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Erika Weiberg

Thinking the Bronze Age

Life and Death in Early Helladic Greece



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Abstract

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This is a study about life and death in prehistory, based on the material remains from the Early Bronze Age on the Greek mainland (c. 3100-2000 BC). It deals with the settings of daily life in the Early Helladic period, and the lives and experiences of people within it.

The analyses are based on practices of Early Helladic individuals or groups of people and are context specific, focussing on the interaction between people and their surroundings. I present a picture of the Early Helladic people living their lives, moving through and experiencing their settlements and their surroundings, actively engaged in the appearance and workings of these surroundings. Thus, this is also a book about relationships: how the Early Helladic people related to their surroundings, how results of human activity were related to the natural topography, how parts of settlements and spheres of life were related to each other, how material culture was related to its users, to certain activities and events, and how everything is related to the archaeological remains on which we base our interpretations.

Life and death in Early Helladic Greece is the overall subject, and this double focus is manifested in a loose division of the book into two halves. The first deals primarily with settlement contexts, while the second is devoted to mortuary contexts. After an introduction, the study is divided into three parts, dealing with the house, the past in the past and the mortuary sphere, comprising three stops along the continuum of life and death within Early Helladic communities. Subsequently, mortuary practices provide the basis for a concluding part of the book, in which the analysis is taken further to illustrate the interconnectedness of different parts of Early Helladic life (and death).

Keywords: prehistoric Greece, Early Helladic, social space, embodiment, mortuary practices, the past in the past, Lerna, Aghios Kosmas, Tsepi, Manika

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The journey went from Åmål to Uppsala and to Stockholm. My first years as a student in Uppsala, and later on in Stockholm, were spent within the subjects of Cultural Anthropology and Comparative Religion. In retrospect, these semesters formed my mind as a researcher; at least it formed my interest towards matters of the mind, culture and religion. With the present book, I like to think that I close the circle of my years as a student.

In 2002, I was back at Uppsala University—this time as a PhD student. I would like to thank the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History for providing me with the secure possibilities and encouragement to work on a study that did not quite come out the way I first thought when I applied for the position in 2001. It has been a luxurious life, really. Throughout these years, I have also been awarded scholarships and grants from a number of funds. I would like to express my appreciation for the following allowances to travel and work in Greece: Värmlands nation: Uddeholms resestipendium; The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences/Kungliga vetenskapsakademien: Hierta-Retzius fond för vetenskaplig forskning; Sven Kristenssons stiftelse; HF Sederholms stipendiestiftelse: Sederholms stipendium för utrikes resor; Helge Ax:son Johnsons stiftelse; Swedish Institute at Athens/Svenska institutet i Athen: stora arkeologiska stipendiet; N-E Nilssons stipendiestiftelse: Nils Erik Nilssons resestipendium; Axel W. Perssons stipendiefond.

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Uppsala, December 27, 2006

Part One.
Defining a prehistoric society

1. Introduction

This is a study about life and death in prehistory, based on the material remains from the Early Bronze Age on the Greek mainland. It deals with the settings of daily life in the Early Helladic period, and the lives and experiences of people within it.

Thinking about prehistory, I have always found it difficult to populate that past or the societies I have been studying. Researching this book has been a means for me to find a way to overcome this, by working with and through the material culture. One hope, an ambition, with this book is to allow the possible experiences and ambitions of Early Helladic peoples to begin to come alive in some way. That these thoughts and experiences are, by necessity, channelled through me, is my opportunity as author to convey my view of daily life within some Early Helladic communities and settlements. It is also, therefore, very much a book about my experience of the Early Helladic world. It is a book about me thinking about the Early Helladic people thinking about their world.

The analyses will be based on practices of Early Helladic individuals or groups of people, and they will be context specific, with the focus directed at the interaction between the Early Helladic peoples and their surroundings. In order to make this work, the challenge is to put things in the hands of prehistoric individuals, and to put these individuals into the setting of Early Helladic landscapes and material culture. It is therefore also a book about relationships. How the Early Helladic people related to their surroundings, how results of human activity related to the natural topography, how areas of Early Helladic settlements related to each other and to the settlement as a whole, how material culture related to its users, to certain activities and events, and how all may be intertwined with the experiences and interactions of the people in their landscapes.

Finally, this study is very much a work in progress, and a work that, rather pleasingly, will never be completed. We will never be able to know or feel what the people of the Early Helladic communities knew and felt. I see it instead as an ongoing discussion, based on our modern viewpoints, in parallel with the material culture that makes up the basis for our interpretations.

Presenting an idea

What makes up the Early Helladic period? Things. Corridor houses, Urfinis, sauce boats, Lefkandi I/Kastri pottery, roof tiles, sealings, cist graves. Places. Lerna, Tiryns, Eutresis, Manika, Lithares, Aghios Kosmas. An increasing number of things and places are added to the whole as our knowledge of the period increases.

The present study would not have been possible had it not been for the works that have shaped our knowledge of Early Helladic material culture over the years. The sources of inspiration for the present study have of course been many, and specific contributions will be addressed where relevant in the coming chapters, as different subjects are considered. This is not, therefore, the place to indulge in too much retrospective study of the beginnings and development of research into the Early Helladic period, or of recent trends. Previous research has also been comprehensively surveyed elsewhere, most recently in the 2001 publication of the previously separate *AJA* articles as the volume *Aegean prehistory. A review*, in which Jeremy Rutter was responsible for the Early and Middle Bronze Age on the southern and central Greek mainland.¹ Furthermore, in the latest addition to the *Die ägäische Frühzeit* series, Eva Alram-Stern has also made any future reviews of the Aegean Early Bronze Age (at least to 2002) superfluous for some time. The two-volume work, published in 2004, presents in detail research on the period between 1975 and 2002, arranged both geographically by sites and thematically under a wide variety of subjects.² The second volume of her study also includes some of the most up-to-date articles on important Early Bronze Age sites by the responsible researchers.³ With these extraordinarily comprehensive volumes, Alram-Stern has provided us with an overview of a wealth of information on which future studies may be based.

Without forcing all earlier studies into categories, I would like to divide previous research into three general groups. Firstly there are the excavation and survey reports, of which a number will be frequently referred to in the following chapters. Secondly, there are studies of the available archaeological material, either in geographically limited areas, or concentrating on a particular chronological period.⁴ Among these, and for the present study, especially the works by Jeannette Forsén and Joseph Maran should be em-

¹ Rutter 2001. The article was originally published in *AJA* in 1993 and complemented for the 2001 publication by a review of research during the intervening years up to publication. For other comprehensive works with extensive discussions on Early Helladic materials and previous research, see Renard 1995, Cosmopoulos 1991; Maran 1998.

² Alram-Stern 2004. The review does not include the Cretan Early Bronze Age.

³ Alram-Stern 2004, Appendix.

⁴ E.g. Wiencke 1989; Cosmopoulos 1991, Forsén 1992, Renard 1995, Maran 1998, Alram-Stern 2004.

phasised. Both focus their efforts on the transition from EH II to EH III,⁵ but both, however, have also supplied us with in-depth studies of the two periods. The third group comprises more specialised studies focusing on specific social and/or material phenomena. Among the more substantial works, we find Daniel Pullen's 1985 dissertation about social organisation, based on an evaluation of mortuary and architectural remains.⁶ As a way of summing up the state of previous research into the Early Helladic period, it has concentrated on the very large or the very small, the descriptive and the synthesising. By the 'very small' I of course refer to the studies of archaeological materials so central to traditional research in the Aegean Bronze Age. This typologising and schematising has worked as a springboard towards the 'very large', the relative chronologies and grander schemes of cultural development and organisation playing on social, political and/or economic conditions. I will attempt to position myself in the still much underexplored zone between these poles.

Thus, the small and the large make up the bases for the present work, in which I will, in a manner of speaking, re-organise the findings according to my own set of questions. My goal is not to present a set of ideas to substitute the already existing interpretations, but instead rather to work as a complement to them. The present study has also to some extent developed as a response to previous research on the Early Helladic period, and in other areas it has been triggered by the potential of adopting methods of analysis not previously developed within Early Helladic research. Both have played a part in shaping a feeling that we must be able to say more about:

- the Early Helladic people, living their lives
- regional and local contextuality
- aspects of material culture and practices in their own right
- the experiential and perceptual views on life

In most previous studies, the actions of the Early Helladic people become governed by concerns for survival, while life revolving around the small scale of things—daily life within an Early Helladic community—becomes blurred and out of focus. Although a necessary companion to a more interpretative mode of analysis, the descriptive aspect of archaeology needs to make room for closer considerations of the individuals or groups active within the societies we study. The synthesis must be complemented by studies of the regional and context specific. Otherwise we are stuck with a pre-

⁵ Where relative chronology is concerned, Early Helladic will be abbreviated to EH (also in places EC and EM for Early Cycladic and Early Minoan periods). Other abbreviations used: EBA, MBA and LBA, for Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age respectively, and MH and LH for Middle and Late Helladic periods.

⁶ Pullen 1985; also e.g. Nilsson 2004.

history populated by “faceless blobs”,⁷ rather than ‘social beings’, leading to a loss of the dynamics between humans, and between humans and material culture.⁸ Architecture and stratigraphy, pots and pans, graves and grave goods—all need to be surveyed to a larger extent for their significance within daily life for members of the Early Helladic societies.

The list above constitutes four points of emphasis which, I hope to show, have the potential of widening our understanding of Early Helladic life and thereby the main goal of the study. Starting at the bottom of the list, I will throughout the study largely omit the common functional considerations from the discussion, in favour for a view that puts focus on the individuals active within the different contexts. The partiality for functional models present in much archaeological discourse reduces the vitality of any communal or individual mind for shaping their own views and explanations of their worlds, beyond strategy and economy. This is not to say that the Early Helladic people did not look to function or strategy when planning and living their lives, but these have already received much attention and are in the end likely to have been coupled with considerations more connected with the perceptual or cognitive ways of looking at things.

By emphasising the relationship between material culture and practices, specifically in the daily lives of the Early Helladic people, I will attempt to study material culture, practices, actions and events in their specific contexts. For example, how a house was built is seen as strongly connected with why it was built and how it was used, and this is all connected with a larger context of earlier practices, specific circumstances, and the pre-existing surroundings. The emphasis on regional and local contextuality is therefore essential. It does not mean that I will not be looking for more general patterns, because these will also play an important role at various points below, but in other cases I will leave the overview aside to more closely study one or a few specific contexts and, in many instances, their development through time.

Finally, the emphasis on the Early Helladic people, living their lives, in a sense captures the three other points of emphasis. Life, and death, within the Early Helladic societies is the general focus of the present study, and everyday life in particular. Everyday life is the forum I have chosen as the scene for the meeting of the small and the large, a scene that has the potential to make the Early Helladic individuals visible.

⁷ Tringham 1991, 94; Dobres & Robb 2001, 6.

⁸ Thomas 1993, esp. 25f.

Lived-in landscapes

It would be easy to get lost in the featureless bush, with no hills to guide one and each tree looking much like the next one. Though for Mma Potsane the landscape, even if dimly glimpsed, was rich in associations. Her eyes squeezed almost shut, she peered out of the van, pointing out the place where they had found a stray donkey years before, and there, by that rock, that was where a cow had died for no apparent reason. These were the intimate memories that made the land alive—that bound people to a stretch of baked earth, as valuable to them, and as beautiful, as if it were covered with sweet grass.⁹

The theoretical grounding for the present book can be found within the general framework of social and cognitive archaeology, and particularly within interpretive approaches to landscape studies in which the landscape is seen as social, embodied, meaningful and changing. The landscape was the scene for the engagement of the Early Helladic people with the world around them, and was rich in associations. Greece was, and is, a varied landscape, with the mountains and the sea creating small worlds within a greater one. In the same way as Mma Potsane in the citation, the Early Helladic people would have met the landscape up close, forming it and being formed by the meeting. This book has benefited greatly—although not, I hope, in an unreflected manner—from the works of especially Richard Bradley and Christopher Tilley, but also many other British and Scandinavian archaeologists working on prehistoric landscapes. In these works I have found a large part of the academic discourse that has formed a basis for the present study.

James Whitley has recently expressed his abhorrence for a near future, which he himself predicts, bearing titles such as “‘Ancestral geographies of Minoan Crete’ or ‘A Cretan phenomenology of landscape’”, in which “‘interpretations current in British prehistory will be stuck on to Cretan material’”.¹⁰ It is interesting in itself that he chooses Minoan Crete as the likely victim of such a fate, based on the supposition that “‘the palaces and tombs of Bronze Age Crete have a peculiar attraction to those seeking an ‘age of innocence’ before capitalism and modernity’”.¹¹ The material of Minoan Crete, from Early Minoan tholos tombs, through Middle Minoan peak sanctuaries and caves, to Late Minoan art, and the palaces of course, has inspired a series of interpretations that have allowed imagination to be a mostly fruitful part of the archaeological process.¹² To me, this is not a bad thing. Whitley’s article, however, also pinpoints the as yet minor impression that theories of British prehistory have made on Aegean Bronze Age studies. It is scholars of Mi-

⁹ Extract from *Tears of the Giraffe* (McCall Smith 2003, 87f.).

¹⁰ Whitley 2002, 120.

¹¹ Whitley 2002, 120.

¹² See, Bradley (1993) for a call to allow imagination back into archaeological interpretation.

noan Crete who have been most open to theoretical currents coming from outside the sphere of Aegean archaeology.¹³

Whitley's contribution to the theoretical debate is, above all, a criticism of research on British prehistory in general, and the omnipresent ancestors in particular.¹⁴ I agree that the concept of ancestors has at times been treated with too little regard for the variation within the group of a society's dead, as well as for alternative explanations for the re-use of monuments, for which Whitley himself puts forward alien and previous races.¹⁵ Whitley was certainly right, therefore, to recommend moderation and concern for original meaning and cultural variation in the use of a concept such as 'ancestor'. Ancestors will not play an important role in this book (although the past will, *Chapters 4–5*). The scenario Whitley envisaged is gruesome indeed, with Minoan henges and a Cotswold Severn tomb found on the Mesara plain, but similarly worrying is his lack of belief in the ability of any researcher with an interest in these interpretations to also undertake contextual analyses before 'applying' them.

The landscape archaeologies of western and northern European archaeology can only with difficulty be separated from the general corpus of archaeological theory, in which perception of landscape is only one, important, part of a continually (re)constructed society. The development of landscape archaeologies has been intimately connected with the monumental and expressive aspects of the material culture set within the landscapes of, above all, Britain, Scandinavia and Brittany; landscapes of henges, barrows, hoards and rock art. Its applicability to landscapes without these features may seem problematic. Two of the most widely distributed and cited works within landscape archaeology, however, both stand out as also incorporating a somewhat wider range of features in the landscape. Richard Bradley, through his book *An archaeology of natural places*, and Christopher Tilley, with *A phenomenology of landscape. Places, paths and monuments*, have provided archaeologists with methodological frameworks with the potential to accommodate a larger range of material;¹⁶ supplying a somewhat clearer applicability to material other than that used by the authors themselves. As the title of his book states, Tilley represents the phenomenological school, and, in the first chapter of the book, introduced phenomenology as a theoretical framework for discussing prehistoric landscapes, thus focusing on the

¹³ E.g. the contributions by Murphy and Hamilakis in Branigan 1998. Also Broodbank (2000) for the EBA Cyclades. See also many interesting contributions to the study of the Neolithic of northern Greece (e.g. in Halstead (ed.) 1999).

¹⁴ The title of the article 'Too many ancestors' is an allusion to Norman Yoffee's 1993 article 'Too many chiefs (or, Safe text for the 90s)' (in N. Yoffee & A. Sherratt (eds), *Archaeological theory: who sets the agenda?*), and the provocative introductory question is: "Have ancestors replace[d] chiefs as the defining entity of prehistory?" (Whitley 2002, 119).

¹⁵ Whitley 2002, 123–125.

¹⁶ Tilley 1994; Bradley 2000.

landscape as experienced by a subject.¹⁷ The book as a whole was presented as an attempt to "...set elements of them [phenomenological and interpretive works] to work pragmatically in consideration of prehistoric landscapes"¹⁸, and specifically to explore "[...] the symbolics of landscape perception and the role of social memory in choice of site location."¹⁹ Bradley, on the other hand, does not come across as being theoretically specific, but stands within the realm of social and cognitive archaeology. They both share an interest in investigating how the natural landscape was socialised in prehistory.

The social colonisation of an unknown landscape can in general terms be seen as a movement from space to place, expressed here in the words of John Chapman:

The creation of place led to the formation of those special areas termed settlements, the appearance of which attests to the emergence of a place-based world-view. The appearance of settlements, especially those with upstanding remains ('monuments'), gives rise to the idea of place-value, or the nexus of stored meaning of past activities and traditional usage associated with a significant place. This idea can be more generally expressed in terms of the history of a settlement and its occupants as stored in collective memory—a site's 'biography'. These notions which link time and place are basic to the development of a socially meaningful landscape.²⁰

Space and place, however, are not mutually exclusive. Places may be seen as chosen locales in a landscape, given form and meaning by people, and characterised by their specific settings. Spaces, in contrast, may be seen as the individual experiences of place, through which places are given meaning.²¹ A socially meaningful landscape is a landscape inhabited by people; it is experienced and given meaning by embodied individuals. Interpretive and phenomenological approaches towards prehistoric landscapes and worlds are based on this notion of embodiment. Theories of embodiment, however, also exist outside landscape archaeologies, and concentrate on the acting subject in the form of the sensuous human body, its perception of self, and how it relates to the world around it.²² "An archaeology of embodiment sees the body as the subject of culture: only through dwelling in the world do we get a feel for signs and tools and come to recognise them as objects."²³ This

¹⁷ On phenomenology: e.g. Tilley 1994, esp. 11–14; Ingold 2000, 168–171; Altenberg 2003, 26–28.

¹⁸ Tilley 1994, 1.

¹⁹ Social memory, the perception of the past in the past, is the theme for another book by Bradley (Bradley 2002), and the sentiments concerned there will be the subject for a separate section below.

²⁰ Chapman 1994, 53f.

²¹ Robin 2002, 248–250; Tilley 1994, 7–15.

²² E.g. Gröhn 2004, 19f., for a discussion of the concept of embodied agents.

²³ Hodder & Hutson 2003, 113f., for an overview of archaeologies of embodiment, see the entire chapter 6 in Hodder & Hutson 2003. For the 'dwelling perspective', see discussions by Ingold (2000, e.g. 185–187).

means, rather attractively, that objects only become meaningful as a result of our engagement with them. Given the unique experience of every human agent, there is room for many different meanings. The embodied reading that we as archaeologists can make is, as Thomas pictures it, to “put ourselves inside a set of material circumstances which were integral to a meaningful world in the past” arriving at our own, present day, understandings of a past meaning content.²⁴ Of relevance for the notion of embodiment is that the experience of the subject is working not in a vacuum but in relation to other agents and objects. This stress on the human agent as a social and sensuous being, experiencing the world, is central to the present book, and the focus is therefore on life within a lived-in landscape:

And we know that it is through the activities of the embodied mind (or en-minded body) that social relationships are formed and reformed. Psychological and social processes are thus one and the same. And the discipline that will be called into being to study these processes, whatever we choose to call it, will be the study of how people perceive, act, think, know, learn and remember within the settings of their mutual, practical involvement in the lived-in world.²⁵

Thinking about the Early Helladic

Certainly, there is room for critique concerning the applications of phenomenology,²⁶ and one major concern for the purpose of the present study is the strong focus on the monumental landscape. The Early Helladic landscape is not a monumental one, or rather, no monumental graves or other structures dot the space outside the settlements. Chapman has recently commented on this otherness of south European landscapes in relation to the landscapes of northern and western Europe:

The most striking feature which differentiates the study region [Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper Age Balkans] from the succeeding Bronze Age and from the Neolithic of much of northern and western Europe (but not that of central Europe or Greece and Anatolia!) is the importance of the domestic domain and the relative insignificance of the mortuary domain and any accompanying monumentality.²⁷

How can we benefit, then, from the potentials of the landscape archaeologies on a landscape so different to the ones on which these approaches were developed? Surveying the islandscapes of the EBA Cyclades, Cyprian Broodbank has, on the same note as Chapman, pointed at the “light impression” by

²⁴ Thomas 2001, 180f.

²⁵ Ingold 2000, 171.

²⁶ For critique of Tilley, see for example Jones 1998; Brück 1998; Bradley 2000, 41–43; Altenberg 2003, 27; Hodder & Hutson 2003, 119.

²⁷ Chapman 2000, 2.

the people of the early Cyclades on their land, in comparison with other parts of the world where “earth-altering” monuments help explore the cognitive landscapes of early people. Favours nevertheless a phenomenological approach as a necessary complement to understanding a prehistoric island-scape,²⁸ he proposes that “in the absence of such clues, the search must instead be conducted with reference to where people lived, to traces of connecting sea-paths, and to points of prominence that may have served as foci of long term memory and activity, such as caves, obsidian and metal quarries, and distinctive seamarks that bear signs of islanders’ presence.”²⁹ *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* has been an important source of analyses of an Early Cycladic world-view, with many obvious points of contact with Early Helladic worlds of thought and ways of looking at the world. Broodbank’s work has been an important inspiration for the final appearance of the present study, as well as for my way of looking at the Early Helladic world.

There are of course differences between the Early Cycladic and Early Helladic areas, just as there are similarities. The latter are to be found, for instance, within the mortuary sphere, as will be considered below (e.g. *Chapter 6*). One difference lies in the nature of the available archaeological material. ‘Where people lived’ in the Early Cyclades is still more often than not a rather unspecific point in the landscapes of the islands, while the excavations of settlements are what have clearly dominated the archaeology of the Early Helladic Mainland. It is also with the settlements as the point of departure, that I have found the applicability of the interpretive landscape approaches for the present study. The focus on monuments is a focus on the significance of certain places in the landscape. The importance of these places is signalled by the traces of human activity, and experienced in interaction with them, whether today or in prehistory. Thus, it is true that the Early Helladic landscape was not a monumental landscape, but only if by monument we mean monument in the ‘Tilleyan’ sense, in terms of large standing constructions set within the general landscape itself. As far as we know, the Early Helladic world did not include this form of monument, nor the rock art and hoards that are often considered as a complement to them. In contrast to northern and western Europe, the monuments of Early Helladic societies were firmly set within the domestic sphere and sustained within the general area of the settlements. Thus, from our modern point of view, and for the present survey, the *settlements* mark the centres around which the interpretation of the landscape (r)evolves (see *Figures 1–4* for the local landscape of four important Early Helladic settlements).

²⁸ Broodbank 2000, 33.

²⁹ Broodbank 2000, 70.



Figure 1. Berbati valley from the northeast. A view from the area of many Early Helladic sites identified during the archaeological survey. The hillock of Mastos is situated to the left, and the route to Mycenae runs over the ridge in the middle ground.



Figure 2. Zygouries from the west. The mound of the Early Helladic settlement is marked by the green shrubs and flowering apricot trees, with the nearby modern village to the left in the picture.



Figure 3. Tsoungiza from the east. The Early Helladic habitation was concentrated to the higher southern part of the double mound (left in the picture). The Classical sanctuary of Nemea and the temple of Zeus is seen on the flat ground in the middle distance.



Figure 4. Askitario from the northwest. The Early Helladic settlement was excavated in the middle section of the headland, immediately inland from its barren and lower tip.

Even though some aspects of Early Helladic material culture were indeed even monumental in size, such as the fortifications and corridor houses, the settlements themselves, as well as everything within them, may also be considered as monuments in the sense of illustrating the significance of place as experienced by one or more individuals, or even for a whole community. With this reading of ‘monument’, the applicability of Tilley’s and Bradley’s analyses would become more obvious. Following an interpretive approach and a focus on embodiment, the potential lies in the analyses of how the settlements were organised, and in relation to what, and specifically how and in what ways this may have been meaningful, experienced and manipulated by their Early Helladic users.

Tilley asserted that monuments (read settlements) “...make ancestral powers in the landscape *visible*”.³⁰ In the present context, I will understand the ‘ancestral powers’ in the light of the historicity of a specific place or the landscape in general. ‘Settlement’ will be used here, as defined by Kotsakis for a consideration of the Neolithic of Northern Greece:

[...] in its general sense, as a place where human social relations permanently transform space in a repeated and archaeologically recognizable way, as a result of conscious human activity. Intention, memory and tradition are all inscribed in the physical environment and concentrated to the settlement.³¹

To place Early Helladic settlements and their contents on a par with monuments of the British type may seem to be over-generalisation. There are bound to be differences between the symbolic powers of the types of monuments on which Bradley and Tilley build their arguments, and those innate in the Early Helladic settlements, related to their varying significance for everyday life for one thing. I would argue, however, that differences lie more in scale and directness than anything else. Therefore, what Tilley says about monuments in his conclusion to *A Phenomenology of landscape* can easily be adapted to pass as a description of the cultural importance of settlements and all that they may contain:³² In the prehistoric present, the settlements, and the relationships between settlements and their surroundings, structured the perception of landscape, and they guided movement within and between regions and locales. By extension, and in a loose sense, it can be said that monuments/settlements “freeze” perspective and limit our freedom of choice in engaging the landscape. The monument/settlement asserts control over topographic perspective, and thereby:

³⁰ Tilley 1994, 204, original emphasis. See, Whitley (2002) for the overuse of the concept of ‘ancestor’.

³¹ Kotsakis 1999, 67.

³² Tilley 1994, 204f.

[...] 'hides' contexts in which it does not appear. It captures and draws attention, domesticating the view of the landscape. The monuments, then, are to do with the formation and stabilization of attitudes toward the world. They acted as signifiers of part of a structure of knowledge, an iconography of human intentions, a resource for power and social control.³³

As for other periods, archaeological field surveys have been crucial for the visibility of Early Helladic life within the landscape. The picture for the Early Helladic period is one of an increasingly socialised landscape,³⁴ a process that had already begun in the Final Neolithic and culminated, in terms of the widest distribution of settlements and farmsteads throughout the landscape, in the middle of the Early Helladic period. At this point in time, the settlements grew larger and the people seem to have gathered at a smaller number of settlements, as their distribution throughout the landscape becomes more limited. Throughout this development, the landscape must have continued to play an important role for its Early Helladic inhabitants. A continually socialised and lived-in landscape should have been accomplished by a general movement in the landscape, by herding and agriculture, by movement of goods and people over longer and shorter distances.

With a varied landscape, the choice to settle at a specific spot was also a choice of bounded area in a larger setting, its limits defined by features of the landscape. Natural lines in the landscape, lines made up by mountains, rivers and coast lines, visually divide(d) and define(d) the landscape, today and in the past. These different features in a region would to a large extent have defined the cultural context. To some extent they would have guided the decision to settle there, and they would have been significant in the shaping of life within the region.

Because of the limitations of time and space, the greater landscapes of the Early Helladic world will not play a central role in the present study, although the theories connected with the archaeologies of landscape, have been intrinsic to its development. Nevertheless, landscape and topography will play an important role in considering the relationship between settlement and cemeteries (*Chapter 8*), and beyond the present book, these aspects will thereafter provide the natural expansion to the questions considered here. The landscape under consideration now, for the most part, will be the built landscape of the settlements, and in some cases of the connected cemeteries.

³³ Tilley 1994, 205.

³⁴ For an overview of archaeological field surveys carried out and published: Rutter 2001, table 1, with an addendum: pp. 148f., n. 217. For specifics of development: e.g. Forsén 1996, esp. 117–120.

Connecting things, places and people

In the present study, the focus will be a focus on the built environment as created and experienced by the Early Helladic inhabitants. One general concern has therefore been to find a way to relate the roles of material culture to the lives of people. A fruitful way has been to regard the meaning of material culture as present in its associations and uses:

Culture is to be studied as meaningfully constituting—as the framework through which adaptation occurs—but the meaning of an object resides not merely in its contrast to others within a set. Meaning also derives from the associations and use of the object, which itself becomes, through the associations, the node of a network of references and implications. There is an interplay between structure and content.³⁵

In the view exemplified here by a citation from Ian Hodder's influential article first published in 1982, in which he outlined a framework for later post-processual and contextual approaches to material culture,³⁶ the dynamics of cultural interaction is absolutely central. Material culture is seen as the result of people's choices under certain circumstances at a certain time and place, but it is also intrinsic to the same choices "as both the outcome and the instrument of social agency"³⁷. The passiveness indicated in views that see material culture as merely reflecting culture is therefore considered to be inadequate.³⁸ Concentrating on material culture as a result of human action, Richard Bradley pictured things as a way to express something, and thus, by extension, this something as being the result of a conscious choice. Accordingly, continuity or change is not a coincidence but a way to relate to a past that is ever present in architecture and artefacts.³⁹ Decisions to produce and use a certain set of objects are decisions made by individuals, but inextricably intertwined with life and interaction within particular societies. The decisions may not always be conscious, but they may, and I think do, reflect certain patterns of thought, which can be approached by a study of the material remains. It follows that symbols are never arbitrary, and that meanings of material culture are never fully separated from society.⁴⁰

Material culture seen as an instrument of social agency is part of the theory of a meaningfully constituted, dynamic society. Hodder stressed, in the 1982 article, the importance of "a large amount of different types of archaeological data" to "be seen as being meaningfully constructed in relation to

³⁵ Hodder 2000, 46.

³⁶ Preucel & Meskell 2004, 7.

³⁷ Gröhn 2004, 47, referring to Gell 1998, 15.

³⁸ Hodder & Hutson 2003, 7–10, 236f.

³⁹ Bradley 2002, e.g. 8–12, on culture and material culture.

⁴⁰ Hodder 2000, 46f.

each other within each cultural context as part of social processes.”⁴¹ One basic idea for my book is just this, that an understanding of a past society and world-view requires us to search for possible links and associations and emphasise the constant interaction between them. The analyses of the workings of this interaction have varied, but include the dynamics between structure and practice. What influences how the structure is actually acted out in practice has often been seen as a culturally varying filter of values and ideas for which Bourdieu used the concept of *habitus*, placing it between structure and practice.⁴² As a practical mastery of day-to-day activities,⁴³ it is also through this filter that agency works. What agency does is to give needed weight and attention to the time- and space-specific element imbedded in all human actions carried out by individuals or groups of individuals. Familiarity with the ways of the world, whatever we like to call it, is gathered from being in the world, from listening and learning. Material culture plays an important role in this process, and this condition stresses the concept of meaningfully constructed material culture. Material culture in this role works as a contextually significant trigger for certain cultural and social actions, factors that have been variously termed:

Hence, the communication of meaning within a defined cultural situation, delimited in space and time, is canalised through the organisation of locales or settings in the landscape—some including built form—and structured by objectified habitus (Bourdieu 1977), cues (Rapoport 1982, 1990) or properties of locale (Giddens 1984), which informed social agents recognise and react and act upon—consciously as well as unconsciously.⁴⁴

Thus, the meaning of material culture is seen as equally context specific and individual. A study aiming at a greater understanding of the prehistoric experiences of the world is a study aiming at the contents of a prehistoric mind. ‘Meaning’ from a Early Helladic perspective, however, can be seen as something altogether beyond our modern day reach, that is, if it is used in the sense of relating to the actual significance given by individuals to a specific symbol, and this may very well be something that is altogether too elusive to our modern minds.⁴⁵ But, if the discussion of meaning is seen as a creative mental exercise to provide the past with intelligibility in the present, to ‘make sense’ of the past,⁴⁶ this is what we must strive for. Our task, as I see it, is to give meaning to the things, landscapes and people of the cultures we

⁴¹ Hodder 2000, 55.

⁴² A helpful overview of theories of practice, structure and agency can be found in Gröhn 2004, 25–35; see also, Hodder & Hutson 2003, ch. 5 for discussion and references.

⁴³ Hodder & Hutson 2003, 91.

⁴⁴ Gröhn 2004, 286. For overviews of the concept of agency, see e.g. Dobres & Robb (eds) 2001; Dornan 2002.

⁴⁵ Renfrew 1994, 6.

⁴⁶ Tilley 1993, 10.

study, meanings that can be built on the view of material culture as being both a result of human agency as well as directing it. Therefore, present day understandings of prehistoric material culture need to explore as many aspects as possible, not only the ‘when’ and ‘how’, but also the ‘why’: Why was it used there and then, what was its history, what were the circumstances of its use, what was its role in relation to the context of its deposit and to the context of the society as a whole? Why is the archaeological material presented to us in the way it is? What actions directed its creation, composition, use and final deposition? If we assume that the Early Helladic people shaped their lives by making choices, we allow for many interesting discussions concerning values, ideas and preferences active within their societies.

In my understanding, the meaning of an act, preserved to us in the form of objects or sets of objects of material culture, resides in the relationship between many different factors. These factors are any or all of (for example) the following, in a contextually significant mix: economic, functional, technological, ecological, social, structural, symbolical, conceptual, individual and collective. Furthermore, the meaning of an object lies in the power of being what it is: a historically constituted entity, a trigger for social action, or a symbol for the same. As individuals or members of a group we are engaged in a dynamic interaction between people, things and places, and it is through this interaction that meaning is produced. It follows that an understanding of the past can never be meaning-free.⁴⁷ Furthermore, if meanings are both individual and contextual, it follows that there are bound to be a multitude of meanings at different times, perspectives, with different individuals or groups of individuals concerned. Variation should therefore be a key word for archaeological interpretations. It is also important to note, finally, that although our experience can never replace the experiences of the prehistoric individuals, without our own experiences, *our* interpretations are even more limited. A study like this is, by its nature, a balancing act between the archaeological material, educated conjecturing, and comparative data. I will have failed in my attempt if the study is not perceived as encompassing the available archaeological material in a proper way, but also if I do not dare to endeavour beyond it and take my interpretations some steps further.

Boundaries, visibility and movement

A defining aspect of all archaeologies of landscape is the regionalisation of the greater landscape and the pinpointing of significant locales—a definition of space on a regional as well as a local level. Transferring this to the built landscape of the Early Helladic settlement, a spatial approach has been natural. A focus on the spatial aspects of life within Early Helladic settlements is

⁴⁷ Thomas 2001, 180.

also an opportunity to consider the interplay between people and their surroundings, with the built environment also the dual role of material culture as the result as well as a cue for social action.

The present book is an anthropological journey into the prehistoric present, if you will, in which I offer complementary discussions on already published material. At the heart of my work is the engagement of the Early Helladic inhabitants with the world around them. How did the Early Helladic people form, organise and manipulate their surroundings? One aim is to visualise the dynamics of the continuing interaction between the individual, or group of individuals, and their surroundings by focusing on their lived-in landscapes and material culture. One theme throughout the book is therefore to present the available material within a framework of social space. Social space for the understanding of the coming chapters is the conceptual contexts of life, building on the interrelations between humans, and between humans and their material and natural surroundings.⁴⁸ Humans are categorising beings and, based on our own position in different contexts, we tend to create spaces which, in relation to our surroundings, render the relative ‘other’ to some degree. We create or assign boundaries that distinguish different contexts from each other. These boundaries change. In the ongoing interaction between people and their environment they are likely to be constantly renegotiated, but at a given point in time, I believe, they define our position and guide our actions.

For the purpose of incorporating the notion of embodiment into my study of the daily life of Early Helladic settlements, I have had with me three tools of thought, grounded in my readings of, for example, Bradley and Tilley. The themes—*boundaries*, *visibility* and *movement*—have served to keep my focus as far as possible on the Early Helladic individuals active within their communities, moving, seeing and experiencing, and in that way interacting with their surroundings. They have also been chosen to avoid a very functional emphasis in favour of a discussion of spatial components of the experiential and perceptual worlds of the Early Helladic people.

These themes can be related to other aspects of space and how it is experienced. Anna Gröhn has discussed a number of ‘features of space’ used in the differentiation of ritual space,⁴⁹ and which I believe can serve for a discussion of space in general. They are: material culture; symbols/iconography; distance; temporality (in ritual space connected with the alignment of celestial bodies); physical form (with choices of building technique, monumentality etc); attention focusing; inclusion/exclusion; and labour investment. Carleton Jones, for his part, gave four mechanisms for the structuring of the interaction between human beings and their environment, and for the creation of the perceptual frameworks through which the envi-

⁴⁸ For discussions on social space, see e.g. Altenberg 2003, 23–32.

⁴⁹ Gröhn 2004, 42.

ronment was perceived. The four mechanisms, construction, movement, ritual and exploitation, were suggested to operate by focusing attention.⁵⁰ In my case, the point of departure is the Early Helladic material culture, manifested within the general area of the settlements, and experienced by their users. For this purpose, Gröhn's features of space are possibly significant avenues towards an understanding of spatial differentiation. Differentiation of space will play an important role throughout the present study, and will be especially considered in relation to the mortuary sphere in *Chapters 6–8*. Spatial differentiation in itself, or Gröhn's features of space, however, does not adequately emphasise the position of the prehistoric individuals. Neither, I believe, do Jones' four mechanisms, although movement is also used in the present study, and construction has much in common with my focus on boundaries.

Movement through a landscape, incorporating the full sensory array, may be seen as the ultimate bodily experience of that landscape,⁵¹ be it contained within the settlement or include the larger landscape beyond it. To then single out *visibility*, or the visual perception of the surroundings, may perhaps be argued to downplay the importance of hearing, as well as smell, taste and touch.⁵² The sensory experience of sounds, for example is emphasised in the concepts of the 'taskscape' put forward by Ingold.⁵³ Following Ingold, if the landscape is what we see, the taskscape is what we hear. What we see is an assemblage of interdependent features, what we hear is activity. The task-scape is then the sounds (and smells, and touch) of our involvement in the landscape and, as such, inseparable from it and an inherent part of dwelling, of being-in-the-world. Vision is, however, not only a very powerful sensory experience, but *visibility*, especially in a consideration of the built environment, is a similarly powerful means for forming the experience of space and place, a tool that may also be actively made use of, and that is active also at a distance. Finally, *boundaries* have already been commented on above. It remains to say, however, that boundary, in contrast to construction, is a highly relative concept, just like space, and that the meaning and the existence of a boundary lies in the eyes of the beholder. In the words of Ingold again: "it is important to note that no feature of the landscape is, of itself, a boundary. It can only become a boundary, or the indicator of a boundary, in relation to the activities of the people (or animals) for whom it is recognized or experienced as such."⁵⁴ The appreciation for certain boundaries may be

⁵⁰ Jones 1998, esp. 10, 12–15. 'Perceptual framework' is a concept introduced by Jones (1998) and presented as, among other things, a less "jargon-filled" alternative to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (10f.).

⁵¹ Cf. Ingold 2000, 203.

⁵² Hamilakis 2002, 122.

⁵³ Ingold 200, esp. 198–201.

⁵⁴ Ingold 2000, 193.

learned, and therefore also shared, but in the end it is also context-specific, varying and individual.

Limitations in time and space

My ambition with this book has been to adopt a broad view of daily life within Early Helladic settlements. Therefore, from the outset I did not establish any limitations, such as including only certain aspects or settlements. This means that the basis for the study has been the complete published record we have on Early Helladic society, as far as this can be fully embraced. I have, however, chosen the material most appropriate for the questions at hand. Therefore, although the study makes use of a range of data, this does not mean that I have been aiming for total comprehensiveness. I have not had the ambition of covering the totality of things and places that the studied regions encompass. To a large extent, what I present here are case-studies, and not a study attempting an overall view. Instead I wanted to make room for the importance of time- and space-specific elements in our interpretations.

From the beginning, however, I decided on the geographical scope of the study. Thus, I have chosen to limit the account to an area smaller than the whole Greek Mainland during the Early Bronze Age. The choice fell on the east-central regions, encompassing the modern *nomes* of the Argolid, Corinthia, Boeotia, Attica and Euboea (*Fig. 5*).

A quick perusal of the contents of the present book will show a rather striking resemblance with the content of Pullen's survey of Early Helladic social organisation in terms of our common view of both settlement and mortuary data.⁵⁵ My study area is also the same as that chosen by Pullen twenty years ago. This choice fell now as it did for him on the "[...] best overall set of data for testing the various propositions [...]",⁵⁶ "the 'heartland' of mainland Bronze Age cultures" as he then defined it.⁵⁷ While Pullen, however, downplayed the differences within the study area in favour of the differences between the study area and Crete, the Cyclades and Anatolia (in response to Renfrew's much more extended geographical scope in his search for a common pattern of development), I will instead highlight the variety within the study area. The reason for not extending the study area to the whole of the Greek Mainland and beyond is that the study (and I) would be overwhelmed by a variation greater than the one already existing within it. This is not an excuse to avoid the work a larger study area would entail; it is instead an acknowledgement of the important variations within. The reason

⁵⁵ Pullen 1985.

