-na-ka*¹⁵⁸ “certainly presided over the administrative hierarchy that ran the state economy, and some goods and craftsmen were designated 'royal'. But was he also a lawgiver, like ancient Sumerian and Babylonian kings? Was he a military commander who led troops into battle, like the Egyptian pharaoh or the king of the Hittites? The tablets, with their limited economic focus, reveal nothing of such matters.”¹⁵⁹

If we are to follow Homer and regard Agamemnon as the supreme *wanax*, he indeed, was a military commander. He did not only command his own army from Mycenae, but also the whole army of other lesser *wanax(es)* and chiefs. Shelmerdine and Bennet argue or believe that the *wa-na-ka* had economic and political attributes and was also a religious leader. It is not clear however, what they mean by it. I think that in order to understand the divine aspect of a *wa-na-ka* we should look at Homer. In the Iliad for example, *wanax (es)* are involved in ceremonies, libations, while feasting. They appease the gods, through hecatombs, and sing and praise the god to whom such an offering has been made. They also have a special relationship with the gods. There are messengers sent that appear within the dreams of these rulers and make indications in regard to how a problem may be resolved or a thing settled. However, they generally can not interpret omens, since there are specialized priests to do such work. It is clear from the Iliad that there are various fore-tellers, prophets, priests, etc.

One of the most important relationship between a *wanax* and a god is that many *wanax (es)* descend from gods themselves or that they are favored to rule over people. In the Il.19.100-105 there is a passage where we find the following saying “Zeus spoke boastfully among all the gods: 'Hear me, all you gods and goddesses, while I speak what the heart in my breast commands me. This day will Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, bring to the light a man who will be lord of all those who dwell round about, one of the race of those men who are from me by blood.” I understand *wa-na-ka* to gain his right to rule from the gods. The people obey the one who has been

157 SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), *Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition* (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 42.

158 The term *wa-na-ka* appears only twenty times in the preserved corpus of over 5,000 Linear B tablets, and only two texts from Pylos show the king in an active role: on one tablet he appoints a *da-mo-ko-ro* (provincial overseer) and on another he participates in a ceremony, at a sanctuary site SHELMEARDINE, CYNTHIA W. and JOHN BENNET (2008), "Mycenaean States: A. Economy and Administration," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (The Cambridge University Press) 293.

159 Ibid.

chosen by Zeus. However, a *wa-na-ka*'s wishes, political or economic actions, must take place within a certain predefined normative framework; only then he has legitimacy to rule.

Second in the hierarchy is the *ra-wa-ke-ta* (or lawagetas) a title probably meaning 'leader (or gatherer) of the people'. This conclusion is based upon that his land-holdings are smaller than that of the *wa-na-ka*. Kelder¹⁶⁰ has identified the *ra-wa-ke-ta* as a vassal, however, evidence that he resided within the palace itself makes such an interpretation difficult to sustain. He is often shown as a military leader since on a clay tablet from Pylos there are groups of people, e.g. rowers, under his command. The *wa-na-ka* and the *ra-wa-ke-ta* "may each have presided over a ceremonial hall in the palaces; a subsidiary megaron with a central hearth has been found at both Pylos and Tiryns."¹⁶¹ In this scenario the *wa-na-ka* resided within the central megaron while the *ra-wa-ke-ta* within a subsidiary megaron.

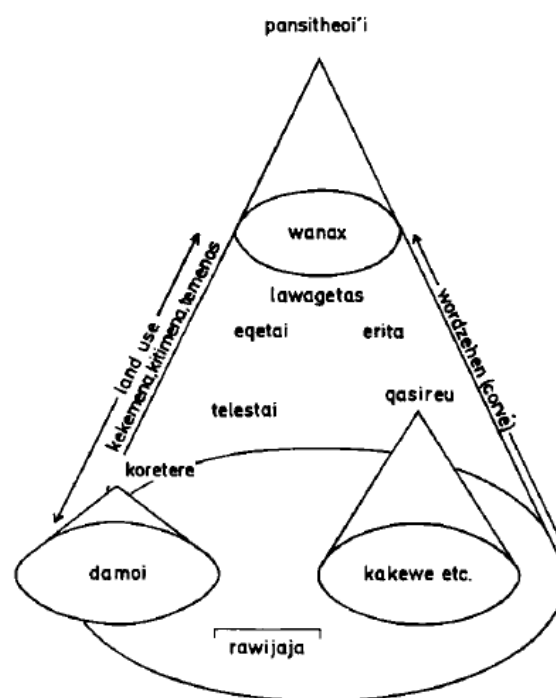


Figure 26: The Mycenaean Social hierarchy in Linear B tablets, (Kilian, 1988, p. 293).

160 KELDER, JORRIT M. (2008), "A Great King at Mycenae. An Argument for the Wanax as Great King and the Lawagetas as Vassal Ruler," *Palamedes: A Journal of Ancient History*.3.

161 SHELMEARDINE, CYNTHIA W. and JOHN BENNET (2008), "Mycenaean States: A. Economy and Administration," *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (The Cambridge University Press) 293.

Then, beneath the two leaders there seem to be other groups of people called e.g. the *e-qe-ta* (or *hequetai* or translated as followers) and the *a-ko-ra* (collector). There are also other figures described as 'fig overseers' or 'key bearers', but about them not much is known. D.B. Small sees the *e-qe-ta* as a possible representative of the center out in the territories¹⁶². Nonetheless, there seems to be various duties attributed to them. They are sometimes represented as persons accompanying military contingents or in the company of religious officials. There is one person called, Diwiewus (Zeus-priest), appearing on some clay tablets from Pylos, thought to be an *e-qe-ta*, and he collects bulls or oxen for sacrifice from military contingents. The class of the people called *a-ko-ra* were probably managers, dealing with flocks, with the production of woolen textiles, or they could have been workshop owners, or managers within the perimeter of palatial economy dealing with perfumed oil production. "It is thus possible that they were involved in acquiring and distributing exchange commodities." I think that it is impossible to attribute a specific duty to these people, rather they may be regarded as members of the ruling class, who had their own workshops, or could have worked within the palatial economy. They were probably dealing with a variety of economic and administrative issues and problems. They were probably not independent of the state-economy. The *hetairoi* or companions to the *wanax* in the Iliad maybe reminiscent of these people, especially of the *e-qe-ta*.

There is also the title of the *qa-si-re-u* and *ko-re-te-re*. This word is the predecessor of the Homeric word *basileus* (king, or ruler). Within the Linear B tablets, the *qa-si-re-u* may serve as an overseer over groups of workers, e.g. over bronze smiths at Pylos. They are also listed alongside the *lawagetas* (or *ra-wa-ke-ta*), in charge of groups (soldiers?) not much smaller than that of the *lawagetas*. They were probably rulers over adjacent regions under the rule of the *wa-na-ka*. In such a scenario there was the all-mighty *wa-na-ka* who ruled from a palace-state and other lesser rulers or chiefs (*basileis*) from nearby regions. The *ko-re-te-re* were probably also local administrators but tied to the palace. The *qa-si-re-u* and the *ko-re-te-re* ruled over the *damoi* (commoners) of various regions. They administered the use of land, agriculture, collected taxes and mobilized a work force in times of need in order to fulfill the interest of the palace. In this sense, we may imagine the Mycenaean world divided between several districts ruled over by *basileis* under one major center.

162 SMALL, DAVID B. (2007), "Mycenaean Polities: States or Estates?," *Rethinking Mycenaean Palaces II*, eds. Michael L. Galaty and William A. Parkinson (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology) 51.

It has been argued that both the title *wa-na-ka* and *qa-si-re-u* are non-Indo-European words. These titles may have been adopted within the Greek or Mycenaean political framework from the Minoans or the non-Indo-European people whom the Greeks found when they entered the Greek mainland. It is important to note how the Greeks adopted non-Indo-European words that already designated some sort of status.

