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# HESPERIA

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# MYCENAEAN PERIPHERIES DURING THE PALATIAL AGE

## THE CASE OF ACHAIA

### ABSTRACT

Despite much intensive archaeological fieldwork, several regions of Greece still have not yielded any evidence for palatial structures. It may be, therefore, that they never gave rise to full palatial states. Rather, in regions such as Achaia, local elites may have functioned within less-articulated organizational orders (perhaps chiefdoms), which did not require the centralization of economic activities. These polities existed alongside the more complex palatial states, but it is not necessary to posit that they were subjected to or dependent on the palaces economically or politically, although their opportunities may have been constricted by the presence of the larger power. After the collapse of the palatial system around 1200 B.C., some of these smaller polities seem to have flourished in the LH IIIC period.

### INTRODUCTION

Results of archaeological investigations in recent years have complicated the traditional view of a Late Bronze Age Greece dotted with palatial centers, governed by *wanaktes* at the apex of the administrative structures and social hierarchies of Mycenaean states. Despite the wealth of data provided by intensive and systematic survey projects,<sup>1</sup> except in a few cases,<sup>2</sup> new evidence of palatial or complex buildings is scarce for various areas of the Mycenaean world. The geopolitical picture that emerges is one of a composite reality consisting of palatial states, but also of “peripheries,”

1. For an overview on several survey projects, see Shelmerdine 1997, pp. 550–554. On the northeastern Peloponnese, see specifically Wright 2004a. Abbreviations used are LH = Late Helladic, MH = Middle Helladic, SM = Submycenaean.

2. The “Mansions I and II” of the

Menelaion (Catling 1976–1977, pp. 27–34; 2009); Megarons A and B at Dimini (see Adrimi-Sismani 2006; 2007, pp. 161–168; Pantou 2010); one complex building at Volos: Kastro-Palaia considered a “palace” by the excavator Theocharis (Theocharis 1956, 1957, 1960, 1961; Skafida,

Karnava, and Olivier 2012); “Building D” at Ayios Vasileios near Sparta (Morgan 2009, 2010, 2011); the “Cyclopean Terrace Building” at Iklaina (Cosmopoulos 2009, pp. 11–14; 2011, pp. 3–7; 2012a, pp. 43–46; 2012b, p. 2).

whose exact status continues to defy precise definition.<sup>3</sup> This composite reality, which, despite the varied nature of the settlements involved, is characterized in the LH IIIB period by a relative homogeneity of material culture, does not correspond to a uniform political model.<sup>4</sup>

This article explores the possibility that other less complex, regionally based organizational structures existed alongside state entities during the acme of Mycenaean civilization, and that *wanaktes* were probably not the only ones to hold power in the Mycenaean world.

In this regard, I will closely investigate the case study of Mycenaean Achaia, whose eastern part, Aigialos (or Aigialeia), is supposed to have been an Argolid “province.” Since I do not consider it a given that peripheral regions necessarily depended on distant palaces, I will first provide a general archaeological survey of the region, highlighting the available evidence for the elite and their possible continuity through the LH III period, which supports the existence of local ruling centers. Second, I will present the chronological and geographical distribution of the evidence, arguing for the autonomy of the whole of Achaia and its independence from the direct control of major palaces during the palatial age. Finally, I will attempt to categorize the organizational forms pertaining to the Mycenaean polities in the region during this phase.

## PERIPHERIES LACKING PALACES AND THE “PALATIAL DEPENDENCE MODEL”

The Mycenaean palace, generally thought to have been first constructed in LH IIIA1 with some earlier antecedents,<sup>5</sup> was not simply an architectural structure consisting of a megaron and service areas. Nor was it merely the seat of the *wanax*. It was also a “directional unit” encompassing economic, administrative, military, political, and religious functions, which was therefore also equipped with archives, workshops, and food storage areas, all of which serve as evidence for a complex system of organization and division of work, specialization of functions, mobilization of goods and labor, and, in some cases, redistribution of the surplus production. Moreover, the palace was also the “primary node of exchange in the territory.”<sup>6</sup>

At the present stage of research, Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Thebes, Knossos, and Chania are considered palatial centers, since they had an administrative structure documented by Linear B archives; the recent discovery of Linear B tablets at Ayios Vasileios and at Volos: Kastro Palaia

3. There are few specific works; see, e.g., Deger-Jalkotzy 1998; Eder 2007a. Although the entire Peloponnese and central Greece in some perspectives are considered the “core” of the Mycenaean world (see Feuer 2011, p. 523, fig. 3), I find it useful to adopt the “world-system theory” terminology, defining “core” as the “large, hierarchical, economically and politically centralized state” and “periphery” as “smaller less hierarchical society”; see

Parkinson 2010, p. 13. On the “world-system theory,” see Wallerstein 1974; for its application to the Aegean context, see Kardulias 1999; Kardulias and Hall 2008.

4. Darcque 1996, p. 712.

5. Buildings consisting of a megaron and storage areas in Kakovatos in Elis and Megaron B of the Menalaion date to LH IIB. Cf. Wright 2006, p. 20.

6. The bibliography on Mycenaean palaces is extensive. See, e.g., Kilian

1987; Shelmerdine 1997; Wright 2006. On palatial mobilization—surpluses collected in order to finance operations in the state, versus state-wide distribution—see Halstead 2007; Galaty and Parkinson 2007, p. 26. On redistribution in Aegean palatial societies, see Earle 2011. For a synthesis of the main Linear B document deposits in the Mycenaean world, see Driessen 2008.

could provide evidence that this list should be enlarged.<sup>7</sup> Another category includes fortified citadel sites or complex buildings of a palatial type (of which, in a few cases, no trace remains). These have not yet yielded clear evidence of archives, but in some cases are thought to have been palatial centers.<sup>8</sup>

However, large areas of the Mycenaean world have revealed neither actual palatial buildings nor clear indications of administrative activities. This includes whole regions of the Peloponnese, such as Achaia, Elis, Arcadia, the Corinthia, Aitolia, Phokis, Lokris, Euboia, and Attica in central Greece and Rhodes in the Aegean Sea. In contrast, tholos tombs (and rarer monumental and/or rich chamber tombs) testify to the existence of local elites in these regions.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly, the recent approaches to ancient funerary evidence have demonstrated that, in general, the mortuary record did not automatically mirror social organization, but rather it represents merely a claim to status.<sup>10</sup> Thus, burial within a tholos tomb could assume different meanings depending on the tholos tomb's geographical context and time period.<sup>11</sup>

7. The discoveries at Ayios Vasileios, 5 km south of Palaiopyrgi, may shed light on the puzzling state of affairs at Laconia. Cavanagh (1995) and Cavanagh and Crowel (2002, p. 148) regarded the Menelaion and Vapheio-Palaiopyrgi as primary centers in the 15th century B.C. A similar view is taken by Banou and Hitchcock (2011, p. 13), who stress the important role of the "chief" buried in the Vapheio tholos during the LH IIA period, whom they think managed to control the territory in the heartland of Laconia as it was becoming a state, although he must still have been contending with the centers at Vouno Panayias and Ayios Vasileios. According to Cultraro (2006, p. 122), the Menelaion and Palaiokastro/Pellana, at which complex buildings but no archives are attested, cannot be compared to actual palatial centers, but rather to secondary centers. Thus, they are identified as "satellite" centers of an unknown Laconian palace that has yet to be discovered, or they are credited as belonging to a large kingdom covering western Arcadia and Laconia. The significant evidence of Ayios Vasileios—such as Building D, the five linear B tablets (see Aravantinos and Vasilogamvrou 2012), and the 16 bronze swords in Building A—may attest either to the existence of a palatial center at Laconia (see n. 2, above), or a nonpalatial settlement that produced administrative records; see Pantou 2010, p. 394. Similar suggestions and nuances can also be applied to Volos:

Kastro Palaia. The two Linear B tablets found at this site, the first found in Thessaly, which probably come from the building considered a "palace" by Theocharis (see n. 2, above), made some scholars think of this Mycenaean settlement on the bay of Volos as "an important administrative center, if not a palatial center"; see Skafida, Karnava, and Olivier 2012, p. 65.

8. From the Peloponnese up to central Greece: Midea (which yielded inscribed sealings), Argos, Asine, the Menelaion, Palaiokastro/Pellana, Teichos Dymaion, the Acropolis of Athens (see n. 20, below), Eleusis, Orchomenos, Gla, Eutresis, Krisa, and now Dimini. The latter, due to the discovery of nonarchival inscriptions (see Adrimi-Sismani and Godart 2005) and of two megarons, has been considered the seat of a *wanax* by Adrimi-Sismani (2006; 2007, p. 169); but see the criticism of Pantou 2010, who considers these structures as "intermediate buildings" between regular houses and palaces according to Darcque's (2005, pp. 320–326) classification. On these various sites, see Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979.

9. On the typology of tholos, see Hood 1960; Vermeule 1964, pp. 363–365; Pelon 1976; on tholoi as a social destination, see Mee and Cavanagh 1984, pp. 50–54 (not only related to *wanaktes* but also to high dignitaries of Mycenaean social hierarchy); Darcque 1987 (who is less precise in defining the composition of the elite buried in tholoi

and inclined to think that the high social status of the deceased is expressed in the architectural monumentality of the tomb and the wealth of grave goods rather than in tomb typology); Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1995; Voutsaki 1995, 1998; Boyd 2001, pp. 93–94; Borgna 2006, pp. 49–50; Cultraro 2006, p. 152; Cavanagh 2008, pp. 328–330. On the importance of monumental and/or rich chamber tombs as elite markers, see Dickinson 1977, p. 61 (who also considers them royal tombs); Darcque 1987, p. 204 (who provides the archaeological record); Phialon 2011, pp. 330–333, who highlights some central Greece examples, such as tomb no. 26 of Thebes: Kolonaki, the triple chamber tomb of Spata, and the built chamber tombs of Medeon and Eleusis.

10. In general, on the various possible interpretations of funerary records, see Ucko 1969; on the recent approaches to the "archaeology of death," see Hodder 1982, 1984; for syntheses, see Cuzzo 1996; Parker Pearson 1999, pp. 31–54. For discussion on the relation between the funerary record and social organization, see Morris 1987, pp. 29–43; 1992, pp. 1–30; Whitley 1991b, pp. 23–33. For Mycenaean burial practices, see the recent remarks of Borgna 2006; Papadimitriou 2011; Boyd, forthcoming.

11. Voutsaki 1995, p. 58; 1998, p. 56. Voutsaki (1998, p. 56) points out that tholoi did not have the same significance in the Argolid and Messenia,

However, because of the effort and labor force needed for their construction, and the intrinsically valuable objects preserved inside, tholoi undeniably represented, in LH I–II, focal points for the display of high-ranking families or individuals.<sup>12</sup> In this way, these tombs mark the existence of early competing centers. In contrast, after the birth of the palatial states in LH IIIA, when the construction of new tholoi decreased dramatically in many parts of the Mycenaean world due to the centralization of power and prestige<sup>13</sup>, most monumental tholoi functioned as the tombs of the “kings,” as is attested at least in the case of Mycenae.<sup>14</sup>

Faced with this documentary gap, scholars have proposed two explanations, which give rise to differing views of Mycenaean political geography. Both are based on Renfrew’s “Early State Module” theory, which assumes that primary centers in archaic cultures coexisted side by side without, initially at least, any superordinate forms of jurisdiction:

- a. The existence of as yet undiscovered palaces is postulated by constructing “Thiessen’s polygons” around known palaces or major citadels. The absence of these “missing” palaces is explained by the partial nature of the archaeological investigations.
- b. Some regions lacked palaces and therefore “depended” on major existing palaces some distance away, therefore functioning as “provinces” of a sort<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 1).

As for the tholoi found in the areas without palaces, some scholars are inclined to relate them to early local rulers stripped of their power by the rise of palaces, or to local aristocrats—heirs of the small principalities that were incorporated into the Mycenaean kingdoms by the LH IIIA1 period,<sup>16</sup> or even to *koreteres* or other officials connected to a palatial center.<sup>17</sup>

The latter interpretation is due for a reappraisal: tholoi can only be assigned to minor palatial officials when the tholos is located within a

nor were they used by the same social groups in LH II and LH IIIB; in Messenia, tholoi seem not to have been “such contentious signs of status,” since they “were much more common and far less exclusive than in the Argolid.” Borgna (2006, p. 53) stresses the “public” ideology of the tholos, as a monumental, visible tomb, probably a symbol of clear, firm authority, as opposed to the “private” ideology of the Shaft Graves, whose burials were occasions for the display of wealth and for the legitimation of a social role that had to be constantly negotiated. Focus on regional and chronological variability and the different social strategies behind the tholoi can be found in Boyd 2001, p. 98, who now (forthcoming) emphasizes the case of the LH II Vapheio tholos, which stands isolated without a funerary landscape and represents the “idiosyncratic adoption” of an elite group,

who created a copy of the tholoi of Messenia and the Argolid (on the Vapheio tholos, see also Banou and Hitchcock 2011). However, as no activities were carried out after the funeral, this situation recalls more the practices peculiar to the shaft graves than those that were characteristic of the tholoi. Thus, in Thessaly the simultaneous adoption of Mycenaean pottery and tholoi in LH IIB–IIIA1 is due to the local elites around Volos introducing some (but not all) aspects of a palatial system.

12. Wright 1987, p. 174; Borgna 2006, p. 50.

13. See Bintliff 1977, p. 10; Voutsaki 1998, pp. 48, 55; 2010, pp. 97–98; Cavanagh 2008, p. 335.

14. Mee and Cavanagh 1984, pp. 51–53.

15. Bintliff (1977, p. 16, fig. 4:a) proposed seven Mycenaean states in the Peloponnese, whereas Renfrew (1977,

p. 119, fig. 2) thought there were five, although he admitted that autonomous regions that lacked fully developed palatial organizations or those that were associated with unknown palatial centers, did not appear on his map. Cf. Niemeier 1991; Galaty and Parkinson 2007, p. 2, fig. 2:1. For an even stronger notion of dependence, see Mariotta (2003), who suggests an alleged Mycenaean “empire” that controlled most of Mycenaean Greece, and recently Kelder (2008, p. 54), who postulates that even single palaces may have fallen under the influence of another center. For the basic guidelines of “Thiessen’s polygons” and “Central Place Theory,” see Renfrew and Bahn 2000, pp. 178–179.

16. See Deger-Jalkotzy 1998–1999, p. 73.

17. See Mee and Cavanagh 1984, p. 56; Niemeier 1991, p. 132; Mariotta 2003, p. 205.



Figure 1. Mycenaean Greece, based on Renfrew's Early State Module theory. After Galaty and Parkinson 2007, p. 2, fig. 1.1

palatial territory and dates to the LH IIIB period,<sup>18</sup> the time during which the existence of a social hierarchy linked to administrative offices is documented by the Linear B tablets.<sup>19</sup> Different explanations are necessary in cases where the tombs were still in use during LH IIIB or where they were first built during this period and are located in areas without palaces.

Quite significant, in this regard, is the case of the Menidi: Lykotrypa tholos, built as late as LH IIIA2–B1, which, together with earlier tombs in Thorikos, Marathon: Vrana, and Spata: Magoula, is considered to constitute evidence that during the palatial age in Attica there may have been centers

18. Messenia: Tourkokivoura (tholoi 3, 6), Koukounara (Gouvalari, tholoi 1, 2; Akona, tholos 1; Palaiochoria), Vlachopoulo, Mouriata, Malthi (tholoi 1, 2); see catalogue in Pelon 1976, pp. 484–487.

19. The discovery of the Iklaina Linear B tablet, dating to LH IIIB–LH III A1 (1470–1370 B.C.; Cosmopoulos 2010, p. 10; 2012a, p. 46; Shelmerdine 2012; Summer 2012, p. 39), which is comparable to the chronology of the earliest Knossos tablets, undoubtedly attests to the existence of

a sort of early bureaucracy in this center (maybe the *a-pu*<sub>2</sub> mentioned in the “Pylian cadastre”; see Cosmopoulos 2006; 2012a, p. 45; Shelmerdine 2012, p. 76) that was afterward absorbed by Pylos. Yet up until recently we did not know whether, e.g., the “officials” and social hierarchy attested in LH IIIB tablets already existed approximately two centuries earlier in this polity. On the chronological problems of the Knossos tablet deposits, see Driessen 2008, pp. 70–72.

that were independent of Athens, the actual *floruit* of which is now thought not to have been earlier than LH IIIB2–IIIC Early.<sup>20</sup> Thus, I suggest that the tholoi with these features (“late” construction and/or use) may indicate the survival of local elites and leaders that were contemporary with the main palatial societies but not necessarily part of them.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, on the assumption that tholos construction generally ceased after the palace had achieved its full expansion, and due to peculiar Mycenaean burial customs (which often involved the conversion of the earlier interments to “secondary” burials), no specific analysis of tholoi that explores their use during the LH IIIB period within the entire Mycenaean world can be undertaken with ease. Yet this sort of study, in theory, could lead to a better understanding of the social hierarchy of nonpalatial regional centers during the palatial age.