⁵⁶ Pullen 1985, 23.

⁵⁷ Pullen 1985, 47. Also Rutter 2001, 109.

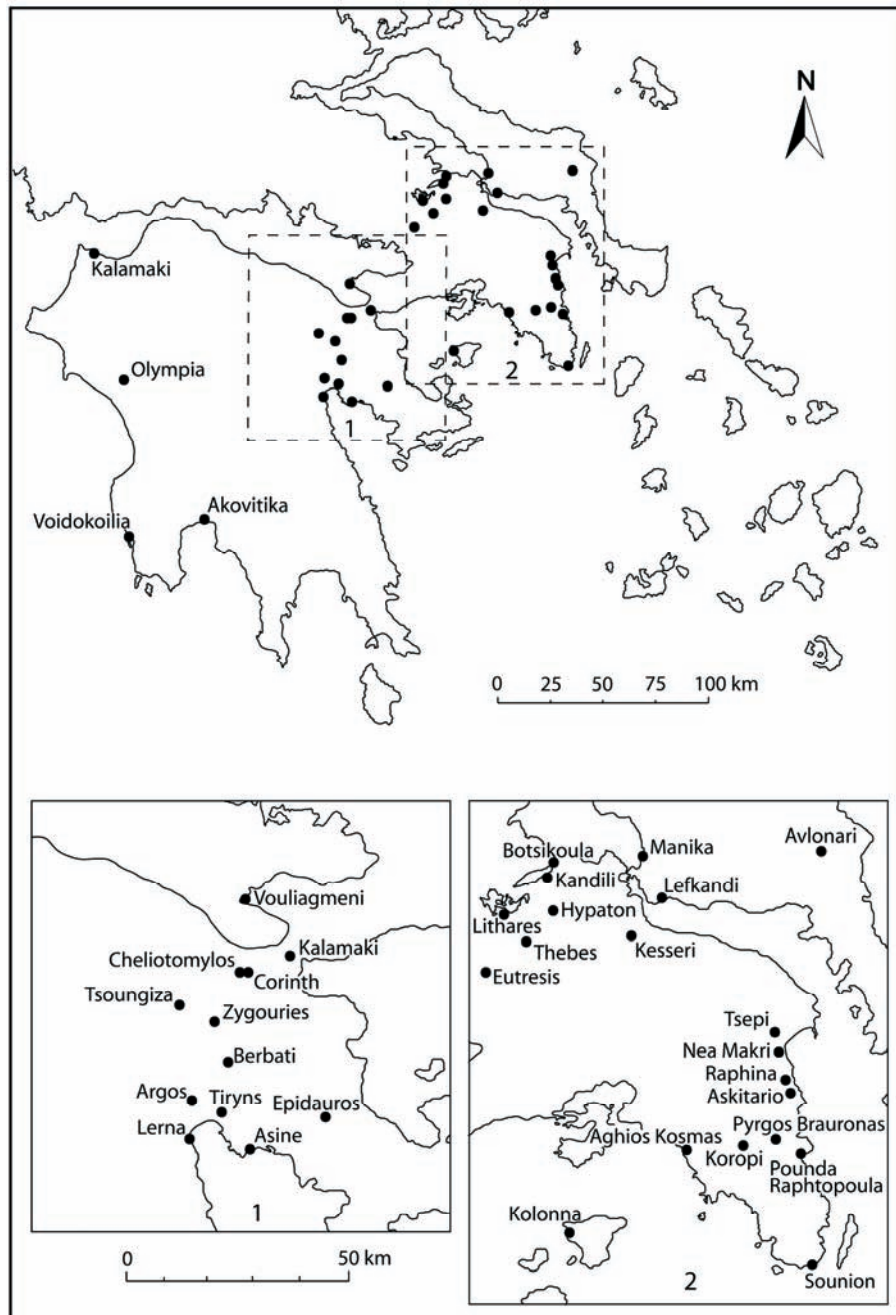


Figure 5. Map of studied regions (boxes 1–2) and Early Helladic locations mentioned in the text.

for not adopting an even smaller study area is the need for varied material to which to put the questions. The choice of studying the same regions as Pullen did, as well as also incorporating both settlement and funerary remains, is therefore partly necessitated by the degree of our archaeological knowledge of the regions. It should also be seen, however, as my way of positioning myself and my work in relation to his influential study—partly by adding a study to complement his and to enable comparisons, partly also, however, in the hope that these comparisons will pinpoint some of the weaknesses in the older study.

Another delimitation, not actively chosen, is a result of the composition of the archaeological material as well as the research conducted on it. Thus, depending on the theme under special consideration, the focus will vary between the regions of the study area. Partly responsible for this varying emphasis are a number of studies that have been my companions throughout the work on this book, and have had a positive effect on the end result. Among these, I will mention here only the two most influential for the overall content of the book. Because of their attention to detail, as well as their full publication, these two works have given ample room for future readers to address new questions and to interpret the material further.

The first of these is Martha Wiencke's two volume publication of EH II Lerna: *Lerna. A Preclassical Site in the Argolid IV: The Architecture, Stratification, and Pottery of Lerna III*, published in 2000.⁵⁸ The site of Lerna in the Argolid (Fig. 6), with its two corridor houses, fortifications and sealing deposits, has, since Caskey's first preliminary reports on the excavations in the 1950s, set the standards for future explorations into the Early Helladic period, within the Argolid and beyond. The pottery sequences developed at the site have been instrumental in the fine-tuning of an Early Helladic relative chronology. The availability of this settlement's many fascinating details has secured it a prominent role in the first half of the present book.

Secondly, there is the 1959 publication by George Mylonas: *Aghios Kosmas. An Early Bronze Age Settlement and Cemetery in Attica*.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the important remains of the settlement and cemetery at Aghios Kosmas suffered badly from erosion by the sea as well as World War II installations at its coastal location before its publication, and the area has today been allowed to be completely taken over by modern activities (Fig. 7). Both the settlement and the cemetery were, however, published in considerable detail, and the settlement remains one of the best published examples of smaller-scale housing complexes from the Early Helladic period. It is, however, the publication of the North cemetery that will figure most

⁵⁸ Wiencke 2000. For Lerna, also Rutter 1995, for the publication of the Lerna IV (EH III) pottery, with a short introduction by Elisabeth Banks on the architecture and stratigraphy, the full publication of which is pending.

⁵⁹ Mylonas 1959.

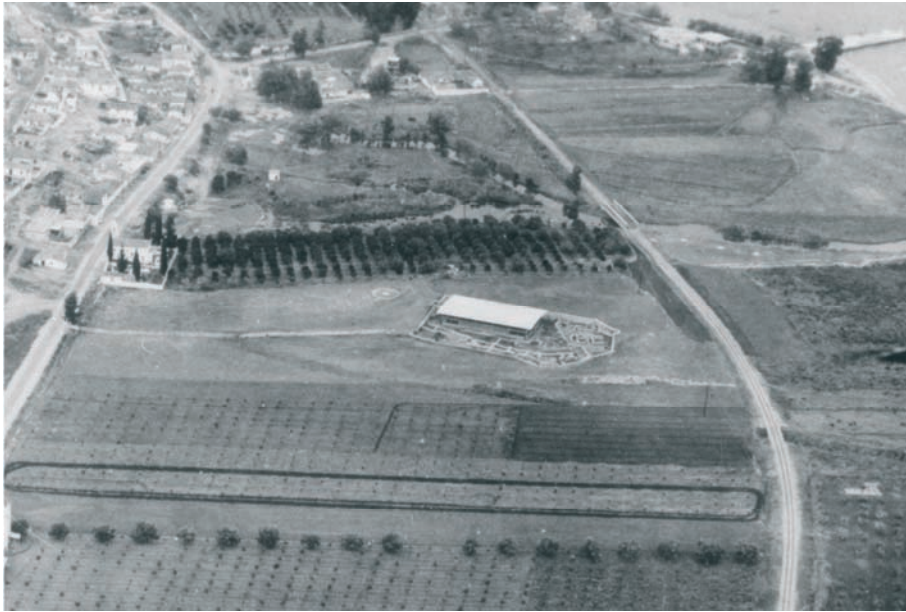


Figure 6. Lerna. Aerial view over the area by the coast of the Argolic Gulf and south of the spring of Amymone. The location of the House of the Tile is marked by the rectangular roof constructed over the remains (from the ASCSA archive, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).



Figure 7. Aghios Kosmas. View from the northeast and the general area of the North cemetery, towards the modern cape.

prominently in the present study. Aghios Kosmas will therefore step in as an important locale where the coverage of Lerna ends, in the second part of the book.

Finally, I should give some consideration to the chronological delimitations of the study (*Table 1*). This has been from the beginning a full Early Helladic perspective, that is, including all sub periods of the Early Helladic period, *c.* 3100–2000 BC. Like the discussion in general, however, the degree to which each period will be represented is dependent on the archaeological material available. This tends to favour the more varied picture of the EH II period over the preceding and succeeding periods. An absolute chronology will not be used more than occasionally, but the actual number of years does put things in perspective, especially for discussions of the historicity of some locales and the longevity of certain practices. The relative chronology will be used throughout the study, and the two leading varieties are included in *Table 1*. Likewise included is the culture system introduced by Renfrew, and the specific terminology developed for the settlement of Lerna.⁶⁰ The Lerna chronology will figure prominently whenever the settlement of Lerna is addressed, and also, at times, for inter-settlement comparisons.

Table 1. *Concordance of Early Helladic chronologies.*⁶¹

Absolute chronology			Relative chronology		'Culture'	Lerna
from	to	yrs	Maran	Rutter		
3100	2650	450	EH I	EH I	Eutresis / Talioti	
2650	2450/ 2350	200– 300	EH II, early	EH IIA, or Early	Korakou	IIIA-B
2450/ 2350	2200/ 2150	150– 300	EH II, developed EH II, late Transitional EH II/EH III	EH IIB, or Late	Korakou / "Lefkandi I"	IIIC-D
2200/ 2150	2050/ 2000	100– 200	EH III	EH III	Tiryns	IV

⁶⁰ The cultural division is only sparsely used today for the Mainland but, is, however, still used by Rutter for the organisation of his internet based course on the *Prehistoric archaeology of the Aegean* (Rutter, *Prehistoric*), including discussions on its varying geographical applicability. On relative and absolute chronology, see also e.g. Renfrew 1972; Rutter 1979; Manning 1995; Maran 1998; Alram-Stern 2004, 151–182 (for a summary of Helladic as well as Cycladic cultural sequences during the EBA).

⁶¹ Absolute years as given by Rutter 2001, table 2, p. 106, based on Manning 1995, 171–173. Relative chronology: Maran 1998, tables 80–81; Rutter, *Prehistoric*; 2001, table 2. For Renfrew's cultures, see Renfrew 1972, and for Lerna, Wiencke 2000.

Layout of the book

Although I made no delimitations regarding the settlements and types of material culture to be considered, I have chosen to arrange the discussions into five parts:

- Part One. Defining a prehistoric society (*Chapter 1*)
- Part Two. The house: perceptions of the bounded space (*Chapters 2–3*)
- Part Three. Living with a past (*Chapters 4–5*).
- Part Four. Locating the dead (*Chapters 6–8*).
- Part Five. Connecting the living and their dead (*Chapters 9–10*).

Life and death in Early Helladic Greece is the overall subject of the book, and the double focus is manifested in a loose division of the book into two halves. The first deals primarily with settlement contexts, while the second is devoted to mortuary contexts. On a general level, however, the double focus on life as well as death is concerned with the interconnectedness of different spheres of society and how one affected the other. As I see it, at every point in time, daily life is part of a continuum of what has been and of what will be. For the purpose of illustrating some aspects of this, the next three parts are devoted to three places along this continuum. These will be followed by a final part attempting, on a detailed level, to tie together life and death.

In *Chapters 2* and *3*, the discussion revolves around the bounded space in relation to the Early Helladic house. In the first chapter, I will primarily consider the outside of the house, with the house and the relationship between houses, as organising principles within settlements, delimiting spaces and directing movement. In the next chapter, the discussion will shift to the houses themselves, as centres for activities, with their own biographies related to their inhabitants and users.

Chapters 4 and *5* will be concerned with moments and situations within everyday life when the past and present meet. I will consider various ways in which the Early Helladic people related to the past, and situations in which they would have been made physically aware of the passing of time. Remains of a past may have both enabled and restricted activities. I will consider how in the succession of houses (*Chapter 4*), and in some so far unique instances of tumuli (*Chapter 5*), the past may have been of significance and varyingly made use of in the Early Helladic present.

After thus considering the meeting of the past and the present within the settlements, I will continue by considering one aspect of the past that was deliberately separated from the settlements. Thus, in *Chapters 6–8*, the discussions will be concerned with the location of the dead: (in the order of the chapters) by way of a hypothesis on mortuary variability through time; in a view of those instances when spatial differentiation was not employed; and

finally in relation to spatial and topographic aspects of the ways that it was employed.

With these chapters, I will have made three calls on the continuum of life and death within the Early Helladic communities. The mortuary practices, however, will also be the starting-point for the concluding part of the book (*Chapters 9–10*), in which the analysis will be taken further to illustrate the interconnectedness of different parts of Early Helladic life (and death). In *Chapter 9*, I have given myself the opportunity to create and take as my point of departure a narrative of an Early Helladic death, to consider in detail the significance of this and a series of similar events for the people involved. The details of the mortuary sphere have played only a minor role within Early Helladic research, and it is also the sphere in which life and death most physically meet. The practices of the living within the mortuary sphere were therefore a natural choice for this main section of the concluding part of the book. In *Chapter 10*, I will thereafter sum up the results of the discussions throughout the book, my present understanding of daily life within the Early Helladic settlements, and my hopes for the future of Early Helladic research.

Part Two.

The house: perceptions of the bounded space

This part of the book (*Chapters 2 and 3*), will be concerned with the potential usefulness of the house as a tool towards a wider understanding of Early Helladic individuals' perception of their surroundings. The basis for the chapters is the houses themselves—their internal location and organisation—and the creation of space in relation to them. They will be considered as both the physical and social arenas for human activity. How they were used provides valuable insights into how they were perceived. Bradley has argued that “[i]f there are boundaries in the mind, there are boundaries on the ground as well, but these do not seem to have attracted much attention in field archaeology.”⁶² I concur fully with the latter half of the statement but for the present study I am inclined to reverse the first clause: if there are boundaries on the ground there are likely to be boundaries in the mind. The focus in the coming chapters is thus the conceptual boundaries that man-made boundaries may signify. For the following two chapters, the boundaries will be the walls of the house, as definers of space separating the interior from the exterior and the persons and activities within the boundaries from the surrounding world—creating perceptions of the bounded space as distinct from the other. As we shall see, there need not be any absolute distinctions—the exterior can work together with the interior—and there will be transitional features and activities as well, as there would have been constant movement connecting the two.

Houses in general, and dwellings in particular, are to our modern minds a highly charged concept, signalling ownership, boundaries, as well as manners and rights of conduct in relation to them. The following two chapters will be concerned with the different and changing appearances/manifestations of the house, and the interaction between the Early Helladic people and their houses. The basic contention is that the Early Helladic houses were both constructed and constructing. Although planned and constructed by their Early Helladic inhabitants/users, once constructed the houses affected movement into and around the house, as well as any other

⁶² Bradley 2000, 147.

construction in relation to it, and thus to a certain degree directed life in their surroundings.

The house, of course, has enjoyed a large amount of attention throughout the history of discourse regarding Early Helladic Greece. However, their potential as spatial indicators, I would argue, has not been sufficiently considered, nor has their significance within the conceptual worlds of the Early Helladic inhabitants. Even as a single feature, the house may indicate spatial perception and utilisation, and although our understanding of the overall spatial organisation of Early Helladic settlements will probably remain fragmentary, the house may give clues to the organisation of the settlement as a whole. The walls of the house may be seen as the result of the willingness of the Early Helladic people to create, mark out, organize and manipulate settlement spaces and activities within them on a regular basis. As foci for activities within the daily life of the Early Helladic people, the houses would also have held significant positions within the perceptual lives of their users. The purpose of the coming chapters is to connect these issues. The present discussion will therefore be concerned with the Early Helladic house or houses *as a result of human action and thought, as well as on their potential to direct the actions and form the minds of the inhabitants of their respective settlements*.

Before I continue, however, I will present an initial survey of previous research on the house in order to form a further basis for the discussion in the coming chapters. It will also serve as an introduction to the various forms and functions of the Early Helladic house. The previous research will be contrasted against the avenues of research remaining to be explored, a distinction that may be translated into a view of the Early Helladic house as either archaeological or experienced.

Our definitions: the archaeological house

How do we define the Early Helladic house? The Early Helladic house has been the subject for several separate articles, just as it has been included in many more comprehensive monographs and a large part of one edited volume.⁶³ Research has been focused on three points in particular:

- Form—types and shapes of houses
- Content—functions of houses
- Significance—relative importance of houses within their settlements

⁶³ E.g. Overbeck 1963; Shaw 1987; 1990; Pullen 1986; Hägg & Konsola 1986; Tzavella-Evjén & Rohner 1990; Harrison 1995; Kalogerakou 1999; Nilsson 2004.

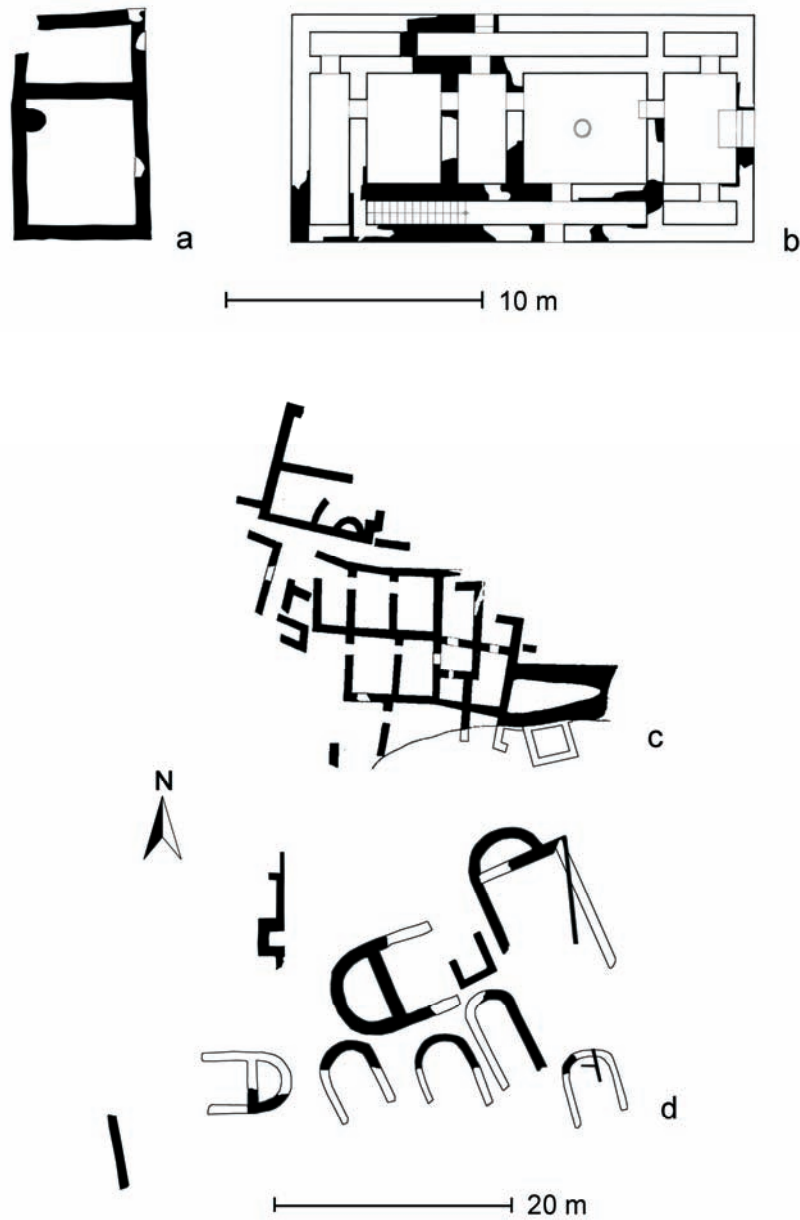


Figure 8. Plans of different house architecture: (a) Eutresis House I, (b) Weißes Haus at Kolonna III, (c) Aghios Kosmas, phase B and (d) absidal houses at Tiryns Horizont 10–13 (after Goldman 1931, fig. 8; Walter & Felten 1981, fig. 5; Mylonas 1959, plan 1); Kilian 1982, fig. 39).

In 1928 Blegen laid down the fundamentals for the definition of the Early Helladic house, noting that they “tended to be small and of no standard shape, though all are rectangular in design and usually have two or more rooms.”⁶⁴ As noted in 1995 by Harrison, this was a definition which emanated from Blegen’s excavations at Zygouries, but it is also the definition most often used today.⁶⁵ Harrison set out to question the validity of the definition, both within our growing corpus of Early Helladic houses as well as at Blegen’s Zygouries. His conclusion was that the many deviations from the common definition of the Early Helladic house that become visible when reviewing the archaeological material are enough to render the common definition itself an exception rather than the norm. Harrison suggests instead a multi-roomed complex to be nearer the ‘norm’ of Early Helladic housing formation, thus merging architectural units that have generally been regarded as separate.⁶⁶

From the outset of Caskey’s excavations of the House of the Tiles at Lerna we have had as a counterpart to the ‘norm’, whatever it may have been, the limited number of ‘corridor houses’ (*Fig. 8b*).⁶⁷ The corridor buildings have ever since been firmly within the focus of studies into EH architecture or into Early Helladic society as a whole, and will be presented in more detail in *Chapter 2*. Further evidence of the fragility of any norm is a growing corpus of apsidal buildings (EH II as well as EH III), round buildings, very small buildings and other very large buildings.⁶⁸ It should be noted also that Blegen himself had already concluded that there appeared to be no standardized shape of the Early Helladic house, only general similarities.⁶⁹

We are probably better off leaving the definition of the house as very general and allowing for extensive diversity, both in appearance and use. The diverse architectural remains within the study area make it very difficult to summarise them in any comprehensive way, chronologically, typologically or regionally. Very generally, however, it can be said that we know very little of EH I houses. Possibly the houses were free-standing, consisting of one or two rooms, as appears to be the case with House I at Eutresis (*Fig. 8a*) and therefore close to Blegen’s original, general definition. Free-standing houses, by definition, would mean that open spaces existed, allowing movement around the house, and may also indicate a more loosely-established settlement plan. However, evidence from Zagani, Manika

⁶⁴ Blegen 1928, 6.

⁶⁵ Harrison 1995, with reference to Pullen (1985, 254f.) and Overbeck (1963, 145f.).

⁶⁶ Harrison 1995, *passim*.

⁶⁷ A name given by Shaw (1987) to the monumental buildings defined by their narrow corridor-like rooms along their long sides. I will use this term throughout the book but it should be noted that it is used as a neutral, purely analytical term without any preconceptions as to the qualities that may append to the concept of a ‘house’.

⁶⁸ See, e.g. Alram-Stern 2004, 233–251, for a summary; also, Fossey 1973; Felten & Hiller 2004, Aravantinos 2004.

⁶⁹ Blegen 1928, 6.

(phases 2–3) and Lithares,⁷⁰ show that tightly-arranged room complexes of mostly square rooms with shared walls were present in Attica, Euboea and Boeotia by at least as early as the first half of EH II, and continued in these regions into the second half of EH II (Askitarío, Raphina, Aghios Kosmas B: *Fig. 8c*), when they are also first evidenced in the Argolid and Korinthia (Tiryns,⁷¹ Zygouries).⁷² Only at Kolonna are these tight complexes of rooms known to have been continued into EH III.

Apsidal buildings seem to appear (in larger numbers) earlier in Boeotia than in the Argolid.⁷³ The dense establishment of apsidal buildings at EH III Lerna, Tiryns (*Fig. 8d*) and Tsoungiza has yet to find parallels in any other region within the study area,⁷⁴ but has nevertheless become the model for general housing forms during the EH III period. EH III can also be seen as the period in which the construction of free-standing houses was intensified. Free-standing houses were nevertheless being built throughout the Early Helladic period,⁷⁵ and they take their most prominent appearance in the form of the corridor houses. The first corridor houses were erected in the phase corresponding to Lerna phase IIIC (Building BG at Lerna, Haus am Felsrand, probably the Fortified building at Thebes and Akovitika A, and possibly Zygouries),⁷⁶ and continued, with refined techniques, into the latest phase of EH II, corresponding to Lerna phase IIID (House of the Tiles and Weißes Haus: *Fig. 8b*),⁷⁷ after which they ceased.

⁷⁰ Lithares: following most recently Maran 1998, 67f, *contra* Forsén (1992, 128f.), although it is unclear if, apart from arguing for a continuation of settlement into EH III, she also argues for a dating for any part of the excavated street-room complex later than Lerna IIIB.

⁷¹ I think it is possible that the unfortunately badly-preserved architecture of Horizont 3 and 4 at Tiryns may have been an early EH II form of multi-roomed complex in the Argolid (Kilian 1983, 321–323; see also *Fig. 26*).

⁷² Theocharis 1953–1954; Theocharis 1952; 1953; Mylonas 1959; Blegen 1928.

⁷³ E.g. the Fortified building is stratigraphically succeeded by an apsidal building within the second half of EH II, and the same dating is set for apsidal buildings also at other plots within modern Thebes (Konsola 1981, 106–109; Aravantinos 2004).

⁷⁴ E.g. Banks in Rutter 1995; Kilian 1981; 1982; Pullen 1985, 208–211; 1990. For a summary of apsidal houses, see Maran 1998, 199–201.

⁷⁵ Separate, isolated structures have been excavated at Tsoungiza (Pullen 1985, 211), dating to EH II and III phases, as well as at Eutresis, dating to EH I–EH III (Goldman 1931; Caskey & Caskey 1960). The same can be said of EH II Kolonna, although much remains to be found here under later architecture (Felten & Hiller 2004).

⁷⁶ Wiencke 2000, 185–211; Walter & Felten 1981, 12f.; Aravantinos 1986. For discussions of corridor houses, see e.g. Maran 1998, 193–197; Nilsson 2004, 75–145, 136–145. Zygouries may have had two corridor houses: an early phase of the House of the Pithoi (Pullen 1985, 206–208; 1986a) and House Y (Felten 1986, 25). The dating of these structures is somewhat unclear but should generally be attributed to phases corresponding to Lerna IIIC–D, and the House of the Pithoi structure to an early IIIC phase as it precedes the later structure (discussion in Maran 1998, 164). Also, the date for the Fortified building remains unclear but the abandonment has been generally dated to “a phase of the mature EH II period” (Aravantinos 1986, 62). Shaw (1987, also Alram-Stern 2004, 240f.) has on stylistic grounds divided the corridor houses into two groups, one earlier (Haus am Felsrand, Building BG, Fortified Building and Akovitika B) and one later (House of the Tiles, Weißes Haus, Akovitika A).

⁷⁷ Wiencke 2000, 298–303 (summary); Walter & Felten 1981, 14–21.

Types and shapes have clearly been a focus of concern in previous research on the house, to a larger extent than the two other points above, the contents and the significance. Neither of these two works alone, but in parallel with the typologies of houses, and as a result of them. In terms of the function of houses, the corridor houses have played a central role, just as they have for the significance of houses. The latter has been concerned with constructing intra-settlement hierarchies between buildings, as well as hierarchies between settlements on the basis of the types and functions of houses present within each settlement, features of settlement organisation (streets and fortifications), site size and material culture. Dora Konsola's review of the Early Helladic material has here been most influential and often quoted, presenting a list of 26 characteristics for the quantification of settlements, focusing on size and specialisation of buildings.⁷⁸ Monumental buildings have come to epitomise these two criteria especially, and the most common, in relative terms, is of course the corridor house, considered therefore by most as the principal characteristic of a 'major' site. Other types of specialisation in buildings are workshops, storerooms and ritual buildings. Monica Nilsson has carried out the most recent, and one of few, interpretative surveys of building inventories, also encompassing arguably domestic dwellings, in order to understand the activities within them.⁷⁹ However, interpretative surveys based on the house as *living* and *social* space remain to be performed on the Early Helladic material, and the following chapters will be a first attempt at beginning to fill this gap in Early Helladic research.

EH definitions?: the house as experienced

With the several types of houses existing through the period, many times contemporaneously within one settlement, there is, I think, no need to connect the concept of the house to any particular form. On a spatial level, the corridor houses need not differ from any more ordinary buildings in that their walls provide archaeologically detectable boundaries that may be included in a discussion of the perception and manipulation of settlement space. I propose that it is therefore unfortunate, although understandable, that corridor houses have been allowed to dominate the discourse on Early Helladic architecture and of houses in particular. It is unfortunate, not because they are not important or interesting but because it has led discussions away from the local in favour of the regional and general. In particular, it has led discussions towards the specifically economic and political, away from the potential of seeing the house, any house, as *experienced*, by its users and

⁷⁸ Konsola 1986; Pullen 1985, 359–362; 2003; survey reports: e.g. Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994.

⁷⁹ Nilsson 2004.

by other people living their lives in relation to it. In this view, that underlies the discussions in *Chapter 2* below, the ultimate function of the house, in terms of what took place within its walls, is of lesser importance than how it may have been perceived—by the inhabitants of a settlement, and users of specific houses—as an individual architectural unit and in relation to other architecture. The generalisations on typology and function have also been counterproductive to the explorations of the conceptual and symbolic values of the house as an *idea*. For this view, the activities within the house are of importance whether the house functioned as a dwelling or not. It is most likely that there were meaningful differences between the corridor houses and other houses and typology and function are, therefore, not without significance. However, I believe that the means to encompass the conceptual and symbolic and the individual houses are close, contextually-specific analyses that are likely to have little room within large-scale generalisations.

As remarked by Pullen, for the Early Helladic period, the walls of the house make up the boundaries of “the smallest social group detectable archaeologically”.⁸⁰ This sentiment, I propose, may be regarded as the driving force behind the search for the definitions of the Early Helladic house that by extension would enable calculations of numbers of residents and thereby discussions of the social organisation of Early Helladic society.⁸¹ Moreover, it has inspired the need for a separation of different types of buildings, or activities within these buildings, such as domestic or ritual, private or public, workshop or storage, etc. In the light of the focus of previous research, it is important to note, however, that the house, signifying the smallest social group detectable archaeologically, is also a feature that for the Early Helladic people may have conjured up any number of feelings in its capacity as a bounded space and, where appropriate, as a living space for a group of people (under the symbolic umbrella that we at least today call a *home*)—we, them, family, ownership, affiliation, protection, and the list goes on.⁸²

⁸⁰ Pullen 1985, 157. The EH burials should not be dismissed in this context, but the multiple, consecutive use of each grave leaves many questions open regarding especially the vertical and horizontal compositions of these social groups as well as the chronological affinity of the interred within one grave (see further *Chapter 9*, e.g. section on *The Nearest and dearest?*).

⁸¹ E.g. Pullen 1985, 259–263 (chapter: Room Sizes, Room Populations, and Social Organization); Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, appendix B, 542–547; Harrison 1995, 38–40. To set the human need for roofed space to 2.32 sq m or 10 sq metres is a concept which to my mind is far too tainted by our own preconceptions of a ‘home’.

⁸² For a recent discussion of the house as the centre of perception within a Neolithic context, see Hodder 2006, esp. chapters 5–6, pp. 109–168. Also, e.g. Tringham 1995 and other contributions to Benjamin (ed.) 1995; Hendon 2004; also further below: *Chapter 3*.

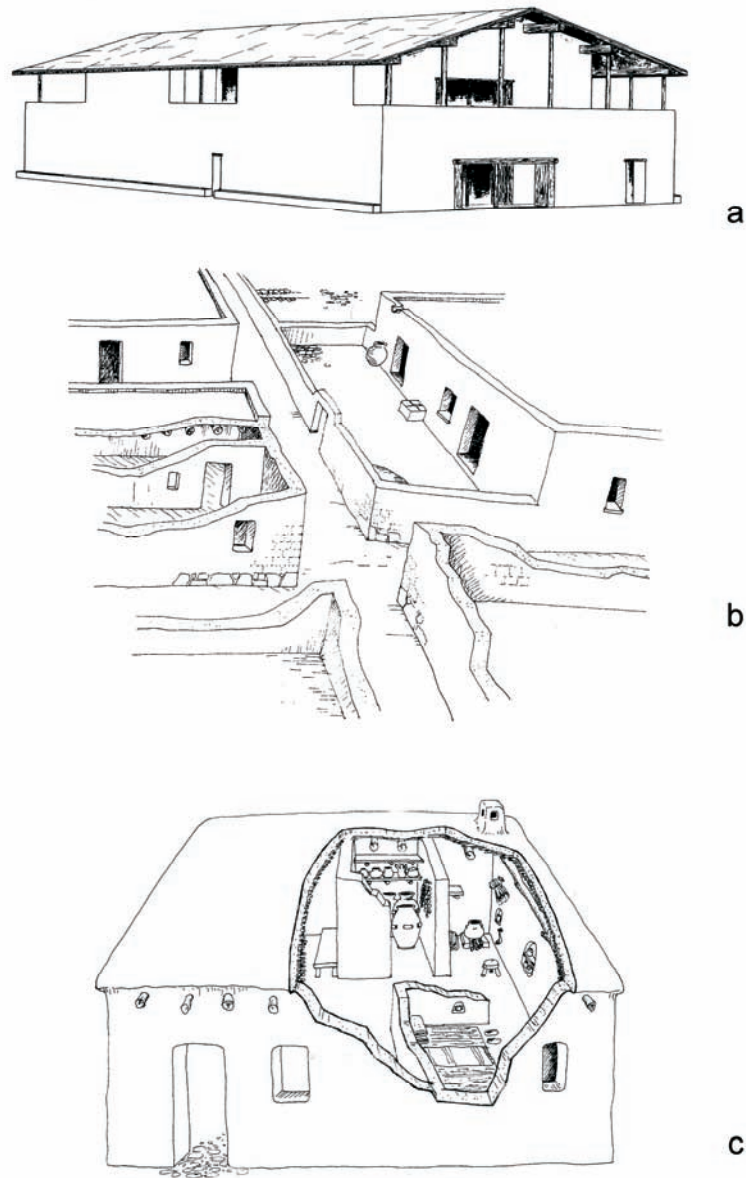


Figure 9. Reconstructions of Early Helladic houses and house complexes: (a) House of the Tiles at Lerna III, (b) houses at Manika and (c) house at Manika (after Wiencke 2000, fig. I.107.a; Sampson 1985, fig. 5; 1988a, fig. 72, p. 324)

But how can we approach these issues? The very first step must be to place the walls and doors and roofs of the houses, to explore their three-dimensionality and try to picture the visual impact of the houses on their surroundings—in the eyes of the people around and within them. The helpful tool of architectural reconstruction is perhaps significantly seldom applied to Early Helladic material, but three that have been published are illustrated in *Figure 9*.⁸³ The natural continuation of this visualisation, I argue, is to examine the relation of the bounded spaces, created by the walls of houses, to other parts of the settlement, other houses, and to the respective settlement as a whole. In *Chapter 2*, I will explore the possibilities for this, building on earlier reflections on private and public space in the Early Helladic sphere. Like many before me, I will draw information from the interesting and complex corridor houses. I will, however, not be primarily concerned with the function, or the possible residents of these buildings, but rather with the means for creation of space and the problems involved in discussing it. More specifically, my purpose will be to explore aspects of control, boundaries and movement, exemplified by the contextually specific case of the House of the Tiles. This particular house, and corridor houses in general, will be related in the discussion to more ‘ordinary’ types of houses. In the following chapter, *Chapter 3*, I will explore the biographies of houses within the Early Helladic material. The specific life-histories of houses and their significance for the lives of the people living and working in relation to them will widen our understanding of Early Helladic perceptions of the house, the household and the home.

⁸³ See also the web pages of the *Nemea Valley Archaeological Project*. *Multimedia publication*: including reconstructions of EH II House A from the site of Tsoungiza.

2. The values of space

The basis for the present chapter is to explore how houses may have been experienced on a spatial level and how movement within and around them was accomplished and possibly manipulated. The wider goal is a greater understanding of how these structures were appreciated, perceived and used by the inhabitants of Early Helladic communities.

For this purpose, the values of space become central. The most common translation of these values is the dichotomy of the public and the private. The questions concerning these concepts are many, however, especially when trying to apply them to a prehistoric context. Was there a notion of public and private in the Early Helladic period? Was there what we call private space? For whom? What is private space? How do we distinguish between public and private space?

Archaeology tends to let space be confined to the sum of walls and door openings. Private or public space is, however, as much a conceptual value, a designation that we give to a (somehow bounded) space, a symbolical and conceptual language that we as inhabitants learn to read and hopefully respect. Not every doorway is meant to be entered. Apart from any structural features, there may have been signs, symbolic and/or physical that, together with the architecture, directed and to some degree controlled movement. Any review of past architecture and the use of terms such as public or private should be performed with this sentiment in mind. The different architectural features of the house are our tools to try to somehow translate as far as possible the symbolical language pertaining to the house.

For the Early Helladic period, private and public space has been discussed especially in connection with the corridor houses,⁸⁴ and only to a lesser extent with the more standard houses.⁸⁵ One reason for this is certainly the complicated floor plans of the corridor houses, which have invited varying considerations. The suggestion of the corridor houses' multifunctional character has gone hand in hand with the interpretation of their interior spaces as correspondingly diverse. More specifically, this has been done by dividing the spaces into more distinctly public and more private (or domestic)⁸⁶ parts

⁸⁴ E.g. Walter & Felten 1981; Themelis 1984; Pullen 1985; Felten 1986; Shaw 1987; 1990; Wiencke 1989; 2000; Maran 1998; Nilsson 2004.

⁸⁵ E.g. Konsola 1984.

⁸⁶ Pullen 1985, 264. See, also Nilsson's use of the terms 'display' and 'service' instead of 'public' and 'private' (Nilsson 2004, 138f.).

of the houses, drawn from the different degrees of accessibility afforded to different rooms of the structures.⁸⁷ As a reflection of the subjectivity of the two concepts, the sense of privacy in corridor houses has been characterised both as very strongly expressed,⁸⁸ or conversely, as low/undeveloped.⁸⁹

To obtain a complete picture of the spatial diversity of corridor houses it is worth taking a closer look at the House of the Tiles.⁹⁰ Because of the high level of preservation and detailed publication, the remains of this particular building, and how they have been reconstructed, have been used to support the reconstruction of other corridor houses also (sometimes also vice versa, especially in comparisons between the House of the Tiles and Weißes Haus). Much of the layout of the House of the Tiles thus corresponds to other similar houses.⁹¹ I will shortly present a summary of previous research on corridor houses, and thereafter give extra consideration to a few aspects of the structures I feel have been largely overlooked. In my spatial consideration, which forms the core of the present chapter, I will, however, keep the survey specific to the House of the Tiles in order to explore the potential of a contextually specific survey for the understanding of each specific corridor house. This greater understanding may thereafter lead to new arguments for the corridor houses in general, and also to houses in general.

The corridor houses: a presentation

Ask anyone, undergraduate or specialised prehistorian, for a feature that would characterise the Early Helladic period, and the answer would most probably be: the Corridor House. The corridor houses have been made a symbol for the whole of the Early Helladic period in general, and especially for the growing diversification of economic and material culture issues peaking in the late EH II period: “the period of the corridor houses”.⁹² The buildings have been very important in the modern definition of Early Helladic society, the central question being how and by whom the buildings were used. Pullen concludes on this issue that:

The complicated plans and varying scales indicate that these [corridor] buildings were built for a specific purpose, and that this purpose was similar throughout the area of distribution of the structures. I have suggested that the

⁸⁷ For a review of the arguments on the public and private in relation to the House of the Tiles, see Peperaki 2004, 216–219.

⁸⁸ Wiencke 2000, 300.

⁸⁹ Nilsson 2004, 138.

⁹⁰ Caskey 1955; 1956; 1958; Wiencke 2000, 213–304.

⁹¹ For this process of mutual affirmation regarding the layout of corridor houses see, especially, Shaw 1987; 1990.