8. The Near Eastern Political System or the Amarna Age

It would be important to look at the Near Eastern political system from both a constructivist and neorealist perspective. I have discussed in the above some points made by neorealism and constructivism. The neorealist paradigm is strong in explaining the behavior of states in a self-help system. However, by dropping out the second component (domestic politics) neorealism is devoid of exploratory power regarding structural transformation through ages. The Near Eastern political system was not made of capitalist political entities but of quite different state-based societies and cultures. It is important to give equal importance to both agency and structure. War between two great powers during the Bronze Age may be explained by a balance of power concept, for instance an Egyptian and Babylonian alliance against the hegemonic powers of the Hittites, however there are a variety of cases where the concept of brotherhood of the Great Kings, their identities, and so on are important considerations in order to understand how conflict could be prevented.

The Near Eastern political club was made up by powerful Great Kings (e.g. Egyptian, Hittite, Babylonian) being related through marriage, friendship or brotherhood. A social theory of international relations does not only deny the importance of international anarchy or balance of power or human selfishness but also points to the importance of identity, intersocietal relations, and intersubjective knowledge as fabrics of the international system. Negotiations between Great Kings were made on the basis of familial ties; they offered gifts and expected to receive gifts. There was a reciprocal relationship that had to be maintained and asserted continuously. When a new king was enthroned he would generally send letters along with gifts to other Great Kings to continue the traditional external relations of his father or the old king. It mattered for example whether the person against whom a Great King would have intended to wage war against was a *brother* or not.

It is not clear whether the king or *wanax* from Mycenae achieved that status of a Great King and whether he was accepted within the Great Family of the Near East. The Hittite King referred to the king of Ahhiyawa as to a Great King, (my brother); however there is no evidence that such a relationship also existed between Ahhiyawa, Egypt or Babylonia. The Mycenaean civilization probably remained semi-peripheral to the international affairs of the Near East. Nonetheless, there the Mycenaeans trade with some of the core civilizations of the Near East, and it probable that they

offered mercenaries when requested.

An archive of approximately 350 letters (so-called Amarna Letters), documenting relations of Egypt with great powers, independent states and its vassals in Canaan. The documents were written in Akkadian (Babylonian) the lingua franca of international relations, and were discovered in 1887 at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt. Among these letters approximately 50 letters document relations between Egypt and other great powers and independent states, c. 14th century BC. The Great Powers of the Amarna age were Egypt, Mittani (northern Syria), Babylonia (Mesopotamia), Hatti (or Hittite Empire, Turkey), and Assyria. There are two independent states appearing in the documents Arzawa (western Turkey) and Alashiya (Cyprus). In Hittite documents, and the king of Ahhiyawa is addressed by the Hittite king as my Brother King. It is not clear however if there was an all powerful state during the Late Bronze Age. Kelder believes that there was, and it was Mycenae, that dominated all other Mycenaean palace-states.

8.1 Mycenaean Trade Relations and External Relations

International commerce throughout the Late Bronze Age was both extensive and complex. There were sea trade routes throughout the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Goods manufactured inland, e.g. Anatolia and Mesopotamia were distributed and exchanged for at entrepôts on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. If compared with the quantity of Mycenaean objects e.g. pottery found in the eastern Mediterranean (Ugarit, Amarna) the Mycenaean objects found in central Mediterranean such as Vivara and Nuragi di Antigori or western Mediterranean (Montoro) are not many.

“It is true that Mycenaeans were involved with the politics of the east Mediterranean exchange circuit described by the Amarna Letters, but they did not necessarily participate on an equal level, or with the same frequency. In fact, even when the Mycenaean palatial states reached their apex of internal centralization, they never became the peers of the Near East's kingdoms and remained essentially peripheral to their elite gift exchange and political intimacy.”¹⁶³

163 BURNS, BRYAN EDWARD (1999), "Import Consumption in the Bronze Age Argolid (Greece): Effects of Mediterranean Trade on Mycenaean Society," University of Michigan, 11.

Our knowledge of transported goods during Late Bronze Age within the Mediterranean comes from three shipwrecks, (i) Cape Gelidonya (Anatolia), (ii) Uluburun (Anatolia), and (iii) Iria (Gulf of Argos). One of the critical commodity of Bronze Age international commerce was off course bronze. The liquidity of bronze as a commodity “facilitated the integration of regional exchange systems.”¹⁶⁴ In order to produce bronze copper and tin had to be procured. This necessitated extensive contacts with the outside world. The Mycenaean palaces probably appointed merchants who bartered for ingots at various ports, on the coasts of Anatolia, Cyprus, and the Levant.



Figure 27: Possible trade routes of the Ulu Burun ship, (Yalçın et. al. 2005, p. 23).

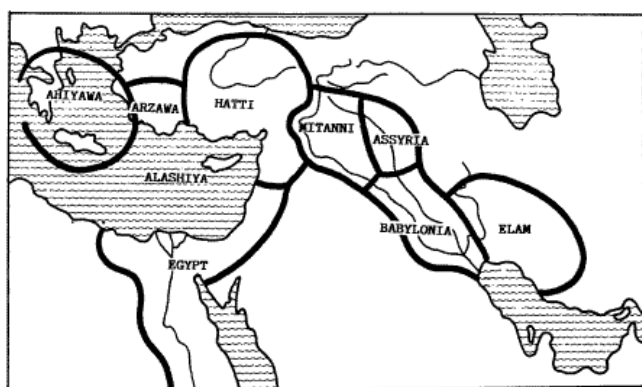
The Ulu Burun¹⁶⁵ shipwreck (c. 1400 BC), off the southwest tip of Anatolia, attests for merchant

164 KARDULIAS, NICK P. (1996), "Multiple Levels in the Aegean Bronze Age World-System," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 2.11: 15.

165 See: YALÇIN, ÜNSAL, et al. (2005), *Das Schiff Von Uluburun: Welthandel Vor 3000 Jahren* (Deutsches Bergbaumuseum Bochum).

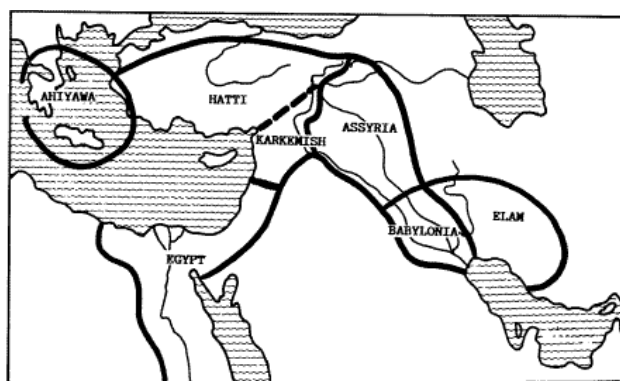
ships' trading routes between mainland Greece, the Levant (Ugarit) and Alasiya (Cyprus), Egypt and Crete among others.¹⁶⁶ The Ulu Burun ship was probably Mycenaean and it traveled from the East to the West when it wrecked. It transported raw materials and foodstuffs (300 ox-hide copper ingots (ca. 25 kg) and a dozen tin ingots; spherical glass ingots; elephant and hippopotamus ivory; orpiment, myrrh and frankincense; and two logs of Egyptian ebony; pomegranates, acorns, figs, grapes, olives, almonds, safflower, wheat, barley, pulses, coriander, sumac, and probably wine and olive oil) and manufactured goods (Cypriot pottery, Syro-Palestinian pottery, gold and silver jewelry of Canaanite form, bronze tools and weapons, hematite wights, stone artifacts, beads of faience, glass and amber, two Near Eastern (Kassite) cylinder seals, and a gold scarab with an inscription indicating an 18th Dynasty Egyptian origin.

8.2 The International Near Eastern System



c. 1350 BC

Figure 29: A map showing important political actors during the Amarna Age, ca. 1350 BC, (Liverani, 2001).



c. 1220 BC

Figure 28: Amarna Age ca. 1220 BC.