Another crucial point that jeopardizes traditional reconstructions of Mycenaean political geography is that all existing models that assume a dependence on or subjection of the peripheries to the palaces still leave open several issues related to the degree of palatial control over the smaller centers within their territory and, above all, over alleged “satellite” regions. In this respect, however, it is necessary to keep in mind that if it is difficult to prove the existence of an indirect political influence, which is archaeologically invisible or elusive without perspicuous written records,<sup>22</sup> the possibility of a direct, administrative dependence—that is, the administrative integration of one region into the territory of another, more powerful state, circumstances which would be required for the “palatial dependence model”—needs to be generally reexamined in light of a more careful analysis of the Linear B documents and archaeological data. But, more generally, before addressing whether the administrative control of a given Mycenaean palace could have extended over several kilometers to its hypothetical provinces, the ultimate problem to be discussed is the nature of the actual bureaucratic structures of the major palaces. As this is a long-debated question, it is impossible to discuss it fully here; however, several key arguments will be considered.

20. On the Menidi: Lykotrypa tomb, see Mee and Cavanagh 1990, p. 240; Thomas 1995, p. 354; Privitera 2013, pp. 47, 96–99. For the Thorikos and Marathon-Vrana tholoi, see Phialon 2011, pp. 79–80; Privitera 2013, pp. 132–140, 153; on the Spata-Magoula chamber tomb, see Privitera 2013, p. 129. On the complex picture of Attica during the Late Helladic period, when it was made of a plurality of different districts, see now the exhaustive work of Privitera 2013, pp. 53–55. Privitera also (pp. 49, 55) denies that the alleged “Erechtheus’s Kingdom” centered on Athens’s acropolis existed during LH IIIA–B and convincingly argues for the view of a “local chiefdom” controlling only the Lekanopedio, which

flourished as late the end of LH IIIB2–IIIC Early.

21. Cf. Crielaard 2006, pp. 274–276; 2011, p. 90; Cavanagh 2008, p. 332. On other cases in Achaia, see nn. 63–68, below; Phokis: Medeon tholos A (LH IIIA–B); Phthiotis: Pteleon tholos A (LH IIIA2–IIIC), B (LH IIIC), C (LH IIIB?–C); Thessaly: Dimini tholos A (LH IIIA–B), B (LH IIIB), Gritsa tholos A (LH IIIA–C), B–C–D (LH IIIC), Ayios Theodoros: Spilia (LH IIIA–B); Euboea: Aliveri and Kyme region: Velousia (LH III?); Katakolou (LH III[A2?]); Oxyliothos/Enoria (LH IIIA–B, LH [IIB–]IIIA); Aetolo–Acarnania: Seremethi (LH II–IIIC), Marathia tholoi 1 (LH IIIA), 2 (LH IIIB–C), 3 (LH IIIB); Kephala-

lenia: Argostoli, Mavrata (LH IIIC), Kokkolata tholos A (LH IIIB), B (LH IIIC?), Mazarakata (LH IIIC); Epiros: Parga (LH IIIB); see also the catalogue in Pelon 1976, pp. 488–491; Adrimi-Sismani 2007, pp. 171–173. Some tholoi of generic LH III or later date are reported also from Lakonia (Arna, Arkines) and Messenia (Englinos, Malthi, Nichoria, Papoulia, Vlachopoulou); see Boyd 2001, pp. 212–213.

22. Without historical sources and records, for instance, we would not be aware of the strong influence exerted during the Archaic period by Sparta over other administratively independent cities such as Megara.

Of particular interest is Sherratt's reappraisal of Mycenaean palatial societies and Mycenaean state magnitude. Sherratt compares the former to warrior societies of the 6th–5th centuries B.C., the Hallstatt hillforts, identifying them as the “pre-palatial society of the chariot-driving warrior band,”<sup>23</sup> which borrows, but only superficially adopts the administrative structure of Neopalatial Crete. Furthermore, Sherratt thinks that the Mycenaean were ultimately unable to create actual territorial states, but rather, that they lived in relatively small communities that exploited and supervised “route-segments within a wider network of long-distance routes.”<sup>24</sup> A minimalist approach, in effect, could explain the negligible bureaucratic control that some palaces exercised over the territory, as Driessen has pointed out was the case for the Knossian state; the toponyms mentioned in the Knossos tablets, in fact, seem to refer to “islands of influence in a sea of uncontrolled hinterland,” rather than to a continuous territory that was evenly controlled by the palace administration.<sup>25</sup>

But evidence from Pylos, for example, is indicative of quite a different scenario: its division into two provinces encompassing 16 districts is evidence for a rational exploitation of resources as well as a tight and almost uniform political control over its territory.<sup>26</sup> Even at Pylos, however, there seems to have been room for other agents who wielded a certain degree of power. For instance, there is evidence for sanctuary administration parallel to that of the palace.<sup>27</sup> With regard to Mycenae, which has a very limited documentary record, the picture is more obscure, and the decentralization of administration in private dwellings around the citadel further complicates scholars' reconstructions.<sup>28</sup> It is very likely that no unique model can work in every Mycenaean state. In addition, the tablets are selective in what they record, being more interested in recording “wealth finance” than “staple finance.”<sup>29</sup> Certainly, because of this textual disparity, it is impossible to avoid the possibility that, in theory, the actual extent of palatial territories could be larger than has been reconstructed on the basis of extant Linear B records.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, it is, indeed, undeniable that the written documents illustrate a heterogeneous picture of palace administration. Still, without a thorough and comprehensive review of the data collected across all sites, the presumed direct administrative control of far-flung polities remains difficult to prove with absolute certainty. Of course, it cannot be considered a uniform, universally applicable model; a significant regional variability has to be accepted.

23. The relics of such a society, according to Sherratt (2001, p. 229), were the *e-ge-ta*, interpreted as the former warlord's “followers.”

24. Sherratt 2001, pp. 231, 237. For a similar attitude, see Thomas 1995, p. 350.

25. Driessen 2001, p. 111. Cf. Bennet 2011, p. 151.

26. De Fidio 2001, p. 19. Cf. Bennet 1995, pp. 595–596; 1998; 1999b, pp. 143–144. As for tight control being

exercised by the palace, see also Small 2007, p. 51. Considering Late Bronze Age polities as “expanding estates rather than small early states,” Small goes on to assume that the palace of Pylos directly controlled some villages (cf. Carothers 1992, pp. 276–277), probably without intermediate secondary centers, even though this view does not fit the evidence of the Pylian tablets.

27. Lupack 2007; for the likelihood that a significant degree of autonomy

may also be inferred from the texts for the *da-mo*, see Lupack 2011.

28. For the West House, the House of the Oil Merchant, the House of the Sphinxes, and the House of the Shields, see Militello 1996; Burns 2010, pp. 147–156.

29. On this issue, see Halstead 1992, 2007, 2011; Parkinson 2007; Shelmerdine 2007, p. 44; Privitera 2009, pp. 23–24; Nakassis 2010.

30. Kelder 2008, p. 54.

For example, in the case of western East Lokris, several archaeological clues may indicate that the region was under the control of the Orchomenos palace during LH IIIB;<sup>31</sup> however, other better-known cases are actually far less clear. On the basis of toponyms mentioned in nodules inscribed with Linear B from Cadmus's palace, in fact, Thebes is sometimes thought to have controlled part of Euboia during LH IIIB,<sup>32</sup> as well as the Megarid, Aigina, northern Attica,<sup>33</sup> and the southeastern part of East Lokris.<sup>34</sup> However, the weakness of some identifications, and the problems associated with equating toponyms with historical places,<sup>35</sup> should discourage a reevaluation of reconstructions of the Mycenaean kingdom territories that are not based on written documents comparable in nature and detail to the famous "Pylos cadastre" (PY Ng 319, 322) and other Pylian documents.<sup>36</sup> In the present case, in fact, the Theban documents do not allow a distinction between sites that actually belonged to the Theban sphere of political influence (which in any case did not inevitably imply administrative control) and which were simply in contact with Thebes.<sup>37</sup>

## THE "PALATIAL DEPENDENCE MODEL" AND ACHAIA

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF MYCENAEAN ACHAIA

The palatial dependence model does not seem to fit Mycenaean areas in the northern Peloponnese, such as eastern Achaia and the Corinthia. An overall reappraisal of Mycenaean peripheries is needed, but these areas, and now also Attica, suggest that some regions of Mycenaean culture in LH IIIB lacked palatial centers, and thus also *wanaktes*, but they did not necessarily depend politically on faraway palaces. The problem of

31. Kramer-Hajos 2008, pp. 125, 139, 145. The archaeological evidence attests to the destruction and depopulation of Mitrou at the end of LH IIIA, with a decline in LH IIIB; the minimal LH IIIB evidence at Kalapodi and at Zeli-Ayios Giorgios and Golemi cemeteries is possibly due, according to Kramer-Hajos, to the growth of Hyampolis as a strong local center that overshadowed the sites around Kalapodi. In turn, Hyampolis was perhaps controlled by Orchomenos; the new building of Larymna with its Cyclpean masonry, located in the extreme southeastern region of Lokris and dating to the LH III B period, is comparable to the walls of Gla. Nevertheless, as Kramer-Hajos (2008, p. 125) admits, LH IIIB sealstones and high quality LH IIIB pottery attest to the continued presence at Mitrou of an elite using standard Mycenaean wares during this

phase. The crucial point is the general evaluation of LH IIIB data and the actual role of the elite. In my opinion this is not necessarily related to one palatial administration; at least, it is difficult to assess merely on the grounds of the presence of seals. See n. 165, below.

32. *A-ma-ru-to* (TH Wu 58γ, Of 25.2) and *ka-ru-to* (TH Wu 55β) are linked to the historical Euboian places Amarynthos and Karystos; see Aravantinos 1987, p. 37; Godart and Sacconi 1999, pp. 543–544.

33. Sergent 1994; Godart and Sacconi 1999, p. 544; Adrimi-Sismani and Godart 2005, p. 65; Del Frio 2009, p. 66; Eder 2009b, p. 9. On these documents, see Piteros, Olivier, and Melena 1990.

34. The mention of an *a-ra-o* has been related to Lokrian Halai; see Aravantinos, Godart, and Sacconi 2001, p. 355.

35. See Kramer-Hajos 2006, who convincingly emphasizes the linguistic, archaeological, topographical, and logical problems in accepting that *a-ra-o* can ever refer to "a man from Halai." Moreover, the Euboian site of Karystos yielded no Late Helladic evidence; see Del Frio 2009, p. 66. Cf. the general caution of Dakouri-Hild 2010, p. 620; Bennet 2011, pp. 138, 155–156; Phialon 2011, pp. 362–363.

36. On this document, see Chadwick 1963; Stavrianopoulou 1996; Bennet 1999b; 2011, pp. 151–155. On other Pylian documents related to the spatial organization of the Pylos state, see Bennet 1995, pp. 588–596; 1998.

37. As is evident in the cases of Laconia and Miletos (cf. *ra-ke-da-mo-ni-jo* and *mi-ra-ti-jo* attested in Theban documents); see Kramer-Hajos 2006, p. 89; for this view, see also Sherratt 2001, pp. 231–232.

identifying the system of political organization and the role of local elites in these regions, which were not included in a local or external palatial system, will be explored fully in this article.

The case of Achaia is particularly important, because it has been the subject of several illuminating studies.<sup>38</sup> Although these studies have clarified vital aspects relating to the Early Mycenaean and the LH IIIC periods, LH IIIB remains a sort of gray zone; the political organization and settlement systems of this time period are not well understood, and they have often been neglected due to prevalent theories of alleged extraregional control.

In his reconstruction of Mycenaean geography, Bintliff proposed two separate state entities within the region: one centered on Aigeira (Fig. 2, 65) in the east, and another centered on Teichos Dymaion (Fig. 2, 27)—a fortified acropolis in the far western part of the region.<sup>39</sup> Recently, due to the substantial finds recovered in the area, another possible regional political center has been identified in Patras.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, Renfrew, in his Early State Module theory, assumed that Aigialos was dependent on the palaces of the Argolid, in contrast to Achaia (west of Panachaikon), for which he proposed a more autonomous role, as possibly united with Elis.<sup>41</sup> This hypothesis has often won favor based on the evidence provided by Homer's "Catalogue of Ships" (*Il.* 2.573–575), which included both eastern Achaia and the Corinthia in Agamemnon's kingdom.<sup>42</sup>

In light of the archaeological evidence recovered in the "historical" territory of Achaia, it is possible to postulate that a cultural and political subdivision to the west and east of the natural boundary of Mt. Panachaikon was in place after the Bronze Age.<sup>43</sup> Both subregions show some major settlement foci with distinctive features, including the region of Dymaia in the extreme west, the Patras area, Pharai in the inland Peiros valley, the Leontion area up on Panachaikon in central Achaia, and both the Aigion and Aigeira areas in the east, with many other settlements and cemeteries active throughout the entire Late Helladic period.<sup>44</sup> Currently, however, there is no evidence anywhere in the region for palatial administration and economy, lacking as it does any definable buildings or structures, and anything comparable to complexes like the "Cult Center" of Mycenae, the "Northeast Building" at Pylos, or the "Cyclopean Terrace Building" at Iklaina.<sup>45</sup> At most, it is possible that there is a situation similar to the

38. Papadopoulos 1978–1979; on the Early Mycenaean period, see Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1998; on LH IIIC, see Eder 2003a; Moschos 2007, 2009; Giannopoulos 2008.

39. Bintliff 1977, p. 16, fig. 4, which is followed, at least with regard to LH IIIC, by Papadopoulos 1991, p. 36.

40. Eder 2007b, p. 98; 2009b, p. 33; Moschos 2007, p. 9.

41. Renfrew 1977, p. 119, fig. 2. Cf. Castleden (2005, p. 55), who assumes that an unknown site close to the isthmus of Corinth commanded eastern Achaia, whereas Teichos Dymaion in

western Achaia did the same for Elis.

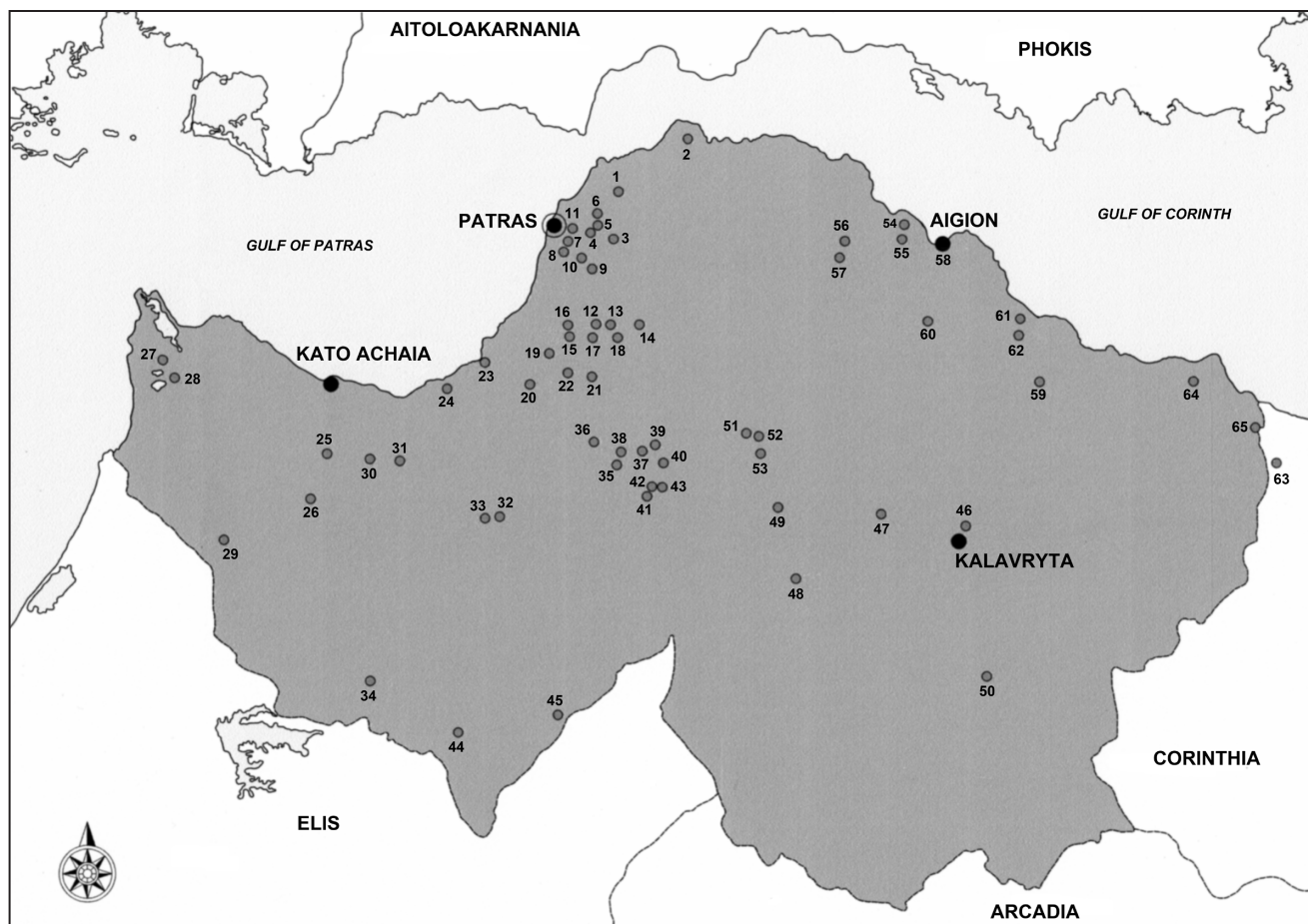
42. For the Corinthia, see Salmon 1984, p. 18; Cherry and Davis 2001, p. 156, with a different perspective; for eastern Achaia, see Renfrew 1977, p. 119, fig. 2; cf. Vermeule 1960, p. 19; Papadopoulos 1978–1979, p. 184: "an Argolid dominated province"; Mariotta 2003, p. 212; and now Petropoulos 2012, p. 199. For Sikyonia, see Lolos 2011, pp. 60–61; but for a different evaluation of Sicyonian traditions regarding the mythohistorical phase, see Arena 2006–2007, pp. 28, 33.

