EPOS

RECONSIDERING GREEK EPIC AND AEGEAN BRONZE AGE ARCHAEOLOGY

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Edited by Sarah P. MORRIS and Robert LAFFINEUR

Université de Liège
Histoire de l’art et archéologie de la Grèce antique
University of Texas at Austin
Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory
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Illustration on cover pages: Palace of Nestor at Pylos, the Lyer-player fresco
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THE SITE OF MITROU AND EAST LOKRIS IN “HOMERIC TIMES”

The area of East Lokris on the North Euboean Gulf is surprisingly prominent in Homer’s Iliad, in contrast to its low status as a backwater in later historical times (Pl. LX). East Lokris is the home of not one but two important Homeric heroes: Patroclus and Ajax "the lesser," son of Oileus.1 Patroclus is said to have been born in Opoes (Il. 18, 324-327 and 23, 84-90). Ajax hailed from Thronion (Eur., IA 262-264) or Naryx (Strabo 9, 425), but reigned in Opoes.2 In the Catalogue of Ships (Il. 2, 484-759) the Lokrians led by Ajax contribute 40 ships, which puts them among the largest contingents of Central Greece (Il. 2, 527-535, 681-694). They are, moreover, listed in a prominent fourth place, after Boeotia, the Minyans, and Phokis.

The Lokrians’ prominence in the Catalogue is somewhat at odds with their decidedly lesser status in the rest of the Iliad. Unlike the other Greeks they do not possess bronze helmets, shields or spears, but fight with bow and sling (Il. 13, 685-700). Ajax the lesser himself is described as “linothorax,” with a corselet of linen—an epithet rarely used for a hero in the Iliad. In contrast, the other Achaeans are frequently described as having bronze armor.3 Since the Lokrian fighting style to all appearances relied on lightness and mobility, a linen corselet would have allowed Ajax to move fast. Indeed he is admired for his speed in running and for fighting superbly with the spear, usually side by side with his namesake, the greater Ajax.4 Like his troops, Lokrian Ajax has a second-tier status among the Greek heroes: he has no weight in the council, and at times does not display great heroic character. He has a silly quarrel with Idomeneus during the funerary games for Patroclus, and then falls in the dung during the foot-race, to everyone’s amusement (Il. 23, 473-498 and 23, 778-784). More seriously, at the fall of Troy he is the one who drags Kassandra together with Athena’s image from the altar, bringing Athena’s wrath upon the Greeks (Iliou Persis). On his return home he perishes in a shipwreck through a stupid boast—a most ignominous fate for a Homeric hero (Od. 4, 499-511).

How does this relatively prominent, but at the same time contradictory, image of the Lokrians in the Homeric epics compare to the archaeological record? More importantly, if there is a correspondence, with which archaeological period(s) do these characterizations best agree? A very broad definition of the term “Homeric period” will be adopted here. Most authors today follow Finley’s view that the majority of the Homeric epics are to be situated after the Mycenaean palatial period, in the Late Helladic IIIC period and Early Iron Age.5 It is also

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2 See J. BENNET, Homer and the Bronze Age, in New Companion to Homer 511-514 and I. MORRIS, “Homer and the Iron Age,” in New Companion to Homer 535-539 for brief discussions and literature. Key arguments against situating the epics in the Mycenaean palatial period (LH IIIB2) are Homer’s depiction of Greek society as being led by a warrior aristocracy keen on legitimizing itself through heroic deeds and emphasis
widely agreed that the Catalogue of Ships is among the latest passages added to the Iliad.6

On the other hand, studies of archaeological correlates by Sherratt, Morris, and others concur with philological research by Ruijgh and West in concluding that there is a considerable time-depth in parts of the Homeric epics, its earliest elements going back to at least the beginning of the Late Bronze Age.7 In view of the wide range of dates possibly covered by the Homeric epics, it seems best to begin our archaeological overview of East Lokris in the Late Helladic I phase and end it ca. 700 B.C.

A well-trodden and obvious path of inquiry is the identification of settlements mentioned by Homer with known archaeological sites. The Catalogue of Ships makes mention only of East Lokris, located opposite the island of Euboea; for an unknown reason it omits West Lokris. Eight place names are listed: Kynos, Opopos, Kalliaros, Bessa, Sarpe, Augeiae, Tarpe, and Thronion (II, 2, 527-535). The later geographer Strabo informs us that the limits of East Lokris are at Halai in the east and Thermopylae in the west (Strabo 9.4.2).8 Various suggestions have been made by modern authors regarding the identification of Homeric Lokrian settlements, but the only prehistoric place name identifiable with some certainty is Kynos.9 It is widely believed that Kynos corresponds to the archaeological site of Pyrgos on the coast of Livanates (Pl. LX). Archaeological remains at this site indeed include Early Iron Age material and go back to at least the Middle Helladic period. However, Dakoronia, the excavator of Pyrgos, believes that this site is too small to represent all of Kynos. She proposes instead that the name Kynos referred to both Pyrgos and the much larger settlement of Livanates-Palaiokasta, located 3.5 km inland from Pyrgos, which it would have served as a harbor.10 The location of Opopos is less certain, but it seems reasonable to identify it with historical Opopi, which must have been located somewhere in the Atalante area.11

Given the uncertainties surrounding the topography of Homeric place names, it is preferable to study the archaeological record of East Lokris on its own terms for the evidence it provides for the characteristics of local Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age society and its periods of prosperity and decline. This evidence will then be compared with Homer's characterization of the Lokrians.