⁹² Wiencke 1989, 503.

main function of the buildings was to house a kin-related group with a social role greater than the typical family resident in a house.⁹³

His conclusion is general but still illustrates a number of ways in which this particular type of house has been connected with status and economy. The existence and similar appearance of buildings from Akovitika in the south (Messenia), the Argolid and Korinthia (Lerna, Tiryns, possibly Zygouries and Perachora-Vouliagmeni), to Thebes in the north and Kolonna (Aegina) in the east, point to wide-reaching connections, and to exchange of ideas between settlements. Their size, two storeys, and free-standing, multi-room character sets them apart from other types of general housing, which indicates a special purpose as well as the skill and organisation that must have been in place to manage their construction.⁹⁴ In this aspect they may be associated with the fortifications, or long walls, often found in connection with them, including in the discussion also the Tirynthian Rundbau, which in its monumentality and complexity resembles the corridor houses.⁹⁵

Although not clearly stated in Pullen's conclusion, their special purpose, based on their singular appearance and size, is generally connected with a social group (often in terms of a chiefdom) in a position to exert a certain amount of control over others.⁹⁶ The latter in turn gives the characterisation of EH II society as increasingly stratified, both on an individual and a settlement basis. It has been widely argued that the corridor houses also supplied a domestic setting in combination with a ceremonial function connected mainly with their largest room.⁹⁷ The large deposit of sealings found in Room 11 of the House of the Tiles has also been important for assigning the corridor houses central economic and administrative importance.⁹⁸

In general, however, corridor houses have been found rather empty of finds and this has recently lead Monica Nilsson to put forward an alternative function. In the most recent and most thorough survey and analysis of the available corridor houses and their inventories, Nilsson also identifies other special purpose buildings and fits them all into a scenario which maintains the economic and contact aspects listed above, but excludes any hierarchical elements of their use. Thus, she argues instead for a community-directed specialisation that motivated inter-settlement contact. Based on the scarcity of finds of domestic character, the more common drinking utensils, and their

⁹³ Pullen 1985, 266f.

⁹⁴ For recent summaries of previous research on corridor houses, see Nilsson 2004, 143f.; Alram-Stern 2004, 238–243.

⁹⁵ Pullen 1985, 263f.; Maran 1998, 195 (connection between fortification and corridor houses), 197–199 (Rundbau), with references.

⁹⁶ E.g. Pullen 1985, 373f., 383f.; Wiencke 1989, 497, 501–503.

⁹⁷ E.g. Felten 1986, 21–26; Pullen 1985, 263–267; 1994, 46; Kalogerakou 1999, 101.

⁹⁸ For the sealings, see Heath 1958; Wiencke 1969; 1974; Aruz 1994; Weingarten 2000.

proposed location close to the city limits, she presents the corridor buildings as centres serving the needs of inter-settlement trading-parties.⁹⁹

The function or functions of the corridor houses remain enigmatic. I find myself reluctant to choose any one of these functions suggested for the corridor houses; too many questions remain regarding their use-life and their relation to the settlement as a whole.¹⁰⁰ The lack of finds should perhaps not be overly emphasised, since there can be many reasons for this situation (e.g. manner of abandonment, looting, clearing, seasonality). Furthermore, where corridor houses have been found they tend to dominate their excavated area. We have nevertheless (from sites other than Lerna) some indications to suggest that more than one house of the corridor house type or size may have been in use at the same time.¹⁰¹ If so, the argument of the house as a 'ruler's dwelling,' for instance, is considerably weakened.¹⁰² For the purpose of the present study, I suggest also that there are a number of aspects in need of further consideration, and which may potentially lead us to a fuller understanding of these monumental structures; aspects that lie in the topography and monumentality of the buildings.

Topography in context

Thus, the actual function of the corridor houses set aside, the prime characteristics of the structures in architectural terms, which above all set them apart from other houses, are the evident planning of the layout, its size and strict rectangularity, its varied multi-roomed interior and its free-standing nature, as well as the corridors with stairways leading up to a second floor.¹⁰³ One commonly noted fact is also that at Lerna, Kolonna (and Akovitika), an old corridor house was replaced by a new one, typologically and spatially closely connected to its predecessor.¹⁰⁴ The fact that a unique and elaborated architectural form, quite distinct from the other known housing types of the period, was so closely replaced indicates the significance of the building, as well as its general location. The location of the corridor houses has also been an important aspect of many interpretations of the structures. Previous research has commonly argued for the structures' isolation in relation to more domestic dwellings within the settlements, as well as their liminal location at the edge of their settlement as a whole. These considerations of location

⁹⁹ Nilsson 2004, conclusions: pp. 144f., 208–214.

¹⁰⁰ See, also Wiencke 2000, 651f.

¹⁰¹ E.g. a possibility at Zygouries (Pullen 1986a; Felten 1986) and at Kolonna (Felten & Hiller 2004, 1090).

¹⁰² Rutter, *Prehistoric*, lesson 3 (accessed 20/12/2006).

¹⁰³ See, Nilsson 2004, 137–139, for corridor house characteristics.

¹⁰⁴ Building BG and the House of the Tiles at Lerna (Wiencke 2000); Haus am Felsrand and Weißes Haus at Kolonna (Walter & Felten 1981), as well as Megaron A and B at Akovitika (for a summary see Nilsson 2004, 132–135).

have contributed to the function thereafter assigned to the structures, emphasising either the prominent, inconsequential or transitional significance for their settlement as a whole.¹⁰⁵

So far, however, interpretations have not combined location with the archaeological features, nor considered fully the potential significance of topography (in contrast to just the spatial distribution of the settlements) for how these structures may have been perceived within their specific contexts. If one considers these aspects more closely, both the argued isolation and liminality of their locations may be seen in a fuller light.

In terms of isolation, the House of the Tiles has long been considered as the only structure standing in late EH II Lerna (within the excavated area), but from Wiencke's recent publication it seems now that the corridor house was flanked by another, much smaller building (House 113), constructed after the demolition of Building BG and contemporary with the Lerna IIID phase.¹⁰⁶ As I will discuss further below, the new corridor house was also most likely built within a pre-existing context of older structures.¹⁰⁷ On the whole, the corridor houses were free-standing but not completely disconnected from other types of architecture, as evidenced also by the two structures adjacent to Weißes Haus at Kolonna (Färberhaus and Haus der Pithoi).¹⁰⁸ As suggested by Maran, it may be that all buildings in relation to the corridor houses were part of a special purpose context within the settlement and thus isolated from more domestic contexts, a circumstance which may have contributed to and heightened a prominent role within these settlements.¹⁰⁹ The surroundings of the corridor houses are still too little known, especially at Kolonna and Thebes, where later architecture has disturbed the remains as well as hindering full investigation, to allow conclusions as to the actual degree of isolation. The corridor houses alone at least cannot be said to have been isolated, not even in phase IIID Lerna.

The notion of the isolation of the corridor houses is also closely connected to the frequently remarked upon location at the edge of their respective settlements. This argument, in turn, is in most instances linked to their close connection to fortifications, as was the case at Lerna and Kolonna, as well as at Thebes. The full extent and purpose of the so called fortifications,

¹⁰⁵ For views in favour of the isolated/liminal character of corridor houses, see, Maran 1998, 195; Felten 1986; Nilsson 2004, 137–139; Walter & Felten 1981, 20. Cf. Wiencke 1989, 502, n. 54.

¹⁰⁶ Wiencke 2000, 150.

¹⁰⁷ *Contra*, e.g. Maran 1998, 195. Cf. Wiencke 1989, 502f., n. 54; Wiencke 2000, houses 113, 117, and 119. See further, *Chapter 4*, section on *New beside old*.

¹⁰⁸ Walter & Felten 1982, 21f. See also the site of Akovitika (Nilsson 2004, 132–135, with references).

¹⁰⁹ Maran 1998, 195, stressing the importance of the buildings in response to Felten (1986, 25f.), who on the grounds of the isolated location of corridor houses close to fortifications (i.e. the city limits), argued for an interpretation of the buildings as “dwellings of large family communities, which took their form from their practical, probably agricultural, function.”

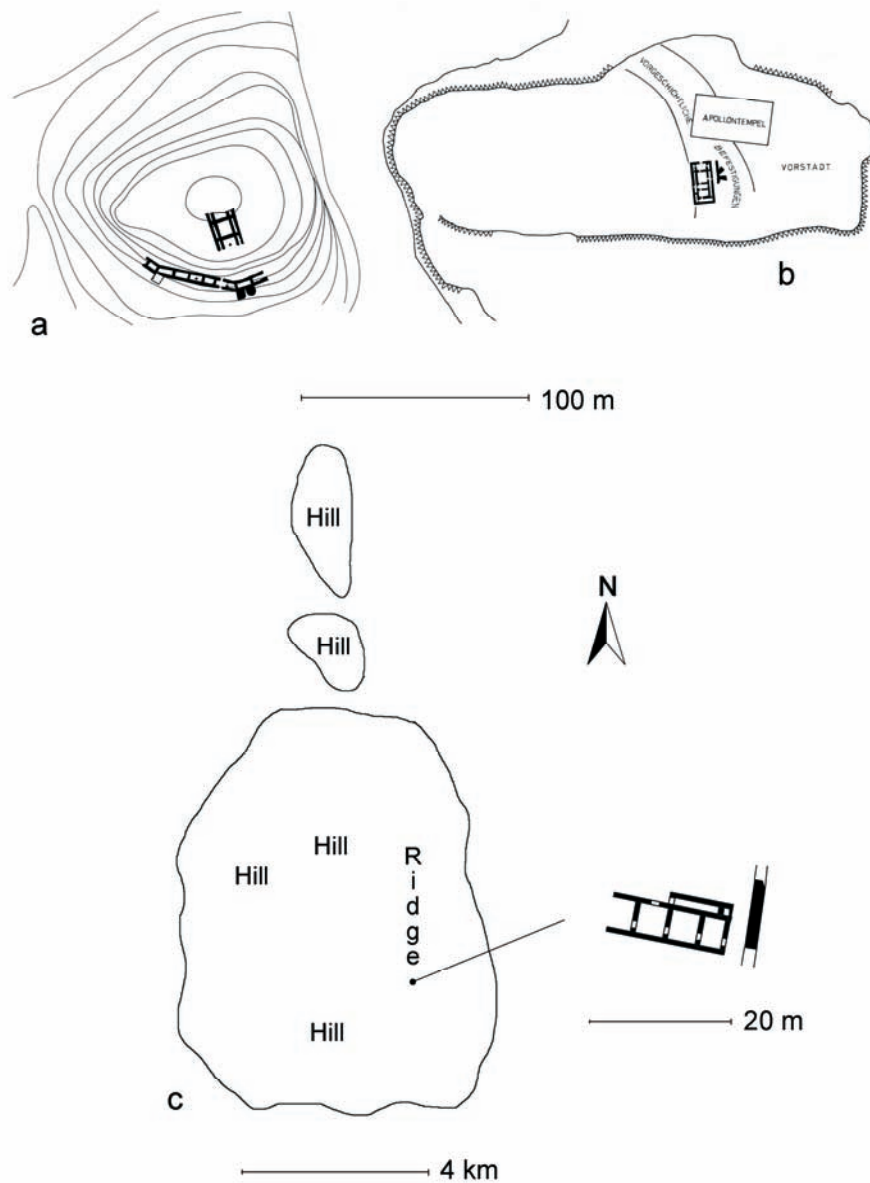


Figure 10. Topographical locations of the corridor houses at: (a) Lerna III, mid phase C (b) Kolonna III and (c) Thebes, and their connection with suggested fortification walls (information from Wiencke 2000, plans 1, 6, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Walter & Felten 1981, fig. 1, plans 1, 5; Aravantinos 1986, fig. 53; Dakouri-Hild 2001, fig. 7.1).

however, is not clear, and Maran continued his argument by suggesting that in cases where the corridor house is found to be connected to a fortification wall, the latter is rather to be seen within the special purpose context centred on the corridor house rather than related to the settlement as a whole.¹¹⁰ In the case of Lerna, the first corridor house, Building BG, was constructed on the very top of the artificial mound which the fortification seems to be encircling, and the House of the Tiles only slightly downhill. The accumulation of debris forming the mound suggests that this very spot, which had already been chosen for habitation in the Middle Neolithic period,¹¹¹ continued to be the *centre* of activity throughout the settlement's period of use.

These topographical perspectives as presented in *Figure 10* are generally overlooked. An important feature of the location lies, to my mind, in the position of the corridor houses towards the highest available elevation in their respective settlement. It is a location that would have made the two-storey buildings prominent and *highly visible contributions to the settlements' profile*. At Lerna it may very well be that the top of the mound was dedicated to some special purpose or all-communal activities, at least in the second half of the EH II period. The continued concentration of activity in this area emphasises by itself the importance of this elevated place. Rather than visualising the mound at the edge of the settlement, it seems to me more likely that any lower town connected to it would have spread out around the mound as indicated by the finds from Area D of the excavation (some 25 metres downhill towards the coast).¹¹² A wall with a thickness equal to those of Building BG and the House of the Tiles, coupled with a tile deposit, may suggest a building of considerable size in this area also, and at about the same time as Building BG. Although located on the slope of the mound, this building would nevertheless have stood some three meters lower than Building BG, a surely visibly significant difference.¹¹³

At Kolonna, the locations of the two consecutive corridor houses appear indeed to have been close to the edge of the settlement during the EH II phase as it is known today. The prehistoric town spread out further west towards the sea within an area that from late EH III was defined by consecutive fortification walls throughout the prehistoric period. Both corridor houses were partly covered by the fortifications and appended structures of the EH III and later periods.¹¹⁴ The fortifications as well as the corridor houses were constructed at the transition from the headland to the inland and are likely to have dominated, to varying degrees, the inland view from the more coastally oriented inner town of the headland.

¹¹⁰ Maran 1998, 195f.

¹¹¹ E.g. Wiencke 2000, 39f, also sections 1 and 24, for the location of the Neolithic layers and the stratigraphy in the areas of House of the Tiles and Building BG, respectively.

¹¹² Wiencke 2000, 155–159, plan 30, section 29.

¹¹³ Wiencke 2000, 158f.

¹¹⁴ Walter & Felten 1981; Felten & Hiller 2004.

The corridor house at Thebes (the so-called Fortified Building), in contrast, was not located on the highest elevation of the Kadmeia but rather on a ridge leading towards the highest elevation in the north. The Kadmeia, however, appears to have been much more topographically diverse during the Early Helladic period than at present, and made up of many spatially well defined areas.¹¹⁵ Although it is difficult to judge today, the location of the building in the Early Helladic period thus seems nevertheless to have been distinct and, considering its size, probably well above most other contemporary buildings, most likely a visible marker of its area.

Although in comparison with Lerna the evidence from Kolonna and Thebes is less clear, I propose that the relative elevation of the locations of the corridor houses, coupled with the height of the two-storey structures themselves, would have given them a central position within Early Helladic perception of their respective settlements, wherever the buildings were actually located. The structures would have been visible at a distance, as well as to some degree separated from lower lying areas in their surroundings.¹¹⁶ Issues of spatial liminality as well as some degree of isolation from other parts of the settlements may therefore be of importance for the interpretation of the buildings, as suggested by earlier researchers. These issues, however, need to be considered along with the topographic location and the most likely considerable visibility of these monumental constructions, in order to appreciate as fully as possible their roles within their settlements.

As a concluding comment it may be suggested that their location, coupled with their size, may also have been a factor contributing to the detection of the corridor houses, as excavations are often directed towards the top of mounds and low hills (e.g. Zygouries), laid out intentionally on the highest elevation, while the edges of the settlement are less commonly actively investigated. The exception is the consecutive corridor houses laid out on apparently more or less flat ground at the site of Akovitika in Messenia. In this case the investigation was a rescue excavation of a chance discovery during road construction.¹¹⁷ This possible spatial and conceptual centrality of the structures within their settlements may be one clue to the lack of less elaborate housing, which in turn is most commonly found where corridor houses are lacking.

¹¹⁵ Dakouri-Hild 2001.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Peperaki (2004, 222) commenting, although in passing, on the physical separation of the mound at Lerna, as well as the House of the Tiles and any activities connected to it, being potentially “conspicuous at a distance”.

¹¹⁷ Nilsson 2004, 132–135.

Houses and movement: the case of the House of the Tiles at Lerna

In this survey I will trace movement and circulation, contrasted to aspects of control of this movement. As illustrated in *Figure 12*, by a combination of access analysis and structural considerations, I will suggest the possibility of up to six separate spatial units within the massive walls of the House of the Tiles (Areas 1–6). These spaces were, I argue, complemented and further defined by four separate spaces on the outside, around the house, related to surrounding buildings (Areas A–D). Areas 1–6 and A–D refer therefore to my own spatial division, and Rooms 1–21 as well as designations of the doorways refer to the specific room and feature numbers and letters used by Wiencke as illustrated in *Figure 11*.

The interior

Two entrances led into the main part of the ground floor of this particular corridor house. The entrances were located centrally, one at each short side, and between them the rooms were arranged in line with aligned, off-centre doorways. The eastern entrance led a visitor through to the largest room of the House of the Tiles by way of an antechamber (13, considerably larger in Weißes Haus than in the House of the Tiles). As summarized and interpreted by Shaw in a frequently cited article of 1987,¹¹⁸ the large room (12) is distinguished from the rest of the rooms not only by its size but also by the width of the doorway leading into the room, the stationary hearth in the centre of the room,¹¹⁹ and the superior treatment of the wall surfaces and special wooden dressing of the doorways.¹²⁰ These aspects support the generally accepted interpretation of the formal and public nature of this particular room. The fact that at Lerna this entrance to both the House of the Tiles and Building BG was from a continuously open terrace of some sort is a further indication of the special status of the room. For the present survey, the antechamber and the larger room make up Area 1.

¹¹⁸ Shaw 1987. The fullest review of the architecture of the corridor houses can be found in Shaw 1987 and 1990, where he synthesises the information from all the buildings, and also in Nilsson 2004.

¹¹⁹ In the House of the Tiles the central hearth is surmised by a shallow depression filled with ashes, although without traces of burning (Wiencke 2000, 241) in the centre of the room and by analogy to the *in situ* hearth of Weißes Haus (hearth at Kolonna: Walter & Felten 1981, 20, figs. 5, 16; further see, e.g. Shaw 1987, 62; Nilsson 2004, 90).

¹²⁰ Peperaki (2004, 219) emphasises the importance of it being only the doorways to the largest room that were furnished with wooden doorjambs. Nilsson comments on the absence of pivot stones for the workings of a door, as found in other contexts. Her suggestion is that the many doorways found were not equipped with solid doors (Nilsson 2004, 139, feature 6). Wiencke (2000, 297) pictures wooden doors in many of the doorways, but admits that there is no evidence for how they were constructed. See, also Walter and Felten (1981, Abb. 15) for a proposed reconstruction of doors for Weißes Haus.

A similar arrangement was present on the opposite, western side of the building (Area 2). Doorway J, of more normal width, leads into an anteroom (5) and then into the larger room (6), the latter by way of an off-centre doorway and not a larger central opening such as in Area 1. A smaller room (8) was also accessible to the south from the antechamber. As full circulation was possible through the ground floor, from the large eastern doorway, by way of the large Room 12, the western rooms are usually given an inferior status in the relation set up between the two halves of the house. The smaller sizes of these rooms compared to the main Room, 12, and their less careful finishing, have resulted in an interpretation of these rooms as ‘back rooms’, having a more private nature than the large ‘front’ room.¹²¹ However, because of the analogous arrangement of rooms accessible from a separate doorway, whatever the nature of this western part of the ground floor, I would rather see it treated as a separate space in its own right. In fact, these rooms do also occupy a slightly larger area of the ground floor but, in contrast to the eastern rooms, had their width cut short by the corridors and stairways along their south side.

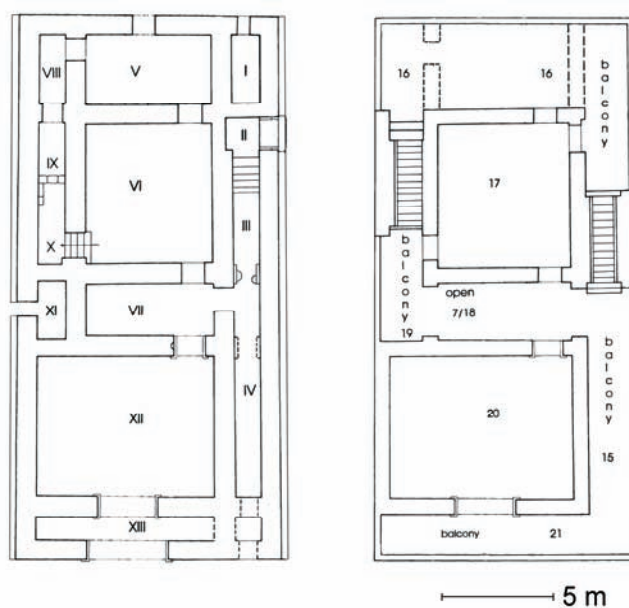


Figure 11. House of the Tiles at Lerna III. Numbering of spaces (after Wiencke 2000, fig. I.103, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

¹²¹ Pullen 1985, 284; Nilsson 2004, 138f.; Shaw 1987, 77–79; 1990, 192–194.

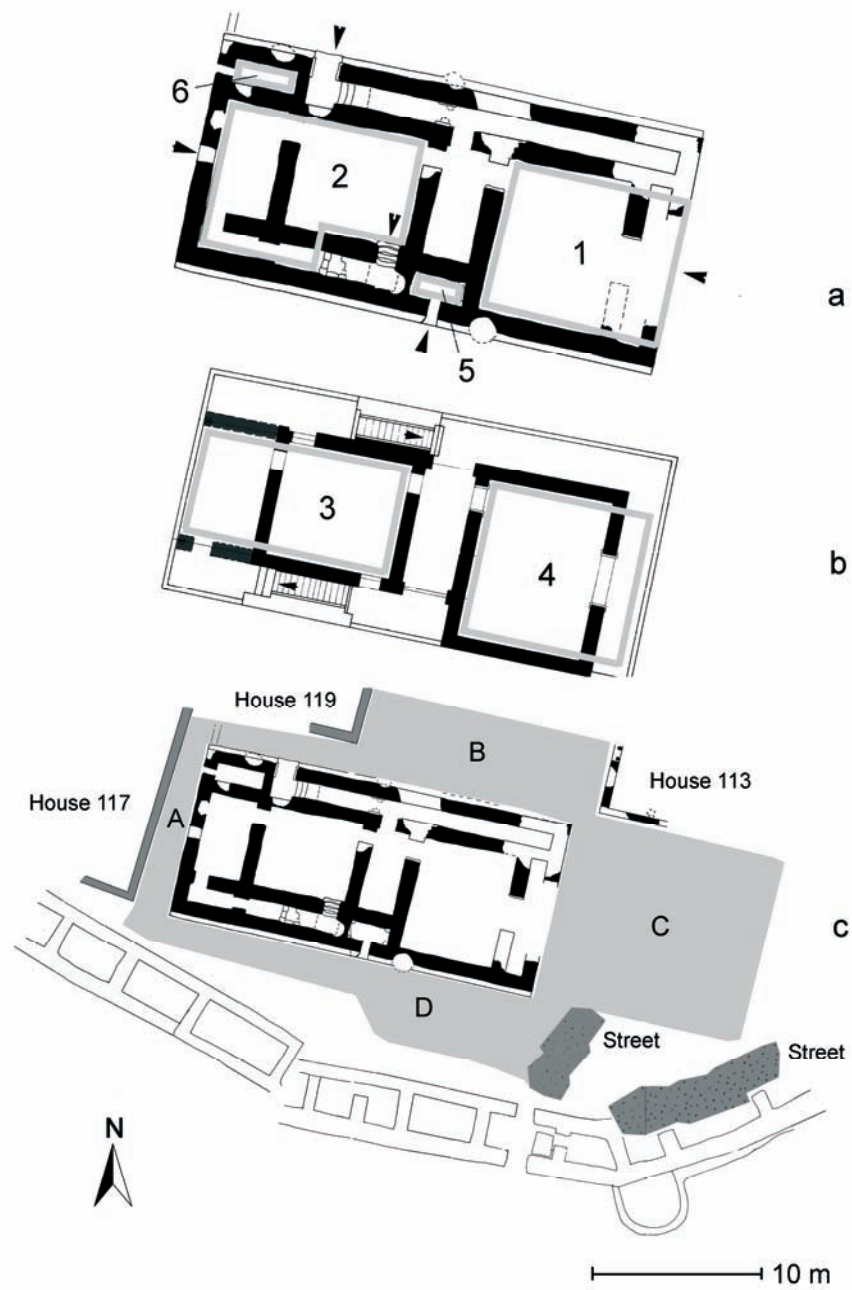


Figure 12. House of the Tiles at Lerna III. Proposed spatial division of (a) first floor, (b) second floor and (c) exterior (information from Wiencke 2000, fig. I.103, plan 8).

An upper floor of the House of the Tiles has been reconstructed from the presence of stairways leading to an upper storey within the so-called corridors.¹²² A second storey is structurally separated from the ground floor. Access to the upper floor of the House of the Tiles was also partly from the exterior, and I suggest a twofold division of the upper floor, analogous to the ground floor (Areas 3, West, and 4, East). Area 3 was accessed only by way of an internal stairway (stairway 9–10) from Room 6. This arrangement differs from that of Weißes Haus where the stairways appear to have been accessible from both the exterior and interior of the house (*Fig. 8b*).¹²³ Following the layout of the upper storey as reconstructed by Wiencke, and similarly by Shaw,¹²⁴ the western part consisted of one room (17), corresponding to the larger room on the ground floor, adjoining a deep balcony or anteroom facing west (16). Correspondingly, the eastern part (Area 4) consisted of a large room, but on account of the narrow anteroom of the ground floor, the upper room (20) faced almost directly onto the terrace below. The most direct access to this eastern half of the upper floor was by way of the exterior stairway from Doorway A.

Continuing the survey around the exterior of the House of the Tiles, it is possible to add at least one more spatially distinct unit to the four above. Thus, Area 5 will be the well-equipped storage room 11, with its many recovered sealings and vessels.¹²⁵ A similar small space existed on the western side of the NW corner of the building. Very little was recovered from this room but for the sake completeness it will be included in the survey as Area 6.¹²⁶

Thus, to sum up, I think it is possible to argue for four and possibly even six differentiated spaces within the House of the Tiles. At the risk of oversimplification: three doors led from the exterior into the main part of the building; I think it is quite possible to interpret this in lines of at least a threefold division within the layout of the House of the Tiles. On account of the internal position of Stairway 9–10, Shaw was also surely right in suggesting a closer spatial relationship between the rooms in the western half of the building.¹²⁷ The division between Areas 2 and 3 is therefore based on their location on separate floors of the building, a possibly meaningful separation as regards their use and perception. Their separation is not necessarily to be equated with the other defined spaces recognized here. It should be noted, however, that based on the current reconstruction of the upper floor,

¹²² For views on the arrangement of the upper floor of the House of the Tiles, see Shaw 1987, fig. 3; Wiencke 1989, 504, n. 60; Shaw 1990; Wiencke 2000, 299–301, fig. I:103.

¹²³ Walter & Felten 1981, 16, 20, figs. 5, 14.

¹²⁴ Wiencke 2000, 299–301, fig. I:103; Shaw 1990, 61–65, fig. 3.

¹²⁵ Wiencke 2000, 233–236. Sealings: Heath 1958, Wiencke 1969; 1974; Aruz 1994; Wein-garten 2000.

¹²⁶ Wiencke 2000, 216f.

¹²⁷ Shaw 1987, 79.

Area 3 would have been accessible both directly from the exterior by way of Stairway 2–3 and Room 14, as well as indirectly through Rooms 19–20.

In no place do any real hindrances to movement appear to have existed. Any subdivision of the layout of the House of the Tiles should instead acknowledge that paths of circulation were indeed available through most areas of the house and around its exterior.¹²⁸ Two doorways led into the main part of the ground floor and one to the upper floor from the exterior. Circulation was probably possible between them, either of them functioning both as entrance and exit. In the case of the House of the Tiles, the upper floor was also reachable by way of the interior staircase from Room 6.¹²⁹

I favour, however, an interpretation that emphasizes variability in movement over one of full (uninterrupted and/or sanctioned) circulation. *The doors, leading into distinct parts of the House of the Tiles, are indicative of a strong wish to direct movement around and within the building.* As Shaw commented: people “who came up the northern stairway were not necessarily to go into the other rooms of the building.”¹³⁰

The exterior

In continuing this argument and the survey of the House of the Tiles to the exterior of the building, it is important to emphasize at the outset that the House of the Tiles did not exist in an architectural vacuum. Unfortunately, this is how it is often portrayed. Before Wiencke’s recent publication, this was to some degree a result of insufficient publications, but, perhaps mainly of discussions largely being concentrated primarily on the architecture or the idea of the corridor house alone.¹³¹ I will take the opportunity to return to this contention below in *Chapter 4*, as I think that fuller contextual analyses have much to add to the understanding of the workings of the excavated area at Lerna from a number of different perspectives (contemporary and diachronic). The relative arrangements of Early Helladic settlements, and their significance, have not been sufficiently explored, and Wiencke’s publication has created the opportunity to do that for the excavated part of EH II Lerna.¹³² By adding a consideration of the exterior spaces and their importance for the understanding of the House of the Tiles itself, I hope to widen the basis for further discussions.

¹²⁸ Nilsson 2004, 138.

¹²⁹ In his 1990 article Shaw also argued for a similar access from room 12 to the upper room 20. In a new reconstruction he makes space for two stairways on the northern side, both leading up to room 20, one from the exterior and one from the interior (Shaw 1990, fig. 1d–e, 193).

¹³⁰ Shaw 1987, 79.

¹³¹ E.g. Shaw 1987; 1990; Nilsson 2004, 82–115; Peperaki 2004.

¹³² Wiencke 2000.

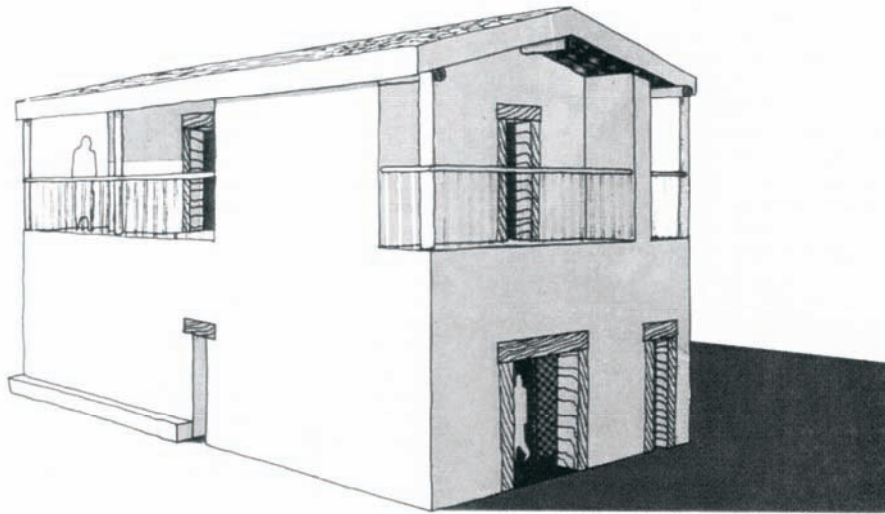


Figure 13. Reconstruction of House of the Tiles at Lerna III (after Shaw 1987, fig. 5, courtesy Archaeological Institute of America/*American Journal of Archaeology*).

For present purposes, it is important to try to visualise how a building like the House of Tiles would have been perceived by the people moving around it. An archaeological plan of the House of the Tiles is an invaluable tool but does not help much in visualising the actual appearance of walls and doorways. Very simply and obviously, a reconstruction, whether completely true to the original or not, begins to do just that (*Figs. 9a and 13*). In the reconstructions of corridor houses, the doors appear as eyes in the massive walls. With their two storeys and their location on elevated ground, the corridor houses are likely to have loomed high over any most likely one-storey buildings in their environs. Set in relation to its closest surroundings, the full architectural context of the area may have helped in focusing attention and directing movement in relation to a house like the House of the Tiles.

Low benches have been excavated along both exterior long sides of the House of the Tiles.¹³³ These benches, as well as the terrace in front of the building, concentrate activity and suggest an opportunity for people to spend time there for one reason or another. If the benches should be assigned any specific use, it is reasonable to connect the northern benches with the entrance up the stairways to the second storey, and the southern ones with the door into Room 11. In the latter case, the unusually narrow, 0.60 metre wide,¹³⁴ doorway was constraining in itself, and I think it is realistic to argue for restricted access to the room, perhaps by use of a sealing practice that is so evident from its interior. It is also likely that the benches were connected

¹³³ Wiencke 2000, 243.

¹³⁴ Wiencke 2000, 232.

with some activity on the exterior of the House of the Tiles where open spaces are likely to have existed on all sides of the building (Areas A–D, *Fig. 12c*, for the details of the surrounding buildings and development through time, see also *Figs. 28–30*). Based on their size, all but one of the Areas A–D may have been a focus for some outdoor activities.

The assignment and analysis of Area A is based on the contention by Wiencke that both Houses 117 and 119 were very likely still standing at the time of the House of the Tiles.¹³⁵ As will be discussed further below in *Chapter 4*, the alignments of 117 (in the same place as the older 115), 119, as well as 113, with the House of the Tiles, are in themselves strong indications of their contemporaneity. The long wall of House 117, already present at the time of the construction of the House of the Tiles, would have helped to form a slightly narrowing passage passing the western short wall of the new building and the entrances to Rooms 5 and 1 (Areas 2 and 6). The width of the passage, approximately 2.00–2.50 metres, is not very narrow but in comparison with the apparent arrangement on the other sides of the house it may have been differently perceived. A continuation of this passage/street may also have been accomplished by House 119, thus similarly restraining the approach towards Doorway A and the upper floor.

A comparison between the two corridor houses at Lerna will give the second exterior space for the present survey. It will also pinpoint some interesting parallels in how movement around the buildings may have been accomplished. Thus, in IIIC Lerna (*Fig. 29*) House CA would have effectively detached the front of Building BG from any activity or any access to an upper floor, that similarly with the late House of the Tiles may have taken place or existed on its southwest long side. In IIID a similar, although much less ‘closed’ separation can perhaps be interpreted from the location of House 113, northeast of the corridor house. This house, constructed on the demolished grounds of Building BG, was initially dated to the EH III period,¹³⁶ but was reassigned by Wiencke to very late phase IIIC or IIID, and thereby contemporary with the House of the Tiles.¹³⁷ Located on the same orientation as the House of the Tiles, the smaller house created an opening of approximately 2.50 metres between the two buildings, incidentally the same width as the entrance into the large Room 12 of the House of the Tiles.¹³⁸ The exterior to the north of the House of the Tiles, beyond House 113, has for the present survey been labelled Area B.

¹³⁵ Wiencke 2000, 151–153, and pp. 213, 648 (summaries).

¹³⁶ Caskey 1966, 146f. House A3 (House 113 in Wiencke 2000), was assigned to the first phase of the EH III period, contemporary for example with a post-hole apsidal building, on the basis that “there was no appreciable difference in ground level and separate strata could not be distinguished”.

¹³⁷ Wiencke 2000, 150.

¹³⁸ Wiencke 2000, 150, 236.

The terrace to the east of the House of the Tiles (here Area C), is the continuation of the practice of an open space at this specific place, a tradition that had already been initiated in phase IIIB.¹³⁹ At the time of the House of the Tiles, the area encompassed the full width of the building up to House 113 in the north and extended at least six metres and probably ten metres to the east, perhaps more.¹⁴⁰ A phase IIID street cut off Area C to the south, 3.00 metres southeast of the southeast corner of the House of the Tiles.¹⁴¹ The street ran from the former gateway of the fortification towards the open space to the east of the House of the Tiles. By its route it made up the western boundary of Area C. The defined space thus created to the south of the House of the Tiles will be called Area D. In terms of separation, a street, of course, does not have the structural quality that a standing building has. The area between the street and the House of the Tiles, nevertheless, appear as a match to the opening created by House 113 and the route of the street created a similar passage in relation to the southeast corner of the House of the Tiles as House 113 did to the northeast corner. Also, the surface of the street (2.00–2.90 metres wide) consisting of earth and some larger stones distinguished it from the surrounding surfaces.¹⁴² Furthermore, a comparison again with the spaces of Building BG and Lerna phase IIIC may be significant. Thus, the separate open space by the south-western long side of the older corridor building, created then by the location of House CA, may very well have been continued during the use of the House of the Tiles in the next phase.

These four exterior spaces were not only defined by surrounding features, including the House of the Tiles itself, nearby structures and streets. At the time of the construction of the House of the Tiles these areas were also probably covered by a continuous layer of yellow clay paving (*Fig. 12c*).¹⁴³ The extensive clay-paved area arranged around the House of the Tiles may have encouraged a stroll around the house. It certainly framed and marked out the limits of the House of the Tiles. The notional Early Helladic inhabitant of the settlement of Lerna on this stroll, however, would have passed through as many as four more-or-less clearly defined spaces, corresponding to the four sides of the House of the Tiles, and in each case related to a doorway.

There are also some agreements in measurements that may be meaningful. 2.00–3.00 metres is the width of the openings from Area C into both Areas B and D. It is the width of the entrance into the large Room 12 on the

¹³⁹ The development of this open space through time will be further discussed in *Chapter 4*.

¹⁴⁰ Wiencke 2000, 286. If W-133 should be dated to the same phase as the House of the Tiles (p. 160) it is possible that the area extended up to 15 metres, to this wall.

¹⁴¹ Wiencke 2000, 287.

¹⁴² Wiencke 2000, 287, also section 19.

¹⁴³ Wiencke 2000, 283, 286f.: yellow clay paving: at south c.a 2.50; southeast, above CA, ca. 5.00, at west ca 1.50, at north at least 4.00.

ground floor of the House of the Tiles. It is furthermore the width of the corridor space by the western short side, Area A. The same measurement is also a common width of Early Helladic streets as exemplified by the Lerna phase IIID streets themselves. This distance does not make up a very narrow passage and need not have been perceived as hindering or discouraging movement. On the other hand, buildings rising on each side would have helped to mark the entrances to this passage as transitional in relation to the open spaces to the north and south. The western façade would have had the longest and closest contact with the surrounding architecture. Its location would also have been most removed from the main circulation around the building as indicated by the benches and terrace. A transitional character is, therefore, suggested for the full western passage. This should not be translated into a non-use zone, it has been proposed here as a separate space in its own right within the House of the Tiles. Its size and form seems suggested, nevertheless, that we should not visualise any larger gatherings of people in waiting here as may very well have been the case for the other three areas proposed here.

All four exterior spaces presented, however, define and enhance the potential of the suggested five- to six-fold division of the interior, and project, I propose, a controlled environment, similar to that of Building BG, but accomplished in a different way. Looking at the comparison between Building BG and the House of the Tiles, there is a notable difference between IIIC and IIID Lerna (*Figs. 29–30*). The difference lies especially in the strong focus on the front of the building and its terrace in the former period, articulated by the location of House CA in relation to Gateway A and Building BG. If one includes surrounding architecture in the analysis, and the large plastered area around the House of the Tiles, the information from phase IIID Lerna projects a distinctly more ‘open’ picture, as discussed. One, I believe, important point of reflection, however, is that the House of the Tiles was clearly building on traditions from Building BG, traditions that apart from architectural likeness and similar location probably also included similar ways of approaching it, both physically and conceptually.

Uses of the House of the Tiles: an alternative hypothesis

In order to place the above into the perceptual world of the Early Helladic people, I will continue by considering how the House of the Tiles may actually have worked within the daily lives of the people having some contact with it. Most importantly, I think, there would have been ‘rules of engagement’ defining the workings of different spaces. How and if circulation was realised, within and around the House of the Tiles, should in the end be ascribed to the norms and principles guiding its use and position within the society as a whole. These rules of engagement are hinted at in the architecture but it is not likely that we have the full picture. Although full circulation

was possible, it need not mean that this was practised, and whether it was or not is likely to have been context-specific and changing.

Olympia Peperaki has recently performed a reanalysis of the architectural setting of the House of the Tiles.¹⁴⁴ In it she challenges earlier interpretations of the building as varyingly public and private in favour of a view that emphasises “the potential use of different architectural features in ways that not only enabled the ordering of multiple, temporally specific settings for interaction, but also placed particular emphasis on the transition from one setting to another.”¹⁴⁵ Doorways, corridors and balconies give the users of the houses the possibility of variously controlling, manipulating and/or changing the preconditions for contact between different parts of the house and between the inside and outside of the house, between people at any given moment occupied in either place.¹⁴⁶ Her conclusions are in many ways parallel to my own and I concur fully in her interpretation of Lerna, and specifically the House of the Tiles, as “a *place* to and from which different people may have moved to fulfil particular needs or *obligations* and to promote and pursue different *aspirations*” and also as “a place that may have attracted different people at different times and for different reasons.”¹⁴⁷

However, although the architectural features have the potential to be manipulated in the way she suggests, I have some problems in seeing the mysteriousness of the building projected by the stage-like use of doorways and balconies. The architecture and context of the House of the Tiles and the proposed division into six interior and four exterior spaces suggest to me a less extraordinary quality, set within the daily life of the inhabitants of Lerna. Furthermore, in response to much earlier research, the argued subdivision, I think, suggests a *communal* character of, or at least a communal interest in, the corridor buildings, rather than a more restricted, ‘ruler-oriented’ interpretation with a focus on restricted access and governance.