43. Petropoulos 2012. Cf. Rizakis

2002, p. 46.

44. For an overview of the topography of Mycenaean Achaia, see at least Åström 1964; Papadopoulos 1978–1979; Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979, pp. 84–91; Hope Simpson 1981, pp. 89–92; Kolonas 1998; Sgouritsa 2005, pp. 520–523; Giannopoulos 2008.

45. On these complexes, see Lupack 2007; on Pylos's "Northeastern building," see Bendall 2003; on Iklaina's "Cyclopean Terrace Building," see n. 2, above. On cult buildings in the Mycenaean world, see Whittaker 1997.



- |  |                                   |                                 |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Ortos                               | 23. Monodendri: Stenosia          | 45. Drosia / Prostovitsa        |
| 2. Drepanon: Akarnes                   | 24. Tsoukaleika: Vrachneika       | 46. Kalavryta: Arnouga          |
| 3. Voundeni: Amygdalia                 | 25. Ayiovlasitika                 | 47. Vrysarion: Kato Goumenitsa  |
| 4. Voundeni: Bortzi                    | 26. Pournari                      | 48. Manesi: Vromoneri           |
| 5. Voundeni: Ayia Kyriaki              | 27. Teichos Dymaion               | 49. Mikros Pontias              |
| 6. Ano Sychaina: Asprochoma            | 28. Gerbesi                       | 50. Kastria: Spilaion Limnon    |
| 7. Patras: Odos Germanou               | 29. Kanghadi                      | 51. Leontion: Vrayianika        |
| 8. Patras: Odoi Smyrnis and Laskareos  | 30. Spaliareika: Lousikon         | 52. Leontion: Ayios Ioannis     |
| 9. Patras: Gerokomeion                 | 31. Kalamaki: Elaiochorou         | 53. Leontion: Ayios Kostantinos |
| 10. Patras: Pagona                     | 32. Mitopolis: Profitis Ilias     | 54. Kamares: Xerikon            |
| 11. Patras: Acropolis                  | 33. Mitopolis: Ayia Varvara       | 55. Kamares: Paliomylos         |
| 12. Koukoura: Klaus                    | 34. Portes                        | 56. Arravonitsa                 |
| 13. Petroto: Mygdalia                  | 35. Chalandritsa: Ayios Vasileios | 57. Mageiras: Paliometochos     |
| 14. Petroto: Skodreika                 | 36. Chalandritsa: Troumbes        | 58. Aigion                      |
| 15. Krini: Drimaleika                  | 37. Chalandritsa: Agriapides      | 59. Hatzis: Trapeza             |
| 16. Krini: Zoitada                     | 38. Chalandritsa: Stavros         | 60. Achladies: Achouria         |
| 17. Krini: Ayios Konstantinos (site A) | 39. Mirali: Pori                  | 61. Nikoleika                   |
| 18. Krini: Ayios Konstantinos (site B) | 40. Katarraktis: Drakotrypa       | 62. Nikoleika: Ayios Georgios   |
| 19. Thea                               | 41. Katarraktis: Ayios Athanasios | 63. Derveni                     |
| 20. Pavlokastron                       | 42. Rodia                         | 64. Akrata                      |
| 21. Kallithea: Rabantania/Spentzes     | 43. Katarraktis: Bouga-Karela     | 65. Aigeira                     |
| 22. Kallithea: Laganidia               | 44. Skoura                        |                                 |

Figure 2. Achaia site map. After Moschos 2007, p. 17, fig. 8

“secondary centers” of the Pylian kingdom at Patras or Aigion. Certainly, the traditional views need to be reassessed.

Starting with Bintliff’s hypothesis, one cannot recognize a palatial center in Aigeira: the acropolis was only fortified in LH IIIC.<sup>46</sup> Earlier, Middle Helladic evidence indicates that the site was a base on the way from the Corinthian Gulf to the central Peloponnese.<sup>47</sup> Habitation during the palatial period is attested by LH IIIA2–B pottery in the acropolis area,<sup>48</sup> grave finds of unknown provenience of the same date, and one LH IIIA chamber tomb cemetery is reported in neighboring Derveni/Psila Alonia (Fig. 2, 63).<sup>49</sup>

Regarding Teichos Dymaion, the recovery of an object identified as a scepter and a simplistic reading of some literary traditions have persuaded some scholars to identify the site as the seat of a powerful king, responsible for prosperity and the persistence of a cultural homogeneity in LH IIIC.<sup>50</sup> However, the absence of tholoi and of “prominent” tombs in the surrounding area, as well as of any structures ascribable to palatial buildings inside the Cyclopean walls (which are of unclear chronology)<sup>51</sup> suggests that, during the palatial age and afterward, the acropolis was most probably used to control trading routes on the Ionian Sea and the population settled in the neighboring plain. It would thus be comparable to the citadel at Gla or the Krisa fortifications rather than to an actual palatial center.<sup>52</sup> Undoubtedly, there must have been some authority that organized the implementation (with the central power likely based in the Patras region), as is probable for the Cyclopean fortifications along the Aitolian coast.<sup>53</sup> This situation does not require the existence of a *wanax*; today it is recognized that large construction projects were not exclusively managed by palatial states and, as Loader illustrates, did not require a substantial labor supply.<sup>54</sup>

Achaia as a whole, however, does not lack indications of local ruling centers. They are not, however, palatial in nature, as they are built on a substantially smaller scale. There is much evidence for settlements, but, to date, only a few complex buildings are known: some ample dwelling structures are recorded in Katarraktis, at Ayios Athanasios (Fig. 2, 41), and

46. See Deger-Jalkotzy and Alram-Stern 1985; Alzinger et al. 1986; Deger-Jalkotzy 1991; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 83–93.

47. See Alram-Stern 2010.

48. Mountjoy 1999, p. 399. Contra Deger-Jalkotzy (2003, 66), who suggests an unknown site, maybe nearer to the sea, for the LH IIIB settlement of Aigeira. In fact, according to the latter scholar, the LH IIIB pottery sherds reported from the acropolis were probably brought by the builders of phase Ia of the acropolis settlement, which is definitely ascribable to LH IIIC Early.

49. LH IIIA–B grave goods in the Berlin Museum reported from the Aigeira area (Åström 1964, pp. 97–99;

Kontorli–Papadopoulou 2003) come from an unknown cemetery predating the acropolis settlement; see Giannopoulos 2008, p. 84, n. 705. On the two Derveni/Psila Alonia (or Lukovouno/Lykovouni) chamber tombs, which were previously linked to the acropolis settlement by Schachermeyr (1976, p. 158), see Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979, p. 84; Bammer 2002, p. 237; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 93. In the view of Deger-Jalkotzy (2003, p. 66), the recovered grave goods, dated by Verdelis (1959, p. 11) to LH IIIB–C, and the pottery sherds from the excavations point more conceivably to a LH IIIC date.

50. Papadopoulos 1978–1979,

p. 184; Schachermeyr 1980, pp. 121–122. On the scepter, see Desborough 1972, pp. 92, 335.

51. Papadopoulos 1978–1979, pp. 66–67. The LH IIIB–C houses recovered within the circuit in contact with the wall seem to recall the “Unterburg” houses at Tiryns. Hope Simpson and Dickinson (1979, p. 196) suggested a date not before LH IIIB for the walls. See the exhaustive examination in Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 23–28.

52. Niemeier 1991, p. 138; Moschos 2002, p. 31; Dickinson 2006, p. 41.

53. Sgouritsa 2005, p. 522.

54. Loader 1998, pp. 71–72. On Cyclopean wall construction, see Wright 2006, p. 35.

Drakotrypa (Fig. 2, 40) in central-western Achaia. In Ayios Athanasios, a large two-roomed house (18 m long in the second occupation phase) with two stone bases for wooden columns and a flat slab-paved floor built in the Middle Helladic period, then rebuilt and occupied in Late Helladic times, has been tentatively interpreted as a “primitive Mycenaean megaron” and connected to the tholos uncovered nearby.<sup>55</sup> The building recovered at Drakotrypa, consisting of one large main room (9.50 × 7.20 m), a partially paved large court in front of it, a retaining wall (18.40 m long), and a series of smaller rooms interpreted as magazines, is also of interest. It has yielded clues of sacred activities and an intramural child burial. The construction goes back to the Middle Helladic period, but the building was repaired and continuously inhabited until the end of LH III;<sup>56</sup> the recovered pottery dates to LH IIIB.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that both edifices were used from the Middle Helladic period continuously through the Late Helladic without having been abandoned, along with their uncommon dimensions and the crucial presence of a court (at least in Ayios Athanasios),<sup>58</sup> could mark them as likely dwellings of prominent individuals (similar to, for example, house P in Korakou),<sup>59</sup> especially in the Drakotrypa case, where the “small rooms” may hint at storage (possibly even redistribution) functions.

Remains of a megaron of similarly early time period occur in eastern Achaia at Aigion (Fig. 2, 58) (Odos Polychroniadou, 8), where a large (12.50 × 3.50 m) rectangular LH I building remained in use until its destruction in LH IIA. In LH IIB–IIIA1 changes were made to the ground plan. A cist grave and two burials in a pit were found inside the LH I building, plus two pithos burials within the same building plot. It is comparable to LH I–IIA buildings in Tzoungiza, Kirrha, and Thermon. According to Papazoglou-Manioudaki, the existence of another large rectangular building to the east means that an analogy with the “double megaron” in Tzoungiza cannot be excluded.<sup>60</sup>

Another megaron is reported at Chalandritsa: Stavros (Fig. 2, 38). This significant settlement, dating to LH IIIB–C, occupied a circular hill, on which substantial remains of houses and a road system were unearthed.<sup>61</sup> If the building chronology proves to be contemporary with the settlement, this might attest to the existence of local prominent individuals during the full palatial age.

Western Achaia records the earliest examples of prominent tombs: at Portes (Fig. 2, 34), a very large cist tomb (C 1; 8 × 1.60 m) in the middle of tumulus C dates to LH IA. Built on a monumental scale equivalent to that of a tholos tomb, it seems connected to social power and wealth.<sup>62</sup>

55. Zappeiropoulos 1958, p. 139; Papadopoulos 1978–1979, p. 44; Hiesel 1990, pp. 106–107; Darcque 2005, no. 131; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 46; Rizio 2011, pp. 49–50.

56. Papadopoulos 1978–1979, pp. 45–46; Hiesel 1990, pp. 70–71; Darcque 2005, p. 142, no. 130; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 47; Rizio 2011,

pp. 50–51.

57. Mountjoy 1999, p. 401.

58. On the importance of courts in Mycenaean buildings as places where leaders exercised power, see Cavanagh 2001, p. 130; see also Siennicka 2010, pp. 75–77.

59. See Siennicka 2003.

60. Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1982,

p. 149; 2010, pp. 134–135; Papakosta 1991, p. 236; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 80.

61. Kolonas 1985, pp. 136–138; 1998, pp. 482–483; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 41; Rizio 2011, pp. 44–48.

62. Moschos 2000, pp. 15, 20; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 35. On tumuli as evidence for the high status of the deceased, see Mee and Cavanagh 1984, p. 47.

At the same site two plundered (and unpublished) tholoi occur, dating to the LH II–III A period.<sup>63</sup>

At Kallithea: Laganidia (Fig. 2, 22) a single tholos tomb, formerly dated to LH I, but now to LH IIB–III A, was surrounded by a LH II–III C chamber tomb cemetery. The tholos appears to have been continuously used until LH III and perhaps even later. This tomb, although extremely important, has remained basically unpublished.<sup>64</sup>

Two LH II–III A tholoi in the area of Pharai, between Katarraktis and Rodia (Fig. 2, 42), yielded rich offerings (including the “Pharai hoard”), which escaped looting. These tholoi indicate that the deceased were elite members of the Early Mycenaean period. The tholoi are usually connected to the abovementioned megaron-like building at Ayios Athanasios.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, one can include the LH IIB–III A1 tholoi in Petroto: Mygdalia (Fig. 2, 13),<sup>66</sup> Pournari (III A?; Fig. 2, 26),<sup>67</sup> Chalandritsa: Troumbes (Fig. 2, 36),<sup>68</sup> and the LH III A monumental “princely” chamber tomb no. 4 in Voundeni: Amygdalia (Fig. 2, 3) with its precious grave goods in this list of elite burials.<sup>69</sup>

All these tombs testify to the existence of elites, primarily in western Achaia, but their level of importance is ascertainable if the symbolic value of monumental architecture is properly gauged. The building of palaces or monumental tombs displays the ability of a given leader to command

63. Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, p. 501, n. 3. The circular chambers measure 5–5.35 m.

64. Papadopoulos 1988, pp. 89–91; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 54; Graff 2011, pp. 17–19. The pottery found in the tholos dates from LH I to LH III, and perhaps up to the Protogeometric period; 40 burials have been identified, whose dates indicate that the tomb was in use for perhaps 200 years, but was looted in the Late Mycenaean Age. The remains of the skeletons of a large horse, dogs, and other animals are relevant; they may be connected to eschatological beliefs, food offerings for the deceased (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1995, p. 120), and high social status, as dog offerings are often linked to hunting; see Hamilakis 1996, pp. 162–163. For the new dating, see Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, p. 515.

65. Zappeiropoulos 1956, p. 193–196; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 42. The little tholos A (Diam. 3.90 m), which had been robbed, was considered by the excavator more ancient than B because of the wall construction; the larger tholos B (Diam. 5.20 m) is dated by pottery fragments found in the retaining wall between the mound and

the tholos; see Pelon 1976, p. 223. Initially attributed by the excavator to LH III A–B, the tholoi are now dated by Papazoglou-Manioudaki (2011, p. 514) no later than LH III A1. The materials collected outside the retaining wall, the so-called Pharai hoard (which consists of a silver kylix, four bronze daggers, one with silver-plated rivets, another with gilded studs and decorated with silver dolphins and niello, a bronze sword, and a spearhead and razor, also made of bronze), which most likely belonged to an elite (warrior?) burial, are dated to the LH III A1 period by Dickinson (1977, p. 95) and Hope Simpson and Dickinson (1979, p. 90). According to Papadopoulos (1978–1979, p. 59), the tholos may have been built in LH II, and it remained in use in LH III A.

66. Petropoulos 1989, p. 132; 1991, pp. 251, 253; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2003; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 57–59; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, pp. 506–512. The Petroto tholos (Diam. 4.2 m) yielded grave offerings (over 100 pots, golden ornaments, a proto-phi figurine, amber beads, glass, faience, and semi-precious stones) dating back to LH II–III A; animal bones were found around the only intact burial, a feature occurring

also in the Kallithea tholos (see n. 64, above).

67. Papadopoulos 1978–1979, pp. 25, 59, no. 4; the Pournari tholos contained LH III C Middle–Late pottery; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 34.

68. Among the three damaged tombs, Kyparissis (1929, pp. 89–91) refers only to the one he could investigate, recovering one spearhead and other little bronze objects. He identified the pottery as later than that which came from the other tombs recovered by an amateur excavator. Ultimately we have no data about tomb dimensions and chronology; see Giannopoulos 2008, p. 40. Near Chalandritsa two partly destroyed tholoi are recorded, neither of which have been excavated; see Moschos 2007, p. 33.

69. Among the rich offerings are a group of LH III A1 kylikes and two seals representing figured scenes; see Kolonas 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 64–66. The majority of scholarship (Kolonas 1998, p. 478; Moschos 2002, p. 32; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 65) agrees that the tomb belonged to a sovereign; nobody else, in fact, was buried in this tomb during the same phase.

a labor force, specialized craft labor, exotic materials, and access to highly restricted resources.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the absence of monumental architectural features in tombs (Achaian tholoi are classified by Pelon as class A, since they are under 6 m in diameter)<sup>71</sup> and buildings (no traces of frescoes or plastered rooms are recorded), whose construction would involve at least a modest labor force, makes the existence of “Achaian” *wanaktes* unlikely (in the east as well as in the west of the region).