Intensive archaeological research in East Lokris is a relatively new phenomenon, starting in 1973 with the creation of the 14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities at Lamia. Thanks primarily to the efforts of its dynamic long-term ephor, Fanouria Dakoronia, and her successors, we are now in a position to discuss the archaeological record of East Lokris in "Homeric" times.12 However, this record is far from comprehensive. Field work carried out by the 14th Ephorate has focused chiefly on rescue excavations of tombs, most of them plundered, and the results are known primarily from short reports published in the Archaiologikon Deltion.13

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6 For a recent discussion and bibliography, see O. DICKINSON, "The Catalogue of Ships and All That," in MELETEMATA 207-210.
8 LATA(~CZ (supra n. 4) 170; KIRK (supra n. 1) 203. Contra W. OLDFATHER, s.v. "Lokris," RE (1926) col. 1135, who puts the eastern boundary at Mount Ptoon. Strabo's eastern boundary is adopted in the present study.
9 For discussion and overview of the literature, see DAKORONI(~ (supra n. 2) 115-127.
10 DAKORONI(~ (supra n. 2) 126; Livanates-Palaiokasta: F. DAKORONI(~, AD 48 (1993) [1998] B' 207-208; only historical remains have thus far been reported from this site.
11 DAKORONI(~ (supra n. 2) 117-120.
12 DAKORONI(~ (supra n. 2) 118.
The only systematically excavated sites—the settlements at Pyrgos Livianaton, Proskynas, and Mitrou—have not yet been published. Pyrgos Livianaton and Proskynas are presently being studied for publication, and the settlement of Mitrou, on the coast of Tragana close to the eastern border of East Lokris, is the subject of an on-going excavation since 2004 under the direction of the present author and Eleni Zahou, archaeologist of the 14th Ephorate. Nevertheless, an overview of the presently available archaeological evidence, preliminary as it is, brings out some interesting patterns relating to Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Lokrian society.

For the sake of clarity this overview is subdivided into three major periods: the formative period of the Mycenaean palaces (Middle Helladic III/Late Helladic I – Late Helladic IIIA1 phases), the palatial period14 (Late Helladic IIIA2 – Late Helladic IIIB phases), and the postpalatial period through Early Iron Age (Late Helladic IIIC – Geometric periods). Late Bronze Age sites not closely dated within these major periods will be omitted: these are 2 rock-cut chamber tombs at Atalante-Spartia, 2 similar tombs at Proskynas (Megali Rachi and Padi), and a settlement fortified with Cyclopean walls at Roustiana, ca. 7 km northwest of Livianates.15

Formative period (MH III/LH I – LH IIIA1)

Relatively few remains dating to the formative period in East Lokris have been reported in the literature. They consist of at least 2 or 3 rock-cut chamber tombs at the cemetery of Zeli-Ayios Georgios, 2 similar tombs at the nearby cemetery of Golemi-Ayios Georgios, a single large rock-cut chamber tomb at Livianates-Kokkinonizes, a minute part of the settlement excavated at Pyrgos Livianaton, and some pottery from Proskynas. These finds are now complemented by substantial architectural remains at Mitrou.

The cemeteries of Golemi-Ayios Georgios and Zeli-Ayios Georgios are located in the hills some 12 km west of Livianates. Even though situated close to Kalapodi in the ancient region of Phokis, they are still within view of the sea and therefore should be considered to be part of Lokris and not Phokis. Both appear to have begun in the LH IIB phase, when the use of this tomb type became more widespread on the Greek mainland.16 Pottery of this date is reported from tombs XVII and XXIII at Zeli-Ayios Georgios, and from tombs II and XV at Golemi-Ayios Georgios. In addition, a piriform jar from tomb XIII at Zeli-Ayios Georgios may date as early as LH IIIA1 or the beginning of LH IIIA2.17 Only tomb XXIII of Zeli-Ayios Georgios and tomb II of Golemi-Ayios Georgios are described in any detail in terms of their architecture and distribution of finds. Both have a canonical Late Helladic plan with a rectangular tomb chamber. The dromos of tomb XXIII at Zeli is not preserved. Its rather large chamber (3.3 m x 2.8 – 3.2 m) has a niche in the back in which the bones of an older burial were found together with three LH IIB jugs, a fragmentary unpainted alabastron and two biconical steatite “buttons.” A fourth LH IIB jug was found in the main tomb chamber together with disturbed human bones, two three-handled alabastra, four steatite “buttons,” three small agathe beads,
two lentoid steatite seals with an animal image, and a large amount of painted Mycenaean pottery fragments, mostly from alabastron-shaped vessels. Tomb II at Golemi was not looted. It has a 4.8 m long dromos with insloping walls. Its small, roughly rectangular chamber (ca. 2.8 m x 1.8 m) included one primary burial as well a heap of bones belonging to earlier burials found together with a LH IIIB three-handled alabastron, four steatite “buttons,” a thin bronze ring, and fragmentary vases.