The core of the Near Eastern international system included Egypt, Levant, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. Within the inner zone there was a high concentration of wealth. Here likewise were almost all the laboratories and all the scientific activity of the eastern Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The semi-periphery included the East Asia and especially mainland Greek (Ahhiyawa), which received stimuli from the inner zone. There were several such situations. During the beginning of Late Bronze Age there was a seismic phenomenon that had wide implications concerning the Near Eastern political system. Throughout the Bronze Age cultures or peoples that succeeded to implement technological advances that originated from outside of the core managed to shock the

¹⁶⁶ SCHOFIELD, LOUISE (2007), *The Mycenaeans* (The British Museum Press) 107.

status quo and establish themselves as powerful dynasties throughout the Near East.

Within this letters Egyptologists have identified issues relating to dynastic questions, particularly marriage, exchange of gifts, alliance and strategic matters, trade, foreign policy and legal problems. This archive, although fragmentary, makes it possible to understand how diplomacy and international relations actually worked. Besides this, it offers a background against which modern theories of international relations may be tested.

As R. Cohen and R. Westbrook argue the “Amarna letters represent the culmination of a tradition, developed over centuries, through which state might communicate with one another in a common language, might pursue their interests and resolve their differences by reference to common standards and conventions, and might inform themselves of and accept or resist the moves of their neighbors without necessarily resorting to war.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore they point to the restrictive database from which international relation scholars derive their analyzes and theories. “If we assume that sovereign collectivities have engaged in more or less regular international contact for at least 4,500 years, it can be seen that modern scholars have tended to restrict their attention to about 200 of those years, or only 4 percent of this immense span of time.” “The Amarna system existed for at least two hundred years, with few major wars between the Great Powers. Are there possible lessons here? How did Great Kings avoid war? What mechanisms of conflict resolution, if at all, did they resort to?”

An international system is understood as a structure both constraining and enabling within which states or other political organizations or formations act. The rulers of the Great Powers called themselves Great Kings and used the term 'brotherhood' to describe their relationship. “Resort to war was not excluded, but it did not play the role that it performed in the European balance of power or in the ancient Chinese system. Force and war were used on an ad hoc basis in bilateral relations, not as a mechanism to preserve the balance.”¹⁶⁸ Cohen and Westbrook “examine the pragmatic aspects of diplomacy between the Great Powers: the system of mutually beneficial exchanges of goods, gods, and persons; negotiating tactics; and the diplomatic mechanisms that were called upon to implement policy and manage relationships”.

167 COHEN, RAYMOND and RAYMOND WESTBROOK (2000), "Introduction: The Amarna System," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations, eds. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (The John Hopkins University Press) 3.

168 RAGIONIERI, RUDOLFO (2000), "The Amarna Age: An International Society in the Making," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations, eds. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (John Hopkins University Press) 52.

The Realist-Constructivist debate present within contemporary international relations extends back in time in the Amarna age¹⁶⁹. While R. Cohen seems to hold a constructivist stance, S.R. David holds a realist one. "Cohen makes the case that the Amarna Letters revealed an international system perceived as an extended family. Instead of leaders focusing on state interest, as Realists would have it, the major powers acted in ways dictated by familial obligation and brotherhood. As Cohen explains:"

"Strangers to the philosophical thinking later invented by the Greeks, these kings were incapable of conceiving of international relations in terms of the sort of political abstractions we now take for granted, such as national interest, the balance of power, or justice. In the Ancient Near East, tangible attachments – love, family ties, filial piety, and marriage – were the only bases for obligation that made sense. Foreign policy was accordingly preoccupied with relationship issues. Diplomacy was conducted exclusively within the fraternity of great powers, known as 'equal Great Kings'."¹⁷⁰

S.R. David responds:

"Although Cohen is correct to point out the familial tone of much of the Amarna correspondence, the actions of the leaders were fully consistent with Realist thinking. The states of the Amarna period lived in a world characterized by international anarchy, in which constant struggles for power ensued. Individuals lied, cheated, and stole in a manner all too reminiscent of contemporary times. Leaders expanded at the expense of their neighbors; balances of powers formed to check hegemonic states; Great Powers established spheres of influences that were constantly encroached upon by other states; the strong preyed upon the weak; and the weak did their best to survive. War, or the threat of war, was the primary means of resolving conflicts. In short, the states of the Amarna period behaved much like the states of today and much like Realists would predict. That they did so without

169 See: COHEN, RAYMOND (1996), "All in the Family: Ancient near Eastern Diplomacy," International Negotiation 1.1. and, DAVID, STEVEN R. (2000), "Realism, Constructivism, and the Amarna Letters," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations, eds. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (John Hopkins University Press).

170 COHEN, RAYMOND (1996), "All in the Family: Ancient near Eastern Diplomacy," International Negotiation 1.1: 25.

the concepts of Realism to influence their actions is a strong argument in favor of the universal logic of the Realist model.”¹⁷¹

One view describes international relations as one of friendship and marriage and in terms of familial relationships among the Great Kings while the other view emphasizes cheating and lying, selfish and thirsty for power. I think that we should understand the Near Eastern Political System from the perspective of culture and social relationships as proposed by Cohen. There was an intersubjective framework according to each Great Kings interacted with one another. If we are going to try to understand the Near Eastern world from a modern standpoint we might fail to do so.

There was religion, gods, power, animosity and friendship. When a treaty was signed the signers generally made oaths to keep their promises. This is also present in the Iliad when the Achaeans and Trojans make oaths in order to guarantee that their agreement would be kept. If one of the signing parties would have done otherwise it would have faced the anger of the gods. Or, such oaths could not have been kept because the gods made such a thing impossible, as within the Iliad.

For example, the battle of Qadesh (ca. 1274 BC), between Egypt and the Hittites was not an oil-seeking story. The reasons behind the war can not be simply reduced to a realist perspective, rational choice theory, or the logics of an anarchical structure. These cultures, as our own, were significantly affected by their culture and belief-systems.

“After the death of Tutankhamun ... an agreement with his widow to marry Suppiluliuma's son failed when the Hittite prince died on the way to Egypt, possibly murdered by the widow's opponents. This led to armed reprisals by the Hittites. By their own account, Egyptian prisoners brought back to Hatti carried with them an epidemic that ravaged the kingdom for some years, killing Suppiluliuma himself. Intermittent warfare with Egypt followed for the next fifty years, culminating in the battle of Qadesh, a direct clash between the imperial armies under Suppiluliuma's grandson Muwatalli and Ramses II, respectively.”¹⁷²

171 DAVID, STEVEN R. (2000), "Realism, Constructivism, and the Amarna Letters," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations, eds. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (John Hopkins University Press) 57-58.

172 COHEN, RAYMOND and RAYMOND WESTBROOK (2000), "Introduction: The Amarna System," Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations, eds. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (The John Hopkins University Press) 7.

The marriage arrangement failed which would have ensured peace and the continuation of the brotherhood relationship. This example supports the idea of the importance of intersociatal norms and relationships according to which the Great Kings of the Near East interacted.

The reasons behind the Trojan War, described in the Iliad, are generally presented from two perspectives, from a realist standpoint and a constructivist one. The realist would claim that the reason behind the war was 'national interest'; what Agamemnon sought was to plunder the city and enhance his power. However, I see the abduction of Helen an important factor as 'national interest' is. The relationship between the Trojans (Luwians) and Mycenaeans was one of brotherhood or friendship. They exchanged goods, met with each other, and feasted together. The abduction of Helen, would break this relationship, since the respect that one would seek from his counterpart was infringed. Such an act I would claim, would have meant an insult, that could not be tolerated. The Amarna international system was not made up of capitalist states; but of divergent states, having different gods, belief-systems, and so on. In this image I see the question of 'national interest' and Helen as interrelated; both being an enough cause for the Trojan War.