It is clear, then, that there is little extant evidence for the existence of local palatial systems. However, it remains to be understood whether elites are detectable beyond the LH IIIA period, and to what extent Achaia (or part of it) was dependent on a distant palace and was ruled by an “international aristocracy” through the LH IIIB period. Indeed, I am inclined to suggest that it is time to depart from this hypothesis.

### CHRONOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE EVIDENCE AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL VISIBILITY OF THE ELITES

I have just discussed the relatively less impressive quality of the Achaian tholoi and what the lack of monumental architecture may mean in terms of the political power of those who built them. But now we must address what can be inferred from the tholos burial offerings in relation to the argument that the area was dependent on a distant palace.

The consideration of this point is not insignificant, especially if we take into account the remarks of Bennet about some Messenian LH III tholoi; he attributes their general lack of objects of great intrinsic and cultural value to a palatial control of the funerary sphere.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, as reported above, most Achaian tholoi were looted; moreover, we are well aware that one should not propose grand generalizations based on a single case. Nevertheless, the precious offerings of the Pharai hoard can be taken to indicate that the Achaian tholoi do not display the same departure from conspicuous consumption that was observed in the abovementioned Messenian cases. And, therefore, the reason thought to explain the absence of conspicuous consumption—a lack of elite competition, thanks to its being coerced by a given palace—cannot be applied to the Achaian situation. Thus, in my opinion, it is very likely that the prominent individuals buried in the Achaian tholoi were not “officials” subordinate to a faraway *wanax* or local elite members subject to distant palaces. If, as recent scholarship suggests, they can be regarded as local rulers,<sup>73</sup> a comparable reading could now be applied to the individuals who resided in the megaron-like buildings.

Considering that some destructions also occurred in Achaia (Aigion) during the transition from the prepalatial to the palatial age,<sup>74</sup> it is unclear whether the power of these elites (whose possible nature we shall try to examine further) to some extent survived during the full palatial age. On this issue, Papazoglou-Manioudaki has recently reconsidered the evidence and chronology of four tholoi in western Achaia (at Kallithea, Petroto, and the two at Pharai), observing that at the end of LH IIIA1 or early LH IIIA2 they “were abandoned and plundered, not to be used, at least in a respectful way, again.” Therefore, she concluded that the transition to the Mycenaean *koine* in Achaia “may not have been uneventful but it rather had its victims.”<sup>75</sup>

70. Wright 2006, p. 13.

71. Pelon 1976, pp. 222–223. They belong to the group of tombs in north-west Greece that are small in size and whose dromoi lead directly to the chamber without a *stomion*; see Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, p. 507.

72. Bennet 2007, pp. 35–36: tholos III at Englianos and tholos M1 at Nichoria.

73. See Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, p. 200; 2011, p. 516; Deger-Jalkotzy 1995, p. 374; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 254–255.

74. Deger-Jalkotzy 1996b, pp. 723–724; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, p. 135.

75. Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, p. 516.

But what actually did happen afterward during the full palatial age? According to Papazoglou-Manioudaki, Achaia still flourished. The cases of the plundered tholoi highlighted by Papazoglou-Manioudaki and the destruction of the megaron at Aigion seem to point to some disturbance both in western and eastern Achaia, a fact which could suggest that some elites were suppressed, and that a new social order arose that replaced the former.

On the other hand, the buildings of Ayios Athanasios, Drakotrypa, Stavros: Chalandritsa, and the Kallithea tholos, which could all have been used after LH IIIA, may provide positive evidence concerning a sort of continuity, meaning that an “ancient,” prepalatial *koine* did not necessarily disappear everywhere. This is particularly evident at Kallithea: Laganidia, where a chamber tomb cemetery had been arranged around the tholos since the LH II period—a sort of clustering that also occurred in the Argolid—testifying not only to the aim of facilitating “the procession through an ancestral landscape” in order to create a relationship between social groups, but also to a respectful attitude toward the dead within the tholos among the following generations of the Kallithea population, and, above all, among the local elite, who, significantly, chose to be buried closer to the tholos than the lower classes.<sup>76</sup>

It seems that no new tholoi were built in western Achaia after the LH IIIA period, and in eastern Achaia, to date, they seem to have been almost absent. Nevertheless, the rarity or absence of tholoi does not preclude the possibility that local elites did exist at the time. As Mee and Cavanagh have stressed, regional variation in the use of tombs can reflect different traditions. In Boiotia, for example, the Treasury of Minyas at Orchomenos (which closely imitates the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae) is unique. It seems that tholoi had no place in prior burial customs; rather, chamber tombs were the predominant form of burial.<sup>77</sup>

If we consider that chamber tombs and tholoi shared certain similarities in their architecture (both having a permanent system of access, a “horizontal approach” to the tomb, and the triad *dromos—stomion—chamber*) and usage patterns (a collective space of interment and tomb reopening for further funerals and activities), in some cases (such as at Volimidhia), chamber tombs could be “conceived as simply a different way of creating a tholos

76. Cf. the 20 chamber tombs (Pera Sphalaktra) near the Cyclopean and Genii tholoi; the 15 near Atreus’s tholos (see Darcque 1987, p. 200); and chamber tomb no. 222, which is respectfully placed within the tumulus of Grave Circle B (Kostantinidi-Syvriddi and Paschalidis 2011). For other similar cases, see Cavanagh 2008, p. 334. On the meaning of tholos-chamber tomb clustering, see Boyd, forthcoming. It is worth recording here that the Kallithea-Laganidia cemetery shows a clear social stratification: the varying quality of burial offerings suggests that the tombs

closer to the tholos contained burials of the elite, whereas the tombs farther away contained the burials of lower social classes, a fact reflected also within the palaeopathology data deduced from osteological analysis; see Graff 2011, p. 20. In the same vein, the peculiar rectangular chambers and gabled roofs, which suggest domestic architecture, of the carefully constructed tombs T, Δ, E, H, Θ, M, and O are possibly ascribable to the wealth or elevated position in the social hierarchy of the owners (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1987, pp. 147, 159). Thus the LH IIIA2 warrior burial Θ

of tomb VIII, which was accompanied by a group of bronze weapons and tools (including a long crossed sword, a long spearhead, and a double axe; see Papadopoulou 1992a, 1992b, 1999; Moschos 2007, p. 25), and burial M of tomb XV, which contained an elite woman with healthy dentition, who exhibited bilateral femoral enthesopathies that were possibly caused by horseback riding (Graff 2011, pp. 111), can also be understood as elite burials.

77. Mee and Cavanagh 1984, p. 54; 1990, pp. 238, 242.

tomb.<sup>78</sup> It is obvious, therefore, that an elite presence can be attested also by chamber (and even cist) tombs, with status expressed through the size of the tomb or through grave offerings, and not necessarily by a distinctive tomb type.<sup>79</sup> The chamber tombs at Megalo Kastelli (Thebes) and the Athenian Agora (no. 1), for example, are exceptional in their dimensions, materials, and construction features.<sup>80</sup>

So, the single male burial in the large LH IIIA Voundeni chamber tomb no. 4, with its extraordinarily long *dromos* (19.80 m), ample rectangular burial chamber (28 m<sup>2</sup>), and rich grave goods mentioned above, may represent the clearest case of a local Achaian ruler during the early palatial age. It is unclear why this individual preferred a monumental chamber tomb over a tholos for the purpose of displaying his high rank, but the choice was probably contingent upon a local and temporary social strategy. The very long *dromos* of the tomb, resembling the “gigantic” *dromoi* that were peculiar to some tholoi (Vapheio: 29.80 m; Mycenae: Aigisthos and Lion tombs, 22 m; Peristeria tholos 1: 21.20 m), could have resulted from the developments in Late Helladic funerary customs, and could reflect the “increasing importance of the *dromos* as an attention-focusing device in funerary ritual”;<sup>81</sup> on the other hand, one cannot exclude the possibility that this phenomenon might also signify a new social order that may have been based on the emulation of the behavior of the palatial elites.

In general, it is very difficult to identify elite members in Achaian chamber tombs using the wealth of grave offerings as the sole indicator. The precious burial gifts in chamber tombs could have been carried away by those who prepared the tombs for new primary interments,<sup>82</sup> either through a sort of “legal looting” (such as in the Koukoura: Klaus cemetery; Fig. 2, 12)<sup>83</sup> conducted by the descendants of the deceased person, who extracted the goods when the dead were no longer revered, or possibly through “actual looting” by intruders, which would signify a break in the use of the tomb by the family of the deceased.

In addition, the possibility of an actual shortage of prestige goods in funerary assemblages within Mycenaean peripheries also has to be considered. Voutsaki has emphasized that, during the palatial period, mainland palaces, after having replaced Knossos as the major center of the Aegean, gradually restricted access to valuable goods to fewer people, so their scant appearance in the settlement and funerary record outside palatial centers could be explained in light of a gift exchange network.<sup>84</sup>

78. Boyd 2001, p. 59. On the close connections between tholos and chamber tomb construction, see Boyd 2001, pp. 58–59, 93–94. Cf. Cavanagh 2008, p. 331; Papadimitriou 2011, p. 473.

79. Mee and Cavanagh 1984, p. 49. In Thessaly, Nea Ionia is the location of rich cist tombs dating to LH IIB–IIIA1, which show that even this tomb type could belong to elites; see Kramer-Hajos 2008, p. 125, n. 20.

80. Darcque 1987, p. 203.

81. Papadimitriou 2011 p. 477.

82. Cf. the Aigion cemetery case;

see Papadopoulos 1976, p. 36.

83. See Paschalidis and McGeorge (2009, p. 3), who rightly highlight the double functions of precious offerings “as insignia and supplies to the dead and as safely deposited wealth, i.e., temporary hoards for the living and the rest of the family, withdrawn when needed.” Cf. Wace 1932, p. 187.

84. Mycenae, which dominates long-distance exchange during LH I–II, took over the Knossian network that extended across the Aegean to Rhodes, Anatolia, and beyond, but during

LH IIIA–B, Tiryns and Thebes also began to emerge as points of long-distance exchange, in contrast with Pylos, which seems to have remained marginal; cf. Parkinson 2010, pp. 22, 25. For the gift-exchange network, see Voutsaki 2001, pp. 205–206. Analyzing the link between “conspicuous consumption” and “gift exchange,” Voutsaki observes that, as a result of “centralization of reciprocities,” gift exchange becomes asymmetric, shifting from equality or quasi-equality to a dependence relationship between exchange

Furthermore, whereas in regions like Attica and the Argolid, distinction in tomb type seems to represent different “social classes,”<sup>85</sup> in Achaia, simple graves, significantly, were very rare in the Early Mycenaean period and disappeared afterward.<sup>86</sup> Thus the chamber tombs appear to point inevitably to a “cross section of society,” as the abovementioned case of the Kallithea cemetery clearly demonstrates.

Nonetheless, some clues that there were distinctions in status (or at least the claim thereof) seem to occur: as for grave goods, no ordinary people could obtain the precious items (including *Orientalia*) recovered in chamber tombs dating to LH IIIA–B in western Achaia at Portes, Spaliareika: Lousikon (Fig. 2, 30), Monodendri: Stenosia (Fig. 2, 23), Mitopolis: Ayia Varvara (Fig. 2, 33), and Koukoura: Klaus.<sup>87</sup> Within a rigid gift exchange perspective, therefore, they would be seen as the lesser partner in an asymmetric relationship that placed them under the protection and indirect political influence of distant palatial elites. However, there is no evidence that excludes the possibility that these western Achaian elites were, to some extent, able to access broader networks, by acquiring valuable items without the oversight of major palaces. Some rare artifacts imported from central Europe and northern Italy that were found in the LH IIIA Monodendri tomb I show that western Achaia played, at least by this phase, a mediating role as a “port of call” within the exchange network that included the western Mediterranean and central Europe.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Patras could have played the active role of “gateway community,” redistributing goods to the western Achaian settlements.<sup>89</sup>

The wealth of foreign objects displayed, for instance, in many LH IIIA Argolid tombs and in the LH IIB–IIIA chamber tombs of Kokkalia cemetery at Kalapodi<sup>90</sup> can demonstrate that the destruction of Knossos may have, for a short period of time, permitted differential access to long-distance exchange to elites at mainland centers other than Mycenae. This

partners. So it became “a way to exert indirect political influence and ensure the loyalty of weaker exchange partners,” placed under protection of central elites and “acquiring status by the proximity to them.”

85. “Simple” graves (i.e., pits and cists) seem to represent a social class lower than the one represented by those buried in chamber tombs; see Lewartowski 1995.

86. See LH IIIA–B pit graves and cists at Arnouga in Kalavryta (Fig. 2, 46); intramural burial (LH IIIB) at Katarraktis: Ayios Athanasios. See Moschos 2000, p. 27, n. 44.

87. In Portes, MH tumuli were replaced in LH IIIA by rich chamber tombs; see Kolonas 2000, p. 95; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 35. In Spaliareika: Lousikon, cemetery tomb 4 yielded LH IIIA1–2 Mitanni seals of Syro-Palestinian origin, and tomb 5 produced a Syro-Egyptian perfume flask;

see Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 104, 121–122, 190–193; two other (LH IIIA2–B) Mitanni seals occur at Monodendri (Cline 2009, p. 151, nos. 159, 160); see Petropoulos 2000, p. 66; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 134, 190–193. At Mitopolis seven chamber tombs, dating to the LH IIIA–C period, yielded phi figurines (tomb 3), one golden necklace (tomb 3), glass, carnelian and golden beads (tombs 2, 3, 5), one Mitanni seal (tomb 3), three seals (tomb 3, 5), many bronze objects and weapons (tombs 1, 5, 6), and fragments of amber and ivory (tomb 5); see Kyparissis 1929, p. 91; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 38; and now the exhaustive treatment in Christakopoulou 2010, pp. 131–138 (metal objects), 140–143 (jewelry and seals). At Koukoura: Klaus, an alabaster pyxis decorated with nautilus motifs of LH IIIB date is recorded as the product of a Argolid or Cretan workshop; see Moschos 2007, p. 23.

88. The objects include one ring with spiral discs, which is a type characteristic of the European Middle Bronze Age, and four lantern-shaped beads (these together with the 12 specimens found in the Vrysarion cemetery constitute the second largest concentration in Greece after Mycenae); see Giannopoulos 2009, pp. 123–125.

89. On “gateway communities” as redistributive centers of foreign goods, see Cline 2009, p. 87.

90. On Argolid tombs showing signs of access to external resources, see Burns 2010, pp. 179–190. On the Kokkalia cemetery, see Dakoronia and Dimaki 1998; Dakoronia 2007; Kramer-Hajos 2008, p. 59. Kramer-Hajos (2008, p. 124), however, hypothesizes that the precious items were produced at Thebes, postulating that they were worked in the first palace complex of LH IIIA.

opportunity may have been sufficient for them to acquire high levels of wealth by bypassing the major Argolid centers or Thebes.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, a systematic study of grave goods from Achaian chamber tombs is necessary to establish the actual sources of wealth and to assess their comparative similarities and differences.

On closer inspection, the first adoption of chamber tombs in Achaia can also be considered to demonstrate the existence of local elites. Recently Wright detected “the consequence of increasing reach of palace centers as they succeed in consolidating control over adjacent regions” in the widespread adoption of chamber tomb cemeteries in the outer regions of emerging palatial centers only after LH IIIA1, and he regarded their establishment as “partly a product of implantation in some places of functionaries from palace centers (or the co-optation of local elites for that purpose), who in showing their allegiance to the urban center promoted a new style burial.”<sup>92</sup>

This argument clearly does not fit the state of affairs in Achaia, where chamber tombs appeared at the latest in LH II (and maybe earlier) almost throughout the whole region.<sup>93</sup> It is therefore unlikely that they can belong exclusively to palatial “officials,” unless one postulates the presence of such men in distant regions before the consolidation of the palatial structure in the Argolid and Messenia. Their introduction could, however, be very meaningful; as Wright stresses, in the contexts of Messenia and the Argolid, it reflects the breakdown of lineage structures of earlier, basically transegealitarian Middle Helladic communities due to the increased power and importance of individuals and families who had relationships with the economic and political center of a palace. What is relevant here is that chamber tombs, as a family burial place, mark a new division within a larger and more articulated community in social and economic terms.<sup>94</sup>

This could mean that the early appearance of chamber tomb cemeteries in Achaia also points to the rise of a new type of political order, one ruled by elites able to attract followers beyond kinship ties. With this assumption, an economic factor also has to be considered: while it is less expensive to

91. For foreign imports in Aegean contexts, see, in general, Cline 2007, 2009. But for a more balanced evaluation of the frequency of long-distance interaction during the Aegean Bronze Age, consult Parkinson (2010, pp. 17–25), who reduced the raw number of imported objects to the minimum number of contacts that could have produced their distribution in the archaeological record. In LH I–II the majority of contacts were concentrated on Mycenae. Later, more than 90% of Orientalia found in LH IIIB contexts on the mainland belong to Mycenae, Tiryns, and Thebes, whereas they were completely lacking at Pylos. As for Achaian sites, Parkinson (2010, p. 23, fig. 2.2) records few contacts at

Kangadi and Katarrhaktis (LH I–II), Chalandritsa, and Patras (both LH IIIA–B).