About 10 km to the east is Livanates-Kokkinonyzes, where a single chamber tomb was found. The tomb is situated ca. 2 km northwest of the modern town of Livanates and not far from the later historical settlement of Livanates-Palaioakrastra. Its earliest use, to judge by the illustrated pottery, took place in the LH IIIA1 subphase. The tomb is described in detail by Dakoronia. It has a large rectangular chamber (3.70 m x 2.70 m) and a long dromos with insloping walls, 8.5 m long and 1.5-m to 1.9-m wide. Primary burials were laid on rock-cut couches on the north and south sides of the chamber, and earlier burials were swept into the deeper central part of the chamber. The excavators found two bodies on the north bed accompanied by some pottery (a small stirrup jar, juglet, small pithoid jar, jug, lekane, and two globular alabastra). The northernmost skeleton still had faience, bone, and steatite objects lying in situ at its neck and feet. No precious metals or weapons were found in this tomb, but it had been disturbed at least since the Hellenistic period. A rectangular pit in the dromos was found empty.

Tomb XXIII at Zeli and the tomb of Livanates-Kokkinonyzes are among the largest of over one hundred rock-cut chamber tombs reported from East Lokris for the entire Late Helladic period, and the dromos of the Kokkinonyzes tomb is unusually long. When compared to the Early Mycenaean chamber tombs of the Peloponnese, however, the Zeli and Kokkinonyzes tombs are of average size. The disturbed condition of these tombs and the preliminary state of our knowledge of the formative period in this region do not allow us to draw a firm conclusion, but we may tentatively propose that the rarity of these LH IIIB and LH IIIA1 chamber tombs in East Lokris, combined with the relatively large size of two of these and the isolation of the tomb of Kokkinonyzes reflect social differentiation and the presence of relatively high status people in the formative stage.

At the nearby coastal settlement of Pyrgos Livanaton, an area of only 6 square meter was dug into a stratum of the formative period below later occupation. The excavators found small parts of LH IIIA1 walls covered by a burned layer, ca. 0.50 m thick, which contained

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18 F. DAKORONIA, AD 35 (1980) [1986] B' 244-245, pl. 105: a piriform jar (FS 31) with dark-painted lily pattern (FM 9) and a hydria (FS 128) with dark-painted irregular wavy lines illustrated by Dakoronia are dated to LH IIIA1 by MOUNTJOY (supra n. 15) 810, 813, fig. 323, nos. 8 and 10. A piriform jar with foliate band is dated by her to LH IIIA1 or the beginning of LH IIIA2.

19 F. DAKORONIA, “Mycenaean East Lokris,” in E. DE MIRO, L. GODART, and A. SACCONI (eds), Atti e memorie del secondo congresso internazionale di Micenologia (1996) 1169-1170, figs. 1-2, pl. 1; DAKORONIA (supra n. 2) 125-126. For an image of the interior of the tomb, see DAKORONIA (supra n. 15) 37, fig. 14.

20 Tomb IV at Megaplatanos-Sventza has a similarly large chamber and dromos (8.31 m long), but was found without grave goods (F. DAKORONIA, AD 40 (1985) [1990] 176-178, fig. 16).


22 The mortuary evidence from the Middle Helladic period in East Lokris is too scarce to allow conclusions regarding social differentiation. Only a few cist tombs have been found: 4 at Pyrgos Livanaton (F. DAKORONIA, “Mittelhelladische Gräber in Ost-Lokris,” AM 102 [1987] 55-64; AD 46 (1991) [1996] B' 195) and one unpublished one discovered in 2005 at Mitrou below a monumental Late Helladic I building or architectural complex (see below). Interpreting the social significance of Late Helladic chamber tombs is not a straightforward matter: CAVANAGH and MEE, (supra n. 16) 56; S. VOUTSAKI, “Social and Political Processes in the Mycenaean Argolid: the Evidence from the Mortuary Practices,” in POLITEIA 55-66; BOYD (supra n. 21) 98.