9. Homeric Epics as Anthropology

In the previous chapters I tried to describe and explain the evolution of the Mycenaean political system and its place within the larger Near Eastern world system or international political system. I have emphasized that the sources of power are both allocative and authoritative. A careful reading of the *Iliad* would furnish valuable nuggets of information for our understanding of authority and inter-human relations during the Mycenaean Bronze Age. If one only relies upon the evidence from Linear B tablets and archaeological research would fail to see politics as practice. It is therefore important to study Homer as a source for anthropological research. The Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, are the earliest recorded stories within ancient Greek literature, dating from around 750 BC. Here I will discuss the *Iliad*, which tells a story of the Trojan War which took 10 years. So we are told in book II of the *Iliad* (II.2.134) that “already nine years of great Zeus have gone by.” That the war would take so long was prophesied by Calchas, who interpreted a sign-omen send by Zeus, in the form of 8 little sparrows with their mother the ninth, devoured by a snake. Only after 9 years of fighting and sorrow would the Achaeans¹⁷³ conquer the well-built citadel of Troy. In the words of Shalom L. Goldman¹⁷⁴ these myths as well as others ‘mirror and reflect social realities’ that otherwise would be concealed. We can understand a myth as follows:

(i) Myth can be thought of as ancient science, in the sense that ‘myth functions as explanation for phenomena’. Through myth the ancient Greeks explained to themselves how earth and the human being was created; why there was suffering and why there must be a sort of hierarchy, a sort of social order that if changed may anger the gods.

(ii) ‘Myth reflects and refracts the memory of historical events’. With historical nuggets carefully separated from what may seem to be fantastic and then compared to archeological data we can arrive at a plausible historical image of reality.

Iliad starts by calling out the Muse:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε’ ἔθηκε,

173 The Homeric name for the Mycenaeans.

174 WWW video lecture.

πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεύχε κύνεσσιν
οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι· Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,
ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

The **wrath** sing, goddess [Muse], of Peleu's son **Achilles**,
the accursed wrath which brought countless sorrows upon the Achaeans,
and sent down to Hades many valiant souls of warriors [or heroes],
and made the men themselves to be the spoil for dogs and birds of every kind;
an thus the will of Zeus was brought to fulfillment.
Of this sing from the time when first there parted in strife
Atreus' son, lord of men, and noble Achilles. (Il.I.1-7)



Figure 30: Mycenaean warriors from the palace at Pylos, ca. 1200 BC.

In the first paragraph of the Iliad, Book I, Homer makes his introduction by calling the Muse to sing about Achilles' wrath (μῆνιν/menin). It is wrath that it is here of interest. The word may be translated also as rage or madness. In understanding the importance of this word as a characteristic of human beings our attention is called for. But, I shall emphasize here wrath or *menin* as a dimension or extension of power within the arena of politics. In the history of political upheavels we see *menin* as a present manifestation. The nearest examples to the present are the French revolution, the 1917 revolution, or terrorism, or the present economic crisis where people are enraged and protest. So here, too, in the same manner we may call the Muse to sing about the rage

of the bourgeoisie, of the Bolsheviks, etc. The most important consequences that such rage has, is therefore, within the political sphere. Achilles' wrath is concerned with the actions of Agamemnon, since according to Achilles, Atreus' son, lord of men (*anax andron*), breaks the normative or ethical framework within which consensual political action occurs.

It becomes all more interesting, when we actually look at the etymology of *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*. The name or word *Achilles* is a compound and may be broken into two separate words: *akhos* (pain, grief) and *laos* (the people, a people, or army), hence 'the grief of the people'; while *Agamemnon* into *agan* (very much) and *medon* (ruler), hence 'ruling mightily'. So here, we have two men in contention, manifesting within the perimeter of Zeus' will, who may have different status and are part of different sectors of Mycenaean society. It is not clear if we should understand the etymology of the word *Achilles* as a grief of a people or of a single person against Agamemnon's actions, or as person who's actions 'brought countless sorrows upon the Achaeans'. In any case, we shall look at the *Iliad*, as a story in respect to a so-called Trojan War, whose historicity is an ongoing debate, but also as political action, and consequence of such political action. Some scholars believe that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* represent a world of chiefdoms from the 9th or 8th centuries BC. I am going to argue otherwise. It should be noted that the Mycenaean world of the Bronze Age contained both chiefdoms and palace-states. If some scholars would argue that Odysseus' *oikos* as represented in the *Odyssey* is not a palace-state but a chief's house, this does not rule out the possibility of kingship of e.g. Agamemnon or Nestor in state-based societies.

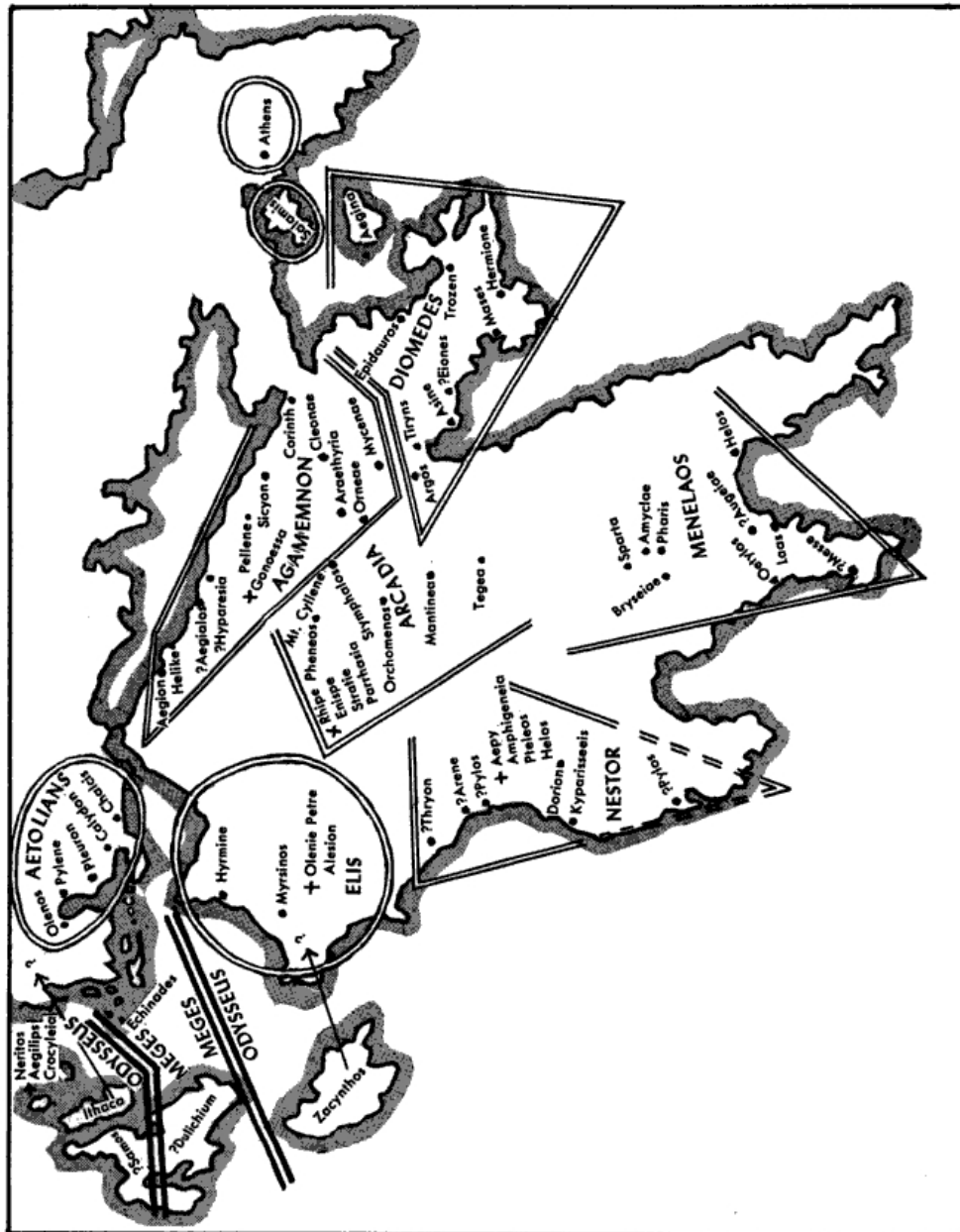


Figure 31: The kingdoms of Mycenaean Greece as described in Homer. The Commanders shown here are the leaders in the expedition against Troy(after the Catalogue of Ships in the Iliad Book II). The 'confederation' closely matches the extent of the Mycenaean heartland as indicated by archaeological evidence.