92. Wright 2008a, p. 148. On the earliest chamber tombs of Messenia, those at Volimidhia, see Cavanagh and Mee 1998, pp. 48–49; Boyd 2001, pp. 58–59.

93. The Vrysarion cemetery is noteworthy in upland central Achaia: within the chamber tombs of general LH IIIA date, chamber tomb no. 28 was already being used in LH I–II; see Giannopoulos 2008, p. 69. At Portes, chamber tombs date back to LH IIIB (Giannopoulos 2008, p. 35); at Voundeni: Amygdalia, to LH IIIB (Giannopoulos 2008, p. 64); at Aigion: Psila, Alonia square tombs nos. 3, 5, and 6 date to

LH IIIB (Papadopoulos 1976; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 79); Nikoleika tomb no. 4 dates to LH IIIB (Petropoulos 2007, pp. 257–258; Giannopoulos 2008, p. 83).

94. Wright 2008a, p. 148. I prefer, with Wright (2004b, pp. 69–70), the use of the “transegealitarian society” notion, instead of the traditional egalitarian one, because this form of organization is vital to the emergence of leadership. As Hayden (1995) shows, the ideology of equality veils forces oriented toward establishing wealth, resources, and power inequalities, and the individuals trying to differentiate themselves reciprocally and from other social groups into transegealitarian societies.

construct chamber tombs than tholoi, even the poorest chamber tombs undoubtedly required much more labor than simple graves. Therefore, the LH II Achaian chamber tombs could be directly related to the local elites<sup>95</sup> who were then displaying their high status through this “new” kind of tomb, which originated in Messenia, that arose as a contemporaneous “emulative invention” of the tholoi.<sup>96</sup>

It is undeniable that during the palatial age evidence of the elite seems gradually to fade. This phenomenon could be due to either a lack of “archaeological visibility,” caused by homogenous Mycenaean burial customs as well as family behavior (which can substantially skew our perception of grave wealth), or to an actual paucity within Mycenaean peripheries of prestige goods, which were being drained by the major palaces.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE EVIDENCE

### WEST ACHAIA

The early dating of the tholoi at Portes, Petroto, Laganidia, Katarraktis, and Pournari and the Voundeni chamber tomb no. 4, as well as various megaron buildings, indicates that local ruling centers may have appeared in Achaia, west of Panachaikon, very early. And, because of their chronological and geographical positions, these local ruling centers could hardly have been controlled by the increasing power of Mycenae—they had to have been “autonomous.”<sup>97</sup>

In addition, the “monumental” architecture (large tumuli and small tholoi) and the luxury goods also found in the chamber tombs (e.g., at Monodendri, Spaliareika: Lousikon), objects commonly used by elites to enhance their position and status, are further proof that social ranking did exist in Achaia, although sufficient data are not available for determining how “deep” the social segmentation was.

The wide plains of Patras, Pharai, Tritaia, and Dyme could support a large population: the Dymaia chora,<sup>98</sup> the ample Patras area,<sup>99</sup> the inland

95. Cf. Phialon 2011, p. 370 on the situation in central Greece; the presence of chamber tombs during LH II mark the emergence of dominant groups; in particular, the LH IIA chamber tombs placed around the Kadmeia of Thebes indicate the creation of a hierarchical society.

96. Wright 2008a, p. 147.

97. Eder (2009b, p. 33) is perhaps correct in her hypothesis concerning a connection between Achaia and Elis, despite the many uncertainties raised by the lack of palatial centers in Elis during the LH IIB period.

98. Cemeteries: Kanghadi (LH IIIC–SM; Fig. 2, 29), Pournari (presumed), Skoura (LH IIB–C; Fig. 2, 44), Drosia/Prostovitsa (LH IIIC–SM; Fig. 2, 45), Manesi: Vromoneri

(LH IIB–C; Fig. 2, 48), Ayiovlazitika (LH IIB–C; Fig. 2, 25), Spaliareika: Lousikon (LH IIB–C), Kalamaki Elaiochorou (LH IIIA1–SM; Fig. 2, 31), Portes (LH I–IIB), Mito-polis: Prophetis Ilias–Aya Varvara (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 32 and 33); settlements: Teichos Dymaion (LH I–IIIC), Gerbesi (presumed; Fig. 2, 28). See Kolonas 1998, pp. 470–475; Moschos 2007, pp. 25–31; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 23–66; Rizio 2011, pp. 23–29.

99. Cemeteries: Tsoukaleika/Vrachneika (LH IIIA2–C; Fig. 2, 24), Monodendri (LH IIB/LH IIIA1–C), Thea and Pavlokastron (LH IIIA1–C Early; Fig. 2, 19 and 20), Kallitheia: Rabantania (LH IIB–C; Fig. 2, 21), Voundeni (LH IIB–IIIC; Fig. 2, 3), Ano Sychaina: Asprochoma (LH III;

Fig. 2, 6), Koukoura: Klauss (LH IIIA–SM), Petroto (LH IIB–IIIA1), Skodreika (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 14), Krini: Drimaleika (LH IIIC; Fig. 2, 15), Ayios Konstantinos (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 17 and 18), Krini: Zoitada (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 16), Patras: Odos Smyrnis and Laskareos (MH III–LH I cists; Fig. 2, 8); Patras: Odos Germanou (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 7), Patras: Gero-komeion (LH IIB–C; Fig. 2, 9); settlements: Ortos (presumed; Fig. 2, 1), Drepanon: Akarnes (presumed; Fig. 2, 2), Patras: Acropolis (Fig. 2, 11; linked to the Odos Germanou cemetery), Patras: Pagona (LH IIIA–C; Fig. 2, 10); Bortzi–Aya Kyriaki (Fig. 2, 4 and 5; linked to the Voundeni cemetery). See Moschos 2007, pp. 19–25; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 60–64.

Pharai valley (Chalandritsa and Katarraktis),<sup>100</sup> and also the central upland Leontion area<sup>101</sup> (with many cemeteries and settlements active during the entire LH III period) seem to have been the main foci of distinct local settlement systems. The sites that have produced evidence attesting to prominent individuals might hint at the existence of some sort of “central places.”

At first glance, it would appear difficult to provide further reconstructions about settlement patterns. It is still unclear, in fact, whether an actual site hierarchy existed; the necessary, diachronic arrangement of the evidence creates a series of problems, which call into question the usual “site catchment analysis” guidelines that link major centers located at about two hours walk from each other and farming communities that are one hour apart.<sup>102</sup>

The Kallithea and Petroto: Mygdalia tholoi south of Patras are almost contemporaneous in LH II, but are also only a few kilometers apart. A similar state of affairs is present in the Pharai area, where various chronologically homogeneous evidence of the elite is concentrated. And yet, the ruler buried in the LH IIIA tomb 4 of Voundeni: Amygdalia (associated with the Bortzi settlement) occurs only 7 km northeast of Patras: Acropolis and the Patras: Pagona settlements.<sup>103</sup> Thus, is it reasonable to suggest that Kallithea and Petroto, for example, or Voundeni: Bortzi and Pagona, although they are located so close to one another, were “independent” centers in the LH II and LH IIIA periods, respectively?<sup>104</sup> Could settlements with prominent individuals rise simultaneously and almost adjacent to each other in Late Helladic Achaia, with overlapping radiuses of 5.5 km, that are usually attributed to major centers?<sup>105</sup> And what size could they reach?

These and other significant topics can be answered by taking into account the results of Bintliff’s surface survey, which presents the Greek mainland settlements from the Neolithic to the Late Helladic periods and tries to apply the “social landscape” approach to the Late Helladic Achaian context. First, Bintliff recognized that Middle Helladic sites exhibit the pattern of a “chain of nucleated villages or hamlets separated by a few kilometres, although a thinning out can occur in most regions.” It is worth noting that in the Late Helladic period the picture remained similar to earlier periods only with a “fuller network of villages and a minor recovery of smaller rural sites . . . apart from the emergence of rare palaces and other high-ranking central-places.”<sup>106</sup>

100. Chalandritsa, cemeteries: Ayios Vasileios (LH IIIA–C), Agriapides (LH I–II tumulus; Fig. 2, 37), Pori (presumed; Fig. 2, 39); settlements: Stavros (LH IIIB–C). Katarraktis, cemeteries: Karela (LH IIIC; Fig. 2, 43), Rodia (tholoi; see n. 64, above); settlements: Ayios Athanasios (MH–LH IIIB), Drakotrypa (MH–LH IIIB); see nn. 55, 56, above. Kolonas 1998, pp. 483–485; Moschos 2007, pp. 31–35; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 39–48.

101. Cemeteries: Mikros Pontias (presumed; LH IIIC; Fig. 2, 49); Leontion: Vrayianika (LH IIIC; Fig. 2, 51),

Leontion: Ayios Ioannis (LH IIIA1–C; Fig. 2, 52), Vrysarion: Kato Goumenitsa (LH IIIB–IIIA; Fig. 2, 47); Lomboka (LH IIIC); Manesi: Vromoneri (LH IIIC; Fig. 2, 48). Settlements: Leontion: Ayios Vrayianika/Ayios Konstantinos (Fig. 2, 53). Kastria: Spilaion Limnon (Fig. 2, 50) has produced LH I ceramic evidence. See Kolonas 1998, pp. 475–483; Moschos 2007, pp. 37–39; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 67–73.

102. On “site catchment analysis” and the notion of “site catchment area” (“the total area around a site from which site contents have been derived”),

see Renfrew and Bahn 2000, p. 258.

103. On this settlement, see Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 61–63; Rizio 2011, pp. 53–54.

104. Petropoulos (2001–2002) suggested that Voundeni, which he identified with Mesatis, amalgamated with Aroe and Antheia in the first half of the 5th century B.C. to form ancient Patras. On the synoecism of Patras, see Rizakis 1995, pp. 163–165.

105. Cf. Kramer-Hajos 2008, p. 110 for the East Lokris settlement distribution.

106. Bintliff 2010, p. 757.

Bintliff's other significant point is that agrarian communities tend to restrict themselves in size in order to facilitate "inter-face interactions." So in Neolithic and Bronze Age settlements of 1.0–2.5 hectares with ca. 100–300 inhabitants, most likely there would have been exogamy and positive relations with neighboring villages; but settlements of ca. 4–5 hectares or more, with 500 inhabitants, could practice endogamy and were, for the most part, "autonomous" in terms of their resources. These types of sites "might be considered to have begun to develop political behavior of an incipient city-state character."<sup>107</sup> Thus, in the Bronze Age Greek mainland, a general picture emerges featuring small sites "tied into a local social network of mate exchange of a 5–15 km radius," where palaces and high-ranking "central places" were exceptions.

Unfortunately, we do not have precise data about Late Helladic western Achaian settlement dimensions, but the trend, maybe excepting the Patras area settlements, seems to suggest smaller communities of under 300 inhabitants. If so, we should place most western Achaian settlements within the model of small and proximate villages and hamlets identified by Bintliff. The consequence is that we can infer exogamy and positive relations with neighboring villages, and, therefore, an absence of actual competition, except perhaps between elites who could have been motivated to display their status inside and outside their community. This settlement pattern would also indicate, ultimately, the failed genesis of actual "state" polities. In fact, limited dimensions allowed settlements to avoid social pressure and sustain easily managed communities,<sup>108</sup> but, at the same time, this also prevented the formation of a deep hierarchy and the shift to a more complex organizational stage.

Thus, we might look at the LH I–II communities of western Achaia as a "transitional" form of sociopolitical development: they are similar in size to Middle Helladic communities, but the burial area is separated from the settlement and not within it as in Middle Helladic mortuary practice. This earlier practice may represent a corporate social structure, where the dead and the living were not strongly separated. It follows that maybe we should start to question whether evidence of elite burial practices during early Mycenaean times should still be evaluated as something similar to Middle Helladic tumuli, which, according to Voutsaki, were characteristic of the more prominent clans within largely kin-based societies,<sup>109</sup> or if we should consider them as signs of a newly ranked society, or even as signs of incipient class divisions, as the appearance of chamber tomb cemeteries in LH II seems to imply.

Another very difficult problem relates to the full picture of the palatial age: it is hard to accept that western Achaia in LH IIIB remained in a sort of political limbo. External control by faraway palaces has been ruled out; the other possibility, therefore, is that the existence of emerging prominent individuals and families was expressed in "new" forms, which appear differently in the archaeological record.

As the plundering of tholoi may suggest, the rise of major palaces had some consequences in peripheral regions: some early principalities seem to have declined (or were destroyed?) and then were replaced by a new social order. Above all, the "survivors" had access to external resources and mainstream international trade, but that access was severely restricted due

107. Bintliff 2010, p. 759.

108. Cf. Bintliff 2010, p. 758.

109. Cf. Voutsaki 1998, p. 44; 2010, pp. 92–93. For an examination of the meaning of the burial mound, see also Boyd 2001, pp. 92–93; Borgna 2006, pp. 47–48.

to the control exerted by the palatial elites, and in some cases access was eliminated entirely. This may have obliged prominent individuals (both the “heirs” of former local rulers and/or the new elites) to shift toward less conspicuous forms of display; thus, tholoi were not built any more and chamber tombs became the predominant burial form, which (except in the Voundeni case) had ordinary dimensions during the palatial age. The fact that the burials are nearly all of the same dimensions means that it is not possible to identify a hierarchy of sites through funerary evidence.

This may lead to a better understanding of the “trace elements” of the elites. The shift in building projects and resources being devoted to the living rather than the dead marks the transition to the LH III period; this is true, for example, in the Argolid, where palatial buildings and major walls were raised. Therefore, in the absence of monumental architecture comparable to that found in the Argolid, the use of complex buildings and dwellings both in Achaia and in other Mycenaean peripheries could serve as a clue to the presence of the elite in these regions.

Nonetheless, if “rulers,” as well as more-or-less ranked societies existed in western Achaia until at least the LH IIIA period, when evidence for an elite can be identified at Voundeni, Monodendri, and Spaliareika: Lousikon, it is difficult to believe, in the absence of clear destruction evidence, that they actually vanished and that these communities turned to a different kind of organization during the LH IIIB period. Therefore, these western Achaian polities, which were too far from Mycenae to be controlled by its *wanax*, had to be ruled by the local elite, whose existence is not evident in the archaeological record. The Patras area could emerge as a dominant “central place” in this picture.

#### EAST ACHAIA AND THE REGION’S ALLEGED DEPENDENCE ON MYCENAE

The case of eastern Achaia is even more problematic: a long-lasting occupation is attested in Aigion, whose early and relevant role is undeniable. After the destruction in EH II, Aigion was settled again in MH II, a significant period in the rise of new social classes, as warrior graves in Aigina, Boiotia, and Messenia (all preceding the Shaft Graves of Mycenae) attest.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, Late Helladic megara and buildings are recorded in this region, while the Psyla Alonia Square cemetery lasted from LH IIB to Early LH IIIC and experienced great prosperity during LH IIIA–B.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, other cemeteries and settlement sites were also active, but, to date, they are observable only in meager numbers compared to western Achaia.

110. Papazoglou–Manioudaki 2010, p. 137.

111. On the Aigion Psyla Alonia cemetery, see Papadopoulos 1976. Cavanagh (1987, p. 164), in his cluster analysis of Mycenaean chamber tombs, classified Psyla Alonia tombs within the group (III) of average size. On some unique peculiarities (a common

corridor joining the outer ends of dromoi of tombs 6 and 7), see Kontorli–Papadopoulou 1987, pp. 153, 159. The other cemetery was at Aigion: Kallithea (LH IIIA2–C). Traces of settlement of MH and LH IIIA–B phases have been recovered in Odos Aristeidou 2; see Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 75–81.

Evidence of early activity also occurs at Nikoleika, which lies between the Selinous and Kerynites rivers in the ancient territory of Helike. Fieldwork has revealed chamber tombs of LH IIB/IIIA1–C date and a settlement of over one hectare on the Ayios Georgios hill that dates to the LH II period (Fig. 2, 61 and 62).<sup>112</sup> In the area of Aigeira and in a few other sites, Mycenaean evidence does not date earlier than LH IIIA1.<sup>113</sup>

To date, it is possible to detect evidence pertaining to early local elites in the LH II Aigion (Odos Polychroniadou) megaron, plus the LH II use of a chamber tomb at Aigion (Psila Alonia Square nos. 3, 5, 6) and the Nikoleika (no. 4) cemetery. But during LH IIIB, as in western Achaia, evidence relating to important tombs and individuals is scarcely detectable.

Farther east, Mycenaean Sikyonia does not provide clear evidence of an elite class nor of a “central place”: the Mycenaean phase of the historical site of Sikyon is poorly known, although Lolos assumes the existence of a “sizable community.” In the countryside the known sites fall within the category of a farmstead or hamlet, with only Litharakia presenting the features of a large village.<sup>114</sup>

This lower concentration of evidence for elites within Aigialos in comparison with western Achaia is often explained in light of the alleged control of the region by Mycenae, which is thought to have stunted, in its early stages, the rise of local complex societies in the area. Several pieces of evidence, however, preclude the view that eastern Achaia was a “province” of Mycenae. In my opinion, this state of affairs, far from being proof of Mycenae’s hegemony, could be better explained by various other factors.