pottery fragments but no building debris. At Proskynas, some 15 km southeast of Pyrgos, evidence for activity in the formative period is limited to pottery fragments.24

Destruction remains of roughly the same date as at Pyrgos Livanaton were found at Mitrou, located ca. 12 km south of Pyrgos and 3 km northwest of Proskynas. Our team exposed about 400 sq. m. in the central part of the island in the first two seasons of excavation, in 2004 and 2005 (Pl. LXIa). In spite of this limited exposure we found indications of a destruction horizon dating to the beginning of the LH IIIA2 phase, at the transition from the formative to the palatial period. Two large deposits and one small deposit of broken pottery of LH IIIA2 Early date have been found lying on surfaces associated with walls. One of the large groups, consisting of 26 mendable vases, a bone button, and a biconical spindle whorl, was burned (Trench LL785). The other large group of broken but restorable pottery was partially excavated in a deep test trench and did not show burning (Trench LN784-northwest extension). We recovered 33 vases as well as the articulated body of a piglet, two clay figurine fragments, some tools and other objects. A much smaller pottery deposit of the same date was found a few meters to the north in Trench LN785. Putting this evidence together with the burned layer covering LH IIIA1 remains at Pyrgos Livanaton, one can hypothesize that we are dealing with destructions that affected both sites at roughly the same time.

Mitrou in addition has yielded significant architectural remains of much earlier date in the formative period. In the east part of the main excavation area we encountered a large wall up to 1.1 m in width built with relatively large, coursed stones running south-southwest to north-northeast and making a return to the west-northwest (Trenches LO782, LP783, LP784, LO784). This structure is labeled Building D. Excavation has not yet reached the bottom of the walls of Building D on the interior or exterior, but a terminus ante quem of LH IIB for its construction is provided by the find of an Ephyraean goblet, and a patterned alabastron below an earthen exterior surface abutting the eastern façade (Trench LP784, Stratigraphic Units 048 and 049). This LH IIB surface must be later than the first use of Building D, because architectural destruction debris slopes down from the large wall below this surface, showing beyond a doubt that it postdates an earlier destruction of the building. Thus we can conclude that Building D was first constructed in the LH IIB phase or earlier. The excavated part of Building D’s interior was too disturbed by later activity to give any useful information.

Another intriguing find of the formative period at Mitrou was made not by excavation but by geophysical survey. In 2005 Grigoris Tsokas and his team from the University of Thessaloniki conducted a magnetometry survey of all the wooded parts of the islet to complement the electrical resistivity survey of the non-wooded area carried out in 2003. The magnetometry results suggest the existence of a large buried structure or architectural complex, apsidal in overall plan, and roughly 32 m long by 24 m wide, in the northwest part of the islet. We received permission to excavate a 2 x 5 m test trench (Trench LF790) during the last week of excavation in 2005, and found a succession of seven surfaces, four of which are associated with walls (Pl. LXIb). The upper three surfaces are earthen, and two of these are associated with thin rubble walls, 0.50 cm wide. These are unlikely to be part of a large substantial structure. However, the fourth and fifth surfaces have high-quality floors made of pink crushed marl (at ca. +4.20 and +4.06, bottom of SU 011 and SU 012, 013, respectively); at least one of these is associated with a well-built wall constructed with fairly regular rectangular small stones. The high quality of these architectural remains makes them the best candidates to be the floors and wall of a large building or complex. Jeremy R. Rutter’s study of the pottery suggests that both high-quality floors as well the three earthen surfaces above them were constructed in the Late Helladic I ceramic phase, contemporary with the Shaft Graves at Mycenae.

If confirmed by further excavation, the presence of a large, well-built apsidal structure or complex of Late Helladic I date with possibly a completely preserved plan would be

unprecedented in Greece, and would make Mitrou a key site for studying the emergence of an indigenous mainland political elite at the beginning of the Late Helladic period. We hope to establish through further excavation the function of this structure or complex—whether it was a "leader's house" or perhaps a communal gathering place or something entirely else. Whatever its function turns out to be, its monumental size already suggests that Lokrian society in the Late Helladic I phase had reached a relatively high degree of socio-political complexity, and was roughly on a par with societal developments in areas further south on the Greek mainland—a conclusion supported to some extent by the LH IIIB and LH IIIA1 rock-cut chamber tombs in the Livanates area.26

This growing socio-political complexity and perhaps the emergence of a political elite at Mitrou and Livanates may well have suffered a set-back in the form of major destructions at both Mitrou and Pyrgos Livanaton at the transition from the formative to the palatial period.