As argued also by Peperaki, for a subdivision of the kind suggested here, I suggest that concepts of public or private need not have applied, at least not in the same way as for the building as *one* structural and conceptual unit. Rather than an interpretation based on the House of the Tiles as a single entity, I would like to propose one that focuses on the flexibility and multifunctionality apparent from the building itself and its surroundings. Shaw saw a development of the corridor house form from a doubling of the standard Early Helladic house form, back-to-back, with the subsequent addition

¹⁴⁴ Peperaki 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Peperaki 2004, 219.

¹⁴⁶ Peperaki 2004, 219–222.

¹⁴⁷ Peperaki 2004, 226f., original emphases. See further Wiencke on different accesses to the rooms of the House of the Tiles: “We are probably justified in concluding that different classes of people with differing social or political roles were being provided for, in other words that the House of the Tiles may illustrate in some way the differentiated social ranking of the community” (1989, 504).

of a second floor by adding corridors with stairways, as both an access and to support balconies as part of the upper structures.¹⁴⁸ I find this model both attractive and credible, as it indicates a local development in response to new needs and only secondarily, if at all, to eastern influence/inspiration (for which the building is seen as a ready-to-use model applied to Early Helladic society).¹⁴⁹ I also find it to be a very reasonable alternative way of interpreting the fully developed corridor houses. The fragmentation of space may be interpreted as due to differences in use, activities, and users.

Following up on the survey above, the interior spaces can be connected to the exterior to form possibly meaningful and separate zones of engagement between the inhabitants and visitors to Lerna and the activities related to the House of the Tiles. The open space by the eastern short side of the House of the Tiles has a long history prior to the construction of the IIID phase building, as we shall see further in *Chapter 4*. From an early point in EH II this area was prepared, it seems, to receive large gatherings of people. As far as the excavation is concerned, the people came to this area from the south, a route that was soon firmly established by a stairway, the gateway of the later fortification and by streets and surrounding architecture. Well in line with the public character of this open space was Room 12 with its superior finishing and extra wide doorway opening on to the open space. If one combines Areas 1 and C, perhaps this context may be seen as adapted for open meetings, councils and or consultations, officiated out in the open or for smaller gatherings or under certain circumstances in Room 12, either separate or in combination.

The open space to the north of the House of the Tiles (Area B) has a natural connection with the entrance and stairway to the upper floor and most directly to the eastern part of the upper floor (Area 4). The long bench covering probably the full long side of the building here, as well as in the south, may be seen as a place for waiting and at the same time an arena for interaction between the people assembled there in connection with the activities in the rooms at the top of the stairs. In contrast, the western façade was not equipped with benches and the size of the space in front of it is dissimilar to that of the three other sides of the building. Area A gave the most direct access to Areas 2 and 6 and indirectly also to Area 3 on the upper floor. As is also the case for Area 4, the material excavated from the inside of the House of the Tiles unfortunately does not provide enough information to establish the activities that took place in these areas, inside or outside.¹⁵⁰ Purely speculatively, the benches and the larger open space in the northern section may indicate a more continuous need for visits from the outside, perhaps some

¹⁴⁸ Shaw 1987, 76f.

¹⁴⁹ For a discussion on the inspiration behind the corridor house type, see Wiencke 1989, 504, n. 59, with references; also Shaw 1990, 188–192.

¹⁵⁰ See further Nilsson (2004, 82–105, tables 5a–c, 6a–d) for a summary and thorough review of the finds.

sort of ‘scribal’, administrative or documentary, function. The western section of the ground- and upper floors were then something that did not call for such frequent visits, perhaps some sort of craftwork; neither basketry, weaving or woodcarving, for example, are likely to have left much trace in the archaeological record. Another, non-exclusive possibility is temporary lodgings and connected activities as suggested by Nilsson.¹⁵¹

Turning finally to the southern long side of the House of the Tiles, this is an area from which we have some indications as to the activities carried out here, at least as connected to Room 11 (Area 5). On an architectural note first, the narrow opening into Room 11 is the only opening from the southern long side (apart from possible balconies on the upper floor). This room and Room 1 (Area 6) are also the only rooms that can only be reached directly from the exterior.¹⁵² In contrast to the possibility of circulation throughout the interior of the building, the 0.60 metre opening into Room 11 is its only entrance and exit, and the direction of movement may to some degree be seen as reversed in comparison. For Rooms 1 and 11, movement may be said to be rather *from the interior towards the exterior*, whereas for all other spaces the focus is on movement *into* the house. This separation of the two rooms from the interior is I think a further indication of the separate ‘function’ of these spaces, not necessarily immediately connected to the interior of the House of the Tiles. The inventory from the room comprised among other things a large amount of sealings, possibly once attached to vessels and boxes of perishable material, possibly as many as fifty-five saucers and eight sauceboats.¹⁵³ I think it is possible, as suggested by Peperaki, that the assemblage of Room 11 was gathered together for the purpose of one specific event, the tableware collected or specially produced, and the boxes or vessels and their contents brought in from different locations (judging from the different seals used).¹⁵⁴

To recap the possible parallel between the earlier Building BG and the House of the Tiles, the side of the earlier building comparable to the southern side of the House of the Tiles was at one time completely separated from the front of the building by House CA. For the House of the Tiles, the south side was, after the large frontal terrace, the space most extensively covered by the yellow clay paving (*Fig. 12c*: Area C). Furthermore, the surface south of the House of the Tiles is noted for being well trodden beyond the area covered by the yellow clay paving also.¹⁵⁵ If the inventory of Room 11

¹⁵¹ Nilsson 2004, e.g. 144f.

¹⁵² Although, Nilsson (2004, 113) notes the possibility of an opening in the wall, a window, between Rooms 11 and 7.

¹⁵³ Wiencke 2000, 232–236; Nilsson 2004, 98f.; Peperaki 2004, 223f.

¹⁵⁴ Peperaki 2004, 223–225. She further puts this discussion in the interesting context of power-relationships and the House of the Tiles “as a locus of ongoing contests and conflicts”, a process towards ranking, and complexity “in the making” (esp. 226f.).

¹⁵⁵ Wiencke 2000, 285–287.

should be seen as providing the evidence for one social gathering including food and drink, then on account of the limited space within any part of the building, the location for this event is more likely to have been the exterior of the House of the Tiles. If so, that assemblage may be indicative of a series of such events quite possibly linked to the southern long side of the house, in direct connection with the room and catered from that room, and possibly partially separate from the activity at the front of the building.

If the exterior spaces can be thus interpreted and connected with the interior of the House of the Tiles, by reconnecting to the development of the corridor building as visualised by Shaw, the House of the Tiles as a whole can loosely be imagined as being made up of several smaller units, 'houses'.¹⁵⁶ These units can be seen as drawn together and established under the same roof by the force of the common communal interest in their activities. The separation of the different units on the exterior is to some extent marked by the corners of the building and by surrounding features. On the inside the as yet unmentioned Rooms 7 and 18 provide transitional zones on both floors, separating the western from the eastern half. It can be suggested that these rooms, which have been interpreted as light wells, share the transitional function of the corridors, as well as the doors and stairways, between different parts of the building and its exterior.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, 'communal' need not counter the possibility of some aspects of control over the construction and/or use of the building. Indeed, the House of the Tiles in itself projects a strong sense of control and a large amount of pre-planning in its construction. This initial control could have been accomplished by certain persons who, through their own initiative or accumulative family ties, had risen to a certain status within the society (knowledge/position/authority). The fact that connection was possible through most parts of the building is an indication of some degree of management on the part of the users inside the house of the people on the outside.

By emphasising the communal interest, I acknowledge the suggestion by Nilsson who interpreted the corridor houses as a community-wide concern without any clear hierarchical qualities.¹⁵⁸ However, instead of placing the buildings at the edge of the settlement, spatially and conceptually, as a transitional locus for the purposes of trade and traders, I see them as located at the very centre of community attention. This interpretation is most fully confirmed by the information from Lerna and the House of the Tiles, but I also see many parallels with the less well-known contexts surrounding the other

¹⁵⁶ Shaw himself presented a similar alternative (1990, 194).

¹⁵⁷ For the interpretations of these spaces, see Walter & Felten 1981, 19, fig. 14; Shaw 1987, 62–64; Wiencke 2000, 229, 299–301.

¹⁵⁸ Nilsson 2004, esp. 136–145, 208–214. The similarities are obvious between her scenario 3 (p. 139) and my proposal, although I do not see a similar division within the House of the Tiles of display and service.

currently-known corridor houses. These parallels suggest that these buildings may have worked in similar ways within their own respective communities, although many questions still remain for them as well as for Lerna. The suggestion is a combination of their topographical location, their still unmatched architecture, and the patterns of movement around them, as exemplified by the House of the Tiles, which seem to have involved a substantial number of people, most likely on a regular basis.

In my proposed scenario, it is likely that the compositions of people active within the different areas of the House of the Tiles that I have suggested, and those mainly remaining outside, changed with the occasion or activity, purpose, time of day or time of year. *The persons in control of movement need not differ largely from the persons whose movement is being controlled except perhaps in a temporal way.* That circulation was possible through most of the building and around its exterior probably does mean that it was so used, on the same flexible and context-specific basis. The values of space, finally, would have been shifting with the activities and the people engaging in the activities, contributing or receiving, at any given point in time. I envision the building itself and the area around it as teeming with people at most times of the day, season and year. I see the top of the mound full of activity, full of people occupied in different ways, with different purposes, for a visit perhaps from outside the settlement of Lerna or from a nearby house, to engage in some activity or just to meet other people.

What about other houses?

The discussion above should be seen as a model for an alternative way to look at the perception of houses in the Early Helladic period—as one approach to nuance our understanding of the people of the period. The main difference from earlier analyses of the House of the Tiles, and they have not been few, is that I have given the exterior equal emphasis to the interior, and widened the analysis to include information on the architecture and other features in relation to the building under analysis. The discussion has been concerned with the specific conditions of the House of the Tiles, not primarily as a corridor house but as a building, any building, in relation to its surroundings. As a model emphasising movements, relations, visibility, control and the possible manipulation of the perception of spaces, it also has the potential to be applied to other examples. With the complex character of the House of the Tiles, and its high degree of preservation, the result of the application of the model to more ‘ordinary’ settings will perhaps produce less complex results, but not necessarily less interesting. Comparisons between different applications are also potentially valuable in themselves.

The suggested fragmented structure of the corridor house type points the way to considerations of the more ‘ordinary’ Early Helladic house. Halstead

has commented on how, “walling off of the family household will have isolated a unit too small to be economically or socially viable”.¹⁵⁹ For this statement he acknowledges the contacts needed for upholding important social and economic connections between families by way of, for example, ‘marriage alliances’, and economic transaction such as upholding a viable population of their own animal herd. These factors could have been important for the working economy as well as for forming valuable connections within and between regions, but they need not make the household less workable as a social unit or the house as a workable definition for such a unit. The walls of the house (if a building constructed for habitation) are a strong statement of the need for definition of the group we may call the ‘household’ and the properties connected to this group.

Quite in contrast to the corridor houses, smaller houses such as House E at Aghios Kosmas and House L at Eutresis have rarely more than one door leading into their interior (*Fig. 14a–b*). Entrance into these houses was usually through an open forecourt, and the only way to reach the interior back wall would have been through the rooms arranged in line and connected by off-centre, aligned doorways. Few houses were, however, as well-defined. Kolonna town V is again the notable exception, where two-to-three room axial houses are appended to each other’s long sides to form house blocks (*Fig. 14d*).¹⁶⁰ It is worth noting, though, that the best preserved block is considerably more organic in nature than the reconstructed blocks to the north. Apart from these and other similar structures, the apsidal house type of EH II and III is otherwise more easily defined (*Fig. 14c*), while the tightly arranged room complexes with shared walls between different units as present within many EH II settlements makes the definition of separate houses difficult.

A further complication is the poor preservation of doorways. The three preserved doorways at Lithares are of course far too few for the fifty-five ‘architectural units’/rooms.¹⁶¹ This uncertainty at Lithares, and similarly at other sites, allowed Harrison his basis for combining rooms that had otherwise been considered separate, to arrive at his suggestion of multi-roomed complexes as a complement to the ‘traditional’ type of houses.¹⁶² His argument also clearly highlights the problems we face when trying to define more private or public parts of houses for which we often do not know the outline. In cases such as the one mentioned from Aghios Kosmas, and for apsidal houses, it is reasonable to assign a higher degree of privacy to the

¹⁵⁹ Halstead 1999, 83.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Walter & Felten 1981, plan 7: Steinplan Stadt V.

¹⁶¹ Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 16.

¹⁶² Harrison 1995, for Lithares: p. 35.

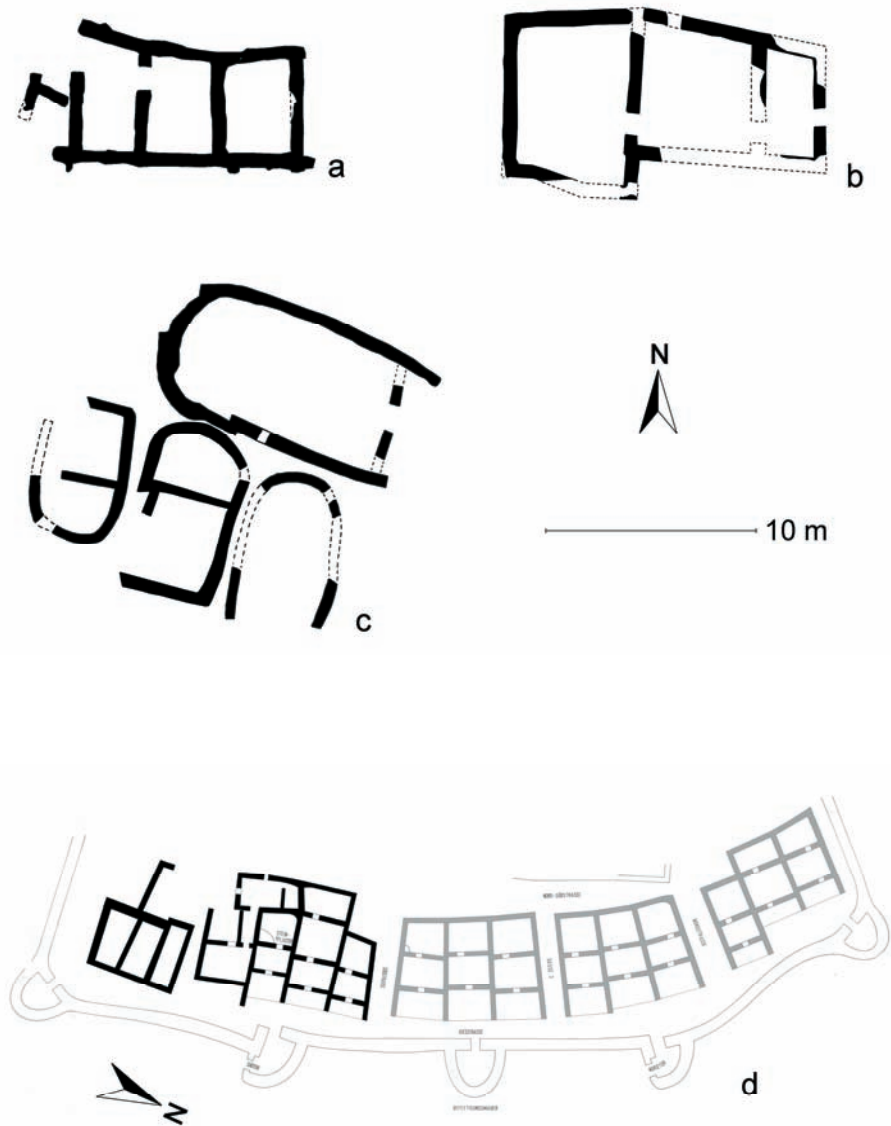


Figure 14. Plans of houses and house complexes mentioned in the text: (a) House E at Aghios Kosmas, (b) House L at Eutresis, (c) apsidal houses at Lerna IV and (d) house complexes at Kolonna V (after Mylonas 1959, fig. 7; Goldman 1931, fig. 13; Rutter 1995, plan 5, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Walter & Felten 1981, fig. 22, plan 7).

innermost room, as this is the least accessible. It is not necessary, however to equate privacy with the degree of accessibility. Privacy may be a highly contextual matter.

Konsola has argued for a common role of spaces (halls/forecourts) opening onto streets, and the streets themselves, as spaces for public life of the settlement.¹⁶³ The halls or forecourts are generally smaller, narrower, than the rooms of the building to which they are appended. In some instances they are fitted with stone-paved floors and are then generally reconstructed as unroofed.¹⁶⁴ Often they are characterised by an exterior doorway that is broader or otherwise structurally different from the interior ones (e.g. Aghios Kosmas, House E, *Fig. 14a*), or the front wall has been replaced by an arrangement with *antae* (apsidal houses in general). Their location and appearance suggest them to be more open to their surroundings as they often open on to streets, alleys, or small open spaces between houses. The halls and forecourts are spaces where the public and private may have merged. They are bounded as part of adjoining rooms but set apart from them as unroofed or otherwise distinct. The actual use of these spaces is difficult to ascertain. At Aghios Kosmas, two of the three courts of the main houses were found completely empty, and in the third court (E1) only a small jug was found.¹⁶⁵ “Nothing of consequence” was found in the large (interior?) court (24) of House W/S at Zygouries.¹⁶⁶ A number of activities may, however, be suggested from material found within the house, such as spinning, grinding, other kinds of food preparation and, to a certain degree, the keeping of small animals. Apart from this, the social aspect should be considered as Konsola argued.

In the corridor houses, vestibules of different size and appearance lead the way into the interior of the houses. At the Weißes Haus and House of the Tiles the doorways leading into these rooms were placed centrally on the short side and were wider than the off-centre interior doorways (*Figs. 8b and 11*). In both cases the rooms behind the vestibules are generally accepted as places of meetings of some kind. In less grandiose settings the function may have been similar, limited (or not) to the outer room/court, looking out towards the arguably public arena of the streets. Again, the status of the vestibules and the whole house is likely to have changed with the situation.

As a final note on the values of spaces, it may be argued that double walls, such as those at Askitarío for example (*Fig. 21c*, e.g. between Houses A and E), could have been special measures taken to uphold the separate

¹⁶³ Konsola 1984, 209.

¹⁶⁴ E.g. Mylonas 1959, 27 (E'1). “Paving is generally associated with unroofed areas” (Harrison 1995, 30), but see Lithares where the floors of sixteen of the rooms were equipped with stone (and sherd) paving (Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 14f., table 2), of which only a few fit the profile of an unroofed room.

¹⁶⁵ Mylonas 1959, 26–38.

¹⁶⁶ Blegen 1928, 16.

boundaries of the house. The choice of this type of wall would indicate the symbolic importance of these boundaries. The shared walls of other settlements, however, need not then signify the converse, but they may. On this note Harrison discussed the layout of the House of the Pithoi at Zygouries and suggested that the nearby architectural elements (A, D and the House of the Snailshells, *Fig. 21b*), separate houses according to Blegen, were more than a casual juxtaposition, forming instead a deliberate house complex.¹⁶⁷ Following Pullen,¹⁶⁸ the House of the Snailshells was, at least in an earlier stage, part of the adjoining House of the Pithoi in the form of a corridor house. Harrison noted that Room 5 of the House of the Pithoi “was modified to accommodate the corner of house A”, and that both A and D are likely extensions to the larger house. In support of his argument he further noted that it was difficult to see Rooms A and D as domestic dwellings because of their small size, and that access only from the exterior is not uncommon in Early Helladic buildings.¹⁶⁹ There are a number of problems with his argument,¹⁷⁰ but if Harrison is correct in his assessment, a case could be made (for this example) that architectural affiliation mattered as a reflection of social affiliation.

The house walls are certainly likely symbolical markers of affiliation. We should not, however, try to find a rule in how it may have been visualised. The possibilities are many, and so, probably, were the solutions, as the examples from Zygouries and Askitarío begin to show. More than this, they also hint at the problems we confront in trying to translate the architecture into the language of the Early Helladic period.

¹⁶⁷ Harrison 1995, 24–27.

¹⁶⁸ Pullen 1985, 206ff.; 1986. Nilsson suggests an alternative connection, by door or window, between the two also in their later ‘separate’ phase (Nilsson 2004, 183).

¹⁶⁹ Harrison 1995, 25–27.

¹⁷⁰ With reference to the development within the house complex at Aghios Kosmas (Mylonas 1959, 26–45, also further *Chapter 3*, section on *Structural biographies*), I think Harrison failed to make allowance for the organic development of the use of structures through time, that a once dependent house unit may change ‘owner’, its uses being reinterpreted (all structures need not be domestic dwellings). There are also problems involved in making assumptions about the space required for habitation.

3. Life-histories of houses and people

Just as we can define biographies of people and households, it is possible to characterize artefacts, sites and monuments in terms of their respective biographies. Not only do artifacts have their own material cycle of manufacture, use and disuse but they also bear qualities of their past history and associations with previous owners.¹⁷¹

In this chapter I will consider the house itself, its interiors, daily life within the boundaries of the house, and the life-histories of the house and the people connected with it.¹⁷² Biographies of houses, often in parallel with a similar view of individuals, artefacts, settlements and monuments have only rather recently become a visible part of prehistoric research. The lives of material culture are constructed to follow that of people in an often tripartite scheme reflecting the cycles of birth, life and death. These lives are often translated into architectural terms and presented as cycles of construction, occupation and destruction or decay.¹⁷³ As an approach, a close analysis of the microcosm of a house interior is attempted to visualise the prehistoric individuals that inhabited it. By focusing on the life of a house, through its construction, occupation, abandonment and possible reuse, the activities and lives of the individuals within and in relation to the house may be similarly highlighted. By extension, light may also therefore be thrown onto prehistoric perceptions and the conceptual values of the house, household and the home.

Which of these latter three terms that has been used, seems to a large degree to be connected to the research histories on the two sides of the Atlantic; while household archaeology has been the focus of North-American archaeologists, archaeologies of the house have been forwarded by European-trained archaeologists.¹⁷⁴ The 'home' has been and still is a concept that is approached with considerable caution due to the wide range of emotional connotation it carries.¹⁷⁵ There are two researchers, however, that I think have nevertheless come to encompass all three concepts in their work; these

¹⁷¹ Chapman 1994, 51.

¹⁷² I agree with Tringham (1995, 98) that 'life-history' is to be preferred over 'use-life', the former a concept that goes beyond the practical view inherent in the latter.

¹⁷³ E.g. Chapman 1994, table 1, p. 51.

¹⁷⁴ Hendon 2004, 272f.

¹⁷⁵ Tringham 1995, 79.

are Ian Hodder and Ruth Tringham, both originally British-trained archaeologists.¹⁷⁶ Through much of his work, Hodder has positioned the house at the very centre of the socialisation of individuals into society, a process working by “the enforcing of society-wide rules through the daily practices of life in each house”.¹⁷⁷ The house, under the term ‘domus’, became central in Hodder’s arguments for the domestication of Europe—the domestication of society as part of the neolithisation process. As an introduction to the concept of ‘domus’ he roughly classified it as “the house and the activities associated with it”, to be “translated as ‘home’”.¹⁷⁸ In his recent book on Çatalhöyük (7400–6000 BC), the wide range of archaeological methods applied to the material has allowed him to paint a very detailed picture of the daily life within a few houses on the Neolithic mound. The picture presented is one that encompasses a varied range of ritualised and habituated practices working on daily and seasonal rhythms as well as across time.¹⁷⁹

Tringham has taken issue with the macro-scale perspectives adopted by earlier research and called for archaeological interpretations that will not reduce the prehistoric individuals to an existence as “faceless blobs”.¹⁸⁰ Through a focus mainly on architecture, as containers as well as arenas for social action, in combination with a gendered perspective, her aim has been to reach down to the level of the individual and to visualise the social reproduction and manipulation within the bounds of the house and the household. The means to this end has been to build biographies and narratives on the individual as well as at house level. For the latter, she and Mirjana Stevanović have concentrated much work on the latter days in the use-lives of houses by considering closely the patterns of abandonment, and especially the fire destructions of houses in Neolithic south-eastern Europe in general and the site of Opovo, Serbia, in particular.¹⁸¹

This archaeology, as outlined by the works of Hodder and Tringham, directed towards the domestic house in particular, is an archaeology that concentrates largely on the Neolithic period, in south-eastern Europe and the Near East. The house has become the most important symbol of the neolithisation process and a sedentary life. Following Hodder, it became the focus of house-based social groups to replace the collective.¹⁸² He visualises the interior symbolism, repetitive patterns and ritual character for which the Çatalhöyük houses are famous, as the culmination of a general development that started in the 10th millennium with the choice of a sedentary life-style. The

¹⁷⁶ Both have their biographies depicted by Michael Balter (2005) in relation to their later engagements in the excavations at Çatalhöyük.

¹⁷⁷ Hodder 2006, 136.

¹⁷⁸ Hodder 1990, 38.

¹⁷⁹ Hodder 2006, esp. chapters 5 (pp. 109–140) and 6 (pp. 141–168).

¹⁸⁰ Tringham 1991.

¹⁸¹ Tringham 1995; Stevanović 1997.

¹⁸² Hodder 2006, 129.

first houses were in themselves relatively simple, but accompanied from an early time by large elaborate centres for communal rituals.¹⁸³ The move towards increasingly more elaborate house interiors may thereafter, in the later occupation levels of Çatalhöyük, be seen as partly reversed, with, for example, a lesser focus on wall decoration and an increased focus on domestic production, domesticated animals, storage, and external contacts.¹⁸⁴ The focus of Tringham's work, the Neolithic of south-eastern Europe, concentrates on the 6th and 5th millennia BC,¹⁸⁵ thus about the time of the Chalcolithic period and the latter part of the development in the Near East.

In some research on the Neolithic of northern Greece also, houses and house biographies have come to play an important role. Especially for the later Neolithic of the 5th millennium BC, houses have been considered as the centre of societal reproduction, rights to resources, power relations and social memory.¹⁸⁶ This is a view closely connected with the tell societies of the period, with theories of house replacement and the social centrality of these ancestral tells, at least until the beginning of extramural cemeteries as an alternative arena for social display, if one follows Chapman's proposal.¹⁸⁷ House replacement is central also to the works of Hodder and Tringham, and I will return to this in *Chapter 4*. Instead, for present purposes, we must consider what relevance these theories of Neolithic houses may have for the Early Helladic houses, at least 1,500 years their juniors, outside the study area of most Neolithic research and within a partly different cultural period.

This is not the place to engage in an extensive discussion of the comparison between the Neolithic and Early Helladic periods. In general, however, the interiors of Early Helladic houses seem not to have been elaborate in any way now visible. The carefully plastered walls of Room 12 of the House of the Tiles are by no means a common occurrence, and have, as we have seen, contributed to the interpretation of the room's special character. Little regularity can be clearly discerned from the interior of the houses apart from the means of construction (mudbrick on stone socle) and the off-centre location of the doorways. There is, however, evidence to suggest that house replacement may have been a socially important factor within at least some of the Early Helladic settlements (*Chapter 4*). By extension, this may mean that the house formed an important focus for social groups, in the interaction with other social groups within the settlement, and between settlements. On the other hand, the Early Helladic period was a time of heightened external contacts, trade and craft specialisation that may have provided a basis for a social life partly disconnected from the house as such.¹⁸⁸ The Early Helladic

¹⁸³ Hodder 2006, 133–135.

¹⁸⁴ Hodder 2006, 249–256.

¹⁸⁵ E.g. Stevanović 1997.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. Halstead 1999b; Kotsakis 1999.

¹⁸⁷ Chapman 1991.

¹⁸⁸ E.g. Broodbank 2000, esp. chapters 8–9 (pp. 247–319).

people did bury their dead outside of the settlements, in the organised cemeteries of built graves that have been excavated in relation to some settlements, or perhaps at other locations as yet unknown to us (*Chapters 6–8*). These burial locations and the rituals connected with them were certainly alternative arenas for social display and the unity of smaller and larger social groups. In these senses, the people of the Early Helladic period may have had a greater range of arenas for social interrelations available to them than did their Neolithic counterparts. The house as such need not have played the same prominent role as has been suggested for the Neolithic period. The Early Helladic people did, nevertheless, put considerable effort into their houses. The house, in the most common sense of a domestic dwelling, was also the centre for household production and, most importantly, each house was the likely focus for much of the daily lives of a limited number of individuals.

It is on this last note that I think that the perspectives outlined above find their greatest applicability to the Early Helladic period. Through their focus on contextuality and their attention to detail, they have the potential of widening our understanding of the daily life within an Early Helladic house. This may bring us closer to the Early Helladic people's understanding of their houses, *their* definitions, in a way that architectural generalisations will never accomplish. The spatial analyses above were one step in that direction, and another will be the analyses of houses through longer time spans, which will be conducted in *Chapter 4*. The present section will be an initial attempt to consider in parallel the different stages of the use-lives of the Early Helladic houses. For the Early Helladic period in general, the micro-scale of the life-histories of houses as demanded by Tringham,¹⁸⁹ and the roles of individuals within them, are veiled by the lack of archaeological detail. Excavations with these questions in mind are needed to allow the micro-scale to really work. This is an opportunity that both Tringham and Hodder have had.¹⁹⁰ In order to explore the much more fragmented Early Helladic material, however, I will need to adopt a somewhat more generalised perspective. Instead of again presenting a case study such as the House of the Tiles or any other well published building, the discussion will therefore be structured around the different stages of life for a variety of Early Helladic houses.

Archaeologists in general are also faced with another major problem when attempting to reconstruct the use-life of a house. This is that it is a life-line that is usually preserved to us only through a fragmentary picture of its last moment of actual use. In contrast to the composition of finds from a grave, which can be said to reflect choices with a specific result/occasion in

¹⁸⁹ Tringham 1995, 98–100.

¹⁹⁰ Hodder has been the director of the excavations at Çatalhöyük since 1993, and Tringham was the director of the excavation of Selevac (1976–1979) and later at Opovo (1983–1989), both Serbia (working with Stevanović at both locations) (Tringham 1995; Balter 2005; Hodder 2006).

mind but need not be translated to an actual use, the composition of finds within a house may rather reflect instead a ‘coincidental’ crossing of different activities. They are the tools for activities related to the house and its inhabitants perhaps, but not necessarily in the specific place they were found. This will always be a major problem when defining a ‘domestic assemblage’, a set of objects actually in use by the inhabitants, and which will represent a full inventory to help reconstruct the domestic life within that house. Like the objects within a grave, the objects found on the floor level of a house may also potentially represent a deliberate composition, or objects may have been added or removed immediately prior to the destruction, as a last act within the house. It all depends on how we picture the last days of use of the house or the circumstances that created the deposits of material culture we aim to study. I will return to this problem at relevant places below.

Houses are storage places for material culture that tell us of the preferences of their residents. Houses in themselves are also statements of human choices. The biographies of houses are thus closely connected with the histories of people. Biographies of people and their objects are both a result of an emphasis given to agency and to the interdependence of people and objects in this process.¹⁹¹ The development of the house through its use-life suggests changes in the conditions of its residents, the actions taken to meet the new conditions and how the results of these actions in turn may have changed and directed the approach and use of the house. Biographies of houses are often seen as formed on at least two levels. They reflect the day-to-day use of the house as well as the development of the house on a more structural level, in which the timeframe will be considerably extended.

Table 2. *The life-histories of houses (based on Chapman 1994, table 1).*¹⁹²

<i>Structural</i>	Construction Reuse	Occupation Modification	Abandonment Destruction Decay Replacement
<i>Day-to-day</i>	Waking	Going out to work Household production	Evening return

Inherent in the longest perspective is the Braudellian concept of *longue durée*, the historical perspective that goes beyond the present chapter and into the two following, concerned with the interconnectedness between the past, the present and the future. In order to encompass the connections between houses, through time, and the possibility of houses gaining an importance

¹⁹¹ Tringham 1995, 80f.; Hodder 2000; 2006; in general: e.g. Dobres & Robb 2001; Dornan 2002; Appadurai (ed.) 1986; Marshall & Gosden 1999; also *Chapter 1*.

¹⁹² Instead of ‘structural’ and ‘day-to-day’, Chapman separated the two perspectives as ‘annual’ and ‘daily’. I have also added activities to those in the original table.

beyond their own use-life, the term life-history is preferred over that of the use-life.¹⁹³ The former term will therefore be used throughout this study. To complement Braudel's long perspective, Giddens has set forth two further temporalities, separate only analytically: the *durée* of day-to-day life, and the *durée* of the life span of the individual. The former is presented as the "reversible time" of returning events on a cyclical (daily, monthly, annual) basis. The latter is the "'irreversible' death approachable time".¹⁹⁴ In the present discussion, as presented in *Table 2*, the latter will be translated into the life span of the individual house, a structural perspective, and the former will be the rhythms of the day-to-day, including also the more extended cycles as they cut across and blend with the former.¹⁹⁵ In terms of the day-to-day rhythms, I have chosen to stay with the division suggested by Chapman, with the addition of household production, but it should be clear that this is a simplification that does not encompass the full day-and-night cycle and the variety of activities that this may hide along the full course of this cycle.

Day-to-day biographies

The shorter, clearly cyclical biographies are related to the activities of people using the house. These activities, "related to the day-to-day living and to the celebration of special events, serve as the primary way that the interaction between structure and agency may be studied", as contended recently by Julie Hendon.¹⁹⁶ In her formulation of a basis for a social archaeology of household production and social relations, she sees this interaction on a day-to-day basis as one way in which society is constantly reproduced and social identities are forged within the bounds of the household and between households.¹⁹⁷ Following this argument, the main question must thus be: What did people actually do in their houses?

This is a question to which we can only give partial answers. As already noted, a number of problems arise when the formula of *Table 2* is applied to the Early Helladic material. Relevant to the question is the manner of the preservation of the 'domestic assemblage' resulting from the last days of use of the houses we excavate. A sudden fire is likely to have preserved many of the artefacts in use in the house more or less *in situ*; a planned destruction or abandonment may instead have changed the composition of the finds from the houses, as selected artefacts may have been removed prior to the fact. To fully apply the tripartite development we would also need to know the day-to-day function of the building under study. The archaeological record is,

¹⁹³ Cf. Tringham 1995, 98.

¹⁹⁴ Jordan 2003, 12f., referring to Giddens 1984, 35f.

¹⁹⁵ Hodder 2006, 126.

¹⁹⁶ Hendon 2004, 276.

¹⁹⁷ Hendon 2004, esp. 276–278.

however, not always/not often as complete as to allow an identification of the activities within a building.

Inherent in the archaeologies of houses and households is that the buildings under study were indeed the domestic world of a limited social group, the household (in contrast to the more tainted ‘family’).¹⁹⁸ It is perhaps likely that most of the defined ‘houses’ in the Early Helladic record were indeed domestic settings. Strictly speaking, special purpose buildings are not common, and even if found, we cannot be certain that they did not also function as a ‘home’, i.e. living quarters, as well as a workshop, storage room, or meeting hall. Following my analysis of the House of the Tiles above, the corridor houses and some other structures may be the exceptions that prove this rule, at least if considering permanent lodgings.

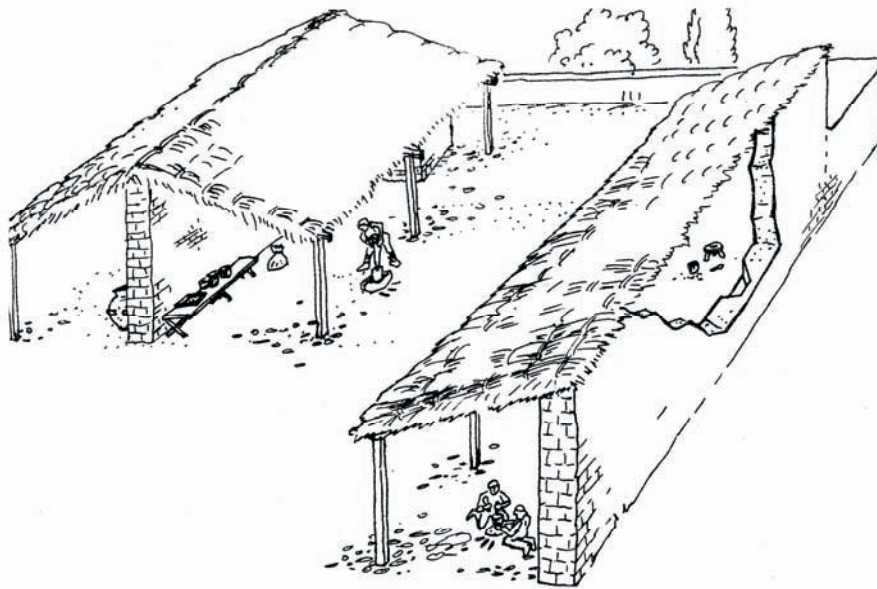


Figure 15. Manika. Reconstruction of the obsidian workshop (after Sampson 1985, 96, fig. 25a)

Special purpose buildings

Apart from the monumental, probably multi-purpose Rundbau at Tiryns and the corridor houses, one special purpose building would be the obsidian workshop excavated by Sampson at Manika (*Fig. 15*).¹⁹⁹ The reconstruction presents the building as a walled enclosure with wooden shelters over an

¹⁹⁸ Hendon 2004, 272.

¹⁹⁹ Sampson 1985, 93–105 (sector V:1: K. Tsotsou plot).

otherwise open stone-paved yard. Thousands of pieces of obsidian (flakes, various tools and many cores) were found over the whole area.²⁰⁰ Elsewhere, there are areas that have been interpreted as metal workshops with smelting ovens. One of these was set within the central room, the hearth room, of Weißes Haus at Kolonna (EH III),²⁰¹ another was found in relation to a small structure excavated some distance from the settlement of Raphina in Attica.²⁰² Looking beyond the sphere of production, another special purpose building may be House I from the latest phase of the Aghios Kosmas B settlement. This structure consisted of one room set within the largest of the house complexes excavated by Mylonas. The room had originally been part of a larger house (House H), which during the later stages of the settlement was split, at which time House I became a separate unit. The room was equipped on the interior with a low bench along its eastern long wall in which a 0.80 metre high spouted pithos was set. The vessel was attached to the wall by a thick layer of clay and further secured by stones around its base. Below the spout that was placed towards the bottom of the pithos was a flat stone, positioned as if to accommodate small vessels into which the liquid from within the pithos could be poured. Mylonas reported grape seeds from its interior, indicating that this liquid may have been wine.²⁰³ Further finds included a small flask-like jug and a small two-handled jar found on the bench, and the sherd material was composed largely of saucers and small bowls, plates and jar-like bowls.²⁰⁴ Nilsson has recently proposed an interpretation of the room as public place where food and drink were served; a meeting place or dining hall for the inhabitants of the settlement,²⁰⁵ a suggestion which, on account of the composition of the pottery, the unique bench and *in situ* pithos, as well as the single room of the house, seems very plausible.

It is certainly possible that these workplaces and House I were also places of residence. One incidence that would seem to be a possible indication of this is the burial found in connection with the small structure of the metal workplace at Raphina,²⁰⁶ a burial that may conceivably be that of the smith or

²⁰⁰ Sampson (1985, 93, 101) mentioned obsidian pieces by the thousand and many cores, but no further details are given except that blades as well as cores of flint were also found. From a house not too distant from the workshop all in all 2,876 pieces of obsidian were recorded from the floor of room 1 (Sampson 1985, 64–79, esp. 75–79, fig. 18, chart 3, sector IV:1, H. Kavata plot: 1,044 flakes, 107 blades, 163 blade-like pieces and 1,562 unidentifiable pieces). Some blades and flakes of flint were found also in this Kavata plot, but no cores of either obsidian or flint.

²⁰¹ Walter & Felten 1981, 23–28.

²⁰² Theocharis 1952, 130–133.

²⁰³ Mylonas 1959, 38f.

²⁰⁴ Mylonas 1959, 40.

²⁰⁵ Nilsson 2004, 153f. See also Nilsson (2004, 146–191) for her exploration of other possible special purpose buildings within the Early Helladic settlements in general.