First of all, views that are derived from the direct comparison of Bronze Age archaeological evidence and late literary documents should be regarded with some skepticism. These ultimately rely on the testimony of the “Catalogue of Ships,” a document that does not date back to the Mycenaean past, but rather to an early Archaic chronological horizon.<sup>115</sup> The Aigialos section, if anything, could underpin the attempts of the 8th-century communities of eastern Achaia to structure an oppositional identity against their aggressive “Dorian” neighbors by connecting themselves directly to the core of the pre-Dorian world—Agamemnon’s realm.<sup>116</sup> This and other mythohistorical traditions referring to Achaia during the heroic age, such as that of Tisamenos’s refuge in Helike, very likely date to, at the earliest, the middle of the 6th century B.C.<sup>117</sup> They must now be considered from the perspective of the reconstruction of Achaian ethnicity during the Archaic period, not within an alleged factual history of the Achaian ethnos during the Late Bronze Age.

Of course, the extent of Mycenae’s territorial control is the pivotal point of the issue. As I have stated above, the Linear B record from Mycenae is still very meager, lacking the wealth of toponyms mentioned in the Pylos and Knossos documents, so it is impossible to infer anything from this category of evidence. Nonetheless, we can turn to different sources, such as surveys and archaeological data, which have been exploited more fruitfully in recent years.

In this regard Dickinson was inclined to recognize an early “overcoming” by Mycenae of all rivals in the northeastern Peloponnese.<sup>118</sup> Cherry and Davis basically support this view, stressing the absence of tholoi in the

112. Papadopoulos 1978–1979, pp. 33–37; Petropoulos 2007, p. 254. On this settlement, which is still being excavated, see further details in Kolia 2011, p. 203; 2014.

113. West to east, cemeteries: Mageiras: Paliometochos (LH IIIA; Fig. 2, 57), Kamares: Xerikon (Fig. 2, 54), Kamares: Paliomylos (Fig. 2, 55), Arravonitsa (MH; Fig. 2, 56), Hatzi: Trapeza (Fig. 2, 59), Achladies: Achouria (Fig. 2, 60), Vareliossa (LH IIIA1–C Early), Akrata (Fig. 2, 64); settlements: Hatzi (Trapeza; presumed). See Kolonas 1998, pp. 487–488; Moschos 2007, pp. 39–45; Gianopoulos 2008, pp. 74–94.

114. See Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979, p. 69; Mountjoy 1999, p. 198; Lolos 2011, p. 273 (Sikyon), pp. 293–305 (countryside).

115. On the “Catalogue of the Ships” and the long scholarly debate on the passage’s chronology, see Marozzi and Sinatra 1984, 1991; for the higher chronology within the Bronze Age, see Latacz 2001, pp. 262–263; for post-Mycenaean chronology, see Dickinson 1999; for its being dated to the late 8th–early 7th century, see Marozzi and Sinatra 1991; Anderson 1995; Eder 2003a, pp. 307–308; Arena 2006–2007, p. 17.

116. Arena 2006–2007, pp. 27–34.

117. Arena 2006–2007, pp. 51–52.

118. Dickinson 1977, pp. 108, 110.

area around Nemea and the Corinth, which could prove that “Mycenae’s power extended over most of the Corinthia by the 15th century, when this form of burial first achieved prominence elsewhere in the northeastern Peloponnese, and that already in early Mycenaean times there were no rival elites able to challenge Mycenae.”<sup>119</sup>

This view, however, appears now to have been overturned. Wright has focused attention on Mycenae’s immediate hinterlands and the whole northeastern Peloponnese, proposing a new reading of center-periphery relationships based on data from intensive surveys. He has proposed several types of models that relate to site distribution: a “Central Place Model,” which is pertinent to the core area of the Argive plain, a “Dependency Model,” which is pertinent to areas neighboring the palace, and last, and most interesting for our discussion, a “Periphery Model,” which relates to territorial units reflecting various degrees of integration into the central political economies of primary centers. The Nemea valley, the southern Argolid, and the Corinthia, which showed a certain degree of “autonomy and autarky,” fall within the Periphery Model, although such areas may have been “stimulated by the rise of central places.”<sup>120</sup> In addition, Wright admits the objective difficulty in detecting “secondary regions and regions in northeastern Peloponnese, that is, settlements to be considered as towns and also administrative seats as recorded in Linear B tablets from Pylos and Knossos,”<sup>121</sup> although he is now inclined to assign such a role to the Aidonia settlement in the Nemea valley.<sup>122</sup>

In circumscribing the power sphere of Mycenae, a key role also has to be assigned to the Corinthia in the interpretation of evidence. Morgan has questioned the view that Mycenae had overarching control, stressing how, according to the available evidence, this power did not extend beyond the southwestern portion of the Corinthia.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, she has tried to explain the striking absence of citadels and dominant settlements in the region through the proximity of maritime resources, which could favor the emergence of a system of interconnected hamlets and villages or towns; this situation contrasts with the inland hinterlands around Mycenae, which lacked such resources.<sup>124</sup>

However, new light has recently been shed on this region, which, in effect, had fortified sites (Korakou, Perdikaria, Isthmia), but no palaces. The existence of early local elites is now demonstrated by a recently discovered tholos tomb at Cheliotomylos near Corinth, although these elites apparently did not survive into the LH III period.<sup>125</sup> Corinth itself, despite its favorable geographical position and proximity to resources, which was comparable

119. Cherry and Davis 2001, p. 156.

120. Wright 2004a, p. 127.

121. Wright 2004a, p. 127.

122. Wright 2008a, p. 149.

123. Morgan 1999, pp. 352–353, 362.

124. Morgan 1999, pp. 349–367.

125. Rutter (2003, p. 77) attributed

the arrangement of 13 Middle Helladic tombs in Corinth’s North Cemetery to half of a tumulus, which he interpreted as a burial precinct, containing a privileged kin group that was contemporary with the earliest use of Grave Circle B at Mycenae. On the recently discovered tholos of Cheliotomylos (LH I/II), see Pullen and Tartaron 2007, p. 148;

Tartaron 2010, p. 179, n. 2; Papadimitriou 2011, p. 476, n. 52; Kasimi 2013, forthcoming. Another tholos is reported in Phlious; see Whitley 2002–2003, pp. 21–22. On Korakou, see Siennicka 2003. The role of Korakou in the region is now reduced by Tartaron (2010, p. 171).

to that of Mycenae, had a far different fate, perhaps due to the rise and expansion of Mycenae in the Shaft Grave period to encompass Zygouries and Tzoungiza.<sup>126</sup>

According to Pullen and Tartaron, the northern Corinthia was neither directly controlled by Mycenae nor did it develop a palatial center due to a number of factors. First, it was located in a contested “political periphery” between two competing polities, Mycenae and Aiginetan Kolonna.<sup>127</sup> The balance of power between the two major centers, which were land- and sea-based, respectively, to some extent inhibited Corinthian communities on the Isthmus and Saronic coasts from independently accessing external centers by sea.

Second, Pullen and Tartaron have stressed how the region shows no differentials in site size that are usually connected to the hierarchical relationships characteristic of a palatial state system. Thus, they classify the Corinthia under the category of the so-called stable heterarchical systems, as they were able to resist the centralizing tendencies and enforcement from an outside system, such as that of a hierarchical and unstable palatial society.<sup>128</sup>

Third, using Renfrew’s suggestion that Mycenaean states had territories of ca. 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> with a 22 km radius (the estimated distance that can be covered by human or animal portage on land in a day), Pullen and Tartaron thought that the Mycenaean territory could have included the Nemea valley and Zygouries, but would not have included the northern portion of the Corinthia. On the other hand, the Saronic coastal zone moved from the Aiginetan to the Mycenaean sphere of influence, as evidence from the fortified harbor town of Korphos Kalamianos seems to suggest.<sup>129</sup>

In general, all the most recent interpretations put the picture of a “Great Mycenae” into the right perspective, pointing out that past readings have been too dependent on reconstructing Agamemnon’s kingdom from the “Catalogue of Ships.” But if the hypothesis of competition between polities fails to explain the entire picture of the Mycenaean Peloponnese,<sup>130</sup> certainly the approach of Pullen and Tartaron to site analysis in a given region may prove to be the future and crucial key to the problem. Namely, that it is appropriate to reject the simple equation: absence of ruling centers (or evidence thereof) = external control by palaces. This lack of evidence (especially of the type provided by prominent tombs) in a given region,

126. Rutter (2003, p. 77) suggests that the economic “take off” at Mycenae in the Shaft Grave period could be connected to the contemporary intensive “colonization” of Tzoungiza and Zygouries, which were reoccupied after centuries of abandonment; in this case, the rise of Corinth should have been stunted by Mycenae’s astonishing development.

127. Pullen and Tartaron 2007; Tartaron 2010. On Kolonna, see Rutter 1993, pp. 776–780; Niemeier 1995; and now Gauss and Smetana 2010. On the

notion of “polity,” firmly established on the basis of Renfrew’s “peer polity interaction,” see Renfrew 1986, pp. 2–4.

128. Pullen and Tartaron 2007, p. 146; Tartaron 2010, p. 169. On Saronic Gulf settlements, see Siennicka 2002. On the so-called heterarchies, see below, n. 146.

129. Tartaron 2010, p. 178: midway between Kolonna and Mycenae, Kalamianos was a second-order settlement possibly controlled by Mycenae in the palatial period, after having been within Aigina’s orbit, as implied by changes in

the assemblage of ceramics, which shift from the volcanic tempered fabrics of Aigina to mainland fabrics; see now Tartaron et al. 2011, pp. 630–631.

130. If Pylos and Mycenae, as we find in Renfrew’s 1975 reconstruction of Mycenaean state territories, were able to directly control their landscape for a radius of only approximately 22 km, a “conflict” between their alleged spheres of influence cannot explain the lack of palaces in Achaia, Elis, and Arcadia.

as we shall see, can now be interpreted through the introduction of some necessary nuance related to the evaluation of endogenous phenomena and local social features.

Returning now to the case of eastern Achaia, if Mycenae's control of neighboring hinterlands and of the Corinthia is far from being proved, it is hard to explain how Mycenae in LH IIIB could control, for instance, Aigeira or Aigion. The incorporation of other polities by primary centers is mainly attested on a local scale and in early Mycenaean times, as in the case of Pylos, which, during its expansion in LH IIIA, absorbed and subordinated sites adjacent to Ano Englianos, such as Beylerbey, Ordines, and Iklaina, which initially had been competing centers. But whenever Pylos expanded a longer way off and in later times, it left strong archaeological evidence, which is absent in eastern Achaia: when in LH IIIA2–IIIB Pylos incorporated Nichoria (together with the “Further Province”) toward the east, a new tholos replaced an earlier one that had been in use from LH I to LH IIIA2; farther north, ancient Peristeria was replaced in LH IIIB with the foundation of Mouriatada.<sup>131</sup>

In addition, once the argument that the absence of tholoi = long distance hegemony has been overturned, the hypothesis that after the LH IIIA phase all palaces expanded at the expense of nonpalatial areas—without concrete data referring to cemetery and site discontinuity or destruction—proves unacceptable.

The LH II chamber tombs of eastern Achaia (Aigion, Nikoleika) can be interpreted as indicating the existence of a new political order and possibly also an emulation of elite behavior common among the most advanced polities in Messenia and the Argolid, but the early date of these tombs contradicts the possibility that they demonstrate external control. In fact, a widespread distribution of wealthy deposits in chamber tombs are seen in the LH II period, and this situation more likely reflects competition among warrior elites,<sup>132</sup> but it does not require the extension of power beyond a relatively small regional base. Moreover, chamber tombs can hardly point to colonization from the Argolid—one cannot exclude that chamber tombs could have come into Aigialos from Messenia via the central Peloponnese.<sup>133</sup>

But there are other arguments to be considered: administrative control of Aigialos by the palace of Mycenae would have meant that the local people were obligated to supply agricultural products, raw materials, and transport to the palace. This scenario is ultimately untenable without a road network linking the Aigialos to Mycenae, evidence of which is scarce. The discussion of Mycenae's road system is in general closely linked to that concerning Mycenaean state expansion. The available evidence in the Mycenaean Peloponnese seems to indicate the existence of single intraregional road systems rather than interregional ones.<sup>134</sup> But even in the broadest interpretation of the Mycenaean road system, this seems not to have included more than the Berbati, Cleonae, and Nemea valleys.<sup>135</sup>

Alleged control by Mycenae, moreover, is not reflected in the material evidence from eastern Achaia; besides the adoption of chamber tombs, there are no other traces of the administrative decentralization or of the “reciprocity” that is thought to be characteristic of the “center-periphery” relationships discussed in the context of Minoan civilization. This

131. On Pylos's expansion, see Bennet 1995, pp. 596–601; 1998, pp. 125–129; 1999b, pp. 145–146; 2007, p. 39; 2011, pp. 154–155; Acheson 1999, p. 101. Bennet 2007 highlights the fact that most tholoi at sites near Pylos after LH IIIA were no longer in use, reflecting the demotion of those who lived in those areas within the regional power hierarchy. Iklaina is now thought to have been overtaken by Ano Englianos ca. 1350 B.C.; see Cosmopoulos 2010, p. 15; 2012a, p. 44.

132. Shelton 2010, p. 141.

133. The fact that the upland Vrysarion cemetery (850 masl, 30 km from the sea) records the earliest Achaian chamber tomb (LH I–II) and the earliest (LH II) “warrior burial” in a chamber tomb (tomb no. 2), together with the LH I ceramic evidence reported near Kastria (800 masl) west of Mt. Chelmos (see n. 101, above), may suggest the significant role of the central Peloponnese in this diffusion process.

134. See Lavery 1990; Jansen 1994, 1997, 2002.

135. Tartaron 2010, p. 167. For a larger, more optimistic view of the Mycenaean road system, see Hope Simpson 1998, p. 247; Hope Simpson and Hagel 2006, pp. 144–174. On the Argolid and Corinthia, see Hope Simpson and Hagel 2006, pp. 144–160. Cf. Castleden (2005, p. 33), who finds the absence of roads joining Mycenae and the Corinthia “incredible.”

center-periphery relationship is characterized by the local adoption of building-plan models, ceramic production, the transmission of palatial factory products, as well as centralized local high-level production.<sup>136</sup> In contrast, Papadopoulos observed an extreme paucity of imports from the Argolid, a phenomenon that is seen as early as the LH IIB and IIIA1 periods,<sup>137</sup> and a peculiar independence of the Achaian pottery style,<sup>138</sup> which attests to local production at least at Aigion in LH IIIA1.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, no adoption of new architectural modules of a palatial type or any display of wealth, such as the use of frescoes or plastered walls, are recorded in the few known complex buildings. Ultimately, the Aigialos's settlement pattern and the apparent "negative evidence" of archaeologically recognizable elites within the region have to be elucidated by arguments that do not assume that the region was completely dependent on Mycenae.

It is helpful to remember that all reconstructions are necessarily affected by the shortcomings of archaeological investigations: the scarcity of finds in eastern Achaia may be linked to the modern depopulation of the area, especially when the great number of finds discovered in the populous area of Patras are taken into account.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, the low density of settlement evidence could be attributed to the different territorial morphology of Aigialos, which consists of the coastal strip from Kamares to Akrata; this area is divided by parallel fluvial valleys (Sybaris, Bouraikos, Krathis, and Krios) into separate districts, which possess only two major fertile plains—Kamares and Akrata. In this subregion, the rise of local complex societies, usually linked to the exploitation of agricultural resources, could also have been limited by geomorphological factors.

This may simply mean that the model of a plurality of local elites and the small, closely linked settlements detected within western Achaia is not applicable to eastern Achaia. The absence of early tholoi in eastern Achaia, however, cannot be ignored and deserves considerable attention. This phenomenon in other Mycenaean contexts has been attributed to local geological factors or to cultural choice, with tomb types conveying competition between rival families or communities that expressed their status or identity through different tombs.<sup>141</sup> But in the case of eastern Achaia, the absence of other prominent tombs, such as monumental tumuli and built cists (cf. Portes, Agriapides), leads one to infer that this perceived lack could reflect an actual dearth of developed Mycenaean polities in this regional context during the LH I–II periods.

The dominant position of Aigina in the Middle Helladic period, which was allegedly responsible for the lack of polity formation in the northern Corinthia, may also have played a role in the lack of development of eastern Achaian polities and elites during the transition from Middle Helladic III times into the early part of the Late Helladic period. If it is accepted that Aigina did play such a role in relation to the polities around it, then it must have been true that its affect would have been stronger on those that were closer to the Corinthia. In fact, Aigeira remained obscure in this period, whereas at least Aigion, due perhaps to its distance from the isle, was able to express, through the construction of a megaron building in the LH I period and its refurbishment in LH IIIA, one non-"ephemeral" elite attribute (despite the presence of some Aiginetan ware).<sup>142</sup>

136. Cultraro 2001, p. 137.

137. Mountjoy 1999, p. 366.

138. Papadopoulos 1978–1979, p. 177.

139. Mountjoy 1999, p. 403.

140. Giannopoulos 2008, p. 254.

141. Cavanagh 2008, p. 330.

142. Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2010, p. 136.