Palatial period (LH IIIA2-B)

In the subsequent period most of the archaeological record of East Lokris consists of mortuary data. In addition to continued use of the early chamber tombs of Livanates-Kokkinonizes, Zeli-Ayios Georgios, and Golemi-Ayios Georgios throughout the palatial period, about 100 other rock-cut chamber tombs, mostly grouped in cemeteries, have been identified. Single tombs or cemeteries are now known from 9 different locations, and this indicates a much more widespread use of rock-cut chamber tombs in the area.27 Dakoronia excavated a chamber tomb from this period at Livanates-Rema Pharmaki, perhaps belonging to a cemetery.28 Like the tomb of Livanates-Kokkinonizes, it is located near the historic settlement of Livanates-Palaiokastra (see above). Seven similar tombs were excavated at Megaplatanos-Sventza, in the vicinity of the large historical settlement site of Megaplatanos-Palaiokastra.29 The cemeteries at Zeli-Ayios Georgios and Golemi-Ayios Georgios continue throughout the palatial period, that at Zeli expanding to 32 chamber tombs, and that at Golemi to 31 chamber tombs.30 Nearby, a

26 In this respect it is interesting that evidence for warlike elites in contact with the Peloponnese has been found in nearby regions. Four rich chamber tombs found at Kalochari-Daliani/Bakandritos plot are thought to have been built in the LH IIB-B phase and continued to be used into LH IIIA. F. DAKORONIA and S. DIMAKI, AD 53 (1998) [2004] B' 394-395; F. DAKORONIA, "Fremontas Dyo Periferienes: Anatolike Lokrida kai BA Fokida. Omnoiotetes kai Díaforès," in N. KYPARISSI-APOSTOLIO and M. PAPAKONSTANTINOU (eds), Proceedings of the 2nd International Interdisciplinary Colloquium "The Periphery of the Mycenaean World" (2003) 342, figs. 4-5. A slender bronze sword of Karo's type A, 0.80 m. long, was found in a farmer's field at Koromelia near Domokos, north of the Malian Gulf (F. DAKORONIA, AD 50 (1995) [2000] B' 349, pl. 123b). With its rounded shoulders it resembles primarily Neopalatial swords from Crete and type A swords from Shaft Graves IV and V at Mycenae, whereas MH II-LH IIIA swords from the shaft graves at Aigion and Thebes (Tambiskou plot) have subangular shoulders: I. KILIAN-DIRLMIEIER, Die Schwerter in Griechenland (ausserhalb der Peloponnes), Bulgarien und Albanien (1993) 17-34, pls. 4-7, 60, 76; for the swords from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, see G. KARO, Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai (1930) pls. 73, 80-82, 92. This stray find suggests the presence of a local elite in direct or indirect contact with Mycenae or Crete. I thank James C. Wright for alerting me to the Cretan character of this sword.

27 Rock-cut chamber tombs are more likely to be discovered and excavated than simple pit or cist graves because they are relatively easy to spot and very much targeted by antiquities thieves. A comparable increase in the number of chamber tombs and apparent adoption of this tomb form by non-elites has been observed in the Argolid in the LH IIA-B phases: CAVANAGH and MEE (supra n. 16) 78; VOUTSAKI (supra n. 21) 48, 55. For a discussion of the social status of chamber tombs, see also VOUTSAKI (supra n. 22).


29 For the tombs at Sventza, see F. DAKORONIA, AD 40 (1985) [1990] B' 176-178, fig. 16, pl. 58a-b; AD 52 (1997) [2003] B' 436. For a discussion of these tombs and the settlement of Palaiokastra Megaplatanou, see DAKORONIA (supra n. 2) 122-124, figs. 5-6.

small cemetery of 8 chamber tombs at Zeli-Kvela was in use at least during LH IIIA2, to judge by the only closely datable vase illustrated in the reports: a globular alabastron with painted bivalve decoration from tomb VIII.\textsuperscript{31} A cemetery and unexcavated settlement have also been reported at Aghanti near Kamena Vourla.\textsuperscript{32} A small cemetery of 9 rock-cut chamber tombs has been excavated at Tragana-Ayia Triadha, as well as a slightly smaller cemetery of 12 such tombs at Kolaka-Ayios Yannis, located on a mountain pass between East Lokris and the Copaic basin.\textsuperscript{33} Grave goods, insofar as they had been left by tomb robbers, were comparable to those found at the Livanates-Kokkinoyzes tomb, consisting of pottery, jewelry, and occasionally seals, figurines, bronze tools and spindle whorls. The Ayia Triadha tombs, dated to LH IIIB-B, may have been used by inhabitants of Mitrou, as they are located only some 3 km to the south and the entrances of nearly all tombs are looking towards Mitrou.\textsuperscript{34} Worthy of note is the clay figure of a horseman from one of the tombs.\textsuperscript{35} Complete horseman figurines are rare in Late Bronze Age Greece. As Dakoronia points out, the Tragana figure differs from the five LH IIIB2 horseman figurines from Methana-Ayios Konstantinos in that its rider and horse have been made in one piece.\textsuperscript{36} It seems to be the earliest such figurine found in a Mycenaean tomb.