²⁰⁶ Theocharis 1952, 130–135; 1955a, 287. Questions still remain, however, concerning the contemporaneity of the two features. Both contexts comprised Cycladic type pottery, including a pattern-painted variety. Maran (1998, 78) dated the metal workshop, without

someone closely related to the smith. Otherwise, these locations were locations that potentially received a lot of people during a large part of the day, workers or visitors of different kinds. One may say that in these cases the scenario is the reverse of the one illustrated for the day-to-day biography of a house in *Table 2*. In these cases, the activities would have been connected with the periods *away* from the houses that are interpreted as households, or homes, at least for a majority of their users. The social relations and identities formed within these locations would to some extent have been separate from the ones connected with household production.

Household life and production

Thus, turning to the rest of the Early Helladic houses and assuming that most of them were also residential quarters, we may start to consider aspects of household production and activities related to these houses. In her survey of Aghios Kosmas, Nilsson put forward an interpretation of the settlement based on distinct activity zones that could be identified within the buildings.²⁰⁷

Her survey of the finds from the settlement at the house level singled out a number of rooms and houses where intensive labour of one kind or another had taken place, and also further structures of what she suggest to be communal interest. Her results display a varied picture for the dense complex of rooms excavated by Mylonas (*Fig. 16*). Apart from the aforementioned interpretation of House I as a dining hall, finished blades and chips from obsidian knapping were found to dominate in five rooms, and processing of agricultural products (J) or storage of agricultural implements (F4) in one room each. One further room (L1) was identified as a bakery or communal kitchen. Her results illustrate a co-existence of many trades in a rather confined space. Apart from the dominant activities, millstones, loom weights, different stages of obsidian products as well as of other stones, among other things, show that the activities were many and varied within the rooms and houses. The intensity of activity may suggest an interpretation of the finds as coming from a workers' quarter (as a reflection of a part or the whole of the settlement). A similar concentration of crafts to a special quarter of a settlement should not be completely discarded, but the more likely interpretation, I believe, is that what we have at Aghios Kosmas is the reflection of a normal Early Helladic community where the indications of daily activities have been sufficiently preserved for us to interpret.²⁰⁸

special reference to the presence of a tomb in the area, to EH II early or developed, but not the late phase represented in the nearby settlement, while Pullen dated the tomb to a late EH II phase (1985, 132).

²⁰⁷ Nilsson 2004, 151–161.

²⁰⁸ See also Pullen (1985, 234f.) for comments on obsidian at Aghios Kosmas.

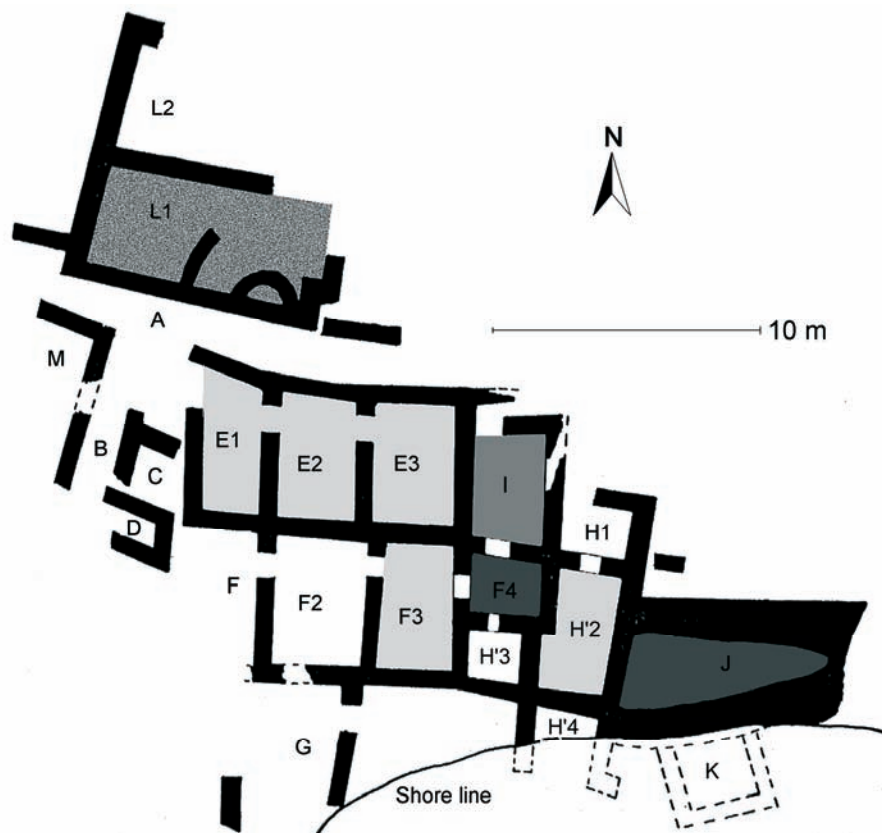


Figure 16. Aghios Kosmas. Distribution of activities within the settlement (information from Nilsson 2004, 151–161 and Mylonas 1959, plan 1)

Flakes, blades and cores of obsidian, often found in small or large numbers also in areas not interpreted as workshops, indicate activities taking place within the walls of probable domestic houses as well. This, I think, is how the obsidian at Aghios Kosmas should be interpreted. The concentration of obsidian blades and flakes indicates perhaps one or two individuals at work at each location. Obsidian or any similar stone tool production leave traces that are relatively easy to find in an archaeological context. The degree of specialisation in these cases need not go far beyond the needs of the separate households, since obsidian discards are found in a large percentage of household contexts within the study area. Kilian recorded at least two deposits that appear to be minor obsidian workplaces like that just mentioned within the Unterburg at Tiryns.²⁰⁹ Lithares may stand in a class of its own if

²⁰⁹ A dense assemblage consisting of obsidian and chert (Radiolarith) raw material, flakes and debris, as well as, to judge from the photo of the assemblage, at least one tool (a blade) (Kilian 1983, 314, fig. 44, p. 317), and another obsidian tool workplace in Room 197 (1983, 318).

one considers the staggering amount of obsidian found: 150 cores, 2,000 blades and 20 kilograms of obsidian chips and refuse.²¹⁰ Although spread out over a number of rooms, this is a very large amount of obsidian. Especially noteworthy is the number of cores, since only a small quantity of cores is generally noted elsewhere, and at Aghios Kosmas (phase B), for instance, none were recorded from the interiors of the houses, only blades and chips.²¹¹ That such high intensity obsidian knapping appears to have taken place within the centre of the settlement as we know it, seems to indicate a common interest among the inhabitants. At Lithares, and perhaps also at Aghios Kosmas and Lerna,²¹² obsidian certainly seems to have played a large role within the daily life of many households and individuals, at times probably for a majority of the inhabitants of the settlement.

The degree of specialisation is, however, not of primary importance for present purposes.²¹³ Rather, our concern is how the production and other activities within the household may help us to visualise the social identities of the individual within these households, and their daily lives within these bounds. To help us, we have the movable and permanent inventories of the houses. In a few instances we appear to have real snapshots of activities, compositions of artefacts left as used. One such striking image, in this case of the ‘social’ grinding of grain, is the five querns arranged in a semicircle in Structure J at Aghios Kosmas.²¹⁴ The structure is also unique in itself. From the exterior it would have appeared rectangular, but walls of gradually increasing widths, up to 2.35 metres, formed a cone-shaped space on the interior. The area enclosed, *c.* 7.50 x 3.25 metres at their maximums, is quite large, and the querns are placed in a loose semicircle that would have enabled five persons to use them simultaneously.²¹⁵ Few other finds are noted from the structure, and in combination with its singular structural appearance, it is difficult to classify it as a standard ‘house’ on a structural level, as well as in the sense of a ‘home’ for a group of people. I think it is also possible that we have here a structure primarily intended as fortification, grinding possibly being a “secondary” use. However, even if secondary and not within a residential area, the querns give a possible glimpse of the lives of five persons, leaving their homes, on a regular or sporadic basis to work together. These individuals may have been in charge of this specific activity

²¹⁰ An estimate by Nilsson (2004, 172) on information from Tzavella-Evjen (1984, 21–107). The only assemblage comparable to the one from Lithares comes from the obsidian workshop identified by Sampson at Manika, see above.

²¹¹ Mylonas 1959, 26–45. The manner of abandonment may be a partly contributing factor in the formation of these varying assemblages: *see below*.

²¹² Lerna: Runnels 1985; Aghios Kosmas is also considered as a likely centre for the procurement, working and trade of obsidian (Mylonas 1959, 143; Carter 1998, 181f.).

²¹³ See, however, e.g. Pullen (1985, 267–280) for a discussion on EBA craft specialisation and its scale; also Nilsson 2004, 212.

²¹⁴ Mylonas 1959, 41f.

²¹⁵ Also Nilsson 2004, 151.

within their respective households, or, the context should be seen in line with the workshops above and the activities partly separated from those of the household. Querns are a rather common find in houses, and on account of their weight I think we should picture the Early Helladic user working with them in the vicinity of where they were found.

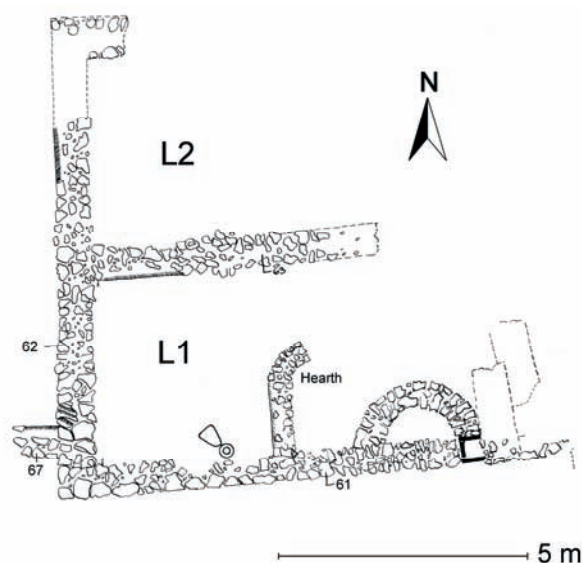


Figure 17. Aghios Kosmas, House L (after Mylonas 1959, fig. 13)

Looking at the survey of Aghios Kosmas, another area for food processing may have been the innermost room of House F. For activities related to food preparation on a larger scale, I prefer Nilsson's interpretation that Room L1 was once a bakery, an interpretation that seems very plausible. Mylonas was clear in his interpretation of the probably once apsidal structure in the room as a hearth (Fig. 17), it showed traces of strong firing and was covered with ash. The hearth seems to have been quite large, and it was set within a room of extraordinary size and shape (3.60 x 7.70 metres). Also, beside the hearth was an *in situ* stone mortar that had been bored through and then mended, and in front of it a flat stone interpreted as a kneading trough.²¹⁶ Mylonas saw prolonged use in both the kneading trough and mortar, and their location by the hearth is certainly thought-provoking. I think it is plausible to assume that few activities were performed by all individuals within a household, and that tasks are likely to have been divided between them. In cases that would have involved a longer learning period, activities to which obsidian knapping may be counted, as well as perhaps the workings of a larger oven, I imagine two individuals of different generations perhaps working side by side, thus

²¹⁶ Mylonas 1959, 43f.

passing on the knowledge. All crafts, however, are likely to have been learned in this way, in the same way as routines of daily life would have been learned, as Hodder pictures it, through living and being socialised into the household from childhood onwards.²¹⁷ Although House L at Aghios Kosmas certainly may have been a special purpose building, for present purposes I imagine it instead as the major way of living within a specific household. If the household consisted of more than a single person, it is easy to imagine one person as responsible for this work area. The trough and mortar seem to have been used regularly for a long period of time, perhaps at the spot they were found, and make up a one person workstation. Others may have helped with various duties, with the baking or other household chores; someone, a child perhaps, may have observed the activities by the hearth especially, perhaps also got to try out the work in order, at sometime, to be prepared to take over from his or her elder.

The excavations at Tiryns provided a number of snapshots of other types of activities. For example, an accumulation of clay bobbins, pierced lengthwise, in Room 143 at Tiryns suggests a place of weaving.²¹⁸ From Room 199 at Tiryns, a lead cast with the impression of the mould still visible was interpreted by Kilian as a definite indication of work performed at this particular spot.²¹⁹ Also, in Room 148 a low plastered platform was found hewn from bedrock and in front of it several rubbers.²²⁰ Whether the rubbers were used on the platform itself, on some moveable item resting on the platform or by someone sitting there, the rubbers and the platform may present a picture of a fixed working area, occupied on a regular basis by one or more individuals.

Certain activities leave traces, others do not. Wood working or wood carving is likely to have been quite a common and perhaps large-scale activity, producing wooden bowls to be used together with, or perhaps even on a more regular basis than, the archaeologically very visible pottery vessels. Some woodwork is also secondarily indicated. Wood-cutting and carpentry would for example have been needed to manufacture the looms to carry the loom weights. Carpentry would have been connected with the production of furnishing of different kinds, such as boxes, and the shelves, for example, whose presence is indicated by the compositions of some closed deposits.²²¹ Basketry is another probable common activity as well as the. Many of the sealings from Room XI of the House of the Tiles bear witness to the basket or box to which they were once applied.²²² Wicker baskets, reed coffins and

²¹⁷ E.g. Hodder 2006, 128, 136.

²¹⁸ Kilian 1981, 189.

²¹⁹ Kilian 1983, 318.

²²⁰ Kilian 1981, 189.

²²¹ E.g. Wiencke 2000, 133–136 (Room CA), 234 (Room XI).

²²² Heath 1958; Wiencke 1969; Weingarten 2000. Type A sealings for unsplit reeds (Aruz 1994, 212), type B for pommels and pegs that secured chests or door, and type E affixed to baskets and wickerwork coffers.

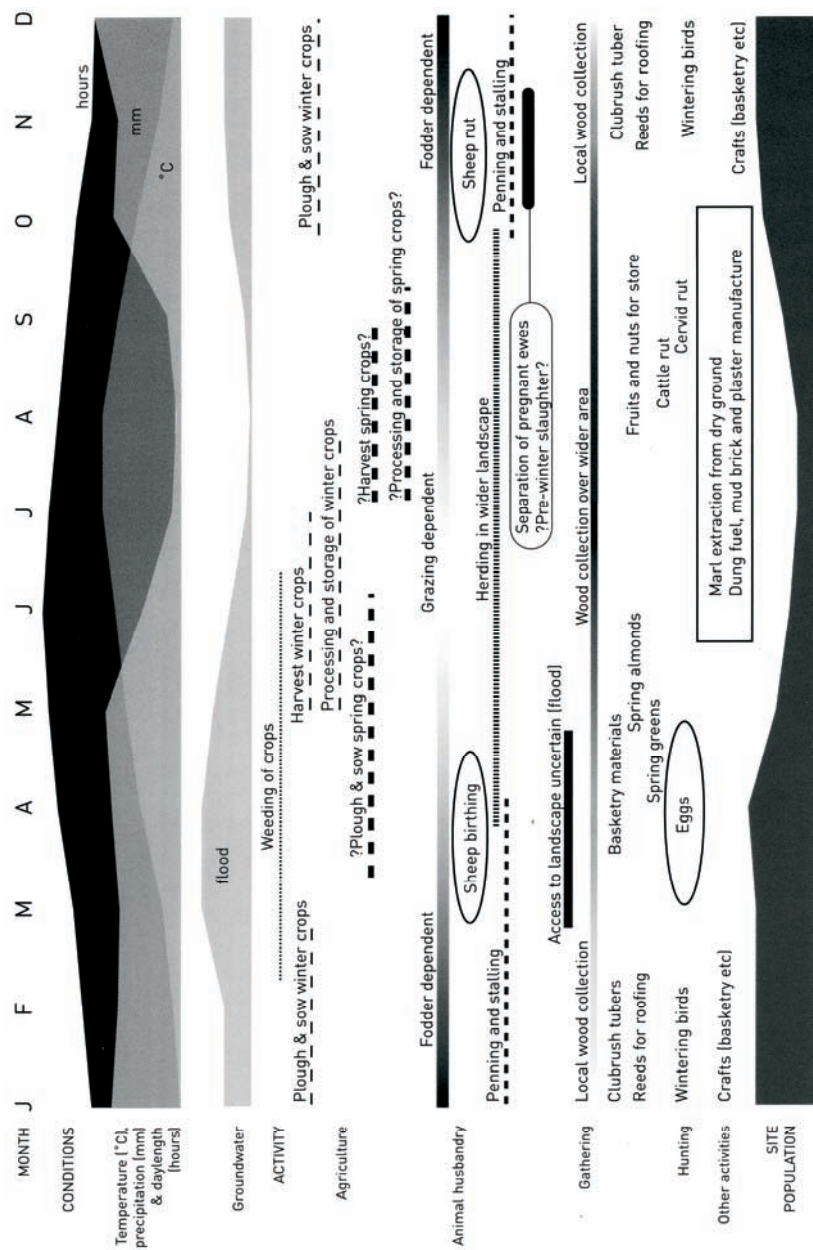


Figure 18. Schematic illustration of the timing of seasonal events at Çatalhöyük (after Hodder 2006, fig. 33).

wooden boxes are probable alternatives to, and would have been used concurrently with, larger pottery vessels for the transportation, preservation and storage of food stuffs etc. These activities likely formed an important part of the daily life of a number of individuals, within all or a more limited number of households, in groups or alone.

It is also likely that the degree of activity varied the time of day. The rhythms of the day would have structured life within and related to the house. These would also have been cut across by seasonal or annual events. The cycle of a year, changing seasons, would also have influenced how, where and why certain activities were performed (*Fig. 18*).²²³ Spinning, for example, must have been partly dependent on the availability of the wool used, basketry on the presence of the right type of reeds and wicker for the baskets. In the summer, some of the activities perhaps moved outdoors, and in the winter, more time would have been spent indoors; similarly, there would have been different seasons for hunting, fishing and harvesting, providing a varying focus throughout the year for at least some of the household members.

The hearth

Some activities would have been the same day after day, and to some extent even fixed to specific times of the day. These are activities that were also likely to have taken place at certain fixed locations within or just outside the house. The hearth would have been one such mostly fixed location, drawing people and activities at more or less fixed times of the day. If the house got its outer form from its walls, its appearance enhanced by the choice of material and building techniques, it may be said that the hearth gave it its central focus.²²⁴

The Early Helladic material comprises a number of extravagant large, circular hearths, the so-called keyhole hearths, of a diameter of one metre or more, e.g. terracotta hearths with a keyhole shaped depression in the centre. Hearths like these have been found at Lerna, reused in the consequently named Hearth Corridor of Building BG, and a somewhat simpler variety was found at Kolonna, located at the centre of the so called Herdraum of Weißes House.²²⁵ In these cases, the edges of the circular area were decorated by a roll-impressed seal design. Three pithoi and one hearth rim have been found decorated with exactly the same seal design. The pieces have been found at Lerna, Tiryns and Zygouries: impressions comprising two rows of spirals

²²³ See Broodbank (2000, 95, fig. 22) and Hodder (2006, 80, fig. 33) for two illustrations of the seasonality of certain events through the year, from the perspective of life in the Early Cyclades and Neolithic Çatalhöyük.

²²⁴ Cf. Hodder 1990, 52. Hodder argued for the hearth as the heart of the (organically developing) house and the focus of activities, commenting on the derivation of the word 'focus' from the Latin, meaning fireplace, hearth, fireside, home.

²²⁵ Wiencke 2000, 193f., figs. I.35, 43–44; Walter & Felten 1981, 20, fig. 16.

with a rendition of two quadrupeds in the intervening space, a pattern not likely to be so exactly rendered on two different seals.²²⁶ The sizes of the hearths, as well as of the pithoi, suggests that they were manufactured more or less *in situ* and decorated with the seal of an itinerant craftsman specialised in the production of these monumental hearths.²²⁷ Apart from the finds already mentioned, another, undecorated, keyhole hearth was found *in situ* in the so-called Megaron of the Early Helladic room complex at Berbati (Fig. 19).²²⁸



Figure 19. The hearth from the so called Megaron House at Berbati, *in situ* photo and drawing (from Säflund 1965, figs. 80–82).

²²⁶ Weisshaar 1989, 320, fig. 10; also CMS V 120, 504 and 529, for the pithoi; Pullen 1985, 272, 341.

²²⁷ Weisshaar 1989, 320.

²²⁸ Säflund 1965, 99f., fig. 80–82.

These large hearths are, however, uncommon, as, in fact, are hearths in general. A circular area, considerably harder than the rest of the floor and showing signs of having been baked by fire, was located centrally in the main room of the House of the Pithoi at Zygouries, and was interpreted as “clearly the hearth” by the excavator.²²⁹ No ash was mentioned, but a slight depression was noted in the centre and, rather than being the hearth, it may be that it was the location of a large moveable hearth, in line with the argument for Room 12 at Lerna.²³⁰ The House of the Pithoi at Zygouries and its inventory display some special features, and it should perhaps be paralleled with the Berbati Megaron and a function similar to the major rooms of the corridor buildings.²³¹ Thus, the hearths of more ‘ordinary’ housing still remain to be identified. No other hearths were confirmed for Zygouries or for Aghios Kosmas, except the one of House L, the probable bakery.²³² Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that every household had its own hearth for the daily cooking of food, for heating and light. These may be situated inside or in the common courtyards, perhaps the location varied with the seasons. The lack of hearths from settlements such as Aghios Kosmas and Zygouries is somewhat puzzling, and should perhaps be attributed at least in part to inadequate excavation methods in early excavations, and in part to disturbed deposits. The hearths may also have been portable and removed from the structures as they were abandoned. Fragments of decorated terracotta hearths have been found at a variety of places,²³³ but, if remnants of the monumental kind, these hearths were most likely not an item in every house.²³⁴ Portable hearths have otherwise not been commonly found in Early Helladic excavations. The invisibility of hearths in some archaeological records should therefore, I think, also be seen to reflect the simplicity of their construction.

Simple hearths have been excavated for example at Tiryns,²³⁵ and several hearths were recorded from the excavation at Lithares. Tzavella-Evjen divides the Lithares hearths into three types: circular or semicircular; limited by walls or upright slabs and placed in the corners of rooms; and circular heaps of ash and burnt earth towards the middle of the room.²³⁶ At Eutresis, excavated in the 1920's, Goldman commented on the simple character of the fire-places that although some were outlined by stones they were “nothing

²²⁹ Blegen 1928, 13.

²³⁰ Cf. Nilsson 2004, 90.

²³¹ It should be remembered that The House of the Pithoi, as well as the adjacent House of the Snailshells, may have been the reused spaces of a preceding corridor house (Pullen 1986a).

²³² Although no traces of fire or ash were found, the circle of cobblestone pavement, set towards and more or less within the destroyed northern wall of Room 39 at Zygouries may very well be the remains a hearth set into a recess in the wall as suggested by Blegen (1928, 20).

²³³ E.g. Tiryns Unterburg (Kilian 1983, 314, fig. 41b); the Berbati-Limnes Archaeological Survey (Forsén 1996, find spots 12 and 414).

²³⁴ See M. Caskey (1990) for a ritual interpretation of this type of hearth.

²³⁵ For Tiryns, e.g. Kilian 1983, 319 (Room 205); 1981, 189 (Rooms 141, 143). Also Lerna, e.g. Room CA (Wiencke 2000, 132–139).

²³⁶ Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 93.

more than the place where the fire was habitually lighted”.²³⁷ Around these hearths people may have gathered to working and for warmth, socialised, cooked and eaten meals, at all hours of the day. They may have gathered around for sleep, at night.

These final, nightly activities are the missing beginning and end of a full day cycle and are difficult to find within the Early Helladic material, as I imagine they would be for most archaeological assemblages. Kilian saw a sleeping area in a raised clay bench in Room 185 that showed traces of fire suggested to have come from the burning of a straw cover lying on the bench.²³⁸ Similarly, Nilsson suggested that the decomposed plant remains, possibly hay, found in Rooms 4 and 5 were remains of the bedding for sleeping quarters within the Fortified Building at Thebes in the second phase of its use.²³⁹ Benches in general are not very common. We have the bench from House I at Aghios Kosmas with its spouted pithos, and the bench with the rubbers at Tiryns. What were interpreted as benches, or foundations for benches, were furthermore excavated at Lithares. These were cobbled areas that followed the length of an adjacent wall and could have a width of up to two metres. As vessels were found *in situ* on some of them, they were seen as places for storage but perhaps also as places for sitting and as beds.²⁴⁰ The uses of these and other ‘benches’ can thus not be ascertained. It is quite possible that they varied with the context and circumstances. The sleeping areas may also have been flexible, with mats and blankets rolled out at varying locations, indoors as well as outdoors, varying with the season or special circumstances. It is equally likely, and I think even probable, however, that there was a pattern for how this and other activities were enacted within the bounds of the house, based on the type of activity and the age as well as gender of the inhabitants.²⁴¹ This pattern may have differed between households even if certain factors were shared, and also within households through time, but most likely reflected the social identities and relationship that to some extent structured the lives of a group of individuals sharing living space.

Picturing the day-to-day

Although day-to-day biographies of houses and people will be full of blanks and question marks, they deserve a place of their own within Early Helladic discourse. Much will need to be on a theoretical level, but considerations of

²³⁷ Goldman 1931, 14. At Eutresis hearths were recognised in most Early Helladic houses (p. 14f.: House I, both rooms; pp., 16, 18: House L, Rooms II and III; p. 30: House A, built into a recess).

²³⁸ Kilian 1983, 314.

²³⁹ Nilsson 2004, 129, 131, 142; Aravantinos 1986, 59.

²⁴⁰ Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 93f.

²⁴¹ Cf. Hodder 2006, 119–123, 135–140.

the biographies of houses highlight the house as something more than a well defined find context for artefacts.²⁴² By more directly acknowledging the house not only as a physical but also as a social construct, there will follow a focus on the important relation between people and their houses. Each item of material culture found within the walls of a room or a house has the potential to shed some light on the relations and on the people and activities that formed the daily life at this and related locations. With a certain measure of imagination brought into the interpretations we can connect the life-histories of each item with the histories of the people using it, and with the histories of the locales in which all these life-histories come together. One context for which this potential may be tested is the so called ‘Komplex Nr. 8’ from the eastern section of the Unterburg at Tiryns.²⁴³

Table 3. *Composition of finds from Komplex 8 (Horizont 8b) of Tiryns Room 196.*

2 high-necked jugs
1 incised so-called frying-pan of local manufacture (on the basis of the high handle on the incised surface it was interpreted as a lid)
at least 3 small saucers
1 large sauceboat
Lower down in the accumulation:
1 belly handled jar
several small pithoi

remains of lead repairs for pottery
obsidian blades (long as well as pointed oval)
1 obsidian core
1 rubber
1 whetstone with a hole
1 trapezoidal stone axe
1 arrow straightener
2 sewing needles (one of tin bronze)
2 conical stoppers
4 bone awls (from rib bone)
1 bone tool (from rib bone)
13 marble spools ²⁴⁴
1 small shallow marble bowl (imported from the Cyclades) with traces of a red substance on the interior

The dense accumulation of the various finds listed in *Table 3*, was found in Room 196 of Tiryns Horizont 8a. It did not, however, belong to this level of the stratigraphy, but comprised an assemblage connected with a clay floor

²⁴² Cf. Hendon 2004, 274.

²⁴³ Kilian 1982, 420–422, figs. 41–46 (list of finds); Weisshaar 1982, figs. 66–68; Kilian 1983, 315, fig. 45 (formation). The assemblage was found over an area of approximately 2.00 by 2.00 metres (to judge from Kilian 1983, fig. 45); the height of the conical accumulation was 0.48 metres (Kilian 1982, 421).

²⁴⁴ See Rahmsdorf (2003) for the interpretation of these spools as weights.

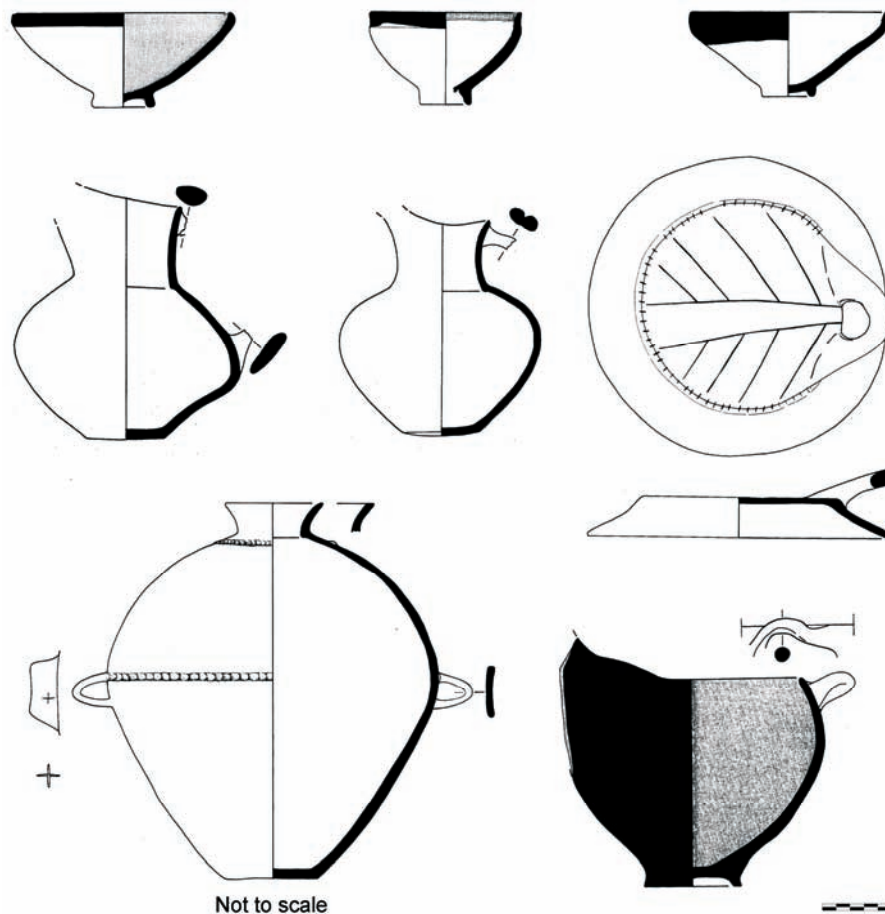


Figure 20. Tiryns. Pottery from Kompleks 8, Horizon 8b: three saucers, two jugs, one frying-pan, one belly-handled jar and one sauceboat (after Weisshaar 1982, figs. 66.4–5, 67).

that had fallen from above into Room 196 (Fig. 20). As instead assigned to to Horizon 8b it stratigraphically parallels a room complex in the western section (Rooms 142, 145–148), but itself unconnected to any house walls, as none have been found of this horizon in the eastern section (Fig. 26).

Remembering that we do not know the circumstances for how these items all came to be kept together in this specific location, we can begin to reconstruct an hypothetical setting for them. We may imagine more than one person active in relation to the assemblage, at one time or another:

In one corner of the room stands a row of pithoi towards the wall, securely sunk into the floor. Two of them have been mended but fortunately they can still hold their contents. A woman enters the room carrying a jar. She has just been out fetching water from a nearby well, she puts the jar down by the

pithoi and sits down on a rolled out reed mat to busy herself with a rubber and a wooden bowl. She will grind some herbs her daughter collected some time ago, when their blue and yellow flowers blossomed, and that have since been hanging to dry. With the herbs she will dye a piece of woollen cloth for a tunic for her rapidly growing son. While working, she looks around the room. She sees the wooden shelves that they set up on the wall last spring and on them the small saucers, the fine sauceboat that stands, a little precariously, on the edge of the shelf—she tells her son to get up and secure it; you cannot rely on it remaining still with its uneven shape—and the two high necked jugs they use to serve wine on special occasions. Beside them, their wooden plates are piled, and this is also where they keep various little things in a small wicker basket: some bone tools a neighbour manufactures from sheep ribs, a couple of knives with blades of that black shiny stone, and the core from which they had been knapped. She remembers the man that came to the village with these black stones and how they exchanged the nicely prepared lamb skin for one of them. It was on the same market day that they got the small pieces of red pigment. The stone will still give them some more blades but they used the last of the pigment some time ago—wonder when the next opportunity will come to get a new lump?

In another part of the room a man sits, her cousin, with a needle to mend a leather sack and his own tunic that got torn on the trip he just returned from. The wood he brought back will be used to mend the door to the inner room of the house. He has told the boy to take down one of the tools from its hook on the wall and whet the axe that got a bit dull from the wood-working. The boy is not used to the whetstone and the man stands up to see that he is doing it right—the young ones need to learn. He goes out through the opening towards the court where his mother is preparing some food for the evening. He knows that she is also expecting some visitors soon, because she has got out the leather pouch with the different coloured stone weights. People come to her for advice. They want to know what to ask in return for the things they intend to use in trade: some pigments, specially prepared herbs, or even a piece of shining metal that can be melted and formed into beautiful things. The man sits down by the boy and guides him. His eye falls on an incised lid and remembers what the potter told him about the trip he had made to a village not so far away, the pans he had seen there, that, he was told, came from much farther away, across the sea, and how when he came home he had tried to copy them as well as he could remember but that the handle was his own idea. The potter had told a good story, he thought, while looking forward to hear what stories the awaited visitors would have to tell.

Structural biographies

Each pot and each obsidian blade had the potential of carrying a story and, through its presence, to recall that story.²⁴⁵ In contrast to the clearly cyclical, recurring events of day-to-day life, the *structural biography* of a single house can in general terms be said to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It can be compared with the life lines of individuals, with which it may also be closely intertwined. Seen on a larger scale, any single house is connected with other biographies, of other houses, or with its settlement context as a whole, in a large cycle of construction, decay and replacement (*Chapter 4*). On the single house level, however, its life-history can be followed from its conception and construction, through its occupation, to its destruction or abandonment.

Construction

The beginning should be taken as the idea of the house in the minds of its constructor/future residents, materialised through its subsequent construction. As an idea, it became incorporated into the existing framework of houses and was given a place in relation to them. Choices were made regarding the size, number of rooms, form, building technique, building materials, following given principles and rules but individualised for the task at hand. The conditions for the corridor houses and other free-standing structures would have been different from those for dense room complexes. The former would have had a somewhat greater liberty of action compared to the room and house complexes within which walls were shared between houses. Interesting in this respect is the amount and level of preplanning that can be understood from the general layout of different habitation areas. Although large parts of the excavated area at Askitarío date to the developed EH II phase (corresponding to Lerna phase IIIC), it is difficult to see a common effort towards the layout of the area (*Fig. 21c*). The impression is rather of a development over a period of time, in which new houses were constructed in relation to already existing architecture, forming quite a mess of walls and alignments.²⁴⁶ A similar development can perhaps be envisioned for Lithares, although organised around a central focus, the main street. The length of this street appears to have been increased at least at one point, as suggested by the ‘dents’ in the eastern extension of the otherwise continuing line of house walls along its length (*Fig. 21a*).²⁴⁷ At Aghios Kosmas, for example, the development is somewhat different. At least for the most complete room complex (Houses E, F, H and later I), the impression for the phase B settle-

²⁴⁵ See e.g. Hodder’s discussions on social memory and the concept of ‘material entanglement’ (2006, 59–64, 186–195, 237–258).

²⁴⁶ Theocharis 1953–1954, fig. 4.

²⁴⁷ Tzavella-Evjen 1985, plan 1, also p. 13.

ment is that of a pre-planned block of rooms whose outline to a large part was respected throughout its use-life (*Fig. 22*). During its occupation phase, however, considerable rearrangement was, as we shall see below, performed within these outlines, redefining the house(s) from within. Shared walls were standard at Aghios Kosmas, while at Askitario the types of solutions were more varied and separate/double walls common. As an intermediate scenario, at Zygouries (*Fig. 21b*), the rearrangements and seemingly organic development in the area of House of the Pithoi, House of the Snailshells and Houses A and D, stand in contrast to the more regular Houses S and W. These differences fit well with the suggestions of Pullen and Harrison for the architectural development of the area, discussed above.

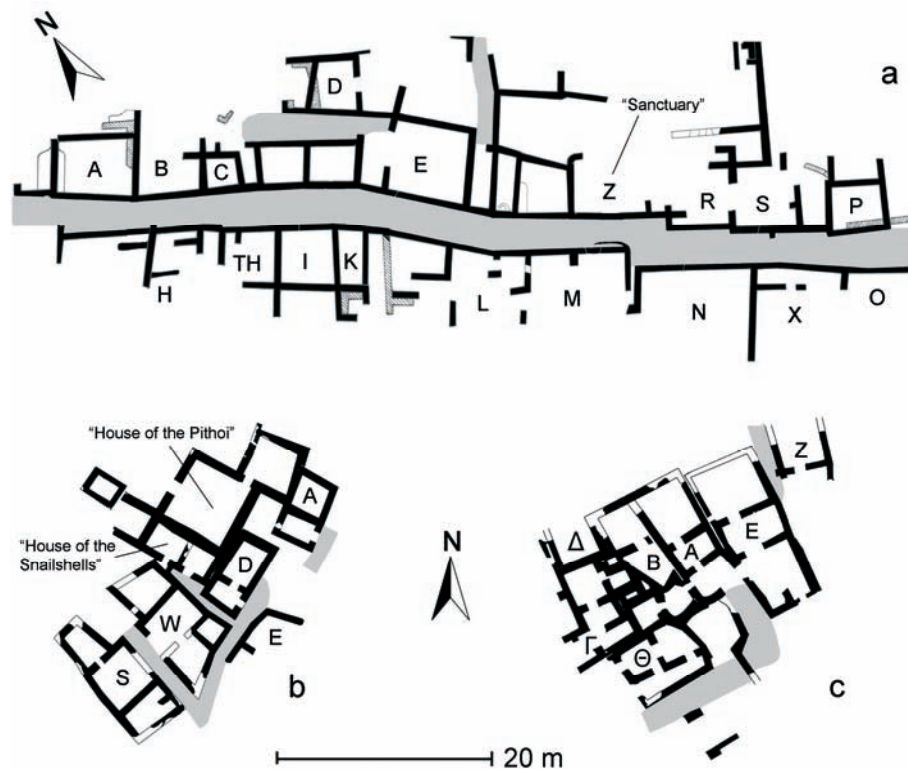


Figure 21. Schematic plans of settlements at (a) Lithares, (b) Zygouries, and (c) Askitario (after Tzavella-Evjén 1984; fig. ΣΤ; 1985, fig. 5; Blegen 1928, figs. 5, 7, 9, 14, 17, plan 2; Theodoris 1953–1954, fig. 4).

For the actual construction, the practice adopted with few exceptions within the Early Helladic period was one of mudbrick on stone socles. This technique thus comprised the erection of sturdy stone foundation walls, generally scale walls, erected in foundation trenches often dug well beneath the sur-

face of the ground. On these foundations, the walls were continued by the laying of sun-dried mudbricks. This is a technique that is characteristic of the whole prehistoric period on the Greek Mainland, but that is not paralleled in other parts of Europe where instead wattle-and-daub dominated.²⁴⁸ Although wattle-and-daub was used in Greece also, to some extent in parallel with mudbricks, the latter was adopted more or less wholesale for ordinary houses as well as fortification walls and other monumental structures.²⁴⁹ The roofs may have been gabled or flat, manufactured from large wooden beams covered with layers of clay and reeds.²⁵⁰ Roof tiles are a feature of EH II and are seen in corridor houses (hence, the House of the Tiles) as well as in other contexts, but not used as a general rule.²⁵¹ Thus, in terms of the activities connected with the construction, we should include the collecting of the proper, somewhat evenly sized stones for the foundations, the cutting and preparation of wooden beams for the roof, as well as the collecting of reeds and preparation of the clay, and the production of the mudbricks, including the collection of their raw materials. It seems to me improbable that the knowledge or possibilities to carry out all these activities were present within one household, and thus that house building was an activity that employed a large group of people, perhaps even a whole small-sized settlement. This certainly seems to have been the case where overall planning can be discerned within a room complex, suggesting that several house may have been built at the same time, but is likely also in cases when one house was rebuilt or built anew.

Even if some material was reused from abandoned and older structures,²⁵² house building is likely to have involved “sets of entanglements in social, material, productive, symbolic and other realms”.²⁵³ To my understanding, these sets of entanglements should be seen as representing the engagement of people with materials and with other people. Relating this to households and house construction, what may have started as the idea of a probably limited group of people should be seen as creating relationships that would not only be formed by the activities at hand, but that would also actively form

²⁴⁸ See Stevanović (1997, 344f, fig. 2) for a comparison of Neolithic building techniques.