9.1 The Iliad and Chieftoms of the Dark Age

“From their material profiles, the small communities of this period [Geometric Period: 900-700 BC] closely fit the models of social and political organization called 'ranked society' and 'chiefdom' by

anthropologists.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, W. Donlan argues that the picture of life presented in the Homeric Epics “matches the observed material and economic conditions of the Dark Age villages ... Homeric society conforms both in general and in detail to the anthropological model of the semi-egalitarian ranked society.”¹⁷⁶ Such a view, is based upon M. Finley's understanding of the Homeric epics as presenting a unitary, consistent, and coherent social system of the 10th and 9th centuries BC.

“... some descriptions have been confirmed archaeologically. The prize piece – and it is worth remarking that it is the only one of its kind – is the boars’ tusk helmet: a curious type of headgear described in detail as a rare object in the Iliad (Book X), and exactly matching the pictures of such helmets common in the Mycenaean age.”¹⁷⁷ “The Catalogue of Ships in Iliad Book II purports to list the main towns in each kingdom. The list for the kingdom of Nestor runs: Pulos, Arene, Thruon, Aipu, Kuparessêis) Amphigeneia, Pteleos, Helos, Dorion. Leaving aside Pulos, the Mycenaean list of major towns has sixteen or seventeen names, only one of which agrees with Homer’s” e.g. Kuparessêis is authentic.

“In the kingship model of the Mycenaean civilization, the Homeric *basileus* has come to be seen by a growing number of scholars as an anthropological type of big-man or chief in which authority rests partly on ascribed aspects of birth and partly on achieved characteristics of personal prowess and strength.”¹⁷⁸ I think that the Homeric leaders (e.g. Agamemnon, Diomedes, Nestor) were kings and not big-men or chiefs. Furthermore, I do not think that the power of the Homeric kings is based upon personal prowess; I do not see any argument in favor of supporting the need on the part of a king to prove his strength as a fighter in order to assert his power. If he tries to impress others in the battle field it is a question of honor. They are not simply men but have extraordinary strength, a common aspect of archaic kings.

If we study the leaders in the Iliad as part of the same community from the same region we may conclude that the Homeric society was made up of chiefs or big-man. But if we acknowledge that the Homeric leaders are from different regions, being to some extent autonomous, then we would conclude that they may also be kings over state-based societies. Agamemnon does not share or redistribute at all the booty to his own supporters or elite members of his own society from Mycenae over which he ruled. His power, and status was firmly based, and he had enough power to

175 DONLAN, WALTER (1993), "Duelling with Gifts in the Iliad: As the Audience Saw It," *Colby Quarterly* 29.3: 155.

176 Ibid.: 157.

177 CHADWICK, JOHN (1972), "Was Homer a Liar?," *Diogenes* 20.1: 7.

178 MAKKAY, JÁNOS (2006), *The Oar of Odysseus* (Budapest) 18.

mobilize and control his population without having to redistribute goods or booty, in order to maintain his seat. Redistribution in the *Iliad* rather occurs among rulers themselves who are not from the same region. There is a confederacy made up of powerful polities and in order to keep it together some sort of dividing the booty must occur.

There is the impression that a bard, such as Homer, should have told to his audience things that it could digest; things and institutions present in their daily lives, e.g. 8th century BC. The following paragraph is representative of such a view:

“‘Mycenae rich in gold’ was a concept that could still have meaning to an audience; even if Mycenae was no longer so rich or powerful, poet and listeners alike could grasp such an idea. Similarly, men no longer fought from chariots with bronze weapons, but everyone knew what these things were ... Homeric burial practices probably had few close parallels in the Aegean, but when a bard recounted a heroic cremation, the audience would nevertheless understand what was meant. But what if the poet told them about a Mycenaean palace functioning as a redistributive center, with its professional scribes and syllabic script? Vanished social institutions with no present referent could mean nothing. These elements disappeared from the constantly evolving poetic tradition as fast as they disappeared from the Greek life. The institutions, attitudes, and conditions of action that we find in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* must of necessity be derived in some way from those of the functioning societies that Homer himself knew.”¹⁷⁹

Morris in the above quotation may rightfully argue that Homer's audience might have not grasped the idea of a centralized redistributive economy of the Bronze Age Mycenaean palaces, but still, there must have been some form of redistributive economy during Homer's time. There was writing too! But this is not an issue. Homeric epics are not economic treatises but stories relating to some past heroic deeds. I also do not see how present scholars may know what the audience did not know and what it expected to hear.

So there is the postulated idea that the a bard should have sang his epics in such a manner as to be in congruence with the listener's understanding of social or political life. “Like their counterparts in ethnographically attested advanced big-man and -chief societies, Dark Age chiefs (*basileis*) did in fact give lavish meat-feasts in order to display their wealth and win followers and gain renown; and,

179 MORRIS, IAN (1986), "The Use and Abuse of Homer," *Classical Antiquity* 5.1: 90.

of great importance for our reading of such scenes, the listening audiences understood the instrumental purposes behind these displays of largesse. I see no consistent argument in supporting the idea that such lavish meat-feasts could have only taken place within a chieftdom-based society. In the *Iliad* there are feasts with the function of appeasing the gods and of establishing friendship and cooperation. While some feasts also involve some distribution of food to people outside the elite circle other feasts are restricted to only a few elite members with no indication that such a feast had the aim to display the elite's wealth.

There is also the concept of 'total situation' used by I. Morris to explain certain 'realities' in the Homeric epics, e.g. the Catalogue of Ships:

"The 'total situation' is described as an element of a poem that has an external *visual* referent – that is, a physical place to which the poet can refer, a road that can be walked, etc. Thus, in Homer, we find remarkable accuracy in the list of Bronze Age centers in the Catalogue of Ships (*Iliad* [Book] 2). In Homer's day, Mycenae, Tiryns, and Orchomenus were no longer major centers. Their power was part of the dead past, but it retained a physical, visual referent – the actual sites."¹⁸⁰

This might have been an argument if a bard or any other person from the audience could have traveled from Pylos to Laconia, to Mycenae, to Tiryns, to Iolkos in Thessaly, and to Troy in Asia Minor. But let us assume that Homer or other bards, indeed traveled to these places, and took careful oral notes in respect to the structures and geography of these places. But how would Homer be able to know that Mycenae was the most powerful palace-center during the Bronze Age? How could have Homer correlated Nestor, Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Idomeneus with the most imposing palace-centers Pylos, Mycenae, Tiryns or Argos, Knossos respectively that today archaeologists have identified to be indeed the most elaborate among all. I believe that the places described in *Iliad* Book II were orally transmitted.

The power of a king depends on his ability "to assert continually his access to external sources outside the internal landscape he controls". If we follow this definition isn't Agamemnon a king? Hasn't he extended his power over the Homeric warriors (king, princes, chiefs) and isn't he continually asserting his access over Achilles' domain? What the *Iliad* presents is the personality of the ruler or commander of an army, how he acts, or thinks, or decides. Achilles is not a man from Agamemnon's own circle, he has his own army, and he may leave the war as he pleases. J.C.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Wright tells that: “a chief's principal concern is oriented towards maintaining his position of dominance, which is open to challenge by peers”. However the leaders from the *Iliad* are not peers (of the same community) but kings of different regions.