Unexcavated settlements of the palatial period in East Lokris have been identified at Ayia Aikaterini-Melidoni, west of Livanates, and possibly at Proskynas and on the north slope of Kastraki hill at Kyprarissi-Ayios Iannis.\textsuperscript{37} Only the settlements at Pyrgos Livanaton and Mitrou have been systematically excavated into palatial levels. At Pyrgos Livanaton, Dakoronia did not encounter LH IIIA2 remains, but on top of the burned layer that covered the LH IIIA1 walls she found a sequence of LH IIIB floor levels alternating with destruction layers, one of which included 2 human skeletons. This suggested to her that the destructions had been caused by successive earthquakes.\textsuperscript{38}

A curious phenomenon is observed at Mitrou. Whereas architectural remains of the formative and postpalatial periods are substantial, and postpalatial walls are built on top of prepalatial structures, we have thus far no architecture datable to the LH IIIB2 subphase postdating the LH IIIA2 Early destruction, and only two very flimsy walls and small parts of two earthen surfaces datable to the LH IIIB phase. It is unlikely that Mitrou was deserted in the palatial period, because we have significant amounts of pottery from these phases, including LH IIIB1 Zygouries kylikes. Moreover, the Ayia Triadha chamber tombs of LH IIIA-B date may have belonged to inhabitants of Mitrou. It is clear, though, that the palatial period represents an anomaly in the use of space in the excavated area at Mitrou. For some reason that we hope to discover in the near future, almost no building took place in this period in this particular part of the islet.
Postpalatial period and Early Iron Age (LH IIIC – Geometric)

Reviewing the archaeological record of East Lokris in the postpalatial period, one is immediately struck by the high degree of continuity in settlements and cemeteries. This continuity provides a remarkable contrast to the widespread destructions and abandonments seen in many other areas of Greece at the end of the palatial period. Out of the 12 secure and 2 possible palatial-period tomb sites and settlements reported from East Lokris, at least 9 continue into the LH IIIC period. These include tombs at Livanates-Kokkinonizes, Livanates-Rema Pharmaki, Megaplatanos-Sventza, Zeli-Ayios Georgios, Golemi-Ayios Georgios, and Agnanti-Kri̇tharia. In the cemetery at Agnanti-Kri̇tharia most pottery reportedly dates to LH IIIC, and tomb use continues into the Submycenaean and Protogeometric period without interruption. Also the palatial-period settlement at Āya Aikaterini-Melidoni continues into LH IIIC, and the possible palatial-period settlement at Kastraki near Kyparissi is definitely occupied in LH IIIC, continuing into the Geometric period and later.

Pyrgos Livanaton and Mitrou likewise continue to be occupied into the final Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Pyrgos Livanaton flourishes during the LH IIIC period, having structures that are much better built than the LH IIB2 architectural remains and with a different orientation.39 Dakoronia found storerooms with clay bins as well as a potter’s kiln with misfired pottery fragments and evidence for bronze working and textile manufacture, which she dates to the LH IIIC Early phase. This habitation was destroyed by an earthquake and succeeded by a new settlement that in LH IIIC Advanced to Late was destroyed by another earthquake. Subsequent occupation has been dated to the Submycenaean and Protogeometric periods, the latter represented only by graves.

At Mitrou we have substantial amounts of pottery from every single pottery phase of the final Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, including Submycenaean remains. As at Pyrgos Livanaton, the LH IIIC period at Mitrou appears to have been a flourishing one. Major architectural activity reappeared in our main excavation area, with builders often placing new walls on top of prepalatial walls. The most substantial structure of this period, to judge by its thicker walls, was Building B with oblong plan. Its outer north and east walls appear to have been built on top of the wide wall of prepalatial Building D. We do not yet know the complete plan or the function of Building B because of disturbances by later reuse of the area.

After Building B went out of use, small rectangular Building C was constructed over its northwest corner. The function of Building C is likewise uncertain, but it is clear that it was not an ordinary domestic structure. In the southwest corner of Building C a wheelmade cooking pot was found that contained the neatly stacked thighbones of 5 piglets and had the base of a painted krater as a lid. Elsewhere in Building C were 23 handmade unburnished miniature vases imitating wheelmade Mycenaean shapes—2 kylikes, a few cups, many conical cups stacked together, 2 kalathoi, bowls, a dipper, and a tray. These small vases have excellent comparanda in the so-called “Submycenaean” Horizon 7 at Kalapodi.40 A fragment of a painted stirrup jar found in the plow zone some 5 m to the southeast (Trench LO783) is Attic Submycenaean in style.41

Occupation at Mitrou continues into the Early and Middle Protogeometric periods, but a change in spatial use is again observed in our excavation area. Cist tombs mostly belonging to children are set among the ruins of earlier buildings to the north and west. Inside the southernmost room of Building B, apsidal Building A is constructed, continuing the practice of