If the LH II chamber tombs in the Psyla Alonia cemetery were used by the same early Aigion elite, they—being less expensive to construct—can point to a contraction of the economic resources of the local elite of Aigion, as well as of Nikoleika. In the Early Mycenaean period, the cause could have been the rise of Mycenae, which came to dominate the main international trade channels.

This peculiar state of affairs in Aigialos was characterized at the same time by long-lasting occupations (Aigion, Nikoleika, Aigeira). The absence of tholoi and tumuli and the early appearance of chamber tombs could therefore be explained by the hypothesis that, after Aigina's decline as a regional center, Mycenae had the power to stunt the development of eastern Achaian elites during the LH I–II period, but apparently it did not wield enough power to control them directly. The early appearance of chamber tombs in this eastern Achaian context can testify to a new political order within communities, together with an emulative process by local elites of the most advanced polities of the Peloponnese, rather than to the presence of palatial “officials.” Namely, the Aigialos evidence may now be partially assessed in the light of the situation in the Corinthia, albeit with substantial differences. The “polities competition” that potentially inhibited eastern Achaian societies in the Early Mycenaean period might no longer have involved Aigina, but rather Mycenae, and possibly western Achaia; this hypothesis could explain the disturbances recorded both in western Achaia and Aigion during the transition to the palatial age.

Another interesting feature is the early occupation in the Aigion, Aigai, Aigeira, and Helike areas—in other words, at the later Achaian centers mentioned by historical sources (*Il.* 2.573–575, 8.201–207; Aesch. fr. 284 Radt; *Hdt.* 1. 145), that were “autonomous,” distinct political units (*merea*) in historical times.<sup>143</sup>

One may pose the question of whether, for instance, Aigion was the apex of a local site hierarchy or a plurality of self-organized, rather centrally “administered” communities in eastern Achaia that exploited local resources. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the settlement at Nikoleika: Ayios Georgios in the Helike territory, located only 6–7 km east of Aigion, dates back at least to LH II, and now appears as ancient as Aigion. If this shows that there were distinct “horizontally ranked” settlements already in early Mycenaean times, this should support the hypothesis of the existence of separate polity systems of coastal or near-coastal settlements, corresponding roughly to the main historical Achaian *merea*. They probably prospered by exploiting access to the maritime resources of the Corinthian Gulf, the traditional Achaian role in westward maritime voyages (mainly as safe ports),<sup>144</sup> and the potential for farming of major plains, finding their interaction partners in the lands north of the Gulf.<sup>145</sup>

Unfortunately, the archaeological record of Mycenaean Aigialos is still too fragmentary to draw firm conclusions and, above all, even in the present case, we lack reliable data about settlement size. If the absence of a site hierarchy and of a distinctive class of burials was not simply due to a problem of archaeological visibility, but really mirrored the ancient state of affairs, it may be possible to suggest that the settlement system was an unranked, heterarchical organization at least during the LH II–IIIB period. In fact,

143. See Rizakis 2002, pp. 48–49.

144. Cf. Sgouritsa 2005, p. 519.

145. Cf. Wright 2010, p. 815.

the heterarchy concept, with its sense of diversity, fluctuation of social relations, and horizontal organizational structure (which could sometimes coexist with a hierarchical one within a single region),<sup>146</sup> has already been used in analyzing societies in order to underline “issues of regional diversity and regional resistance to centralizing cultural and political pressures of a state,”<sup>147</sup> and has also been applied to other Aegean contexts.<sup>148</sup>

Eastern Achaia in particular, to date, seems to have been characterized by the same absence of “evidence of competition for subsistence resources and differential control of subsistence resources,” as well as by a lack of “evidence of centralized decision making or regional integration” that has been detected by Levy in relation to Bronze Age Denmark and linked there to a heterarchical system.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, the reality characteristic of Aigialos (including, maybe, Sikyonia) could be partially explained according to Levy’s conclusion in the case of Denmark: individual sites seem to have served as low-level functional centers, but evidently without an overarching center comparable to palatial ones. Despite its possible physical dimensions and long life span, Aigion does not in fact seem to correspond to the Argolid citadels. However, if the fate of the Aigion LH II megaron in the LH IIIA period were to be illuminated at some point in the future, this reconstruction could be substantially changed, which leaves the general picture open to future reappraisals.

#### GENERAL ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF AN ACHAIAN “INDEPENDENCE MODEL”

Besides the arguments I have presented concerning Aigialos, other considerations can be added which indicate that the whole of Achaia was not involved in one palatial reality. First, a cultural peculiarity of the Mycenaeans of Achaia that has not been properly emphasized is the absolute rarity of kylikes in burial contexts. This seems to mean that libation rituals were not widely practiced, if at all, in this region. Since kylikes were deposited in dromoi of chamber tombs only after LH IIIA, and the custom is usually connected with the rise of palaces,<sup>150</sup> this can support the idea that the region was substantially separated from the palatial state.

Second, despite the fact that by the end of the LH IIIB period Achaia was affected (as was the rest of the Mycenaean world) by a destructive

146. Crumley (1979, p. 144) defines “heterarchy” as a system of relationships “in which each element possesses the potential of being unranked or ranked in a number of different ways, depending on systemic requirements. . . . Elements in a hierarchical structure are most frequently perceived as being vertical. . . whereas heterarchical structure is most easily envisioned as lateral, emphasizing the number and variety of connections among elements and varying circumstantial importance of any single element.” See also Crumley

(1995, p. 3), where he further defines heterarchy as the “relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways.” He goes on to say that “forms of order exist that are not exclusively hierarchical and that interactive elements in complex systems need not be permanently ranked relative to one another.”

147. Levy 1995, p. 47.

148. In addition to the case of the Corinthia, see Pantou’s (2010) heterarchical interpretation of the Mycenaean

settlements of Pefkakia, Dimini, and Kastro: Palaia in the bay of Volos (the last example may now be weakened by the discovery of Linear B tablets at Kastro: Palaia; see n. 7, above), and Schoep and Knappett’s thesis (2004) about the development of Proto- and Neopalatial Minoan states.

149. Levy 1995, p. 48.

150. Cavanagh 1998, pp. 107, 110, 112. On the importance of kylikes within Mycenaean society, see Galaty 2007, pp. 74–76.

force of unknown origins, the population increased during the transition to LH IIIC. The settlement pattern remained almost unaltered, which may be inferred from the continued use of existing chamber tombs.<sup>151</sup> The region experienced a season of prosperity, especially in the LH IIIC Middle period,<sup>152</sup> which was characterized by new features: eastern Achaia records the rise of Aigeira, whose acropolis became the seat of postpalatial rulers,<sup>153</sup> as was the case in the Argolid at Tiryns and Midea.<sup>154</sup> Western Achaia shows a sudden increase in the so-called warrior tombs in LH IIIC (with innumerable comparanda in the rest of the Mycenaean world<sup>155</sup>), pertaining to a warrior elite characterized by the use of Naue II-type swords. The western Achaian LH IIIC elites also developed an active role as a stopover point in a large network involving the Adriatic regions and the eastern Aegean, in particular Cyprus. The diverse origins of the imported objects found in Achaia demonstrate that western Achaia (and the Ionian islands) provided a port of call for Cypriot ships bound for southern Italy and the Adriatic, but in addition to this, they also show that these elites were able to develop local power hierarchies, whose role included monitoring the security and transport of valuable goods.<sup>156</sup>

This regional vitality probably benefited from the collapse of the palaces, which had earlier stunted the economic and political development of the Mycenaean peripheries. One may conclude, therefore, that the existence of palaces did negatively affect Achaia during the LH IIIA–B period. However, we can also see this phenomenon from a slightly different, but meaningful, perspective: if one considers that the regions that were highly integrated with the palaces, such as the “kingdom” of Pylos, tended to collapse along with the palatial center and show little or no subsequent signs of recovery,<sup>157</sup> this postpalatial flowering may be regarded as further proof

151. Among 29 LH IIIB sites recorded by Papadopoulos (1978–1979, pp. 172–173) only five were abandoned in LH IIIC; in the latter phase only eight new sites were occupied, with a relevant settlement continuity from previous periods. Cf. Eder 2003b, p. 39.

152. On “warrior tombs,” which were widespread in western Achaia, see Papadopoulos 1999; Moschos 2002, p. 29; Eder 2003b, pp. 39–41; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, pp. 157–161; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 238–252. On the region’s prosperity in LH IIIC, see Eder 2003b; 2006, pp. 557–559; Moschos 2009.

153. Deger-Jalkotzy 1991, pp. 28–29.

154. Attempts at the reconstruction of palatial age architectural forms and perhaps also a hierarchy centered on a chief *wanax*-like power are evident at both Tiryns and Midea: at Tiryns “Building T” was constructed on top of

the palatial megaron, including the spot where the throne had been situated (Maran 2006, pp. 124–125); and at Midea, the reuse during LH IIIC of a LH IIIB megaron-like structure is comparable (Walberg 1995). For a social interpretation of the phenomenon, see Dickinson 2006, p. 61.

155. Papadopoulos 1999; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006; Giannopoulos 2008, pp. 202–252.

156. Grave goods include weapons (such as “Peschiera” type daggers) and other products (razors) of bronze industry belonging to the metallurgical *koine* that included Italy, central and eastern Europe, and the Balkans (Eder 2003b, pp. 45, 49); but there are also connections to Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus (Eder 2006, pp. 558–559). The gradual shift of the interests of the Achaian postpalatial elites toward the West, and the interconnection with Italy in particular, according to Van den

Berg (2011), ensured the success of Achaia, unlike Aegean regions which did not survive the crisis. On this topic, see now Borgna 2013, pp. 133–134, who focuses on both the bronze items in circulation during the LH IIIC period between Adriatic Italy and Achaia and the emergence of a new figure, the “embedded artisan,” whose position coincided with social leadership and was consistent with the postpalatial models of social organization that were peculiar also to the Achaian societies.

157. Small 2007, p. 52. In this regard, see the case of Messenian subsites, which were all deserted, except Nichoria, during LH III C (Schnapp-Gourbeillon 2002, pp. 29–30; Eder 2006, pp. 549–554). In the Argolid, Lerna, Berbati, and Prosymna suffered comparable abandonments; see Desborough 1964, pp. 73–84; Schnapp-Gourbeillon 2002, pp. 27–28.

of an original political “autonomy,” even if it was one that was substantially overshadowed by the economic primacy of the major center during the palatial period. This view is ultimately tenable if we cease to consider the main palaces as political “masters” of the peripheral regions, and instead see them as mere “bottlenecks” of the international wealth stream, which prevented, first, the full economic development of the peripheral polities and, as an indirect consequence, also affected their political development.

After the collapse of the palaces, a new social order arose, albeit one that grew out of the society of the previous age. As Giannopoulos has pointed out, the “warriors” buried in Achaian LH IIIC chamber tombs belonged to local, ordinary Achaian families, who did not inherit their high status but achieved it by means of their personal military qualities and who adapted themselves to the new historical circumstances resulting from the economic and political void left by the major Mycenaean centers.<sup>158</sup>

Eder has proposed an interpretation of the presence of seals within a given site that would have great implications for Mycenaean peripheral regions, including Achaia. She thinks that the seals that have been discovered in nonpalatial regions provide “the spatial mapping of bureaucratic influence,” and that they define groups of settlements “which were politically and economically oriented towards the respective Mycenaean center.”<sup>159</sup> According to this thesis, the discovery of seals can be considered as evidence for a site’s economic and political integration into the palatial administration.

While the social aspect of the use of seals within Mycenaean culture is an unresolved question that cannot be fully discussed here, nonetheless it should be pointed out that Krzyszkowska has a different methodological approach to seals, one that should not be discounted. Krzyszkowska stresses the importance of a rigorous contextualization of the seal findings. Pini also warns against the acceptance of a standard sphragistic use for every instance of the seals produced on the mainland.<sup>160</sup>

Within nonpalatial regions, as well as in Achaia, no building context has yet yielded traces of the impressed (or inscribed) clay nodules that would concretely attest to administrative activities, albeit at a lower level than the Linear B tablets.<sup>161</sup> The seals that have been found come almost entirely from funerary contexts. This absence in the archaeological record may, of course, be ascribable both to the fact that conditions have to be just so for these objects to have been preserved, and to the natural shortcomings of archaeological investigations. However, this explanation of their absence, especially given the early date of most of the seal findings (LH IIB–IIIA1), is weak and not consistent with a Mycenaean palatial administration that is only fully developed at a later date. The fact that the seals (including Achaian ones) occur almost always in funerary contexts, which hints at a hoarding situation,<sup>162</sup> seems to confirm the assumption that they could be nothing more than simple indicators of wealth, especially when they occur within nonpalatial regions. Because of the inherent value of the materials (glass paste, semiprecious stones, gold rings), the object implies the high status of the owner, who may have been trying to emulate “perceived norms of behavior in the Mycenaean heartland,”<sup>163</sup> rather than his actual membership in or a link to a specific palatial hierarchy. Moreover, the

158. Giannopoulos 2008, p. 256.

159. Eder 2009a, pp. 114–115; cf. 2007a, p. 39; 2007b, p. 106. Cf. Kramer-Hajos (2008, p. 137), who suggests that, due to the presence of sealstones, East Lokris, although lacking palaces, was incorporated into the Mycenaean administrative system.

160. Krzyszkowska 2005, p. 772: seals are to be scrutinized “on a regional level, local level, cemetery by cemetery, grave by grave.” See also Pini 1990, pp. 115–116; 2005, pp. 781–783.

161. On sealing systems, see Panagiotopoulos 2010; Younger 2010, pp. 333–337.

162. On seals found in Achaian cemeteries (Voundeni, Kallithea, Mito-polis, Portes, Nikoleika), see Eder 2007b, pp. 86–87. For similar assumptions about seal meaning within a funerary context, see Lewartowski (1995, p. 108), who assigned a value of “real” seals to seals deposited within chamber tombs and that of jewelry to seals recovered in “simple” graves. This explanation can work, with regard to palatial state evidence (cf. Flouda 2010) and wherever a social differentiation among burial types is detectable, but it cannot correctly explain the presence of seals in tombs within regions lacking palaces and where “simple” graves are absent during the same period.

163. Cf. Krzyszkowska 2005, p. 772. Cf. now Drakaki (2011), who highlights the presence of seals in female burials also as markers of status.

later “mainland popular group” of seals, made of softer stone than earlier ones, which are easier to carve, suggest that they are perhaps being made in imitation of those possessed by palatial elites.

As for the Achaian state of affairs, if one accepts, for example, the nature of “talismans” or “souvenirs” for Mitanni seals found in some Achaian graves (Monodendri, Spaliareika, Mitopolis),<sup>164</sup> it is difficult at the same time to regard *tout court* the Aegean-produced seals occurring in the same kind of context as “administrative activity.” In addition, the very rare seals discovered in an Achaian settlement context are not corroborated by the recovery of sealings.<sup>165</sup> The inherent weakness of the seal argument applied to nonpalatial contexts is shown by another issue relating to the east Achaia case, one that short-circuits the views of the supporters of external palatial control. Except for a single glass seal in the Nikoleika cemetery in eastern Achaia,<sup>166</sup> a site that is allegedly dependent on Mycenae, seals are almost absent. It may be reasonable to propose that only within a substantial palatial context (together with sealings) can the “administrative function” of a seal be considered, while the seals discovered in Achaia to date do not seem to have per se the power to document the existence of, or their owners’ participation in, such an administration.

## THE ORGANIZATIONAL FORM OF ACHAIAN POLITIES

Before trying to draw any conclusions about the organizational form of Achaian polities, it would be useful to take into account the theoretical approaches used to address the problem of the origins of prestate societies. Wright has convincingly argued that the transition from Middle to Late Bronze Age Greece saw the transformation of “traditional subsistence-oriented agro-pastoralist communities to a more cosmopolitan and craft-oriented political economy,” but that this phenomenon, neither uniform nor universal, did not affect some regions, which remained apart from the main developments.<sup>167</sup> It should be kept in mind that the settlement patterns and sociopolitical organizations of mainland Greece varied greatly during the Late Bronze Age, and we need to better understand the state of affairs of the Mycenaean peripheries, and of Achaia in particular.

Terminology is not merely a superficial problem. Is it possible to be more specific about what is meant by the general notion of “polity?” Can the ultimate organizational form of these Achaian sociopolitical entities

164. Giannopoulos 2008, p. 192; cf. Pini 1983, p. 124.

165. A single steatite lentoid seal each was found at Patras: Pagona (Fig. 2, 10) and Chalandritsa: Stavros (*CMS V*, Suppl. 3, pp. 405, 406), but no sealings accompanied them.