The question where to locate (on what stage, chiefdom or state) the Homeric political society is an extremely troublesome one. I believe the reasons behind this is also a result of an attempt to fit Homeric society into some preconceived image. The Linear B scholars argue that the political image in the *Iliad* does not fit the one as reconstructed from the tablets. But, there is no evidence in the linear B tablets in respect to the interrelationships between rulers of different regions. Here I would like to put forward an argument that would support the idea that what we see in the *Iliad* may very well apply to states. Here I will not argue that what we have in Homer actually happened, but that it may be reminiscent of what might have happened somewhere in Asia Minor.

9.2 The *Iliad* as Reminiscent of the Mycenaean Bronze Age

J.C. Wright states “I think in general that the nature of the Mycenaean state was still largely unformed and fragile, that it had not yet had enough time to develop the state-level institutions and offices that we are accustomed to.”¹⁸¹ My interpretation is based upon the plot in the *Iliad*. While objects or house-types and even institutions (property and land tenure) from Homer's times could be incorporated within the oral tradition. I believe that the plot did not diverge much, if Homer did not change his mind when he wrote the epics down. I would like to start discussing my approach by making reference to an article written by Thomas.¹⁸² She argues that:

“a single authority was succeeding [at Mycenae] in subduing those near peers who were acknowledged leaders in local regions ... Agamemnon's position in the *Iliad* may reflect both the remembrance of political development in the Age of Heroes and the uncertainty of others in coming to terms with the claim to such superior status. The claim would have been as surprising to actual Bronze Age leaders as it was to Achilles and the other “kings” gathered before Troy.”

The Homeric polities may be seen as acting in a framework of collective security. If a polity suffers because of an outside threat then other polities gather and come to help. Or, there is an almighty

181 Cited in: THOMAS, CAROL G. (1995), "The Components of Political Identity in Mycenaean Greece," *Aegaeum* 12: *Politeia, Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age*, eds. Robert Laffineur and WD Niemeier 349.

182 Ibid. 354.

king, being endowed by the gods to mobilize others when necessary. Menelaus in the Iliad is a victim of the Trojans. He is not only a simple ruler but the brother of the mightiest ruler in the Aegean region. There is redistribution through which Agamemnon pays for the support against the Trojans and allies, and there is reciprocity or gift-giving, having the function of reconciliation or consolidation of friendship among elite members, e.g. Galucos and Diomedes.

Why is Agamemnon above all? (i) He takes Briseis from Achilles by sending two of his companions along with a military contingent, (ii) his scepter is of a special kind (has greater power than other scepters), (iii) he has the support of Zeus & Hera, (iv) he does not listen to Nestor's advice, (v) He is entitled to command an army, (vi) He has the most ships (100), (vii) He supplies ships – thus mobilization of the army (1,186 ships). Agamemnon is lord of men, and Achilles does not seem to dispute that in the end, what he disputes is the way in which Agamemnon establishes himself over others. The extent of the army, the setting, the power of Agamemnon to gather an army, seem to indicate a hegemonic tendency. There is an indication of obedience towards Agamemnon.

The origin of Agamemnon's scepter is described as follows: “Agamemnon stood up, holding in his hands the scepter which Hephaestus had toiled over making. Hephaestus gave it to lord Zeus, son of Cronos, and Zeus gave it to the messenger Argeiphontes; and Hermes, the lord, gave it to Pelops, driver of horses, and Pelops in turn gave it to Atreus, shepherd of men; and Thyestes again left it to Agamemnon to carry, to be lord of many isles and of all Argos” (Il.2.100-108). Atreus is Thyestes' brother, Agamemnon's father.

What are the rulers in the Iliad called, what are their titles? But by what titles is Agamemnon referred to? Homer (Il.1.7): Atreus' son, lord of men (Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν); wide-ruling Agamemnon (Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὸν κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων, Il.1.102). In another setting when Nestor addresses Achilles, he refers to Agamemnon as βασιλεύς, although he underlines the fact that son of Atreus, is a sceptered king [σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς] to whom Zeus gives glory. While some leaders are referred to as *wanax* they are generally referred by the title *basileus*. Nestor is referred to as sweet of speech, the clear-voiced orator of the men of Pylos (Il.1.248). “Two generations of mortal men he had already seen pass away, who long ago were born and reared with him in sacred Pylos, and he was king among the third [μετὰ δὲ τριτάτοισιν ἄνασσαν]” (Il.1.250-252). Here Nestor is identified with the same title, the *wanax*, by the word ἀνάσσω (to be lord, to rule over), the verbal form of ἄναξ (ruler, king). A similar verbal form is used for Achilles (Il.1.287). In (Il.2.77) Nestor is

referred to as ἀναξ of sandy Pylos. Therefore, the terms ἀναξ and βασιλεύς seem to be interchangeable. There is also the title of ἡγήτωρ, and μέδων (Il.II.79) translated respectively as leader, commander, or chief and guardian or lord (Liddell&Scott dictionary), e.g. leaders and guardians of the Argives (Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἡδὲ μέδοντες). In another setting Agamemnon is referred to as κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (ruler, lord, master; Il.II.100). There is the title of ἡγεμόνες, a leader, commander, chief. However, it seems that the title ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν is only applied to Agamemnon. In any case, the titles appearing in the Linear B tablets, are not present, e.g. the *lawagetas* (commander in chief). In a setting both Zeus and Hermes are referred to as ἀναξ. Zeus is generally referred to as father of men and gods “πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν” (Il.I.544)¹⁸³. Is it possible then to infer that it is not the name that matters but the power one has. Whatever the case in respect to titles I think that we should reconstruct power relations as based on actions and reflections of power and not on titles.

There are counselors (βουληφόρος), e.g. Aias, Idomeneus, Odysseus, or Achilles; even Agamemnon is referred to as one (Il.II.61); individuals that are sent to mediate a dispute or settle a matter. There are the titles of κῆρυξ and θεράπων, e.g. Talthibius and Eurybates under Agamemnon's service. Κῆρυξ is translated as a herald, pursuivant, marshal, public messenger. In Homer, “they summon the assembly, separate combatants, have charge of sacrifices, act as envoys, and their persons were sacred” (Liddell&Scott), while θεράπων, is an attendant, “a companion in arms, though inferior in rank; as Patroclus is the companion or esquire of Achilles; Meriones of Idomeneus” (Liddell&Scott). Patroclus is a *hetairos* (companion) to Achilles, but subordinate to Achilles. (Il.I.345). Eurybates of Ithaca is a κῆρυξ of Odysseus (Il.II.184).

There is an interesting setting where Thersites reviles Agamemnon (Il.II.225-242). It seems to me that Thersites is of a lesser standing. If we think of a hierarchy of the Achaean army it may be as follows: (i) Agamemnon is the paramount leader of his own powerful army and has power over other Achaean kings (ii) on the second level other kings (Nestor, Aias, Odysseus, Achilles) having their own close companions, although subordinate to them, e.g. Meriones (to Odysseus), or Patroclus (to Achilles) and subordinate military leaders e.g. Menesthius and Eudorus (to Achilles); (iii) lesser chiefs or leaders in command, at the third level (e.g. Thersites), and (iv) the commoners – the mass of men (πληθύς) at the fourth level. This I think is a simple but consistent hierarchy of the Achaean army. The politics of power that we see in the Iliad is not to be understood as taking place

¹⁸³ In respect to the distribution of titles in the *Iliad* see SHEAR, IONE MYLONAS (2004), Kingship in the Mycenaean World and Its Reflections in the Oral Tradition (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press) 77.

somewhere in the homeland of the Mycenaeans, but at a camp-site in Asia Minor, where war and tragedy puts significant pressure upon the acts of the leaders. The hierarchy of the Myrmidon army led by Achilles is clear represented in Il.16.168-197. There are five subordinate military leaders:

“Fifty were the swift ships which Achilles, dear to Zeus, led to Troy, and in each ship at the thole pins were fifty men, his comrades; and five leaders had he appointed in whom he trusted to give orders, and he himself in his great might was lord over all. The one company was led by Menesthius of the flashing corselet ... and of the next company warlike Eudorus was leader ...and of the third company warlike Peisander was leader ... and the forth company the old horseman Phoenix led, and the fifth Alcimedon, the incomparable son of Laerces.”