41 Illustrated in J.B. RUTTER, "How Different is LH IIIIC Middle at Mitrou? An Initial Comparison with Kalapodi, Kynos, and Lefkandi," in S. DEGER-JALKOTZY and M. ZAVADIL (eds), LH IIIIC Chronology and Synchronisms: LH IIIIC Middle (forthcoming).
reusing older structures. However, Building A is set at right angles to its predecessor. Building A is destroyed in the Middle Protogeometric phase, and a large group of clay vases were found crushed on its floor together with some spindle whorls, loomweights, and a large bronze ring of a size fit for a male finger. Part of a bovine skull was found near the apsidal end of the building. No architectural remains of the Late Protogeometric phase have been identified, but occupation at Mitrou is likely to have continued because of the large amount of pottery of this date found at the site. The scarcity of later pottery remains indicates that the site was largely, but not entirely, abandoned after the Late Protogeometric phase. The latest architectural feature in our excavation area is a small cylindrical column base of unbaked yellow clay, 18 cm in diameter and 20 cm high, which was sitting above the corner of Protogeometric walls 8 and 9 in the area northwest of apsidal Building A (Trench LM 786). Its associated architecture had been removed by modern plowing. It possibly dates to the 8th century B.C., since similar bases have been found in contexts of this date at Eretria (Buildings A, B, C and elsewhere), Lefkandi-Xeropolis, and Pithekoussai.  

By this time, most of Mitrou's inhabitants may have moved a few kilometers inland to the area of modern Tragana, where an organized cemetery of 47 graves dating to the Middle to Late Geometric period was excavated by Onasoglou and other archaeologists of the 14th Ephorate. As many as 38 jar graves, 6 cist tombs, and 3 limestone sarcophagi were excavated. Most graves contained inhumation burials, but 5 jars held cremated remains. The richest grave (P-9) belonged to a young woman buried with much bronze jewelry, a ceramic krater, jug, skyphos, cup, and aryballos, as well as two bronze Near Eastern bowls, one of which was inscribed in 8th century Neo-Hittite hieroglyphs with the name Mu-wi-zi, which is the name of a late 10th century king of Gurgum (Marash) in North Syria. Nearby was another pithos grave (P-10), presumably belonging to a man buried with an iron sword and spearhead as well as a bronze bowl and a ceramic amphora, jug, and cup. Elsewhere in this cemetery a group of three sarcophagi, cut from single limestone blocks, were excavated by Pantos. One sarcophagus was small and belonged to a child. Of the two larger ones one presumably belonged to a man buried with an iron spearhead and possibly a knife, a bronze bowl, a bronze seal, bronze jewelry, and pottery. The other may have contained a woman buried with an imported Egyptian faience pendant in the form of a figurine as well as hundreds of bone and faience beads, perhaps belonging to the same necklace, 2 bone figure-of-eight shields, and small bronze and iron objects.

A comparable situation was found in a somewhat later cemetery dating from the end of the 10th to the middle of the 9th century B.C. excavated by Dakoronia in the southwest part of the modern town of Atalante, in an area that is often associated with historical Opous and Homeric Opopis. Most of its 43 preserved graves were cist tombs, and a few were pithos burials. All burials were inhumations. Two graves stood out by their rich furnishings and the fact that they were contained in sarcophagi. One sarcophagus held a skeleton, presumably of a man, buried with a sword, knife, shield, bronze bowl, bronze rings, a possible sceptre or pin, and some vases. The other reportedly contained a woman buried with a bronze bowl, iron sickle, a spindle, pins, jewelry and vessels. Of the two larger tombs of the same cemetery held a child wearing a bronze diadem as well as other jewelry. With it were a bronze sceptre or pin, an iron knife, and various pottery vessels. A Late Geometric cemetery of 22 cist graves at Anavra-

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42 VAN DE MOORTEL and ZAHOU (supra n. 25). MAZARAKIS AINIAN (n. 5), 59-60, note 159.
44 The Neo-Hittite inscription is written in linear cursive hieroglyphs deemed typical of the 8th century by D. Hawkins: J. MUHLY, "Phoenicians in the Aegean," in MELETEMATA 525. ONASOGLOU (supra n. 24) 50-51 believed the name on the bronze bowl to be most likely of a commoner, because it lacks the royal determinative. However, Muhly accepts it as being the king's name.
Fournos in Epiknemidian Lokris may also have had one to three graves that stood out by richer finds, including a double ax and a bronze seal, but their disturbed condition does not allow a firm conclusion.\textsuperscript{46} The few richer burials at both Atalante and Tragana, and especially the repeated occurrence in both cemeteries of a warrior's grave located near a rich grave presumably belonging to a female, remind us of the Middle Protogeometric burials of the Lefkandi Heroon.\textsuperscript{47} Even though they are decidedly poorer than the Lefkandi burials, these 3 pairs of Early Iron Age graves from Atalante and Tragana are likely to have held elite members of their respective societies. The nearby child's sarcophagus at Tragana and the child buried with the diadem at Atalante may have belonged to those elite families. Thus the mortuary evidence from Early Iron Age Tragana and Atalante suggests the existence of a simple society with a small warlike aristocracy not so different from Homeric society. A comparable phenomenon was observed by Kilian-Dirlmeier and Deger:Jalkotzy in cemeteries elsewhere in Greece dating from the LH IIIC Middle phase into the Early Iron Age.\textsuperscript{48}