²⁴⁹ See e.g. the fortification walls and corridor houses of Lerna (Wiencke 2000), the platform of the Museum plot at Thebes (Aravantinos 2004), and the Rundbau of Tiryns (Haider 1980, Kilian 1986); in general: Overbeck 1963; Tzavella-Evjen & Rohner 1990; Renard 2001; Cosmopoulos 1991.

²⁵⁰ Blegen 1928, 13; Cosmopoulos 1991, 20f.

²⁵¹ E.g. Wiencke 2000, 253–274 (roof tiles and schists from House of the Tiles); pp. 197–203 (roof tiles related to Tower B, Rooms QR, ST, P, B, DM, House CA and Area D, and schists related to Rooms QR, ST, C, D, Building BG); Berbati: Säflund 1965, 119 (Room N); in general: Rutter 2001, fig. 3; Pullen 1986, fig. 3 (listing Thebes, Raphina, Askitarion, Tsoungiza, Zygouries, Kolonna, Tiryns, Lerna, Asine, Hermionid (6 sites), Akovitika).

²⁵² See, e.g. the possible deconstruction of the fortification wall at Lerna to supply the builders of the House of the Tiles with material (Wiencke 2000, 148).

²⁵³ Hodder 2006, 59.

meaningful interrelationships between people beyond that specific context and for the daily life of communities as a whole.

As regards connections with the life-histories of individuals or groups of individuals, the construction of a house or the addition or removal of a room within the house may mark a significant event in these people's lives. It may signify a successful occupational life or sudden events that bring new possibilities; it could signify the growth of the household through birth or marriage, or, conversely, less fortunate events. The construction of a new house may mark the creation of a completely new household. Either event may have had effects stretching beyond the household and beyond even the nearest community or settlement, creating or transforming relationships between people, and connections with places. Each event may have been marked further by ritual action. Feasts may have been organised to seal new relationships. Feasting may also have been a part of the building sequence anywhere from the idea of the house to the full realisation of that idea. The question of foundation offerings is commonly raised in connection with the construction of houses and other structures, but is a practice that can seldom be unequivocally confirmed by the archaeological record itself. One possibility for the Early Helladic period comes from Lerna, briefly mentioned by Elizabeth Banks in her introduction to the Lerna IV (EH III) stratigraphy and architecture as "possibly to be taken as a foundation deposit". Thus, bothros GP-34, beneath the east wall of a Lerna IV, phase 2 trapezoidal building, was found to contain the almost complete skeleton of a piglet and fragments of another.²⁵⁴ The final publication will be interesting in this case, but the location below the wall is suggestive. Furthermore, the fact that a juvenile pig was deposited and apparently as a whole carcass may very well have had symbolical significance, and is clearly reminiscent of later prehistoric and even Classical practices.²⁵⁵ I know of no other deposits or feasting assemblages to be connected with houses of the Early Helladic period, and for these and the events that may have initiated house construction and renewal, we can only speculate. As we do speculate, however, the close and continuous interrelationships between people and their houses, between people and material culture, and, their wider implications will become clearer.

Occupation

These interrelationships are especially clear for the occupation stage of the house and are of course closely connected with the day-to-day life cycles within the bounds of the house, as considered above. The structural and the day-to-day biographies, as well as the life-histories of people, are clearly only analytically distinguishable, as they meet and join on many different

²⁵⁴ Banks in Rutter 1995, 6.

²⁵⁵ E.g. Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004, with references.

levels following the linear and cyclical recurring events of life in general. In this section, however, I will consider those events that can be connected with the house as a structure, that is, the rearrangements and renewals directed at the house construction.

In a recent article, David Frankel and Jennifer Webb have visually presented the organic development of the Early and Middle Bronze Age Cypriot village of Marki. In a very clear and interesting way they illustrate how the village grew from a few households to a village of about 400 people. This development can be seen by the enlargement, contraction, modification and abandonment of individual houses, a development that was enacted by a constant negotiation of space between households.²⁵⁶ The history of a house in its occupation phase is related to this potentially changing concept of the house through its use phase and also beyond. There are many examples within the Early Helladic settlements of how the boundaries of a house were redefined by the addition or removal of whole rooms, or of walls, new or already existing in another configuration. The Early Helladic house can be seen as an organically changing feature, growing or diminishing in the hands of its users. Many individual houses can thus be seen as having been redefined several times, conceptually as well as physically. Also from this viewpoint, the life span of a house appears to be closely connected with the life span of its residents.

This aspect especially, to my mind, distinguishes the corridor houses from the 'ordinary' houses, and may be used as an argument *against* their use as living space. The corridor house was a fixed structure lacking any organic development. The Fortified Building at Thebes went through some interior restructuring between the two phases of its use, through, for example, the blocking of a doorway.²⁵⁷ Minor changes were also carried out on Building BG at Lerna as well as on the Weißes Haus at Kolonna.²⁵⁸ These changes were made to the houses' interiors and nowhere, I suggest, do we have evidence of additions to their general appearance, adaptations to the changing conditions that may have arisen within a group sharing living space. Some aspects of these differences certainly lie in the type of structure, that is, between the freestanding ones and the house and room complexes sharing walls, where the latter may present greater opportunities for the negotiation of spaces between houses. Thus, if paralleling the House of the Tiles with the full extent of the main block of rooms within the settlement of Aghios Kosmas, the latter was also to a large extent allowed to keep its outer boundaries defined as it already appeared in its initial layout. The difference is that although the overall impression is the same, at least two new rooms

²⁵⁶ Frankel & Webb 2006.

²⁵⁷ Aravantinos 1986; Nilsson 2004, 129.

²⁵⁸ Wiencke 2000, 188, 191f.; Walter & Felten 1981, 21.

(H'4 and structure J) were added to this outline (*Fig. 22*),²⁵⁹ beside the major changes to its interior arrangement. Structure J was thereby constructed on top of House K, in turn contemporaneous with the first phase of House H.²⁶⁰ I have proposed above that the complicated plan of corridor houses in itself suggests multiple uses,²⁶¹ but if it was used as living space, the conditions for its use are likely to have been different (arguably working on a temporary rather than a permanent basis).

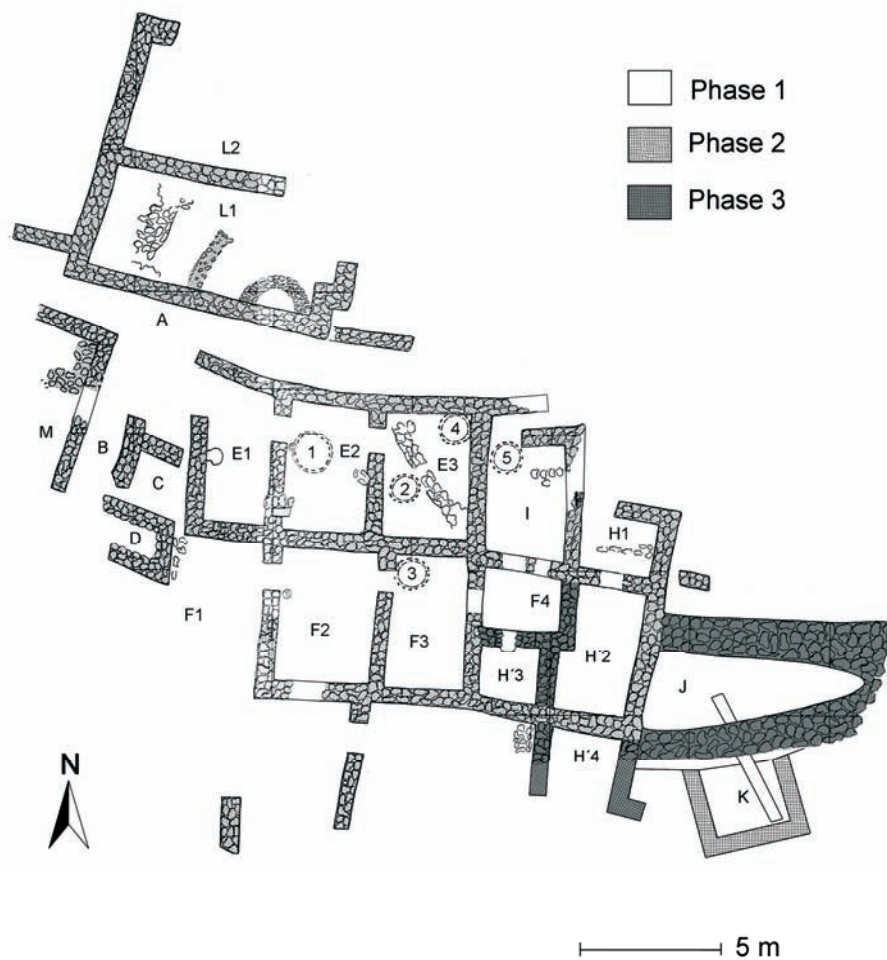


Figure 22. Aghios Kosmas. Plan of different construction phases (after Mylonas 1959, plan 1).

²⁵⁹ Mylonas 1959, 36, 41.

²⁶⁰ Mylonas 1959, 42f.

²⁶¹ *Chapter 2*; also Pullen 1985, 266f.

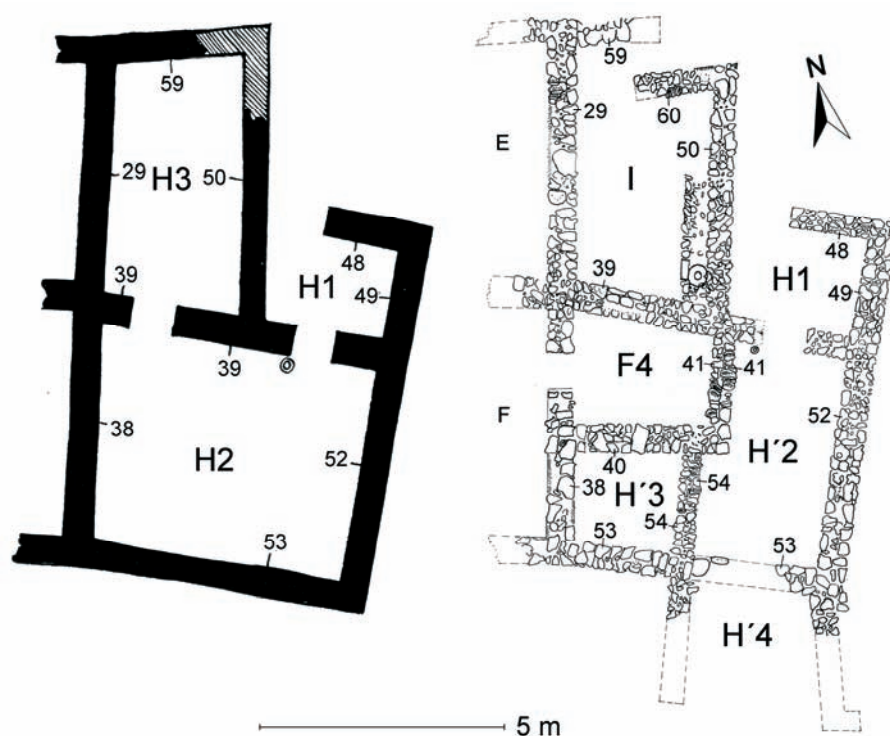


Figure 23. Aghios Kosmas. The spaces of House H before and after its rearrangement (after Mylonas 1959, figs, 9 11).

The detailed publication of the architecture of Aghios Kosmas and the excavator's own interpretation supply an opportunity for the Early Helladic period to consider how houses and room complexes may have undergone changes through their life-histories. *Figure 23* illustrates the architectural history of House H.²⁶² Originally the house had a somewhat L-shaped design comprising a small entrance court (H1), a large main room (H2), and from there a doorway into another somewhat smaller room (H3) that was in part parallel to the court. At some time after its construction, the doorway between H2 and H3 was closed and the latter space turned into a separate area completely detached from the original house.²⁶³ Two new walls were constructed to create a new room from the north-western part of Room 2. This room did not communicate with the original house but was made a part of the adjacent House F (Room F4).²⁶⁴ This left a considerably diminished House H, but the space was somewhat expanded by the addition of Room H'4 to the south. What was left of Room 2 of the original house was also

²⁶² Mylonas 1959, 35f.

²⁶³ House I: Mylonas 1959, 38–41.

²⁶⁴ Mylonas 1959, 31f.

split into two compartments, Rooms H'2 and H'3. Thus, the quite large original House H, with three rooms, became a somewhat smaller dwelling with four smaller rooms. According to Mylonas, these changes were made in the latest phase of the settlement, and for these reconfigurations another type of building material was used than that in the original construction.²⁶⁵ There also seems to be a difference to be seen within these later changes. Walls 40 and 41, making up the bounds of Rooms F4, were considerably sturdier than Wall 54, dividing Room H2, and the walls of the southern Room H'4 (*Fig. 22*).²⁶⁶ Furthermore, the placement of Wall 54 in relation to Walls 40 and 41 suggests an addition rather than a simultaneous construction, while the western wall of Room H'4 is an exact continuation of Wall 54. Although not fully developed by the excavator, it appears that House H went through three episodes of reconfiguration through its occupation phase.

By populating House H and adjacent spaces, thus by crossing the structural biographies of the house with those of their potential users, we may begin to visualise some aspects of life within this settlement. Thus, the reconfigurations can most probably be translated into the lives of the people sharing the use of House H as well as the lives of people active within the adjacent spaces, new or enlarged through the changes. We will never know the exact events or circumstances that led up to the reconfigurations that can be gathered from the architecture. If we should see House H as continuously occupied by the same group of people on both sides of the changes, the spatial modification must, however, have involved active negotiations between the different groups of individuals concerned. On the other hand, although there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest that House H was abandoned during the critical period, this may nevertheless have been so, suggesting in turn the human agency involved from the side of House F, and the interests concerning the latter use of House I. The final reconfiguration of House H (Rooms H'3 and H'4) can in this scenario be translated into a new group of individuals moving in and taking charge of the interior arrangements based on their own needs and values.

Apart from providing a glimpse of the changing circumstances of life that can be gathered even from this relatively limited material, the latter attempts at interpretation have also highlighted an important problem in connecting the histories of people and houses. If Aghios Kosmas, phase B, the phase of the settlement to be connected with the architecture just discussed, should be seen to span the second half of the EH II period,²⁶⁷ this would mean a period of two hundred years or more. This, I believe, is an improbably long life for a mudbrick house. Two hundred years is also, however, a considerable amount of time, during which much can happen. The problem lies in the

²⁶⁵ Mylonas 1959, 36.

²⁶⁶ Mylonas 1959, 36, fig. 19.

²⁶⁷ See Maran 1998, 80f.

common static portrayal of architectural phases that remain unconnected with the passing of time and the lives of their users. Houses may be abandoned and reoccupied without leaving any trace in the archaeological record and thus without disturbing these static portrayals. As a final part of my consideration of the occupation, I will consider one further aspect of the house occupation that is potentially affected by the timeless illustrations of Early Helladic houses.

By this I mean the seasonal cycles that cut across the day-to-day, and are connected with the structural biographies of houses. Elizabeth Banks noted for the EH III period at Lerna that “there was probably not a day in the life of the Fourth Settlement at Lerna on which some new construction or repair and reconstruction of old buildings was not undertaken”.²⁶⁸ I think that her comment can be expanded to apply to every period of use for Early Helladic houses. We may envision that on a regular, although perhaps not daily basis there was work to be done to maintain the houses, on the exterior as well as the interior. A roof may have sprung a leak, parts of it needing to be re-laid or strengthened with a new layer of clay, or a door may have been damaged as in the narrative above. Floors have been found to have been renewed, as well as the paving of outdoor areas.²⁶⁹ South of House 117 and between House 117 and the House of the Tiles at Lerna lay heaps of unused yellow clay, waiting to be utilised.²⁷⁰ The clay was of the kind used for the paving of the open spaces and benches around the House of the Tiles, and may represent left-over material, material not yet used in the original paving, or clay to be used for the replastering of the whole area, or especially exposed parts of it. In the latter scenario the plastering may be suggested to have been performed at regular intervals, perhaps on a seasonal cycle. Similarly, general care of the house, if not sparked by immediate concerns, may have been attended to on a seasonal basis, perhaps when other activities were less pressing (see, *Fig. 18*). Seasonally bound activities would to some degree have structured the daily lives within houses and households, and the variations between these activities are likely to have been noticeable as differences between households and also within households. Hunting seasons would have particularly structured the lives of individuals active as hunters or in activities connected with hunting, and the agricultural year would have affected the seasonal rhythms of people engaged in ploughing, sowing, the gathering of wild fruits and herbs, pruning, harvesting, processing and storage. Reproduction cycles, maturing, annual and daily cycles of secondary products as well as seasonally changing pastures would have been important for people and activities connected with animal and animal produce. Wind and weather would have been decisive for traders and the use of trade routes,

²⁶⁸ Banks’ architectural introduction to Rutter 1995, 10.

²⁶⁹ Mylonas 1959, e.g. 27 (Room E’2); Wiencke 2000, 56–59.

²⁷⁰ Wiencke 2000, 152, 288.

as it would have been important for anyone relying on the products of trade, and so on.

The conservation of the Early Helladic houses cannot be placed at any particular point within the annual or seasonal cycles, except perhaps in relation to the activities listed above. At Neolithic Çatalhöyük it has been possible to propose the annual replastering of interior house walls by counting the number of layers of wall plaster. Annual replastering occurred routinely up to 50–100 times, implying not only a recurrent practice but also the average lifespan of a Çatalhöyük house.²⁷¹ For the Early Helladic period, renewal of surfaces was much less frequent and is more commonly recorded for floor surfaces than for walls. Three floor levels were recognised for Room 2 of House E at Aghios Kosmas, the floor of Room F2 was raised at least three times during its use-phase, and from the inventories of Rooms H2/H'2 and H2/H'3, they were raised at least twice.²⁷² In the latter case, all pottery finds from Room H'2 and H'3, thus the rooms as they appeared after the internal rearrangements, are reported as coming from the last floor level or the last occupation level of the rooms. Are the new floor levels to be connected with the reconfigurations? In any case, it appears as though the renewal of house floors was not a seasonally or annually recurrent practice. Probably there was no need, and there was no symbolical significance attached to it, as appears to be the case in the replastering of walls and floors at Çatalhöyük. The renewal of a floor surface only three times in a house use-phase of, say, seventy or one hundred years may have been simply functional, when the old floor was simply too worn and uneven. With the low number of recognised floors, however, I think we should consider that the new floor signifies also, or primarily, changes of a wider significance for the life-history of a house. By this argument we may, in the renewed floor surfaces, have one of the tools needed to approach the changing circumstances within long-lived buildings, and to some degree amend the timelessness of their walls.

The final days of use

Coming to the final days of the use-phase of houses, there are multiple choices that I have already touched upon above. Houses can be freely abandoned, for one reason or another, be left standing or be consciously destroyed, or at the other end of the scale, they may find a more violent and unexpected ending. Fire caused the destruction of Houses CA and DM at Lerna, while the houses at Lithares appear to have been abandoned in a more gradual and orderly way.²⁷³ The House of the Tiles was violently destroyed;

²⁷¹ Hodder 2006, e.g. 127f. On one wall it was possible to recognise as many as 450 layers of plaster (p. 128).

²⁷² Mylonas 1959, 27, 31, 36–38 (House H inventory).

²⁷³ Wiencke 2000, 132–145, also Rooms A and B of the fortification: pp. 129–131; Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 20; also Forsén 1992, 129.

debris has been found at large distances around the building,²⁷⁴ while Building BG shows no such signs and was probably abandoned and subsequently demolished, arguably as too old or outdated, to make room for its apparent successor. The manner of this end, the final days of the use of a house, should be seen to form these houses' archaeological record as it is presented to us to interpret.²⁷⁵

In cases where a house was simply abandoned, this would not necessarily have meant the end of the use-life of the house. Here there is an uneven match between the biographies of people and those of houses. Even when abandoned, a house still standing would have remained a visual component of the settlement, a reminder of things past, and, in terms of the biographies of people, of past residents. This scenario will be explored fully below (*Chapter 4*). Abandonment also need not mean that the house fell into disuse, thus reoccupation was added to *Table 2*, in analogy with the use life of settlements. The new conditions I have referred to when interpreting reconfiguration of the interior or exterior of a house may be new residents. 'Squatters' may also have claimed the grounds. New constructions can be positioned within the still-standing remains of the older house, such as the EH III copper smelting furnace in the central room of Weißes Haus, continuing in this way the life of that house.²⁷⁶ The alternatives are many.

The emphasis in this last section of the chapter lies however not on possible sequences of use and reuse of houses; these belong primarily to the occupation phase of the house, or, if the reuse lies beyond the actual life *within* its walls I will return to it in the next chapter. Here I am concerned with the activities and events connected with the final days within individual Early Helladic houses, and the final manner of their end as an inhabited space. These events effectively 'sealed', more or less, the assemblages within the houses until they could be excavated by archaeologists. How can these assemblages help us to understand the activities and the significance of these days? How do the assemblages correspond to the manner of their ends as they have been interpreted?

Drawing some examples from Lerna, we know that Houses CA and DM, along with rooms A and B in the fortification, were destroyed in a violent fire. The main rooms of CA and DM especially, have preserved rich deposits of pottery and other kinds of material culture as well as organic remains: arguably a snapshot of the activities that were interrupted by the fire, and the course of events in the destruction of the house. *Figure 24* illustrates how in Room CA, schists appear to have fallen from the roof construction and bricks from the wall, peas and beans have spilled out from a container into

²⁷⁴ Wiencke 2000, 283–286.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Schiffer 1985, on the formation of archaeological assemblages.

²⁷⁶ Walter & Felten 1981, 23f. The walls of Weißes Haus were in part standing; some were used as mounting frames for the furnace, others were dismantled to create workspace.

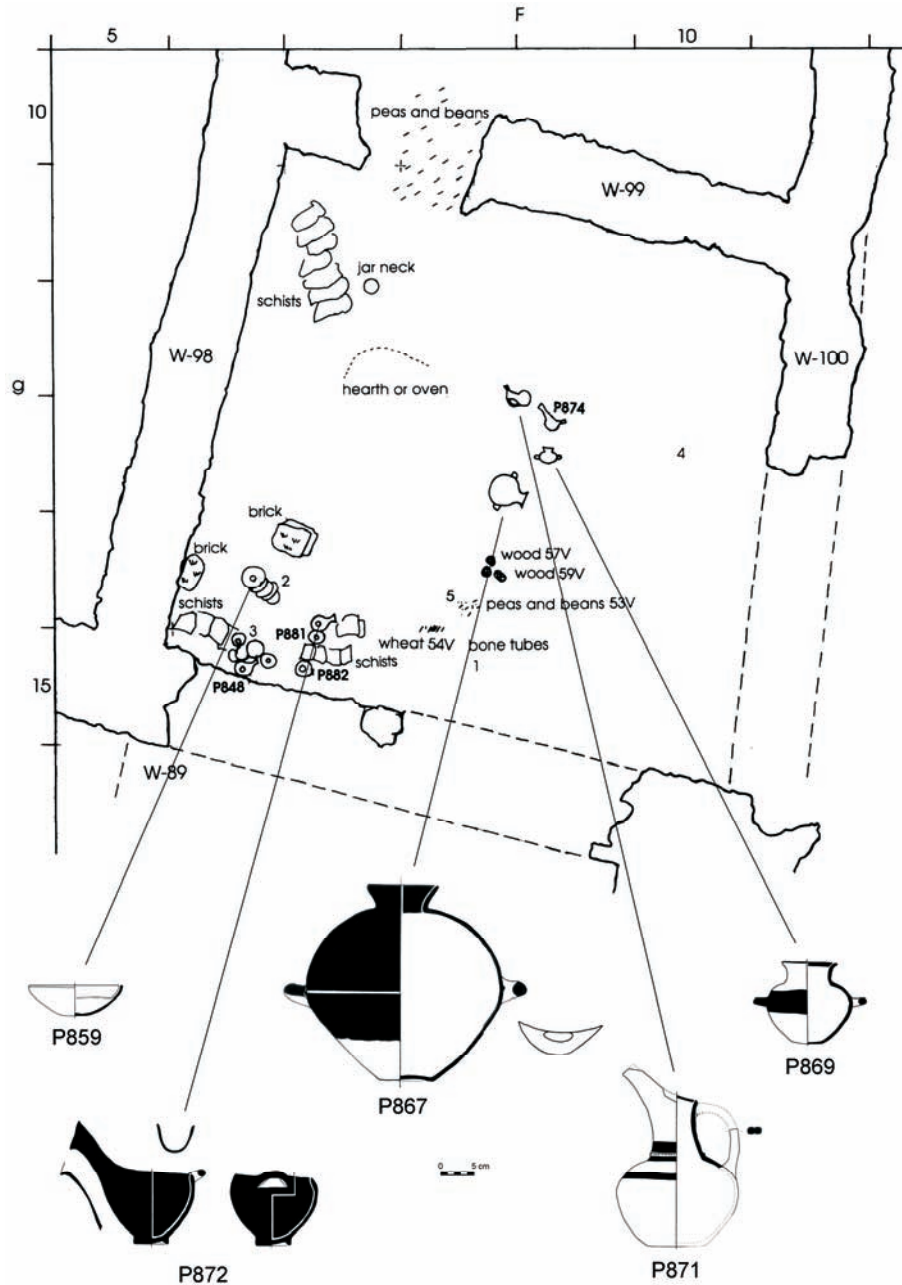


Figure 24. Lerna III. Plan of Room CA with the location of finds as well as illustrations of some of them (after Wiencke 2000, plan 25, figs. II.53: P859, II.54: P867, P867, II.55: P869, P872, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

the doorway in the north. Peas and beans as well as wheat were recovered from the floor, probably once contained in boxes or vessels of some perishable material, perhaps the material may be seen in the carbonized wood recovered nearby; these, however may also be remains of fallen roof beams.²⁷⁷ While some pottery vessels appear to have fallen from incinerated shelves on the southern wall, four almost complete vessels were found forming a semi-circle around an area that has been interpreted as a hearth or oven.²⁷⁸ Perhaps this last arrangement results from vessels left in haste as the danger of the fire became clear, perhaps even a person or persons working by this hearth or oven happened to start the fire. At a later stage, some time after the fire, the ruins of this room and Room DM were demolished to make room for the open space around the House of the Tiles.²⁷⁹ The individuals who did this, however, were either not interested in the content of the ruined house, or it was inaccessible, because as far as we can tell, it was buried as left by the fire.

Building BG was apparently not burnt, as already noted, but rather demolished deliberately. The contents of the building were found to be meagre, floor levels and deposits largely lacking, probably destroyed during the preparation of the ground for the building of the House of the Tiles.²⁸⁰ Parts of the walls of the house were totally removed and the paucity of finds is in agreement with an interpretation that the structure was largely emptied before it was destroyed, leaving only items that can be argued to be less valuable or simply not found, as well as stationary items such as the hearth built into the western, so-called Hearth Corridor.²⁸¹ As in the former example, the demolition of the walls and levelling of the ground appear to be connected with the construction of the House of the Tiles.

As a final example we have the House of the Tiles which, in contrast to the corridor house preceding it, was destroyed in a violent fire. Above its remains a tumulus was subsequently built. The building has been noted for its paucity of finds. Thus in this case we have a building clearly destroyed by fire but without the rich inventory as evidence for intensive use as presented by Room CA. The interpretations of this fact have included suggestions of the building being not completed or looted, or cleared. I have already presented my interpretation of the building above, based on the result of a spatial analysis of the structure and its surroundings (*Chapter 2*), in which the relative paucity of finds may be explained by the character of its use.²⁸² However, by comparison with Building BG, I think it is possible that the

²⁷⁷ Wiencke 2000, 133–136.

²⁷⁸ Wiencke 2000, 134.

²⁷⁹ Wiencke 2000, 148, 286; also *Chapter 4*.

²⁸⁰ Wiencke 2000, 185–197.

²⁸¹ For a summary of finds, see Nilsson 2004, table 4.

²⁸² Cf. Nilsson 2004, 114f. For other possible interpretations, see *Chapter 3*, section on *Structural biographies*, and *Chapter 5* section on *The search for culprits*.

House of the Tiles was to some extent cleared of its contents, but if we add the fire to this equation we would also need to reconsider the meaning and/or intentionality of its destruction (*Chapter 5*).

Lithares and Aghios Kosmas: a comparison of contexts

The examples from Lerna illustrate three varying destruction assemblages that illustrate both the problems and the possibilities inherent in them for understanding the last days of use. On the basis of these examples, I would like to present one further comparison at the level of whole settlements: between the settlements of Aghios Kosmas and Lithares, in a discussion of the manner of their destruction/abandonment. At Aghios Kosmas, one burnt layer, on average 0.40 metres thick, was discovered under a 0.07 metre thick layer of sand in three trial trenches spread over the settlement area. This layer separated the Early Helladic levels from the Late Helladic, suggesting that the early settlement ended with a fire destruction and that some time passed before the establishment of the later.²⁸³ In contrast, no burnt horizon was found at Lithares and the excavator contended that there had been no enemy attack, that the people had simply left, but possibly that the abandonment was forced by some imminent danger, perhaps an earthquake.²⁸⁴

How may these archaeological contexts help us to visualise the last events within these two Early Helladic settlements? Concentrating on these last events, can we gain a wider understanding of the settlements in general? In terms of the size and composition of the inventories left from the contexts, there do not seem to be great differences. Metal objects, which may be considered valuable and are easy to collect and carry away if needed, are very few from both settlements.²⁸⁵ Neither does there seem to be a higher degree of complete vessels from either of the two settlements, although it should be noted that the number of sherds recovered from some of the rooms at Lithares is remarkably high.²⁸⁶ One comparison that may be of interest is the composition of the obsidian assemblages. Both settlements have been characterised as centres for the obsidian industry, by their excavators as well as by other researchers since their excavation.²⁸⁷ In his survey of obsidian in funerary contexts in the southern Aegean Early Bronze Age, Carter concluded that Aghios Kosmas was “obviously an important centre in the procurement, working and re-distribution of Melian obsidian at this time [here:

²⁸³ Mylonas 1959, 10f.; Forsén 1992, 113.

²⁸⁴ Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 95; 1985, 20; Forsén 1992, 129. Traces of the earthquake could possibly be seen in the way some of the walls had collapsed (Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 95).

²⁸⁵ Mylonas 1959, 137f.; Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 95.

²⁸⁶ Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 94; 1985, 19, table 4. In comparison with Aghios Kosmas it should be remembered that, while Tzavella-Evjen recorded the number of sherds for each room at Lithares, Mylonas gave only the numbers of more or less complete/mendable vessels that were also catalogued.

²⁸⁷ Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 94f.; Mylonas 1959, 143. Also e.g. Carter 1998, 181f.; Nilsson 2004, 159, 174.

late EB I]”, echoing to a large degree Mylonas’ own words.²⁸⁸ As already mentioned, the obsidian assemblage from Lithares amounted to around 150 cores, 2,000 blades and 20 kilograms of obsidian chips and refuse.²⁸⁹ By comparison, the catalogued number from Aghios Kosmas was: 48 blades, 23 blade fragments, 454 chips and 85 blades and chips, from the houses with preserved architecture (phase B).²⁹⁰ Although obsidian flakes and cores were mentioned in a general manner among the stone objects in the cemeteries and settlements, the only cores actually recorded from the settlement come from an early, phase A, bothros.²⁹¹ Several cores were also carefully noted for the North Cemetery of the settlement and it is in this context we find the largest concentrations of obsidian.²⁹²

The assemblages cannot be compared in terms of absolute number, as the number of rooms in which the obsidian was found is much greater at Lithares than at Aghios Kosmas. Considering both settlements as centres for obsidian production, however, the lack of obsidian cores at the latter site is striking. Although the chips found in the houses appear to confirm obsidian working at these places, cores must be considered as a necessary product to allow blade manufacture. Obsidian cores, with the potential of producing a large number of blades, are therefore to be considered a valuable commodity, in social as well as economic terms, beyond that of the individual blades.²⁹³ Connecting this with the settlement’s last days, it can be suggested that some aspects of the Aghios Kosmas material culture was cleared out before the fire destroyed the houses of the phase B settlement. The evidence is clearly far from conclusive but, I think, gives room for some further consideration. In the case of Aghios Kosmas, if the lack of obsidian cores is seen as the proverbial ‘tip of the iceberg’ it is possible that the fire was not immediately threatening but, if it had started at all, nevertheless perceived as potentially disastrous, and that the inhabitants had the time and felt the need to remove selected items. The remaining assemblages cannot therefore be seen as providing a complete picture of life within the houses, comprised instead of items that were not valuable, portable or essential enough to be collected as the houses were abandoned. It is also possible that some time passed between a possible abandonment and the fire. These considerations

²⁸⁸ Carter 1998, 182; Mylonas 1959, 143.

²⁸⁹ An estimate by Nilsson (2004, 172) from information by Tzavella-Evjen (1984, 21–107).

²⁹⁰ Mylonas 1959, Houses E, F, H, I, J, L.

²⁹¹ Mylonas 1959, 144, 17f. (bothros: three examples, dating to Aghios Kosmas A, or earlier).

²⁹² Mylonas 1959, Graves 6–8, 16, 21, 23, area O, and Extended skeleton area). In terms of the largest assemblage, this comes from outside Grave 3 (Mylonas 1959, 78: 94 blades, 200 chips, excluding the cores, blades and chips that filled a incised pyxis, also p. 76), see further *Chapter 9*.

²⁹³ For the social value of obsidian cores used within funerary ritual in the EBA, see Carter 1998, e.g. 172f., in general: pp. 90f.

do not bring us closer to what exactly caused the fires but present a possible emotional framework for the final abandonment.²⁹⁴

The evidence from Lithares, on the other hand, projects a picture of a settlement left with the intent of returning. An earthquake is one event that can plausibly be seen to cause a settlement dependent on the manufacture and likely redistribution of obsidian to leave so many cores and finished blades behind. If left in this manner, we must see the houses remaining largely still standing, ready to receive their returning residents. But apparently they never came. Perhaps it can be suggested that the houses were destroyed to a greater degree than is suggested by the archaeological record, or something happened at the time of abandonment, or at least before the settlement could be reoccupied, that caused these houses not to be reinhabited.²⁹⁵ Possible causes that may be suggested could include an epidemic illness, or, simply changing conditions for the residents in the intervening time. I admit that this is all pure conjecture, but although never demonstrable, such discussions bring a further dimension to the consideration of the biographies of houses and people. I will conclude this section, therefore, by considering one piece of evidence from Lithares that will also accomplish this. I am thinking of the 16 animal figurines found by the central hearth of the room often referred to as the Sanctuary at Lithares.²⁹⁶ The figurines (14 complete and 2 fragments) could be divided into two groups suggesting at least two individual producers, and they were found close to, but not on or in the hearth as stated elsewhere.²⁹⁷ Animal figurines in relation to hearths are known from Mycenaean times,²⁹⁸ and it is possible that the Lithares figurines are remains of a final symbolic act performed in the room by one or several individuals. The figurines may present a snapshot of an activity that may not have been uncommon under other circumstances also. But under the circumstances of this specific act, perhaps rather than a place for ceremony it should be seen as illustrating a time for ceremony. Why did someone leave the figurines by the hearth of the “Sanctuary” at Lithares? It may have been an attempt to appease the imminent dangers, or a way to seal or provide an end for life within the house until a later return, or forever.

²⁹⁴ A partly independent possibility is that the settlement in phase B (EH IIB) was no longer the obsidian centre that the evidence from the North Cemetery (mainly EH I–IIA) suggests that it were.

²⁹⁵ It should be noted that the EH II (an early phase, following Maran, 1998, 67f.) street and adjacent room complexes were found very close to the surface, that some EH III and MH sherds have been found in the area, and that we cannot rule out the possibility that anything above the level of the excavated architecture has been destroyed by subsequent activity at the site, ploughing, for example, that has left traces on some of the floors of the rooms (Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 9, 12; Forsén 1992, 129).

²⁹⁶ The room was called the sanctuary in the initial publication (Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 21f.), but in a later article Tzavella-Evjen took care to nuance this statement (1989).

²⁹⁷ Tzavella-Evjen 1972.

²⁹⁸ Kilian 1990.

Paralleling the lifespan of a house with the lifespan of its users?

I have stated above that the lifespan of a house may be connected with the lives of its users. How far can this analogy be pursued? The archaeological contexts as excavated supply us with a ‘picture’ of the last days of the use of that particular house. At the same time this picture is our tool for understanding the full life-history of that house. As such, the house assemblages may be portrayed as snapshots of an extended timeline—but how long should the timeline really be extended? How long a life cycle is it realistic to argue for an Early Helladic house? Building BG is probably one of the best dated buildings. It was constructed early in Lerna III phase C, but only after another house dated to the very earliest stage of this phase. A construction date could nevertheless be put at around 2450 BC perhaps, following the far from exact high chronology given in *Table 1 (Chapter 1)*. The building then probably stood until it was demolished for the construction of the House of the Tiles. By the same chronology, that would mean about 2350–2300 BC, and the full use-life of the building would thus be around 100–150 years. Roughly one hundred years or even more would be an *old* house in Early Helladic terms, possibly even *very old*. Building BG was, however, a corridor house and thus potentially atypical. In reality, most houses may have had a (much) shorter life. As a comparison, based on scientific dating methods as well as the regular replastering of the interior walls of the mudbrick house of Çatalhöyük, the average lifespan of a house has been estimated to be 45 to 90 years of inhabitation.²⁹⁹ Considering that mudbricks were used in both contexts, the values given for Çatalhöyük may be accepted as a guideline for the Early Helladic period also. The range of the average value allows room for contextually specific handling and circumstances that are likely to differ between the Neolithic site and practices within the present study area. House CA, destroyed at about the same time as Building BG was demolished, in the late phase IIIC of the Lerna chronology, was also constructed in late phase IIIC. It may have stood twenty years, perhaps more but maybe even less, and would thus fall below even the lower estimate of the average.

Another example is EH III houses. These were often equipped with less sturdy walls than the houses from the preceding phase, and no roof tiles have been dated to EH III, suggesting perhaps a lesser degree of refinement. In EH III also, the houses were generally free-standing, lacking the support of other structures. Banks has commented on the fact that the EH III houses of Lerna appear to have been the focus for constant activity.³⁰⁰ As commented upon above, this is likely to have been true in general for EH II houses also, but the many individual houses constructed within each phase of EH III at Lerna, I think, rather suggest short lifespans for houses. The timespan of EH III is estimated to have been 100–200 years (*Table 1*). Perhaps it is also pos-

²⁹⁹ Hodder 2006, 220.

³⁰⁰ Banks in Rutter 1995, 10.

sible to argue that the character of EH III apsidal houses as free-standing (their maintenance and structure not necessarily connected with that of other houses) resulted in fewer (extensive) active measures taken to maintain the houses for a longer time. EH III houses were replaced by new ones, apparently on quite a regular basis (*Fig. 31*). Rutter estimated the duration of the separate EH III phases, and this estimate, applied to the stratigraphy of houses presented by Banks, would give an average lifespan of 25 years for the EH III houses at Lerna, possibly even half that time.³⁰¹

In recent years, archaeologists in northern Europe have explored the possibility of a very close relationship between resident and house.³⁰² Closer to the study area, Chapman has commented on the frequency of the destruction of houses on Hungarian *tells*, evidenced by “burnt horizons” in the stratigraphies of houses or groups of houses.³⁰³ He sees three possibilities that would explain the destructions: (1) “the traditional invasion hypothesis, usually involving long-range north Pontic arsonists”, a theory that he summarily dismisses; (2) “accidental fires”; and (3) “deliberate destruction by fire”.

Following Caskey’s suggestion of a wave of destructions at the end of the Early Helladic period inferring the “coming of the Greeks”,³⁰⁴ a variant on the first explanation has surely been active within the present study area also. With the more recent work of Forsén and Maran,³⁰⁵ even if the homogeneity of the destructions cannot be dismissed, I have the feeling that this possibility has nevertheless been kept alive to some degree. Burnt horizons are a feature of Early Helladic settlements, but even if geographically widespread, they were not as synchronous as to allow Caskey’s invasion theory to hold. Forsén, however, does not supply an alternative interpretation and does not discuss other possibilities for the destruction layers of which she nevertheless proves the existence.³⁰⁶ Hostile attacks for the individual fires are, I think, still often considered to be the cause of the fires, although the causes are not commonly discussed directly. If not hostile fires, the cause, I would say, is generally considered accidental; due to the open fires within buildings, wooden details, and densely arranged room complexes, a fire could easily spread quickly over large areas. The third explanation offered by Chapman for his Hungarian material is, however, not considered.