Such a powerful military organization could only have been furnished by powerful palace-states; the power relations among the leaders and their subordinates furthermore attest for the existence of powerful political entities, that at least exceed the the extent of power of a simple chiefdom.

In (Il.2.185-187) Odysseus goes “straight to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and takes from him the staff of his fathers, imperishable ever, and with it went along the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans.” The office is irrespective of the persona who holds it? Here, Odysseus, acts as an agent of the gods, in the service of Agamemnon, since he is not acting against the *wanax androon's* will. He takes the scepter in order to prove to the leaders in command and soldiers that his words are those of Agamemnon. Odysseus takes Agamemnon's scepter to make his persuasions credible. He roves among the army and gives further instructions. This is a clear proof that Odysseus' scepter is of a lesser importance; it is Agamemnon's scepter that is persuasive and holds power. Odysseus threatens with the following words: “Did we not all hear what he [Agamemnon] said in the council? Take care that in his anger he not harm the sons of the Achaeans. Proud is the heart of kings, nurtured by Zeus; for their honor is from Zeus, and Zeus, god of counsel, loves them” (Il.II.194-197). He furthermore states “Sit still, man, and listen to the words of others who are better men than you; you are unwarlike and lacking in valor, to be counted neither in war nor in counsel. In no way will we Achaeans all be kings here. No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counseling Cronos has given the scepter and judgments, so that he may take counsel for his people” (Il.II.200-206). In the Iliad Book II, Agamemnon “sat up and put on his soft tunic, fair and bright, and threw his great cloak about him, and beneath his shinning feet he bound his fair sandals, and over his shoulders flung his silver-studded sword; and he took

the staff (scepter) of his fathers [σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον], imperishable ever, and with it set out along the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans.”

In another setting Agamemnon's invites but a few numbers of leaders, to feast along him: “Agamemnon, lord of men, sacrificed a fat bull of five years to the son of Cronos, supreme in might, and had the elders called, the chief [best] men of the Achaean army, Nestor, first of all, and king (ἄναξ) Idomeneus [son of Deucalion, grandson of Minos, Crete], and then the two Aiantes [Telamonian (tall) Aias and Lesser (short) Aias (a Locrian, son of Oïleus), henchmen of Ares] and the son of Tydeus [Diomedes, Tiryns or Argos], and as the sixth Odysseus [Ithaca], the peer of Zeus in counsel” (Il.II.402-407). It is interesting that Menelaus [Laconia] (son of Atreus) came uncalled – special relationship? As brother of the king? Only few leaders were invited, because of what if not of status and rank? Of allegiance and loyalty to the *wanax androon*. Archeology has revealed that the most imposing palaces are those of Mycenae, Tiryns, Knossos, and Pylos. Now, is it a coincidence that the most imposing, palace-centers' rulers are present in this restricted feast? I believe not. What is revealing is that the three most imposing palace-centers' rulers are present within this setting.

The dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles starts in Book I. “Achilles called the army (λαὸν) to the place of assembly (ἀγορήνδε)” (Il.I.54). Achilles proposes to ask a seer in order to reveal the cause of the destruction exerted by Phoebus Apollo upon the Argives or Achaeans. Calchas, son of Thestor, suggested that the reason why Apollo was angry, was because Agamemnon, son of Atreus, dishonored one of his priests, Chryses, when this came to ransom his abducted daughter. The seer is however, asking for protection, before telling the reason behind Apollos' anger, since he knows that his words would anger “a man who rules mightily over all the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey”.

Agamemnon asks for a prize, in return, for giving Chryses' daughter away. Achilles refuses Agamemnon's demand, and argues that whatever they took by pillage from the cities has been distributed, and “it is not right to take this back from the men” (Il.I. 125-126). It seems that the pillage is distributed among elite members, and there is some normative consensus in respect to such distribution. Agamemnon, threatens that if he is not given a fair prize, he will himself take/seize it; either that of Achilles, Aias, or Odysseus. Achilles boasts:

“What, you clothed in shamelessness, you crafty of mind, how can any Achaean eagerly

obey your words either to go on a journey or to do battle? I did not come here to fight because of the spearmen of Troy, since they are in no way fault toward me. Never did they drive off my cattle or my horses, nor ever in deep-soiled Phthia, nourisher of men, did they lay waste the grain, for many things lie between us – shadowy mountains and sounding sea. But you, shameless one, we followed here in order to please you, seeking to win recompense for Menelaus and for you, dog-face, from the Trojans. This you do not regard or take thought of; and you even threaten that you will yourself take from me the prize for which I toiled much, and the sons of Achaeans gave it to me. Never do I have a prize like yours, when the Achaeans sack a well-peopled city of the Trojans; my hands bear the brunt of tumultuous battle, but when the distribution (δασμὸς) comes, your prize (γέρας) is far greater, while I go to my ships with some small thing, yet my own, when I have grown weary with fighting. Now I will go to Phthia, since it is far better to return home with my beaked ships, nor do I intend, while without honor here, to pile up goods and wealth for you” (Il.I.149-171).

Agamemnon, in return, boasts to take from Achilles, the fair-cheeked Briseïs “that prize of yours, so that you may well know how much mightier I am than you, and another too may shrink from declaring himself my equal and likening himself to me to my face” (Il.I.185-187). Achilles, on the edge of drawing his sword from its sheath, in order to slaughter Agamemnon, Athens, sent by white-armed Hera appears, and urges him to restrain himself and obey¹⁸⁴. Achilles accepts and restrains from killing Agamemnon stating that “whoever obeys the gods, to him they gladly give ear” (Il.I.218) but he does not stop here in insulting the *wanax*: “You heavy with wine, with the face of a dog but the heart of a deer, never have you dared to arm yourself for battle with your troops, or to go into an ambush with the chief men of the Achaeans [σὸν ἀριστήεσσιν Ἀχαιῶν – with the best men of the Achaeans, the term chief not to be confused with a ruler of a chiefdom]” (Il.I.225-227) and refuses to be ruled by Agamemnon.

Nestor, king of Pylos, intervenes and asks Agamemnon not to seize Achilles' prize, and advises Achilles not to boast against a sceptered king to whom Zeus gives glory. Neither do listen. In the end, Agamemnon calls Talthibius and Eurybates, who were his heralds and trusty attendants, saying: “Go you two to the hut of Achilles, Peleus' son, and take by the hand the fair-cheeked

¹⁸⁴ Here we may see myth in action. Although Achilles had the courage to slaughter the mightiest of all the Achaeans he is constrained by the gods, proving the fact that in now way was he a coward, or did change his mind.

Briseïs, and bring her here; and if he does not give her, I will go myself with a larger company and take her; that will be even the worse for him” (Il.I.320-325).

In this segment we can deduce the following. Agamemnon's power is greater than that of Achilles, Aias, or Odysseus. When the elites plunder a city they distribute (δασμὸς, distribution) the booty according to status. It seems that Agamemnon receives the greatest share. Although when Achilles speaks out his sorrow to his mother Thetis, he tells that after they sacked Thebes, the sacred city of Eëtion, “the sons of the Achaeans divided fairly [the spoil] among themselves” (Il.I.378).

There is a normative framework therefore in regard to the distribution among elite members. Agamemnon through his acts and speech, tries to break such a framework, or see himself as above such normative rules, since he is much mightier; wide-ruling, or ruler over all the Argives. In this context I see Agamemnon trying or intending to extend his power; there is a “hegemonic” tendency. While, others keep quiet and obey, Achilles refuses to obey such acts; he seems to represent a sort of leveling mechanism against unworthy or unjust (not right) acts that try to undermine the normative framework or status quo. This segment represents how through the use of power and support of the gods, a ruler imposes his will upon others, rulers of different regions. Prize (γέρας) is translated as “a gift of honor” (Intermediate Liddell&Scott dictionary). Therefore, by the time someone is taken from him his price, there is an infringement upon his honor. Honor is an important factor for the Homeric warriors.