166. This seal (*CMS V*, Suppl. 3, no. 11), found in an advanced LH

IIIA/B context, and a specular one from Ayia Triada in Elis (*CMS V*, Suppl. 3, no. 252) merely provide evidence of trade (cf. Pini 2005, p. 782). For another case that, in my opinion, short-circuits the “seal argument,” cf. Kramer-Hajos (2008, p. 139, n. 24), who discusses East Lokris. She admits the difficulty of reconciling the archaeological

evidence of Mitrou in LH IIIB, which, in her view, was destroyed by Thebes or Orchomenos, with the presence, in the same time period, of two sealstones. These, which she thinks of exclusively as “administrative tools,” suggest “the presence at Mitrou of officials representing palatial administration.”

167. Wright 2010, p. 815.

be better defined? Morgan has shown that in the later Iron Age, the organization of certain communities could operate at the level of a “state” without having to become centralized around an urban core.<sup>168</sup> This proposal, in general, encourages the acknowledgment of more nuanced forms of sociopolitical organization, without necessarily returning to polarizing dichotomies of state and nonstate, core and periphery, hierarchy and heterarchy. In this regard, Mycenaean Achaia seems to provide room for a spectrum of forms, above all supporting the view that, as convincingly argued by Yoffee, current scholars need to move beyond the neoevolutionary theory epitomized in the “bands-tribes-chiefdom-state” sequence of Service.<sup>169</sup> In the same vein, the four stages of sociopolitical organization proposed by Fried (egalitarian organization, ranked society, stratified society, and state society),<sup>170</sup> while they are useful as hermeneutic categories, should not be viewed as consecutive phases in a constant process of development. In ancient societies, effectively, there were many instances of stratification and social and economic differentiation that did not necessarily lead to states.<sup>171</sup>

It is more helpful, in my opinion, to understand these settlements not through the lens of an evolutionary scheme, but rather in terms of complex and less complex societies. The former have institutionalized subsystems, which carry out diverse functions for their members. A central authority develops in order to bring relatively autonomous subsystems within a larger institutional system. Officers are recruited on the basis of their competence, not based on their status, that is, not on the basis of kinship relationships. In less complex societies, on the other hand, roles are appointed based on status, and the division of labor is based on family and kinship units.<sup>172</sup>

Unfortunately, in the case of Achaia, our evidence is very scanty. Achaia and other Mycenaean peripheries, in fact, seem to stand out for their lack of evidence needed to confidently reconstruct the degree of complexity of the extant sociopolitical forms. When we wonder what exactly, for example, the Teichos Dymaion, Voundeni: Bortzi, or Patras: Pagona, Aigion, and Nikoleika settlements were like during LH IIIA–B, and who ruled them, maybe we can more easily respond with what they were not, and who did not rule them.

Currently, the only certain fact is that the extant evidence fails to prove that there were any palatial organizations within the whole region. It is also fairly certain that, in light of the objective difficulty in proving that Mycenae was able to extend its administrative control as far as Achaia, Achaian settlements operated independently of that rather distant palatial state. This means that the local elites, archaeologically traceable at least until LH IIIA, should not be identified as palatial officials nor as local aristocracies that were politically subject to faraway *wanaktes*.<sup>173</sup>

The next task, of proposing an alternative scenario to fill this reconstructive vacuum, is not an easy one. In addition, it should be kept in mind that the use of later ethnographical types to explain the Bronze Age record should be avoided. Nevertheless, I believe that the tomb occupants in Achaia during LH I–II were likely local leaders, who shared in Mycenaean culture and were able to mobilize the labor force necessary to build their tombs—although not on the same scale as the *wanaktes* of Mycenae, Thebes, or Pylos. These

168. Morgan 2003.

169. Service 1962, pp. 132–133.

170. Fried 1974, p. 27.

171. Yoffee 2005, p. 15

172. Yoffee 2005, p. 16. Cf. Fried 1974, p. 37.

173. Technically, the notion of aristocracy, indeed, implies the division of a society into different social classes, the more elevated of which may be characterized by a system whereby power is maintained through inheritance. The existence of this characteristic in Achaian society is uncertain given that it is seemingly ranked, but not yet clearly stratified; cf. Phialon 2011, p. 340.

leaders, who, according to some scholars, should be termed *basileis*,<sup>174</sup> used simple megaron-like buildings. Funerary evidence, moreover, helps us to deduce that they were at the apex of their small-scale communities, which seem to have lacked complex sociopolitical and economic structures, and that they shared the prepalatial organizational form peculiar to the early Mycenaean times in other parts of Greece.<sup>175</sup> In general, we might identify these important individuals of Achaia (and possibly of some other peripheral regions) with the “losers” in the Late Bronze Age competition, which had seen only a few of the early Mycenaean chieftains rising above their rivals and establishing palatial states.

As for the aftermath, during the LH IIIA–B period, due to the monopoly of the major palaces over prestige goods, the Achaian elites, whether old or new, were probably compelled to severely contract the display of wealth in their burials. This makes their detection in the archaeological record more difficult, but, in my opinion, it is no longer possible to deny the existence of local ruling centers during the palatial age. Rather, the lack of local palaces, the limited range of palatial administration, and the scarce or nonexistent coercive power of palatial states in distant territories allow us to assume that some polities, which Deger-Jalkotzy defines as “small-scale principalities or petty kingdoms,”<sup>176</sup> were not entirely annihilated by palace expansion, but likely survived in regions like Achaia, although their economic conditions may have suffered.

In trying to clarify the nature of these Achaian leaders and their “principalities,” the available sociopolitical models, however, are for the most part unsatisfactory. The continuity in Achaian settlements and cemeteries leads us to infer that there was an intergenerational stability that is scarcely compatible with the inherent precariousness of the Big Man Model, which is more appropriately applied to the Early Iron Age.<sup>177</sup> The absence of bureaucracy recorded within the Achaian polities, for instance, is a common feature of the “stratified societies” identified by Kristiansen in his evolutionary perspective, but such stratified societies also have the basic features of state organization (strong social and economic divisions, and an emphasis on territory, rather than kinship),<sup>178</sup> which are still not clearly recognizable in the Achaian context.

On the other hand, the distinctive class of burials—the megaron-like buildings attested in western Achaia—could fit, at first glance, a chiefdom. At the same time, the archaeological record of Achaia currently does not seem to satisfy other requisites usually ascribed to chiefdoms,<sup>179</sup> especially with regard to their economic features, such as redistribution.

174. According to Deger-Jalkotzy (1996a), *basileus* was the term used for minor chieftains that ruled in Greece before LH II and the birth of the palatial state; cf. Palaima 1995, pp. 124–125, who regards it as a non-Indo-European title, referring to local leaders.

175. On early Mycenaean phases, see Dickinson 1977; Rutter 1993; Deger-Jalkotzy 1996b; Phialon 2011; on the “neoevolutionist” view, see Wright 1995, 2008b. A synthesis of

the scholarly debate on anthropology as it contributes to palatial society analysis can be found in De Fidio 2006; for such interpretations of Mycenaean Achaia, cf. Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, p. 289.

176. Deger-Jalkotzy 1996b, pp. 720–722.

177. For the “Big Man Model,” where leaders acquired status through their personal skills in hunting, warfare, and other achievements, but not

through inheritance, see, in general, Sahlins 1963; Strathern 1971; for the same model applied to Iron Age Greece, see Whitley 1991a, p. 352.

178. Kristiansen 1991, pp. 18–19.

179. There is an immense bibliography on the types and dynamics of chiefdoms. For a start, see Earle 1991; Yoffee 2005, pp. 22–40. On the chiefdom in Mycenaean Greece, see Wright 1995, pp. 69–75.

Undoubtedly, however, it is difficult to place the small-scale Achaean communities—which lack any evidence of offices or an institutional system—into a complex picture of a particular society. If we also consider that the leading individuals do not seem to have exerted a strong control over their community, the notion of chiefdom, despite its great variability, perhaps is still the most suitable, at least to describe the western Achaean polities,<sup>180</sup> provided that, as Yoffee has stated, these chiefdoms are viewed as a kind of society that had a social organization, a ranking system, and forms of economic stratification whose trajectory did not necessarily lead to statehood.

But even though these societies probably lacked an administrative hierarchy, palatial buildings, and the “*wanax* ideology,”<sup>181</sup> they undoubtedly participated in the common Mycenaean culture, which is evident in the relative uniformity of the architecture and tombs types, mortuary practices, ceramic products, and luxury goods. This cultural *koine*—regardless of its ultimate meaning<sup>182</sup>—was probably founded on a widespread competitive emulation, innovation, and transmission of symbolic and material interactions comparable to those described by Renfrew for “peer polities,”<sup>183</sup> even though this model may not work completely for the case of Mycenaean Greece.

This is, I think, a crucial point; the simple existence of advanced communities during the transition from the Middle to the Late Helladic period<sup>184</sup> shows that interaction—the medium of cultural transmission—had not always taken place between sociopolitical entities that were initially “peers.” In this case, according to Renfrew’s axiom, palatial states would have always and inevitably developed in Late Bronze Age Greece,

180. In contrast to the state, where offices were abstract and independent of the individuals filling them, among the basic characteristics of the chiefdom, we include a monarchical (albeit circumscribed) and basically hereditary leadership (rank and status are ascribed through the kinship system and passed along intergenerationally; Yoffee 2005, p. 27), wherein chief and person were indistinguishable, and the chief concentrated in his person, economic, social, and religious powers (Wright 1995, p. 66). But the chief’s position was also unstable and open to challenge by his “peers,” so the chief had to continually strengthen his dominant position, by exploiting resources that he could attract and manage. Therefore, within chiefdoms, surplus production was unlikely to have been used for the benefit of the community at large—surplus goods were used by the chief and distributed to his followers for their personal consumption and display; all of which enhanced the chief’s own social prestige. On redistribution, as an essen-

tial method for maintaining the chief’s authority, see Halstead 1988; Earle 2011, p. 239. Pullen (2011) argues, on the grounds of evidence from Lerna, that redistribution was also present in Early Helladic chiefdoms.

181. On the “*wanax* ideology,” see Kilian 1988; on its being a basic diacritic of “Mycenaean identity,” see Feuer 2011, p. 529.

182. It is worth stressing that the homogeneity of Mycenaean material culture, as Hall (2002, pp. 48–49) emphasizes, could be superficial, since the precise meanings and functions of Mycenaean “diacritics” may vary between regions; it is helpful to take into account Bennet’s (1999a) understanding of the uniformity of Mycenaean material culture as the product of an exclusive elite identity. On diacritics of the Mycenaean culture, which he believes overlap with Mycenaean ethnic diacritics, see Feuer 2011, p. 529. Boyd (forthcoming) broadens the discussion from artifacts to mortuary practices. In order to explain this homogeneity it

could be helpful to employ Yoffee’s (2005, p. 17) notion of “civilization,” i.e., “the larger social order and shared values in which states are culturally embedded,” and the assumption that “several politically independent states of modest territorial extent can equally share the same ideological framework.” Yet he discusses these notions only with regard to the organizational form of the state, which, in my opinion, was not the only unique aspect of Mycenaean Greece.

183. Renfrew 1986, pp. 7–18.

184. Such as Mycenae during the “Shaft Grave” period or Ano Englianos, which started early to develop hierarchical structures through which power could be exercised, in contrast to the largely transegalitarian nature of the majority of the other Middle Helladic communities. On the context of central Greece during the transition from the Middle to the Late Helladic period, see Touchais 1989; and now Phialon 2011, pp. 370–374.

compelling modern scholars to continue searching for “missing” palaces in order to explain the regional realities. Conversely, the absence of palaces makes it reasonable to assume that less complex organizational forms in Bronze Age Greece, such as chiefdoms, do not constitute a step in the evolutionary path toward the genesis of a “state,” but it may indicate an alternative development;<sup>185</sup> the formation of palatial states was the exception, not the rule.

Archaeological data make it plausible to affirm that many sociopolitical units did not have, even in the LH IIIB period, a state organization housed in palatial buildings and based on a “central agency” that controlled an economic system focused on the collection and directed use of surplus production, which was done by *wa-na-ka-te-ro* craftsmen.<sup>186</sup> These smaller-scale societies, whose leaders were buried in small tholoi (or chamber tombs, ranging from simple to monumental, with rich grave offerings), had apparently never passed the “critical threshold” for populations (500 or more inhabitants) that would have required greater surplus production, a resulting centralization of economic activities that entailed the distribution of goods to dependent workers, the creation of an administrative system, and the formal institutionalization of power.<sup>187</sup>

Furthermore, in the Early Mycenaean period, most of the leaders, unlike the few “lords” of the Argolid or those of Pylos, failed to elevate their regional status by successfully engaging with external contacts, in both the political and the economic spheres.<sup>188</sup> Most of them were probably cut off from the control of metal supply routes from Europe, and especially from the vital commercial and cultural connections with Neopalatial Crete.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, they were not able to command the resources necessary to mobilize their community militarily,<sup>190</sup> to acquire clients outside the system of kinship, or to expand their territory at the expense of other polities in order to achieve the full sovereignty (an actual “kingship”) peculiar to *wanaktes*, whose powers and authority were also connected with religion.<sup>191</sup>

As the case of Attica also shows, in various peripheral polities the shift from a small, but sustainable, organization to a more complex and organized one, such as a palatial state, probably never took place. It is hard to assert whether, according to Wright’s categorization,<sup>192</sup> these peripheral communities are to be assessed as “simple” or “complex” chiefdoms. Certainly, we should have sufficiently clear evidence to establish whether, in a given regional and chronological context, an actual hierarchy of chiefdoms existed, with a high-level chief ruling over minor chiefs. In the absence of such, a “simple” chiefdom model would be preferable—that is, every site that displays evidence of elite individuals could be equivalent to a little chiefdom.

As for the western Achaean case, the concentration of contemporary sites producing elite evidence, at least in the Patras and Pharai areas, may hint at a network of close, interrelated small chiefdoms, perhaps developing in a hierarchy of sites centered on something like a “primary center.” The Patras area could be a potential candidate for this picture, but currently we have to suspend judgment on this subject.

In eastern Achaia the apparent lack of distinctive tombs such as tholoi, and of site hierarchy in early Mycenaean times, might suggest

185. Cf. Wright 1995, p. 64; Yoffee 2005, p. 31.

186. The needs of a village-based society are different from those of a state, which results in different dimensions for their buildings; cf. Wright 2008b, p. 249. On *wa-na-ka-te-ro* craftsmen, see Shelmerdine 2007, pp. 44–45.

187. Currently we do not have sufficient data to ascertain if these sociopolitical entities pursued “corporate” or “network” strategies of political rule, that is, whether they focused on emphasizing group cohesion and were financed through production and redistribution of staple goods, or if they focused on individual rule and depended on a system of wealth finance; see Nakassis, Galaty, and Parkinson 2010, p. 240. The existence of evidence for an elite class may mean that the second option is preferable.

188. Bintliff 2010, p. 761.

189. Dickinson 1977, p. 108.

190. On the role of force and the function of war in the development of the early Mycenaean polities, see Acherson 1999; Deger Jalkotzy 1999, p. 123.

191. Palaima 1995, p. 130.

192. Wright 1984.

the existence of a more loosely ranked, “lateral,” heterarchical pattern of regional organization. This could perhaps be characterized by self-organized societies and the absence of centers that controlled the region, a scenario that may have persisted, as in the Corinthia, through the palatial age.

The precise nature of the relationships between peripheral, nonpalatial areas and major palaces during the LH IIIA–B period still remains unclear. It is reasonable to suppose in most cases that there was some kind of cultural subjection or interaction involving trade (as occurred with “Euboian” *a-ma-ru-to* and *ka-ru-to* in relation to Thebes). At the most, some indirect link to palatial elites, possibly through a gift exchange network, can also be suggested, but it is ultimately unlikely that strong territorial control was exerted by a faraway palatial administration and, thus, no actual, formal, “political” subjection of the areas outside the immediate hinterland of the palaces can be inferred.

It is therefore conceivable that, at least until the end of the LH IIIB period, different sociopolitical entities coexisted in central and southern Greece. In addition to possible cases of heterarchy, chiefdoms characteristic of the Early Mycenaean era probably survived alongside Mycenaean palatial states, which reemerged, after the destruction of palaces, as the dominant form of organization in the LH IIIC period. This means that in the LH IIIB period, while the monarchical form of power was held by *wanaktes* within the palatial states (although in different forms), in parallel, minor leaders ruled over peripheral regions that were integrated into Mycenaean civilization, but were not controlled by the palatial *wanaktes*.

It is also becoming increasingly clear from studies on the postpalatial age that the chieftains survived the *wanaktes* and prospered during the LH IIIC period, especially in the former peripheries of the palatial states like Achaia.<sup>193</sup> It is therefore these individuals, including those of Achaia, who should be considered the predecessors of the so-called Dark Age *basileis*.

193. On postpalatial *basileis*, see Dickinson 2006; Eder 2006; Maran 2006; Mazarakis Ainian 2006; Crie-laard 2011.

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## *Emiliano Arena*

UNIVERSITÀ DI MESSINA

DIPARTIMENTO DI CIVILTÀ ANTICHE E MODERNE (DI.C.A.M.)

PIAZZA PUGLIATTI 1

98122 MESSINA

ITALY

emaren@tiscali.it