This last explanation connects the death of the house with the death of an important resident. The death of the ‘owner’ or house elder may have been seen as the symbolical death of the household in its present composition, and

³⁰¹ Banks in Rutter 1995, plans 3–5; Rutter 1995, 641. The two first phases were estimated by Rutter to have lasted 25–50 years, the third phase, 50–100 years. Within the first and second EH III phases, two architectural levels could be distinguished and in the third, four levels.

³⁰² E.g. Bradley 2002, 65–68, with references.

³⁰³ Chapman 1994, 62f.

³⁰⁴ Caskey 1960.

³⁰⁵ Forsén 1992; Maran 1998.

³⁰⁶ She does hint at neighbouring hostilities between ‘peer-polities’ as an alternative for what happened at Lerna (Forsén 1992, 257).

a reorganisation of the house and household as the traditionally grounded consequence. The destructions are considered deliberate. Tringham and Stevanović have performed extensive analyses of the houses of the Serbian Neolithic settlement of Opovo, which were, as a rule, destroyed by fire.³⁰⁷ The analyses of this specific aspect of their destruction were considerably extended by Stevanović in a 1997 article. By searching for points of ignition, the spread of destruction debris and the colour of the burnt clay from the Opovo houses, she could determine that the fires were deliberate, that they were restricted to individual houses, and that the average temperature in which the clay had burnt (averaging between 500° and 800°C) came close to the temperature reached also for the pottery production of the period (850° to 950°C). The high temperatures suggested that the fires were maintained.³⁰⁸ She links the considerable homogeneity in house construction (wattle-and-daub) and fire destruction studied, to a specific period and area, namely the Vinča cultural sphere concentrated in the 5th millennium BC. This is a concentration of phenomena that is not to be found with such frequency or volume in any other prehistoric period.³⁰⁹ The intensity with which the practice was performed is probably an indication of the high social significance of the practice within these societies.³¹⁰

Returning to the Early Helladic settlements and societies, I do not suggest that the burnt horizons were deliberate. Furthermore, the lifespan of an Early Helladic house of seventy or one hundred years is not comparable to the lifespan of individuals within this period. Fire, as we have seen, was not the only way that the use-life of a building could come to an end. Houses could be actively dismantled, and they could simply be abandoned and left to decay. What I am suggesting (and what I have tried to do) is that we take on wider and more direct considerations of the final days or moments of the lives within houses that form the archaeological record that we study and interpret. Included in this concept should be considerations of the degree of intentionality or unintentionality inherent in these last moments, the activities and possible scenarios that led up to the destruction by fire or the abandonment of houses. This could include hostile attacks, accidental fires or deliberate destructions of different kinds. Destruction as deliberate ‘killing’ of houses is a concept that may be well worth exploring for the Early Helladic period in general. Even if whole settlements were not set on fire, by their inhabitants or by someone else, individual houses may have been. I will explore some possible scenarios for this later in this study (*Chapter 5*).

³⁰⁷ E.g. Tringham 1995; Stevanović 1997.

³⁰⁸ Stevanović 1997, 367f.

³⁰⁹ Stevanović 1997, 337, fig. 1: illustrating a burnt house horizon over Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Moldova, Ukraine and Eastern Hungary, stretching from almost 6000 BC to about 3200 BC.

³¹⁰ Stevanović 1997, 380–388 (discussion and conclusion).

Coming to the end of this chapter, focused on the life-histories of people and their houses, we must ask ourselves if we have actually come to the end of house biographies. Have I exhausted the ways in which houses and house biographies cut across the daily lives of their users and the ways buildings could have had significance for the Early Helladic societies? From references in this chapter it should be clear that the answer is no; the considerations of the use-lives of houses may have come to an end, but that of their life-histories has not.

Part Three.

Living with a past

As inhabitants of the modern world we stroll through our communities noticing buildings from different periods, acknowledging the past if not always envying or even appreciating it. In some cases, steps are taken to preserve the past, to leave it as if undisturbed by later periods (or leave it in some ideal state, as we want it to be perceived); in other cases the decision is the opposite. Most of us feel the need to be aware of the past in order to be able to relate to our own position today. In the Early Helladic period, the past in the present was perhaps not as striking as it is for us today, the time scale not as extended, but I will argue that it nevertheless had a role to play in the daily life of the Early Helladic people.

This part of the book is the natural follow-up to the discussions in the preceding chapter on the life-histories of houses and people. The concept of a life-history is one that moves beyond the actual use of houses and that has a meaning that moves beyond the individuality of each house. If life continued within the settlement, once a specific building had for some reason or another been found to have outlived its life in the eyes of its users, it may have been left to decay, been dismantled or immediately been replaced. After a varying time span, all buildings would have been replaced in one way or another, all loci reoccupied for construction or other activities. This is what we can see in the archaeological stratigraphies: successive, superimposed building or occupation horizons.³¹¹ This way of presenting the passing of time in prehistoric societies has both its strengths and its weaknesses.

The strengths as I see them are that it gives us the opportunity of a bird's-eye view on chronological development. This allows us access to a diachronic perspective of a far more extended time-line than the one available to the individual active at different points on that time-line. If an excavation is carried out over a large area, these horizons will also provide the opportunity to study the relationships between buildings and the use of spaces, both within and between horizons. One of the weaknesses of this extended view has thus already been mentioned—that we use and furthermore emphasise a

³¹¹ Tringham 1995, 89–92.

perspective on time that would not have been possible for, in the present case, the Early Helladic people. Furthermore, the creation of stratigraphically-based architectural periods, while distinguishing a period from that before and after, tends to merge individual house histories into static occupation horizons. These horizons may cause us to lose sight of not only the individual house histories but also the lived experience of the developments, thus the experiences of a building activity that would in most cases have been gradual over many years rather than wholesale in one event.³¹² By emphasising the linear way of looking at and perceiving time there is also the risk that we ignore or give less importance to other ways of perceiving time.

I will not pretend to know which perspectives on time were active within the Early Helladic societies or if one may have been dominant over others.³¹³ I think nevertheless that it is likely that the experience of time was to some extent very individual, and above all that it was contextually specific. By this I mean that many perspectives on time may have been equally active, and that focus shifted with the occasion and particularly the activities at hand. In the preceding chapter I have already tried to illustrate some ways in which cyclical perspectives—the annual, the seasonal and the day-to-day, the specifics of the seasons as experienced by a farmer, shepherd or cattle breeder and many others—may have cut across the lifespan of individuals and the biographies of material culture.

In terms of the experiences of a past, I think there is no doubt that prehistoric people, and in the present case the Early Helladic people, in different ways recognised, reacted to and acted on the material remains of earlier inhabitants, be they just from a generation ago, from what archaeologists would call discrete cultural periods or sub-periods of the past, or the immediate past of a destroyed building. To some extent at least, this was a linear perspective, of times distinguished from their present. It is another matter how this past was understood. From our modern perspective we can say that the Early Helladic period lasted for about one thousand years, that the start of the EH II period can be placed some five hundred years after the end of the Final Neolithic period, and so on (for this absolute chronology of the Early Helladic period, see *Table 1*). Without this diachronic perspective, the passing of time would have been perceived and referred to in other ways.

There is, for example, likely to have been some division of the past, and also different types of histories. There would have been the immediate past that could be related to through the lived life of each individual, another past that could be learned by the knowledge and experiences of others and by the workings of oral traditions. One part of the latter may have been a past that could be referred back to by the forming of genealogies, created by links

³¹² Tringham 1995, 89.

³¹³ For literature on the experiences of time and different perspectives on time, see e.g. Giddens 1984; Bradley 1991; 2002; Ingold 2000; Bailey 1993; Thomas 1996; Hodder 2005.

between known ancestors. Other traditions may be connected with a mythical past of less distinct peoples and landscapes.³¹⁴ The memories of the past and the way we remember will to some degree be connected with the type of past to be remembered.

Archaeologies of memory usually emphasise two ways in particular in which memories are passed on.³¹⁵ These are the memories and traditions transmitted and created through ‘incorporated’ or ‘inscribed’ practices.³¹⁶ In short, we can remember by doing or remember by seeing, and in the same way memories can be constructed. The former is based on the embodied enactments and re-enactments of practical acts, a sensory experience that will create a memory of the present act as well as transmit a memory of other such acts that have been performed before. The latter type of practices comprises acts which are literally or symbolically inscribed on material culture, through mediums such as texts, iconography, artefacts and monumental representation.³¹⁷ For both types, material culture may act as a trigger for memory, of persons and specific acts. In both scenarios also lies the potential and even likelihood for persons distanced from the original act not only to retain and repeat but to intentionally or unconsciously restructure, transform, repress, accentuate or erase all or some of the intentions and results of that act as they were transmitted through memory, as well as to generate new memories.

What has been decisive for me in the work in the present part of the book are the ways in which the past may have been an active and meaningful part of the daily life of the Early Helladic people, how a past was essentially and continuously created, the underlying processes and the positions of the Early Helladic people in relation to them. The processes thus forming a past could have been deliberate or unexpected, or very gradual on an extended time-scale. The aim of this part of the book is to explore how possible reactions to the past can be surveyed from the archaeological record. As in preceding chapters there is also a special emphasis on the importance of place as well as on the potential for people to control and be controlled by their surroundings. The people would have had it in their power to form their world as they chose, but at the same time those choices would, to some extent, have been directed, or formed, by the pre-existing context as the result of past acts—a past.

*The past in prehistoric societies*³¹⁸ is the title of a recent book by Richard Bradley. Bradley has argued widely and interestingly for ways in which the past was acknowledged and built on in the Neolithic and Bronze Age cul-

³¹⁴ E.g. Gosden & Lock 1998; Whitley 2002.

³¹⁵ For archaeological and other perspectives of memory, see e.g. Connerton 1989; Rowlands 1993; Hamilakis 1998; Alcock 2002; van Dyke & Alcock (eds) 2003; Hodder 2005.

³¹⁶ Terms originally coined by Connerton (1989, 72f.).

³¹⁷ E.g. Hamilakis 1998, 116f.; Bradley 2002, 12f.

³¹⁸ Bradley 2002.

tures of Europe. His work has resulted in several books and articles on Bronze Age perceptions, of nature, and of the inhabited world.³¹⁹ A functional model is, to Bradley's mind, inadequate to explain the frequent associations through time, the spatial overlapping or visually interconnected monuments and the deliberate reuse of the past in a continuously inhabited landscape. He argues instead for a considerable degree of historical awareness and positioning in relation to what has gone before.³²⁰ In the argument also lies a consideration of cultural concepts for how things should be. The ideas that he presents, although contextually specific in their presentation, are of a kind that are of potential relevance for many periods and regions.

Studies of the past in the past have also been conducted within Aegean discourse, commonly stressing the possible uses of the past in the creation of identity and the legitimisation of power and privileges. Analyses have been offered for connections made between historical and prehistoric periods, primarily the Late Bronze Age, but also for uses of the past within the historical periods of Greece under Roman rule. Susan Alcock, in her 2002 book, admits to the possibility of performing analyses of social memory within purely prehistoric contexts, but limits herself to context with "some sort of narrative framework".³²¹ In her study she therefore focuses on the workings of social memory in three contexts: the uses of the heritage of Old Greece by Greeks and Romans within the empire; Hellenistic and Roman connections with the places and traditions of the Minoan and the mythological past on Crete; as well as the creation of Messenian identities through the use of historical traditions and reconnections with older cult places.³²² Of the studies of the past in the past that reach into prehistoric times, the contents of her last case-study have received wide attention through a focus on tomb cult,³²³ along with the uses of a more unspecified variety of the past put in relation to the Homeric epics in general.³²⁴

Outline and limitations of Chapters 4 and 5

While the focus in Bradley's work remains mostly with monuments and depositions in the larger landscape, I will keep the focus on the local contexts of the settlements. In relation to earlier Aegean discourse on the subject, my time scale will also be much less extended. Although I will concentrate on the uses of the past within one prehistoric period, this fact will not

³¹⁹ E.g. also Bradley 1998; 2000; 2005.

³²⁰ E.g. Bradley 2002, 19–26; 2005, 57–64.

³²¹ Alcock 2002, 32.

³²² Alcock 2002, chapters 2–4. See also Siapkias (2003) for a critical assessment of the history of research with a focus on the uses of 'ethnicity' and 'Messenians' in classics (p. 1).

³²³ E.g. Antonaccio 1995; also Siapkias 2003, esp. 209–220 (on hero cults), with references.

³²⁴ E.g. Prent 2003.

necessarily accomplish, however, such a close view of connections through time. The Early Helladic period as defined in absolute chronological terms is now estimated to have lasted over a thousand years. This is the same time frame generally given to the remainder of the Aegean Bronze Age (the Middle and the Late Bronze Age taken together). Throughout *Chapters 4* and *5*, I have therefore instead chosen to focus on the direct succession of architectural remains within the framework of some Early Helladic settlements.

Frequent references in the text to the past, the present and the future will easily appear confusing as the concepts cannot be clearly separated. Thus, the subject of the chapter is the attitudes to the past in the prehistoric present. In the diachronic perspective presented, however, the present is always the future of the past and the past of the future. In adopting this linear, diachronic perspective in the coming chapters, I will make use of the strengths as I outlined them above, and try to be aware of the weaknesses of this perspective on time. Thus, with this architectural focus I do not in any way pretend that I have exhausted the range of ways in which the past presented itself and played a role in the lives of a present. The chosen focus does serve several purposes however.

Firstly, it is a way to exemplify the potential of studies regarding the past that was continuously present during daily life in prehistory. In focusing primarily on the short term architectural developments, that is the histories gradually developed for different loci through the life-histories of houses and spaces, I aim to highlight the practices of people in this process, including the conditions for those practices. Secondly, the focus is also a way to follow up on the discussion in the preceding chapter by emphasising some neglected issues within architectural studies. Diachronic/stratigraphic studies of architecture, with special reference to earlier research on Early Helladic Greece, tend to find their merit in relation to pottery and its role in the phasing of ceramic development.³²⁵ The result is a presentation without any further interpretation of the potential meanings of house replacement. Thirdly, architectural remains also have the merit of offering one of the best pictures of the passing of time within their respective societies. An old style pot can stand out in an assemblage of later style pots. The problem from an archaeological point of view is to establish if the pot is indeed an 'heirloom', saved, sought, or found by chance, or, within a limited timeframe, if it is an example of older techniques being continuously used. Stratigraphies of walls spare us some of these questions.

These stratigraphies, however, are not in themselves the focus for the present study, but their analysis is intended as the means to achieve the wider goal, which is to visualise daily life in Early Helladic communities. The passing of time was already evident in the considerations above of the day-to-day as well as the structural biographies of houses, and especially the

³²⁵ Rutter 1995; Maran 1998.

latter, incorporated, I argue, within one essentially linear perspective on time active within the Early Helladic communities. Although it would not very often have been possible for one individual to follow the whole life-history of one specific building, differently developing histories of buildings must at any time have been very visible part of settlement life. By the focus on architectural replacement, we also have a way of visualising how it would have been in the power of the same individual to observe how one house was replaced by a new one and, perhaps, to take an active part in this process. Furthermore, by using this short term view on the long term processes that build up the archaeological record, we end up with a series of individual events that may help us to grasp how the passing of time and the connections through time may have been perceived by and been meaningful for the people involved.

To this end, we need to ask questions of the evidence of architectural developments we have at our disposal: Why do we have these superimposing layers of walls and houses? Why there? Why then? What choices on the part of the Early Helladic individuals have resulted in this situation? Taken together, the present survey will ask two general questions:

- In what ways can architecture represent a meeting with the past?
- How did the Early Helladic people act on this meeting?

Useful concepts for this study are the perspectives of vertical and horizontal stratigraphies.³²⁶ The use of these concepts does not suppose an archaeological reasoning on the part of the Early Helladic people. They are used in an illustrative sense to present two different perspectives for the meeting with the past:

The landscape is where different time scales intersect, and archaeologists have always accepted that. What they tend to forget is that this was equally true for people in prehistory who would also have come to terms with these traces of the past.³²⁷

In archaeological terms, the vertical stratigraphy is the traditional archaeological perspective; knowledge about the past through the digging of trenches in order to reveal the intersecting layers of past habitation. The horizontal stratigraphy is the perspective of the archaeological field surveys, recording what of the past that is still visible in the environment, and their interrelations. As Bradley asserts in the passage quoted above, the same perspective would have been available for the people of prehistory. From a prehistoric or Early Helladic point of view, the vertical perspective would have been available, for example, through the digging of foundation trenches, or

³²⁶ Bradley 2002, 153–157.

³²⁷ Bradley 2002, 156.

through the EH III preference for bothroi. Both activities have resulted in what we see today as disturbances of the archaeological record of the preceding periods,³²⁸ but the gaps in the modern archaeological record can be seen as pieces of the past experienced by the Early Helladic ‘excavators’. The difference lies in intent. The horizontal perspective could have meant the mended pot or the old style figurines, and from an Early Helladic settlement point of view it would have meant ruined walls, long-standing buildings, and the histories connected with them. Just as we today, whether archaeologists or not, do not stop at a mere recording of things past, so would the Early Helladic people have had different ways of handling, making use of and perhaps primarily thinking about the past, and different ways of interpreting the past.

The two chapters making up this part of the book will be concerned with two themes or perspectives:

- *Chapter 4*: Architectural frameworks
- *Chapter 5*: Monumental commemoration

Firstly, in *Chapter 4*, I will turn to the architectural particulars from the archaeological record. From these can be gathered various choices to relate and to symbolically and quite literally *build* on the past within the everyday frameworks of the life of these settlements. The discussion will initially focus on the architectural developments at Lerna and the Unterburg at Tiryns, which, when presented in detail as two case-studies, will be shown to encompass a variety of ways in which the past was “come to terms with” to quote Bradley above. The material will be presented as a number of architectural sequences connected with different locales within these settlements. By summarising the development within these two case-studies, I will argue that the material from Lerna and Tiryns can be seen to represent two different attitudes towards the past which will lead on to a wider discussion of the meaning of the past within these Early Helladic societies.

Thereafter, *Chapter 5* will be concerned with a limited group of features that appear to reflect deliberate actions to ‘create’ a past, that is to create a focus for memory by the construction of what must be seen as the Early Helladic period’s closest equivalents to ‘real’ monuments of the kind commonly studied by Bradley and other archaeologists, of primarily north-western Europe with its different mounds and enclosures still visible in the landscape.³²⁹ One of these features makes up a direct continuation of one of the architectural developments presented in *Chapter 4*, but of which the discussion will be suspended until this following chapter. The reason for this is that

³²⁸ Cf. Wiencke 2000, 3f.

³²⁹ See e.g. Barrett 1990; Bradley 1998. See also Kolb 2005, for monuments within the Mediterranean sphere.

these so-called ‘ritual tumuli’,³³⁰ have played a role within Early Helladic archaeological discourse as a defined group. I will question the coherency of this group and emphasise instead the individuality of each feature and how a similar consideration may widen our understanding of their meaning.

One final limitation of this part of the book is that I will develop my discussion as a way to study whether the architectural developments can be seen as the result of an essentially positive attitude towards the past on the part of the Early Helladic people. Clearly, the archaeological record is likely to hide and be formed by negative as well as positive reactions and actions towards specific choices and peoples of the past, or even a past in general; actions of both remembering and forgetting, deliberate or unconscious, by small groups or whole societies. These variations should be equally emphasised. By the past I here mean the physical remains of the actions of past people as well as the stories of old, manifested through these physical remains. I do not mean the dead themselves, apart from the role they played in the stories spun around practices, events and things of a past, nor do I mean death and its potential influence on the daily life within Early Helladic societies. Nevertheless, my chosen line of questioning is partly based on that which will be the subject of much of the remainder of the present study (*Chapters 6–9*), namely the practices in relation to the dead of the Early Helladic societies, and particularly the presence of extramural cemeteries in connection with the settlements. The increase of these cemeteries from early on in the Early Helladic period may be seen as an indication of the importance of a past in relation to activities in the present. The visible display of the graves and the practice of collective tombs suggest a significance of connections made through time, and between peoples as well, as they could also be interpreted as a collective display of ancestry. These significances may be seen as manifested in the cemetery itself, or in the settlement, and could thus have been appreciated within the Early Helladic period, but my line of questioning is one much coloured by the bird’s-eye, diachronic view of Early Helladic architectural development available to me as an archaeologist. It is the realisation and visual illustration of the very condition for archaeological stratigraphies to develop at all—the choice to settle and remain settled.

A consequence of this focus is that I will emphasise what might be called the sensory sides of experiences and actions towards a past visible in an Early Helladic present, and to some respect de-emphasise the role of functional reasons for the appearance of the architectural developments.

On the level of the choice of place to settle, we commonly justify the location of prehistoric settlements by the potentials in the surrounding landscape such as water supply, trade routes and defensibility, emphasising functionality and strategic planning. I am not suggesting that if a good supply of water existed in the near vicinity of a prehistoric settlement that this did not

³³⁰ Forsén 1992, 31, 36f.

influence the choice to settle. I am suggesting that a lot of factors may have merged, needed to merge, in forming what in the end was perceived as a favourable spot to live. The factors involved could have been the economic and strategic potential of the landscape (water or other natural resources, good grazing grounds nearby, defensibility) as well as the visual appearance of the landscape (giving definition in different ways to the inhabited space). Any of these factors may also have been 'written' in much less pragmatic language. The motives for settling may have been based on where three large birds were seen circling three days in a row, or where, according to the story, an ancestor saw a deer fly; reasons that need not be wholly non-functional as they would have played a role in the oral tradition connected with the spot and to the settlement, thereby connecting the two. A fortuitous place for habitation may have been a matter of instinct or careful deliberation, or both.

The functional basis must, however, be flawed as soon as first contact is made. Once a settlement is established there is a model to follow. It is at this point that the value of place becomes a force to be reckoned with:

Whereas, in western Europe, individuals were buried with the bones of their ancestors in megaliths, in south east Europe communities lived where their ancestors had once lived, on tells. The tell is therefore a social landmark with a cumulative place-value achieved through long term community participation, a habitus of stability, and an active contributor to social identity.³³¹

At the core of the coming survey, and as an introduction to the concluding discussions, lies the concept of place-value and the added place-value by continuous habitation. In terms of *continued* habitation, the definition of a specific spot in the landscape is likely to become continuously more entwined with the history of people and material culture connected with it, and thereby more meaningful for the people living there. In terms of tells, artificially built up of continued human habitation on one and the same spot, these can be seen as an especially visible marker of a "power-full"³³² locale, as they are literally filled with, made up from, the physical remains and stories of old.³³³

If transferred to the patterns of architectural development, the reasons to continue to use in some way a specific space within the settlements may have been many and varied. The choices made also differ: to build anew, imitate or vary, keep, erase, leave open. The reasons for any of these choices may very well have been partly functional, thus perhaps based on existing

³³¹ Chapman 1991, 155.

³³² Chapman 1994, 138; Kotsakis 1999, 68.

³³³ But see Evans (2005, 115, 120) for a discussion questioning the differences between 'tells' and 'flat sites': that the latter need not lack the quality of being a social landmark or be connected with a lower sense of place. The build up of tells is primarily a result of certain techniques and repetitive practices, and their special quality lies in their visibility, although this varied also between tells, and in the spatial concentration of habitation.

walls to provide good foundations for new, available resources including building material that could be reused, force of habit, building restrictions or lack of resources, economic or otherwise. In the coming chapters, however, I will concentrate on one potential reason in particular—the potential of an essentially positive attitude towards the past that made the Early Helladic people want, in different ways, to acknowledge this past.

4. Architectural frameworks

This chapter will be concerned with the actions that were taken on a daily or at least regular basis, in relation to things of the past. On this level, of likely immediate concern for the inhabitants in a settlement with some history was the need to cope with, to relate to in different ways, the ever present remains of older houses and remaining portable objects, on the ground or in the ground.

The history of remains in Early Helladic settlements shows a very large variety of actions towards earlier settlement material. The differences convey a number of alternative choices in relating to the past and continuing or breaking with former building patterns. The approach presented here is only one perspective on the past in the past—the perspective of the architectural frameworks of daily life. Also, within this perspective the aim has not been to present a complete picture. Instead, detailed analyses will be made of two settlements: Lerna and Tiryns. Thus, Lerna will once more play a central role. This is a role again merited by the rich information provided by the recent and comprehensive volumes by Rutter and Wiencke.³³⁴ The architectural remains of the Tirynthian Unterburg were published by Kilian in a series of articles. These articles were less comprehensive, but the phasing of the architecture is well illustrated and the analysis of the thirteen stratigraphical phases was carried out with a special eye to the interrelations between structures through time.³³⁵

It is nevertheless exceedingly difficult to establish the continuity of activity within long-lived buildings. Chronologically, the EH II period has an estimated duration of more than twice that of the following EH III period, and it is hard to establish the exact chain of events within the ceramic and stratigraphical periods. The architectural development will thus be summarised to highlight the dynamics of the many hundreds of years of building activity at the chosen settlements. The survey shows that there were, as should be expected during such a length of time, substantial changes in the spatial layout of the area, but I propose also considerable continuities in tradition. The present survey is performed with a certain number of questions in

³³⁴ Pottery of Lerna IV (EH III): Rutter 1995; short summary of the architecture of Lerna IV (EH III): Banks in Rutter 1995; architecture and pottery of Lerna III (EH II): Wiencke 2000.

³³⁵ Architecture: Kilian 1979; 1981; 1982; 1983; Pottery: Weisshaar 1981; 1982; 1983.

mind, and since the focus is architectural, all information about the specifics of the large numbers of associated finds has been left out.

There are, however, some specific events and courses of events that I would like to stress here, emphasising what may be called both continuity and change. From the evidence below it is possible to distinguish at least four actions in relation to the past; two general and two more specific practices:

- Keeping and caring
- Levelling, demolishing and paving over
- Incorporation
- Substitution

Keeping and caring

When considering the first point, keeping and caring, we move in the realm of activities that Hodder has classified as habituated behaviour and as something which needs to be clearly distinguished from conscious historical relationships.³³⁶ For habituated behaviours, he contends, that “ritual and daily acts may become routinized and codified but there is no specific memory of events and histories.”³³⁷ Thus, there are likely to have been shared memories, or perhaps rather shared ideas, of how acts should be performed or how things should look and be placed, but no memory of a specific act or object whose performance or appearance is now the rule. These routinised behaviours are amply illustrated by the rather strict adherence to certain principles in the layout of the houses through the use levels of the Çatalhöyük mound.³³⁸ Similar practices have already been considered in the preceding chapter on house biographies and especially the structural biographies. These included the general house form, the seasonal maintenance of buildings and new floor levels, for example.

I find it very problematic to follow Hodder’s dualisation of the routinised and the conscious relating to the past. Following Hodder in his argument and applying it to the Early Helladic material, a case could thus be made for the conclusion that none of the practices presented in the present chapter should be classified beyond the level of habituated behaviours. Continued construction and activity at a site may be largely set within a framework of shared ideas of how things are done within these societies, and need not be coupled with any specific memories. What we see may very well be the results of largely routinised acts of house replacement and continued habitation. Spe-

³³⁶ Hodder 2006, 144, with reference to Connerton 1989.

³³⁷ Hodder 2006, 144.

³³⁸ Hodder 2006, chapter 5.

cific memories may not have been important. At least, they need not be seen as exclusively decisive for concluding about uses of the past in the past. Specific memories are, nevertheless, likely to have been present at many acts of house replacement, as we should probably often place the same or related persons on both sides of an architectural transition. At the same time, shared ideas and communal memories may very well have been important for the decisions made regarding these transitions. In this scenario, shared ideas, routinised actions and specific memories may have been equally active. The same argument is, I think, valid for the practices of keeping and caring.

Thus, on a very general level, it can be argued that every day in the same house, living within the same walls, is a routinised maintenance of the status quo, but, also a continuation of a tradition, i.e. a past continuously created from the viewpoint of the present. So, to fashion a room with a new floor can be seen as relating to the past, specifically the people and practices of the past, *and* the present. Whenever the walls of a building remained standing and the space continuously in use, it must be attributed to the people of that settlement, and the users of that specific building who chose to care for it, that they allowed it to remain standing. The long-lived Building BG at Lerna is an example of this, as is the maintained outline of the main house complex at Aghios Kosmas, and the retention of the main street with the demarcation of new house complexes at Lithares, thus extending but not changing its course.³³⁹ Also, while the maintenance of a specific house or street may signal a certain static quality, changes in other contexts, to other houses, are likely to put the history of the retained house into some perspective of time and the passing of time. I think it can be argued that an old house is only old in relation to other contemporary houses, and any settlement is likely to be a mix of practices as well as a mix of varying time-scales and individual histories of houses and people. In turn, this mix is, I suggest, likely to have inspired an appreciation of the passing of time at any given moment also within the Early Helladic settlements, and, possibly, a positive value added to heritage of older buildings. In this perspective, some consideration of the keeping and caring within the settlements also belongs within this chapter. Thus, while what Hodder considers as active uses of the past and conscious historical relationships is a terminology that is more fitting for the discussion in the next chapter (*Chapter 5*), I see the ways of relating to the past discussed in the present as an important link between his two concepts.

In my view it is nevertheless on the specific acts in relation to these traces that we should base our interpretations, even though we will never know what value was given to the traces of the past that came to light and were used in varying ways in the daily life within the Early Helladic settlements. Thus, there are some instances that indicate how old architecture is incorpo-

³³⁹ Wiencke 2000, 185–197; Mylonas 1959; Tzavella-Evjen 1985, plan 1, also p. 13. See also above, *Chapter 3*.

rated into new constructions, keeping the past visible and used for new purposes. From Lerna there are a number of examples:³⁴⁰ An older phase B wall (W-50) was incorporated in the late phase B stone paving as the south side of the E–W gutter at this point. In the area of Room DM, a mid phase B wall (W-21) would have remained visible, incorporated either as a platform or bench within House DM or within the late phase B paving. Similarly, W-99, the cross wall of House CA, appears to have escaped complete demolition. The IIID yellow clay paving was followed up to the wall and continued after it, but, it seems, never covered it.³⁴¹ Walls like these would have been constant reminders of what was otherwise hidden below ground. The use of them may have been practical; a gutter, for example, does not seem to be a very considerate treatment of the past, nor an obvious rejection of it. It is, nevertheless, an act that may have had further implications for the people making the choice to reuse it, and the noting of these small acts is a small effort to make to illustrate the varieties of meetings with and responses to things of old.

One such meeting with the past, on a vertical rather than horizontal perspective, is the digging of bothroi, a common practice for the people of the later Early Helladic period.³⁴² Wiencke remarks on the problems that this practice during EH III, together with the practice of levelling and filling in EH II, has brought to the understanding of the settlement at Lerna.³⁴³ With the forming of bothroi, their ‘excavators’ dug through up to one metre of old settlement debris. At Lerna a large number of bothroi were dug into the walls and floors of the House of the Tiles, through the tumulus that covered it from early EH III.³⁴⁴ Was any material found during the process and were the contents of the pits reflected upon at all? I think that both parts of the question can be answered in the affirmative. The removal of earth from the dug out pits would in many instances most certainly have contained sherds, small finds or building material. We cannot know to what reactions this fact led. The answer can be ‘none at all’, ‘a nuisance’, or any number of other possibilities. In any case, the digging of foundation trenches as well as bothroi may have been based on, as well as have led to, certain knowledge of the mound composition.³⁴⁵ It may have been a reminder of a certain history of a specific place, whatever other feelings it may also have induced.

³⁴⁰ Wiencke 2000, 49, 139 (W-21); 58f., 77f. (W-50); 132–137 (W-99).

³⁴¹ Wiencke 2000, 286.

³⁴² Bothroi from other phases have also been found: EH I (e.g. Tsoungiza); early EH II (e.g. Aghios Kosmas, Lerna). General discussion of bothroi in the EBA Aegean: Strasser 1999.

³⁴³ Wiencke 2000, 3f.

³⁴⁴ Close to 40 bothroi in and above the House of the Tiles alone (Wiencke 2000, plan 32); the total for Lerna IV is more than 200 bothroi (Banks in Rutter 1995, 4).

³⁴⁵ Cf. Hodder 2006, 143f.

Levelling, demolishing and paving over

Seen on a settlement level, the extension of the occupied area in any settlement is likely to have changed over time. The fortifications of Lerna, phase C, can be seen as monumental measures to bring definition and accentuation to this area of the settlement space. The preserved extension, it appears, closely followed the curvature of the mound, and a hypothesised continuation would then encircle most parts of the excavated area. Most buildings that we know of in the area would then have been enclosed within its circuit, some, however, were built over (*Figs. 28–30*). Both construction phases of the western fortification are likely to have included the pulling down and building over of older structures quite possibly still standing. Only very scant vestiges remain of the first phase or phases of this western fortification (early to mid phase C).³⁴⁶ The second phase (late phase C) of the western fortification thus seems to have involved the complete dismantling of the hypothesised extension of the old fortifications in this area. In both its phases, the fortification was allowed to encroach on an area originally used for phase B buildings that were only fragmentarily preserved.³⁴⁷

Thus, by the construction of the fortification, choices were made to enclose some buildings in the area within its circuit, while other buildings (or spaces where buildings had stood prior to the construction) were built over. Other structures are most likely to have been completely left outside the new fortifications, but these potential areas remain unexcavated. Both phases of the fortification are significant in the way they show how settlement space can be manipulated and how earlier buildings seem less important in meeting these new needs or aspirations. Telling for how quickly these conditions could change is Wiencke's suggestion that the walls of the new line of fortifications under construction were used as quarries to quickly finish the House of the Tiles.³⁴⁸

From an early point, the inhabitants of Lerna paved the way for their buildings by levelling the ground as it was left by earlier inhabitants. Filling, levelling and paving activities are further evidence of the passing of time and the changes in conditions that followed. The levelling and filling activities continued in periods over large parts of the excavated area.³⁴⁹ These activities

³⁴⁶ Wiencke (2000) includes two walls W-77 and W-78 (pp. 105f.), and a possible step, ramp and wall context to be connected with a western tower and a gateway (pp. 120f.), as possibly from an early phase of the fortification.

³⁴⁷ Wiencke 2000, 45–47 (early to mid phase B), 53–55 (late phase B), 80f. (phase B or C), 103–107 (early phase C): Later activities have prevented a reconstruction of more than a very patchy picture showing that houses superseded each other, without a discernable pattern due to the fragmentary preservation of the walls found.

³⁴⁸ Wiencke 2000, 145–148: little remains of some of the rooms, especially room K, and only a few stones remained in one of the excavated foundations trenches (p. 145, W-106). For a useful summary of the history of the western fortification and the connected buildings, see (Wiencke 2000, 148).

³⁴⁹ For a summary, see Wiencke 2000, 40.

in late phases IIIA and very early IIIB, skimmed off the high-lying Neolithic layers in the north, and any subsequent layers, filling and covering, for example, early phase B houses in the southern area J; houses possibly destroyed in a fire. The subsequent houses here also met their end in destruction, and were filled in to accommodate the mid phase C fortifications in this area. These fills, sometimes of considerable depth, approaching four metres from trenches around the most high-lying remnants of earlier,³⁵⁰ mainly Middle Neolithic habitation, show that from an early time the inhabitants at Lerna took steps to improve and expand the area available for construction. In the last instance of the phase C fortifications, each fill comprised debris from demolished buildings of the preceding phase in preparation for new construction.³⁵¹

What occasioned the architectural developments within the settlement at Lerna? It is clear that the existing layout of buildings was constantly reconfigured in relation to new plans for the area. Old buildings must at any given moment have been an active part of the present for the inhabitants. It is difficult to judge, however, the condition of any of the structures affected by the different rearrangements at the point when their space was needed for new constructions. Some buildings were likely to have fallen into disuse, still standing perhaps, only to be dismantled when new plans were made for the area. Others may have been in a ruined state.³⁵² Walls of mudbrick without a protecting roof could have deteriorated quite rapidly. In still other cases catastrophic fires may have put an end to the houses, or a building could have been quite intentionally replaced by a new one.

In a late phase of B, a large area to the east, below and to the south of the subsequent Building BG, was covered with successively larger areas of paving (*Fig. 28*). These well-ordered pavings in some instances covered house walls and bothroi in use up to late phase B.³⁵³ Whether the older buildings were destroyed for this purpose or not is an open question. If they were, it adds further weight to the importance of the open spaces at the time of their establishment. Houses built on top of the pavings, if later in date (such as CA on late phase B paving)³⁵⁴, would in turn have changed the appearance of the area. The preparation of the pavings and the pavings themselves would have quite effectively demolished and covered most remnants of older structures below. After a fire destroyed late phase C Houses CA and DM, it seems as though the clearing of the area was necessary, to rid the area of the burnt remnants of the destroyed buildings. Wiencke suggests that, although

³⁵⁰ Wiencke 2000, section 5.

³⁵¹ Wiencke 2000, 35–40.

³⁵² See Frankel & Webb 2006, for the visual illustration of ruins and abandoned buildings in the history of a prehistoric village.

³⁵³ Wiencke 2000, 56–59. The largest extension was at least 22 m east–west and 15 m north–south (p. 57).

³⁵⁴ Wiencke 2000, 131f.

the evidence is not conclusive, it seems that the area of house CA and room DM was levelled off at the time of and for the very reason of creating level ground for the application of the yellow clay floor that surrounded the House of the Tiles of the next phase.³⁵⁵ An additional factor must have been to create level ground for the new monumental building itself. Building BG, on the other hand, appears to have been demolished primarily for this latter cause.³⁵⁶ The demolishing of the large Building BG in late phase C/D was so thorough that the massive walls were reduced to their foundations and only remnants of floors were left between them.³⁵⁷ By these practices for the creation of new level ground, the past appears erased (from view). Similarly, the street established at around the same time as the House of the Tiles, cut across the recently levelled House DM.³⁵⁸ Somewhat earlier, the eastward street along the interior of the eastern fortifications was laid out above the interior wall of the fortification that had apparently fallen into disuse.³⁵⁹ Outside the fortification, the carefully executed stairway was simply built over when Tower A and the new long wall of the fortification (W-82) were constructed.³⁶⁰

Turning now briefly to the Unterburg at Tiryns, it was possible there to delineate an EBA stratigraphy of as many as 13 'Fundhorizonte', spanning EH II throughout EH III (*Fig. 26*). Not all of them, however, correspond to an architectural phase.³⁶¹ The first Early Helladic constructions have been dated to the very earliest EH II (Horizont 1).³⁶² In this phase, and still in Horizont 3 (the next phase with architectural remains), the houses were built directly on bedrock. Level ground for the house floors was created by filling in the crevices in the rock. For the intervening Horizont 2, Kilian could define a period of considerable terracing and filling out of a large area of the Unterburg.³⁶³ Several fires struck the EH II house complexes on the Tirynthian Unterburg. There were at least five large fires; the first striking the Horizont 4 settlement, the last that of Horizont 9 (the 'Übergangshorizont',

³⁵⁵ Wiencke 2000, pl. 24, p. 286.

³⁵⁶ Wiencke 2000, 185. No traces of fire were recorded to suggest that the same fire that struck CA and DM also damaged Building BG, although this cannot be completely ruled out as an additional factor. With the close proximity of Building BG and Houses CA and DM I think it is quite likely that BG also suffered damage from the same fire (cf. Wiencke 2000, 148), and that this coupled with the antiquity of the building called for its dismantlement and led to the construction of the House of the Tiles.

³⁵⁷ Wiencke 2000, 185.

³⁵⁸ Wiencke 2000, 287.

³⁵⁹ Wiencke 2000, 126.

³⁶⁰ Wiencke 2000, 93–96, 108f.

³⁶¹ Weisshaar 1983, 329; Kilian 1983, figs. 39–40, also Kilian 1982, fig. 39, Kilian 1981, fig. 44. Two of the horizons are divided into two subphases: 7a–b, 8a–b. These horizons were arranged by Weisshaar into four general pottery phases: EH II früh (1–4); EH II entwickelt (5–8b); FH III früh/Übergang (9); and EH III (10–13).

³⁶² See especially Kilian 1983, for a summary of the EBA development.

³⁶³ Kilian 1983, 323.

transitional EH II/III), which was followed by occupation in apsidal houses.³⁶⁴ Each fire was followed by some reconfigurations and new constructions of varying scope. These will be considered in detail below. If I here instead initially relate the development at Tiryns to that of Lerna, it appears as if, in contrast to the latter site, at Tiryns much of the filling that was needed was already accomplished before major constructions on the site. As a consequence perhaps, one further difference between these two neighbouring settlements is that reuse of old stone walls appears to have been a common practice at Tiryns, rather than a constant demolishing and levelling of the old in favour of the new as at Lerna.