In different setting, Agamemnon sends heralds in order to appease Achilles, by sending many gifts. However, Achilles refuses such gifts, since he understands that what Agamemnon was trying to do was actually not to re-establish his honor, but to subdue him or make him a dependent. The move made by Agamemnon here is not resolving the case; the Trojans seem to make significant advances against the Achaeans, and the only hope left is Achilles' return into the battlefield. The Myrmidons must have been great warriors and therefore an important military group led by the best of the Achaeans. It is only latter that Achilles changes his mind and returns into battle.

In the Il. Book XIX, Patroclus is slaughtered in battle against the Trojans, and Achilles worn in grief decides to give up his wrath: “Son of Atreus, was this then better for us both, for you and for me, that then with grief at heart we raged in soul-devouring strife for the sake of a girl? I wish that among the ships Artemis had slain her with an arrow on the day when I chose her after I had sacked

Lyrnessus! Then not so many Achaeans would have bitten the vast earth with their teeth at the hands of the foe because of the fierceness of my wrath” (Il.19.56-60).

Agamemnon, lord of men, responds in the place of assembly: “To the son of Peleus will I declare my mind, but you other Argives give heed, and mark well my words each man of you. Often have the Achaeans spoken to me these words and reproached me; but it is not I who am at fault, but Zeus and Fate and Erinys, that walks in darkness, since in the place of assembly they cast on my mind fierce blindness on that day when on my own authority I took Achilles his prize. But what could I do? It is a god that brings all things to their end ... Eldest daughter of Zeus is Ate who blinds all ... For she once even blinded Zeus, though men say that he is the greatest among men and gods ” (Il.19.84-95). In this setting both Achilles and Agamemnon are victims of fate or destiny. It is interesting to note that Agamemnon failed in extending his power beyond the normative framework of the Achaeans. He does not boast anymore that Achilles should submit to him. In this manner we may argue that Achilles' actions were successful in stopping the blind and lawless power of Agamemnon.

The Book XIX Agamemnon, changes his mind too, and concedes that he was wrong. The quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles I think is won by Achilles, since Agamemnon refrains from his hegemonic tendency. He invokes that the gods blinded him. The normative framework is reestablished. I think such a setting offers a valuable setting to understand Mycenaean power politics. The archeological record or the Linear B tablets do not offer such a source. It is not my argument here, that this quarrel actually happened between the two leaders, but at least to propose that such a setting was possible within the Mycenaean World of the Bronze Age.

Conclusion

The Mycenaean kingdoms were destroyed during the same period of unrest and pillage that brought down the Hittite Empire about 1150 BCE. The palace system that arose to considerable maturity by LH III was probably destroyed at the end of Late Helladic IIIB.¹⁸⁵ The international commerce system probably suffered drawbacks, leading to the decline of the system, as well as to the collapse of almost all centers, except Egypt. A scarcity in metals, oils, and other commodities could have lead to economic inefficiency at home and internal strife. The Amarna international system collapsed too. The reasons behind this collapse are manifold. Scholars have pointed to systems collapse, invasions, the advent of iron, new technology etc.¹⁸⁶

At various sites on the Greek mainland and Asia Minor it occurred to archeologists that a great calamity ended the Mycenaean world. This calamity was linked with the last of the Greek invasions, namely the Dorian invasion of the 12th century BCE as initially stated by ancient cartographers. Nonetheless, other scholars of the same generation as of Schliemann's relied upon the legend of the Return of the Heraclidae which warranted the "thesis that the Dorians had been in the Peloponnese during the heyday of Mycenae, and some archeologists and historians proposed that the Dorian migration had occurred ca. 1500 BCE."¹⁸⁷ There is also evidence for a so-called Sea Peoples who plundered and destroyed many of the centers throughout the Mediterranean. Many of the centers of the Late Bronze Age world collapsed and along with them the international Near Eastern System. "Nobody doubts the 'sea peoples' movement from Central Europe to the Mediterranean in the 13th to 11th centuries BC, with splashes into Palestine and Egypt, with the smashing of Troy and the Hittite Empire."¹⁸⁸

During the collapse some Mycenaeans probably fled to Cyprus establishing themselves at Engomi. Widely separated in Arcadia in the Peloponnese and on Cyprus was the Arcado-Cyprian group, a group which was linguistically closes to the Mycenaean chancery language. Finley argues that

185 CROWLEY, JANICE L. (2008), "Mycenaean Art and Architecture," The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age, ed. Cynthia W. Shelmerdine (Cambridge University Press).

186 SCHOFIELD, LOUISE (2007), The Mycenaeans (The British Museum Press).

187 DREWS, ROBERT (1988), The Coming of the Greeks: Indo-European Conquests in the Aegean and the near East (New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 8.

188 KLEJN, LEOS (2008), "The Bronze Age of Europe: Reflections on K. Kristiansen and T. Larsson: The Rise of Bronze Age Society (2005)," Norwegian Archaeological Review 41.2.

during the Dark Age 'the art of writing disappeared, the centres of power crumbled, there was much petty warfare, tribes and smaller groups migrated within Greece and eastward across the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor, and all in all the material and cultural levels were poverty-stricken. Greek records resume during the Iron Age between 825 and 750 BC, written in the familiar Greek alphabet, a script based upon the Phoenician alphabet.¹⁸⁹ This made it possible for the oral tradition to be written down. The epics were regarded by the Greeks of the classical age as an indispensable source of geographical and mythological knowledge.

Along with the dawn of the Iron Age certain important regional political events occurred. Complex societies of the Bronze Age collapsed ca. 1200 B.C. The Mycenaean palace-centered world fell not only centers on the Greek mainland but also in Asia Minor, Cyprus, etc. Some Bronze Age centers continued their existence but their power was significantly diminished. In Egypt the death of Pharaoh Ramesses XI in 1070 BC marked the end of the prosperous New Kingdom or Egyptian Empire. The end of the Bronze Age in Eastern Mediterranean was a total catastrophe as it succumbed in a 400 year long Dark Age.

History should not be separated from prehistory. It is worth a while to see the rise and fall of the Mycenaeans and then to see how elements from the Mycenaean world shaped the following history of the Greeks. The palaces, Linear B, but also the Homeric epics, that inspired Greek thought are clear vestiges of those times. It is by such an approach that we may understand the advent of democracy or the fall of international systems.

I started my discussion with the developments taking place during the Neolithic, then I discussed the EH II culture and the reasons behind its collapse. I have suggested that it is ca. 2200 BC that the Greeks probably arrived in Greece. They brought with them their own religion or mythology, elements political organization, all having an Indo-European background. I discussed the political organization of tribes and how the big-men of the early and middle MH managed to rise above the common population. I suggested that through a process of nucleation the big-men offered protection within citadels on naturally defensible elevations, which led the population to submit to the big-man's rule. This gave rise to increased agricultural production and trade with the Cretans and Cycladeans.

189 MALLORY, JP and DQ ADAMS (1997), Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture (Routledge) 240.

During late MH and early LH I discussed the rise of chiefdoms and their interaction with Northern people and Southern civilizations. From the North the chariot was imported, while from the South administrative means, such as Linear B, were successfully adopted by the Mycenaeans. These changes gave rise to palace-states which became semi-peripheral to the Near Eastern civilizations. I also explained the international system of the time and the place of the Mycenaeans within it. Then I sought to bring into the discussion valuable information for the Homeric epic, the *Iliad*, and argued that we shall look at it as politics in action. There are many points left to discuss and acknowledge in order to fully understand the importance of the age both from the perspective of state-formation and diplomatic relations.

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