Lokris was not alone in its strong continuity of occupation between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Similar continuity is seen at the nearby site of Lefkandi and in northern Phokis. The sanctuary at Kalapodi is believed to have existed already in the LH IIIC period and continued into the historical period. Cemeteries continue from the Late Bronze Age palatial period into the LH IIIC period and Submycenaean phase at Modi, into the Submycenaean phase at Zeli-Ayios Georgios, and into the Protogeometric, Geometric, and later periods at Elateia.\textsuperscript{49}

**Conclusions**

This overview of the archaeological evidence, even though preliminary, allows us to draw some conclusions with regard to the Homeric landscape of East Lokris:

- East Lokris and its neighboring areas on the North Euboean Gulf experience a remarkable continuity of occupation from the palatial Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age, with both the LH IIIC and PG periods being quite flourishing. This picture of continuity and stability contrasts sharply with the large-scale destructions and abandonments we see in most of southern and central Greece. If indeed these are the periods in which the majority of


Homer’s epics are to be set, the relative prosperity enjoyed by this area as compared to most other areas of central and southern Greece would indeed explain why East Lokris figures rather prominently in the Iliad.

- Mitrou and the area of Livanates appear to be doing well also in the formative period of Late Bronze Age palatial society. This is especially indicated by the presence of not one but possibly two monumental structures at Mitrou (Building D and the LH I complex). It is reasonable to assume that these large buildings or complexes reflect the rise of a local political elite at the site. The presence of chamber tombs of canonical Late Helladic plan at Zeli-Ayios Georgios and Golemi-Ayios Georgios by the LH IIB phase and at Livanates-Kokkinonyzes by LH IIIA1 shows that East Lokris adopted this new tomb form not long after the Peloponnese.50 Thus also in this early period East Lokris does not seem to have been a backwater, but was quite on a par with developments further south. It is possible, then, that the prominence of East Lokris in the Homeric epics goes back also to the formative period.

- Whatever developments were taking place at Mitrou and perhaps Pyrgos Livanaton were cut short by destruction at both sites at the end of the formative stage. Pyrgos Livanaton is thought to have experienced a series of destructions in the succeeding palatial period, whereas at Mitrou there is a major change in spatial use. No Mycenaean palace has yet been found in East Lokris and neither do we have a royal tholos tomb as at Orchomenos or a very large chamber tomb as at Thebes.51 One wonders if East Lokris had run out of luck in this period and had become part of the Mycenaean kingdom of Orchomenos or Thebes.

- After the fall of the Mycenaean palaces, Mitrou and Pyrgos Livanaton flourish again, and become part of what Lemos has termed the Euboean Gulf koine.52 At Mitrou, frequent reuse of prepalatial walls may reflect a resumption of early habitation patterns. An important LH IIIC structure (Building B) rises again on top of prepalatial Building D; it is succeeded in the Protogeometric period by a substantial apsidal structure (Building A). Both buildings may have been constructed by new elites legitimizing themselves through association with the past.

- Dakoronia has commented on the scarcity of weapons and precious metals in Lokrian tombs.53 Could this reflect the Homeric description of the Lokrian contingent poor in bronze? Such a conclusion seems premature in view of the endemic looting of Lokrian graves prior to archaeological excavation.54 Thus it is, ironically, some of the present-day Lokrians who put up the greatest obstacle to our proper understanding of the role of East Lokris in Homeric times.

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50 VOUTSAKI (supra n. 21); BOYD (supra n. 21): the earliest chamber tomb cemeteries in the Peloponnese were found at Epidaurus Limira (LH I), Pellana (probably LH I), Volimitia (LH IIA), and Englianos (probably LH IIA).

51 For the large chamber tomb at Thebes, see HOPE SIMPSON and DICKINSON (supra n. 13) 246; CAVANAGH and MEE (supra n. 16) 78.


53 DAKORONIA (supra n. 19) 1171; DAKORONIA (supra n. 26) 340.

54 For instance, a bronze Mycenaean sword was found a few kilometers from the chamber tomb cemetery of Agnanti-Kritharia and handed over to the Greek Archaeological Service (Filippaki, Symeonoglou, Faraklas, supra n. 32).
**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

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