The new arrangements at Lerna as well as at Tiryns described above suggest changing conditions for the inhabitants. Above all they indicate changing ways in which activities in the area were realised and also most likely the experiences of these spaces combining new and old. In terms of the change to apsidal buildings, which at both sites took place at the start of EH III,³⁶⁵ this would also have included changing ideas about what a house should look like. It is also evident that the architecture of the past inhabitants was an integral part of the present, thus forming the future. Ultimately, the trouble to which the people of Lerna went to provide level ground signifies the importance of securing the possibility of continued construction in that particular place. Demolishing the old in favour of the new seems in these cases to be the result of various circumstances, but in the end they were actions that allowed continued use of certain spaces. The value of place seems to have been high.

In the following, I will consider this supposition in more detail through studies of architectural sequences at spatially limited locations within the settlements of Lerna and Tiryns. In doing this, my emphasis lay on the succession of individual house histories as well as the histories of separate loci.³⁶⁶ These will thereafter be considered in a view of the two settlements, separately and in comparison. The sequences also include aspects of keeping and caring, as well as destructive activities of the types considered in the initial two sections above. It should be noted again that the sequences also span time periods of a greater length than any then living individual could ever have actually experienced. The focus, however, is on the *transitions* between the practices of the sequences and the choices made by the Early Helladic inhabitants at these points. I will thus highlight the importance of peopling these transitions. While the two initial sections should be seen as more general discussions, the two following will consider specific courses of events. The sequences will illustrate two different ways in which the value of

³⁶⁴ For a summary, see Forsén 1992, 43–45.

³⁶⁵ Tiryns: Horizont 10–13 (Kilian 1981; 1982); Lerna: phase IV (Caskey 1966; Rutter 1995).

³⁶⁶ Cf. Tringham 1995, 89f.

space may have been realised, which in turn will be argued in the conclusion to reflect the individual characters of these two settlement spaces.

Incorporating practices: the case of Tiryns

The buildings on the Tirynthian Unterburg retained a NW–SE alignment throughout the EH II period. This was achieved partly by a constant acknowledgement of older structures. The excavations of the Unterburg have been conducted in three different areas: the central section by Dragendorff in the 1910s, and in an eastern and a western section in the 1960s to 1980s (*Fig. 25*).³⁶⁷ The reuse of walls can be traced throughout the EH period and over the whole excavated area.

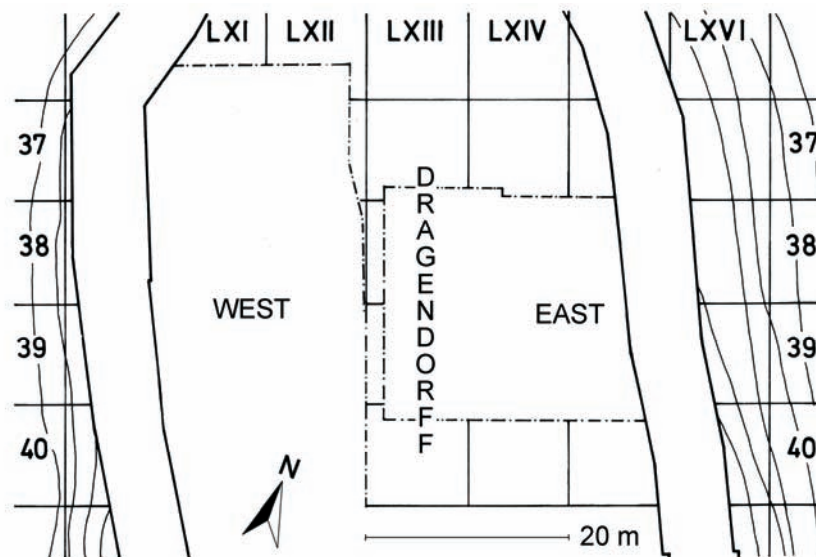


Figure 25. Tiryns. The Unterburg with the excavated areas mentioned in the text (after Kilian 1983, fig. 40c).

It is the publications by Kilian that have presented the opportunity for the present discussion. In many cases he noted the exact relationships between walls and rooms of different periods. The architectural development gives at least two sequences, each having a number of spatially interconnected, but chronologically separated and successive, architectural phases throughout the EH II period.

³⁶⁷ Dragendorff 1914; Voigtländer 1980; Kilian 1979; 1981; 1982; 1983.

- East: (Room 202) → Rooms 203–204 → Rooms 197–198, 205–206 → Rooms 196–199 (Horizonts 3 → 4 → 7a → 8a)
- West: Room 177 → Rooms 180–186 → Rooms 142, 145–148 → Rooms 142–144 (Horizonts 4 → 7a–8a → 8b → 9)

The first sequence covers the time span between Horizont 3 and Horizont 8a on the east side of the Unterburg, the second the time span between Horizont 4 to 9 on the west side. Every transition is defined by a fire of varying magnitude. The plans of the different horizons are illustrated in *Figure 26*.

On the east side, the NW–SE alignment is set by Room 202 of Horizont 3.³⁶⁸ Rooms 203 and 204 are thereafter, in Horizont 4, constructed immediately to the south of this room, in the next phase. These walls were set on bedrock and the floors were laid so that they covered the crevices of the rock. After a fire these rooms were replaced by Rooms 205–206 on the same location (Horizont 7a), as part of a larger room complex including Rooms 197 and 198 to the north. These four rooms in turn were damaged by a fire causing Rooms 205–206 to be replaced by one room, Room 196, while in rooms 197 and 198 the reconfiguration was limited to a new floor level. Preparations for new constructions after the first fire appear to have destroyed most of the earlier structures;³⁶⁹ only patches of walls are known from the Room 203–204 phase (Horizont 4). The two rooms are represented by one NW–SE wall and two perpendicular walls, forming two corners. The same arrangement of these particular walls remained throughout the EH II period, through the addition and removal of other walls related to them. Kilian noted the fixed alignment of the walls and confirmed the structural relationship between Rooms 205 and 206 (floor: 14.87 m a.s.l.) and room 196 (floor: 15.10/15.17 m a.s.l.).³⁷⁰ Some pre-construction planning was noted in the area of Rooms 205–206, eliminating the possibility of confirming the northern and western limits of Rooms 203 and 204 (floor: 14.55/14.63 m a.s.l.).³⁷¹ Although not remarked upon by Kilian, it seems possible nevertheless that the sequence of reuse of the central wall began at the time of these preceding rooms; at the very least this stretch of the central wall seems to have been copied in the next phase. This suggestion is based on a visual correspondence between the plans of the phases as published by Kilian.³⁷² It can be noted also, however, that the change in floor levels between the ear-

³⁶⁸ Kilian 1983, 327. If not otherwise stated, the information is drawn from the summary of the architectural development as outlined by Kilian (1983).

³⁶⁹ Kilian 1983, 322.

³⁷⁰ Kilian 1983, 318f.

³⁷¹ Kilian 1983, 322.

³⁷² As this correspondence was not noted by Kilian, the interpretation is made with the reservation of the small size of the renditions of the plans in the articles by Kilian, a size which may very well hide small but nevertheless important differences in the wall locations.

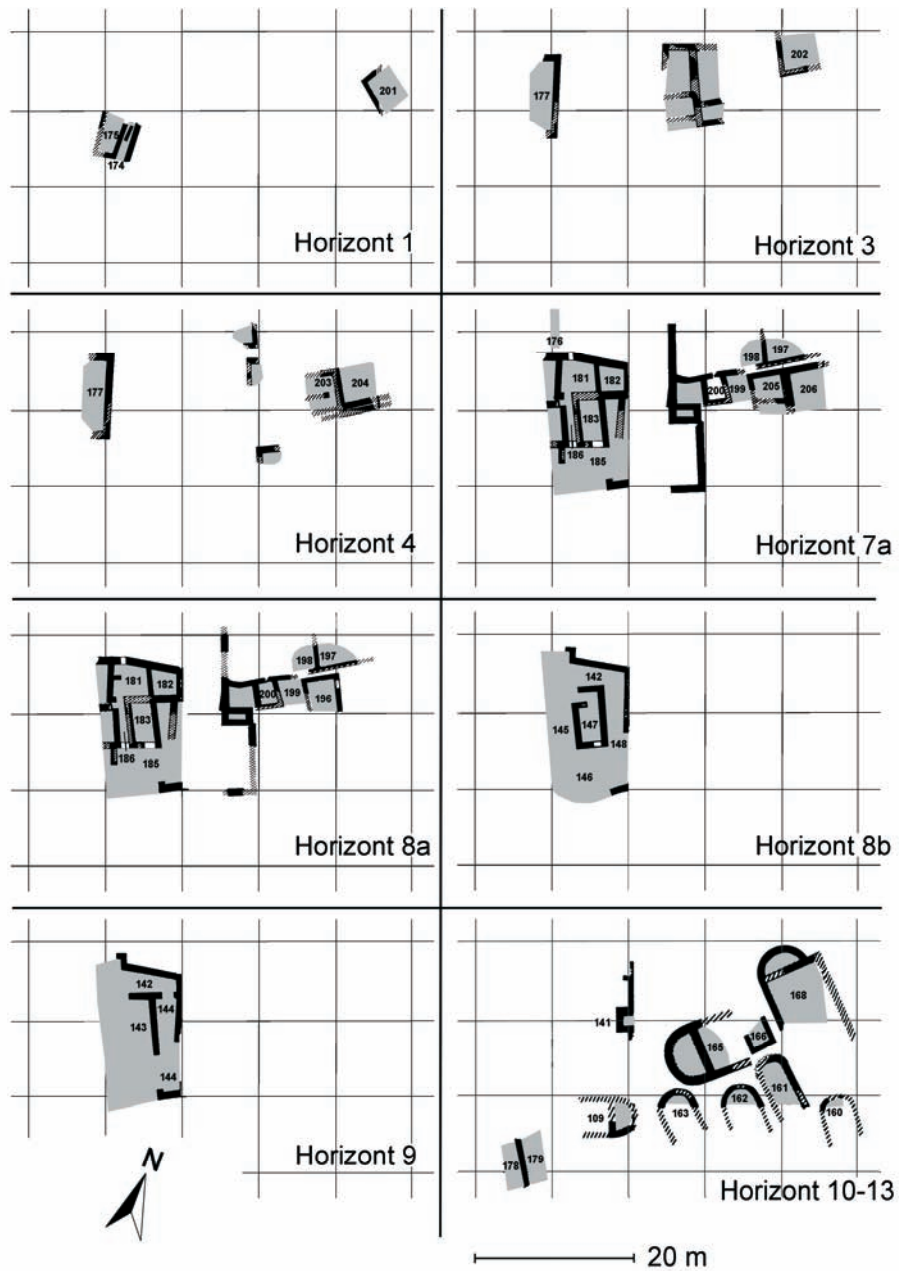


Figure 26. Tiryns. Architectural development in Horizont 1–13 (after Kilian 1981, fig. 44b; 1982, fig. 39; 1983, figs. 39–40).

lier Room 204 and later Room 206 is no greater than between Room 206 and the succeeding Room 196 (all *c.* 0.30 metres). In these later examples the walls were noted to have been reused and, with the 0.30 metres variance in floor level, the walls are likely to have been visible and there to be used if needed and so chosen.

A further observation on the basis of these plans is the exact continuation of the even earlier NW–SE wall of Room 202 (floor: 14.28/14.30 m a.s.l.)³⁷³ into the central wall of 203–204, and similarly between the cross walls at the point where the two NW–SE walls met. While this NW–SE wall of Room 202 was cut into bedrock, the south wall of the room and the NW–SE wall of Rooms 203–204, were both set on bedrock, and the floors of all three rooms were found barely covering the bedrock.³⁷⁴ I would not be surprised if, in a closer examination, these walls turn out to be chronologically and architecturally at least overlapping. Together they begin to form a complex of rooms similar to that of the adjacent Dragendorff sector in the central section of the Unterburg. The outline and combinations of the rooms in the eastern sector clearly change between the phases. The area of Room 202 was apparently completely rearranged after the major fire at the end of Horizont 4. After the fire of Horizont 7a, the former Room 206 was made into an open court,³⁷⁵ flanked as before by a room (now Room 196) and connected with it by a new doorway. The consistency between the phases, however, was more detailed than a simple observance of a NW–SE alignment. It should be emphasised that the observance of the general alignment, as often remarked upon for EH II Tiryns,³⁷⁶ is a result of the continuous maintenance and reuse of old stretches of walls.

In the western section, this consistency between new and old and the longevity of certain wall positions appear even more pronounced.³⁷⁷ After the general planning and filling in of the whole area of the Unterburg, placed by Kilian in Horizont 2, one large room was constructed. This Room 177, which must be the same as the so called ‘Terrassenhaus’,³⁷⁸ was located along the western slopes (Horizont 4). Kilian noted how the walls of Room 181, and especially the wall between Rooms 180 and 181 (Horizont 7a–8a), were built on the composition of walls of a ‘Terrassenanlage’.³⁷⁹ Thereafter, as in the east, the phase following the major fire of Horizont 4 appears to have been represented by a more complex series of rooms. The complex consisted of at least six rooms (180–185, excluding the corridor-like Room

³⁷³ Kilian 1983, 323.

³⁷⁴ Kilian 1983, 321f., 323.

³⁷⁵ Kilian 1983, 315.

³⁷⁶ E.g. Forsén 1992, 44; Alram-Stern 2004, 591.

³⁷⁷ Kilian 1981, 186–191.

³⁷⁸ Kilian 1981, 191; Kilian 1983, 322; Voigtländer 1980, 95f. Wall 79 with floor to the west (14.05 m a.s.l.).

³⁷⁹ Kilian 1981, 191.

186), centring on Room 183 (the room being in the centre of the excavated area). Through the whole of the remainder of EH II, the foundations of the walls of Room 183 were continuously reused as Room 183, Room 147 and Room 143.³⁸⁰ Entry into the area was variously arranged, walls were extended, but the original layout can be followed throughout the phases. Between horizons 7a and 8a, only small changes were made as a result of a fire that seemingly only caused minor damage. The fire that caused the end of the preserved architecture in the east also caused what appear to have been large changes to the rooms in the west.³⁸¹ Fewer walls are preserved and the new complex may thus have been considerably smaller, but for the walls that remained a long history can be claimed. Apart from the walls of what was originally Room 183, the northernmost wall also remained and retained its alignment, and the foundations of the wall from Horizon 7a were continuously reused.³⁸² The northern walls followed the natural edge of the cliff beneath them and bent slightly southwards at a point.³⁸³ As in the preceding phases, the E–W walls met a N–S cross wall at the eastern edge of the excavation sector. The alignment of the northern walls seems to have been partly determined by the natural conditions of the cliff, but both walls are included in the sequence of reuse.

The architectural remains throughout the history of the settlement at the Unterburg can be seen as closely packed layers of walls.³⁸⁴ The reuse of the walls within the Early Helladic period consisted in lower courses of older walls being used as foundations for new.³⁸⁵ This practice as presented for EH II was continued in the EH III apsidal houses excavated over most of the central and eastern sections of the Unterburg.³⁸⁶ At least seven apsidal houses and three other structures belong to the EH III period (109, 141, 178–179, 160–163, 165–166, 168). For Room 141 it may be possible to trace a continuation of some stretches of wall to the preceding room complexes,³⁸⁷ but the layout was largely new in this phase, possibly partly imposed by the new building form. On the other hand, Kilian noted several instances of superim-

³⁸⁰ R 183: Kilian 1983, fig. 39b–c; R 147: Kilian 1981, 44b; R 143: Kilian 1983, fig. 39a. For comments on the reuse of the walls, see, Kilian 1981, 189.

³⁸¹ A yellow clay floor was noted above the last preserved rooms of the eastern section, dated by the pottery to Horizon 9 (Abhub VI: Kilian 1982, 420). Komplex 8 (see above, *Chapter 3*), was dated to a slightly older (Horizon 8b) horizon, contemporary with Rooms 142–145–148 in the west.

³⁸² Kilian 1981, 189. For a detailed account of the development of the room complex from 7a to 8b, see Kilian 1981, 189–191; Kilian 1983, 314.

³⁸³ Kilian 1981, 190. Kilian noted a slight shifting to the south of the northern wall between phases 8b to 8a. The walls must, however, have largely overlapped.

³⁸⁴ Where the settlement layers have accumulated highest, the EH III layers were just below the modern surface, and the settlement mound all in all some 3.20 metres thick down to bed-rock (Kilian 1979, 408).

³⁸⁵ E.g. Kilian 1981, 189; Kilian 1983, 318f.

³⁸⁶ Kilian 1982, 420, fig. 39; Kilian 1981, 186f., 189.

³⁸⁷ Kilian 1981, 189.

posing layers of walls in relation to the apsidal house *within* EH III. House 161 was located on two equally oriented predecessors.³⁸⁸ For apsidal house 168, Kilian counted five (!) phases of the house “unter Wiederbenutzung der gleichen Mauern”, that is, one original house and four subsequent structures (Nachfolgebauten). Much of Room 168 was destroyed by the Mycenaean Building 10, but patches of corresponding floors of the different wall layers were found.³⁸⁹ The upper layers were judged to be contemporaneous with the predecessors of Room 161.³⁹⁰

The correspondences in the location of superimposed walls in both EH II and EH III and their different subphases reflect a continuity that goes beyond the changes in pottery style and building techniques that took place over the same phases. As an undercurrent to the change was a considerable degree of traditionality of house placement, which may also reflect a positive relation to past choices, apart from any practical reasons for the reuse of walls for the reconfigurations. One cause for this may have been a common preplanning, reflected in the longevity of the original walls, as well as in the willingness to conform to a preset pattern. Outer walls and thereby circulation patterns were the least affected by the architectural changes that nevertheless took place. The notional visitor, perhaps returning to Tiryns some time after one of the fires, would have surely spotted the changes, but that awareness would likely have been coupled with a strong feeling of recognition.

Forsén has shown conclusively that fires were a rather common Early Helladic phenomenon and not especially connected with any one chronological point in time.³⁹¹ As a response, Maran has argued for the importance of what happened in the settlement after a major destruction. His main point is that a destruction that is not followed by a visible change/discontinuity in architectural form should not be given the same weight as a destruction that is followed by such a change.³⁹² For present purposes, the latter is an especially useful supposition. Thus, the Unterburg at Tiryns was, despite the many fires, characterised by considerable architectural continuity. Of the five more or less devastating fires, only two have been argued to have led to any larger architectural reconfigurations.³⁹³ The first of these fires was recognised over the full extent of the fourth phase. It has been noted how the houses before this fire appear more loosely set and free-standing in comparison with the multi-roomed character of the structures that followed in this area (Horizont 7a).³⁹⁴

³⁸⁸ Kilian 1981, 186.

³⁸⁹ Kilian 1982, 420.

³⁹⁰ Kilian 1982, 420.

³⁹¹ Forsén 1992.

³⁹² Maran 1998, 222f.

³⁹³ E.g. Maran 1998, 222; Forsén 1992, 44f.

³⁹⁴ Forsén 1992, 44. Again it should be noted that there is not a complete correspondence between the original pottery phases and the architectural phases incorporated in the pottery development.

This picture appears, nevertheless, as very fragmented. As already noted, despite many fires, the NW–SE orientation begun in phase 3 was upheld throughout EH II. From the early Dragendorff excavation in the central section of the area thus far excavated, there is evidence of a multi-room complex even before the fire (at least in Horizont 3).³⁹⁵ As considered above, there also appears to be a certain reuse of walls even between phases 4 and 7a. As, furthermore, no room has been preserved to its full extent, I think this suggests continuity rather than change for phase 7a.³⁹⁶ Thus, in terms of architectural relationships, only the destruction of settlement 9 has caused any substantial reconfigurations in comparison with any past arrangements. After this fire the rectangular house forms were exchanged for successive series of apsidal houses. In this phase also, however, there was a possibly rectangular house (Room 141, fully developed EH III) set above the eastern walls of the preceding Room 144. Room 141 was facing a possibly open area to the west.³⁹⁷ Apart from this room/house, in contrast to the EH II situation, the apsidal houses were constructed without any noticeable consideration for what came before. In EH III the houses were constructed somewhat off the longitudinal axis of the natural rock followed in EH II, with the result that a majority of the apsidal buildings followed the NW–SE alignment more closely than their predecessors. The change in alignment is not major, but represents a very noticeable break in the practices of the Unterburg. The fact that a new alignment is used for the apsidal structures,³⁹⁸ suggests a degree of rearrangement of the Unterburg that finds no match in the preceding, chronologically much more extended EH II period.

Substitutive practices: the case of Lerna

Across the bay at Lerna, practices were different. As noted above, there are examples of old walls being incorporated into new constructions; the use of an old wall as a bench in a house, or as one half of a gutter. As at Tiryns, many walls were also kept standing throughout more than one phase of the detailed stratigraphy. Other walls were added, some were taken away, in both cases creating new rooms. There are, however, no published examples from EH II of new buildings built partly or fully on old walls, thus literally building on an existing layout. Older structures would have been a constant

³⁹⁵ Kilian 1983, fig. 40a–b.

³⁹⁶ *Contra* Forsén (1992, 44) who argued, following Kilian (1983, 327), for the 7a settlement that “their complex multi-room constructions were a stark contrast to the previous settlement.”

³⁹⁷ Kilian 1981, 187–189. In connection with Room 141 it is mentioned that an older wall angle is reused as foundations for a doorway (Kilian 1981, 189).

³⁹⁸ The only structure of Horizonts 10–13 to retain the original alignment is the probable rectangular structure 141 (*Fig. 26*).

reminder of the history of the settlement in EH II, but the response from its inhabitants was not generally to make use of them, rather it was to level and build anew. The site of Lerna is nevertheless one of few settlements that appear in discussions relating to the past in the past. In these cases, of course, the subjects are the two corridor houses and especially the way in which the House of the Tiles seems to succeed and imitate the older Building BG.

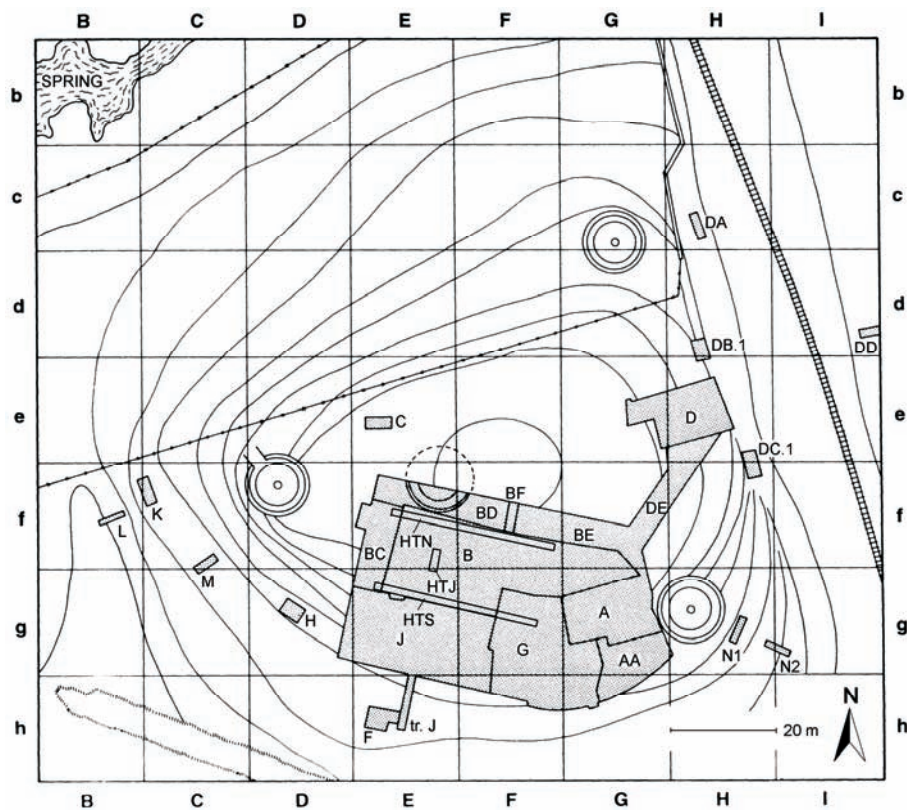


Figure 27. Lerna. Excavated areas with major trenches marked (after Wiencke 2000, plans 1–2, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

The emphasis at Lerna was more generally on place rather than on any reuse of specific walls as the present spatial analysis will show in some detail. Spatial continuity at Lerna can be studied through four interrelated sequences that include the corridor houses but also a number of other more or less well-preserved buildings, illustrated in *Figures 28–30* (for a general view of the excavated area, see *Figure 27*):

- House 115 → House 117
- Late phase B pavings → House 36 → House 67 → Building BG → House 113
- Possibly large unknown building → (Building BG) → House of the Tiles
- (House of the Tiles →) tumulus → ‘Chieftain’s house’ → Lerna IV buildings.

The first sequence comprises the two closely similar buildings standing immediately to the west, and encompassing the full length of the west façade of the House of the Tiles. No floor levels could be connected with either of the buildings, but they are generally assigned to phase C of Lerna III. Wiencke suggests that House 115 was built in early phase C or in latest phase B, and that it was succeeded by House 117 sometime later in phase C (*Figs. 28–29*).³⁹⁹ At this point the walls of the new house, now considerably narrower, closely followed the east and south walls of House 115. The result would have been something of a double wall, as the original wall must have been visible to some degree to accomplish the exact duplication of its course. In terms of this chapter this decision is doubly interesting. Not only must the old house have been visible at the time of the construction of the new house, the position and possibly function of the house must also have been significant enough to secure its limits by a new stretch of wall. Although she treats the four walls as coming from two separate houses, Wiencke vaguely suggests that they may have belonged to “the same major structure (House 117?)” standing “throughout much of the period”.⁴⁰⁰ It is difficult to imagine a continued duplication of the hypothesised walls to the north and west. An answer could be to interpret W-117 and W-118 as reinforcement or substitute walls for the original House 115. The top of the long eastern wall 117 lay clearly over the outer floor level of the House of the Tiles.⁴⁰¹ In combination with the later orientation of the House of the Tiles, it is a strong argument for the fact that the quite old House 115/117 was still an important and actively used part of the settlement at the point of the construction of the phase D corridor house.

The second sequence begins in the area below the later Building BG with the series of stone and pebble pavements. Earlier architecture includes House 33, just within and beyond the north long side of later Building BG, and several pieces of walls without any apparent correspondences (e.g. W-35, E-50) (*Fig. 28*). The pavement, it seems, introduced a new kind of planning in the settlement, with the later walls connected with it set on a N–S or E–W alignment. The connection between House 33 and the pavements is unclear, but W-35 and W-50 were clearly incorporated in or completely covered by

³⁹⁹ Wiencke 2000, 151, details on pp. 150–152.

⁴⁰⁰ Wiencke 2000, 150.

⁴⁰¹ Wiencke 2000, 152.

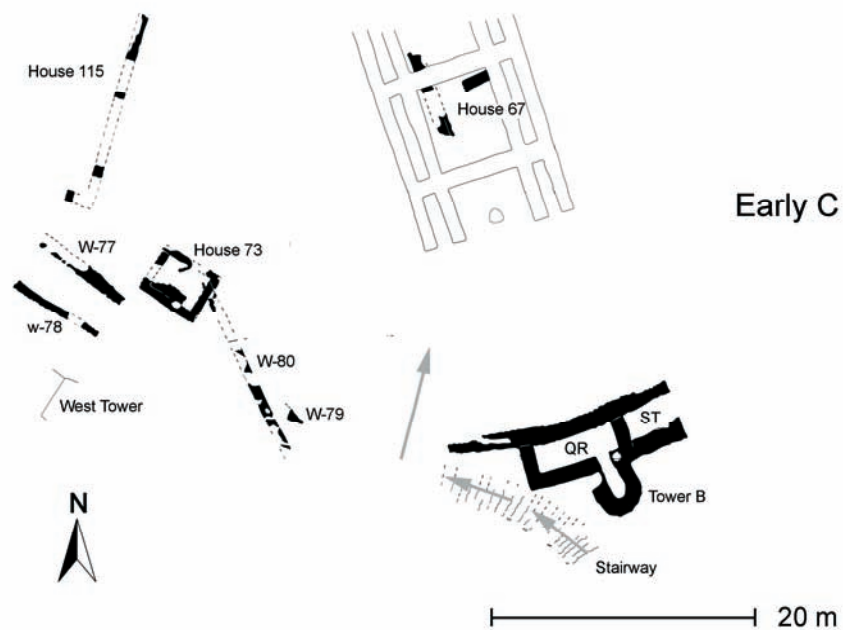
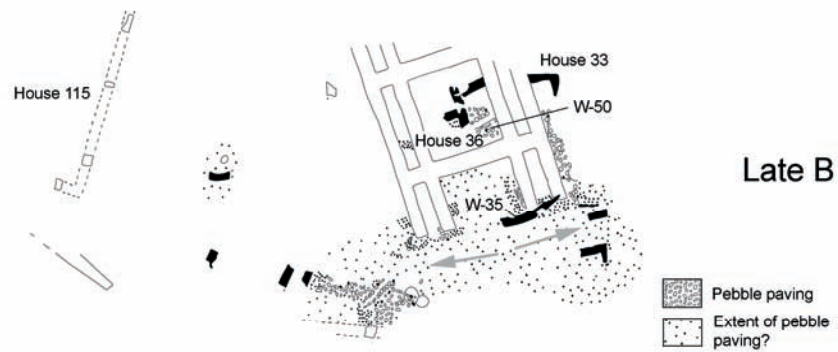


Figure 28. Lerna III. Architectural development with suggested patterns of movement marked with arrows (after Wiencke 2000, plans 4–5, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

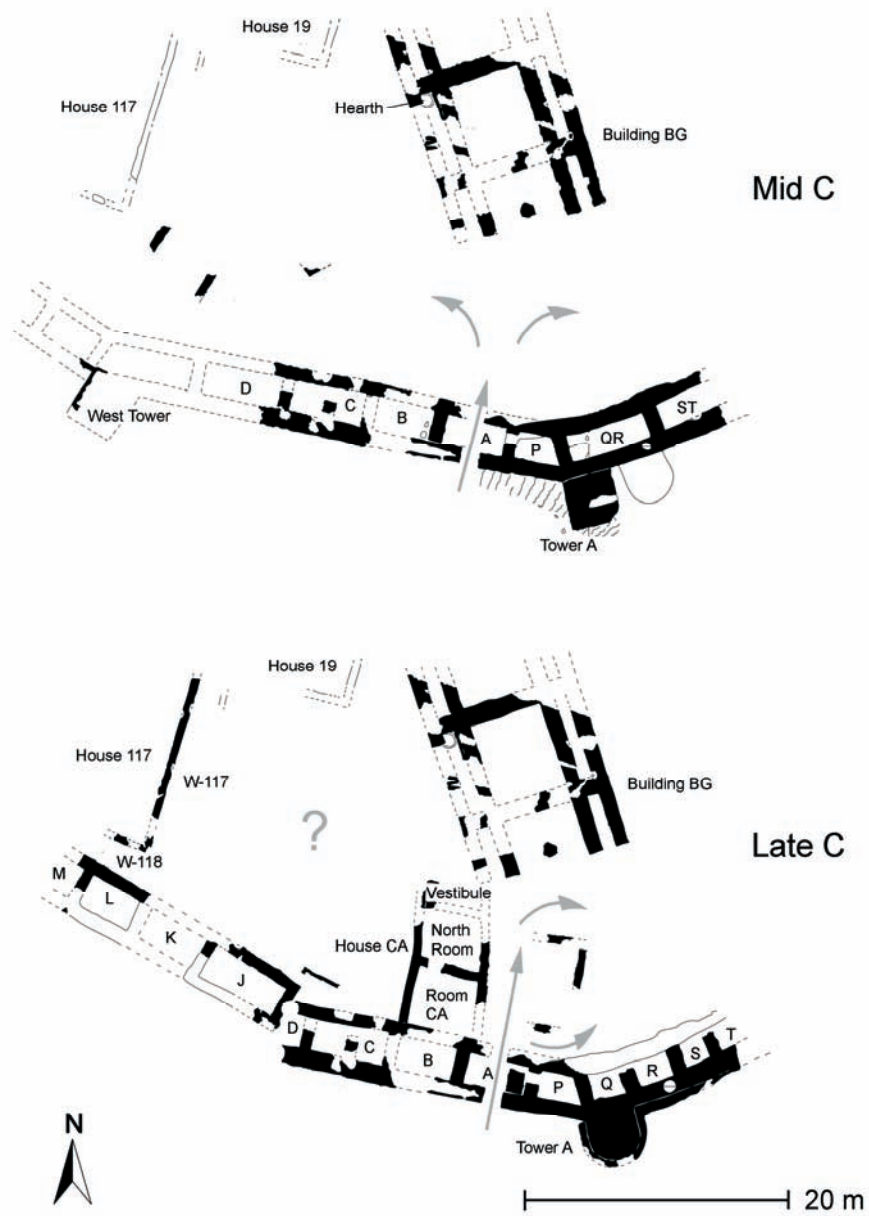


Figure 29. Lerna III. Architectural development with suggested patterns of movement marked with arrows (after Wiencke 2000, plans 6–7, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

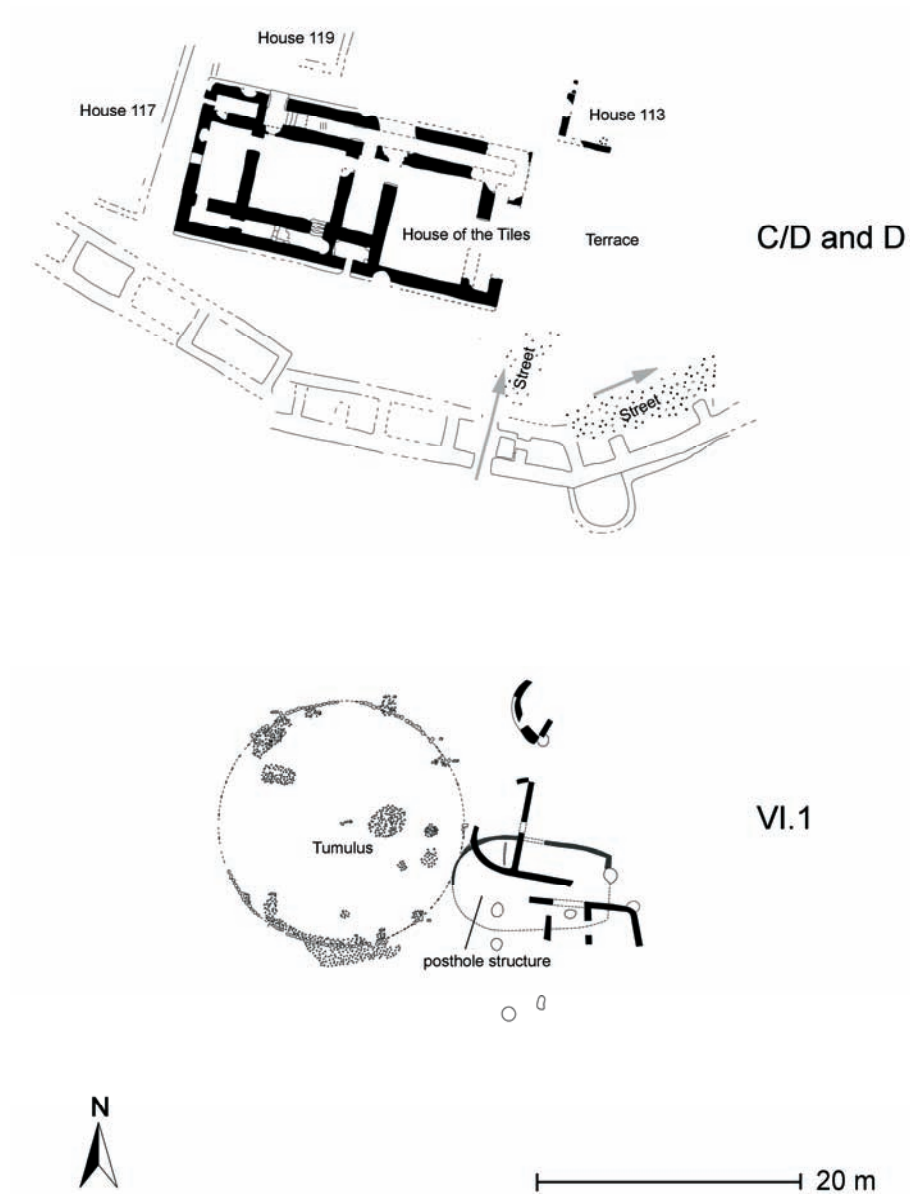


Figure 30. Lerna III-IV. Architectural development with suggested patterns of movement marked with arrows (after Wiencke 2000, plan 8, fig. I.107.a; Rutter 1995, plan 3, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

the latest pavement. Wiencke concludes that the paving had been renewed “more than once”, and the excavators counted up to three layers of stones and intersecting layers of pebbles.⁴⁰² The layers in the pavement show that considerable care and work were put into this area, suggesting in turn that the area had a special meaning in the eyes of its caretakers from at least late phase B.⁴⁰³ House 36, on a N–S alignment, was constructed partly on the latest stone pavement and pebble flooring, at the border of the greatest extension of the pavement.⁴⁰⁴ It appears that a relationship between the house and the pavement was hereby established that was to be adopted for the houses that followed. House 36 was succeeded by House 67 in early phase C. The walls of this house, although not connecting, were more substantial than their predecessors, and placed at right angles to each other.⁴⁰⁵ In a following phase, still early or mid phase C, it appears that the southern part of the late phase B–earliest phase C paving was still in use. It is likely that the uppermost pebble layer in the south was connected with Building BG (erected in mid-phase C, *Fig. 29*), where it continued into the vestibule of this early corridor house.⁴⁰⁶ This pebble layer has been found visible in the walls of bothroi, wells and trenches over an area extending at least seven metres south from the vestibule of Building BG, and emphasising the open space in front of the building.⁴⁰⁷

Thus, Building BG continued the pattern set by the earlier buildings on the same location and alignment, connected as they were with a layer of pavement in front of and partly within the structures. In terms of size this can perhaps be gathered from the width of the walls which gradually increased with every new construction from a rather common (for ordinary housing) 0.60 metres, to a somewhat above average 0.80 metres,⁴⁰⁸ to the monumental construction of Building BG with walls measuring 1.00–1.40 metres.⁴⁰⁹ After that, this building was carefully demolished (probably transitional phase C/D), House 113 was erected on the top of the levelled remains, above and to the east of the north-eastern corridor (*Fig. 30*). With this house the earlier alignment was broken in favour of a new one confirmed by the House of the Tiles. The new corridor house was erected to the south of Building BG, their

⁴⁰² Wiencke 2000, 58.

⁴⁰³ Cf. Wiencke 2000, 89.

⁴⁰⁴ Wiencke 2000, 61f.

⁴⁰⁵ Wiencke 2000, 90f. Possibly connected with the house was deposit E/107, outside to the NE of the later Building BG (Wiencke 2000, 89). Wiencke (2000, 196) allows for the possibility that the walls of House 67 (W-67 and W-68) belonged to a phase between Building BG and the House of the Tiles, but I will follow here her conclusion that they were indeed older than Building BG.

⁴⁰⁶ Wiencke 2000, 190f.

⁴⁰⁷ Wiencke 2000, 56f., 190–193.

⁴⁰⁸ E.g. Mylonas gave 0.65 metres as the average for the walls at Aghios Kosmas (1959, 21), while 0.80 metres is within the range of, for example, the fortifications of Lerna (Wiencke 2000, e.g. 145–147).

⁴⁰⁹ Wiencke 2000, 61, 90, 185ff.

ground plans slightly overlapping. In favour of the interpretation that the House of the Tiles indeed represented the successor of Building BG, it can be argued that, although the location of the new corridor house constituted a certain break with the patterns of the past, spatial continuity was upheld: through House 113 and through overlapping and closely similar ground plans, as well as, of course, through the shared open space in front of them and their close connection with the gateway leading into this part of the fortified space at Lerna. The choice to build anew, to realign the new building and to dismantle the old can nevertheless be further analysed. One question that remains is what came before the House of the Tiles in the specific location on which this monumental building was constructed?

The quite unique state of preservation of the House of the Tiles, however, put a stop to any large-scale investigation of older remains at this particular location. Walls of considerably older structures were found along the length of the southern long wall (trench HTS) (*Fig. 27*).⁴¹⁰ The area immediately below the later House of the Tiles was also examined through a few test trenches. From trench HTJ and a trench in Room VI of the House of the Tiles, considerable amounts of building debris were found, including large fragments of schist and clay with impressions of reed as well as fragments of brick.⁴¹¹ Although the origin of this debris cannot be ascertained, Wiencke holds it most likely that it came from the destruction of “a rather important phase C building” beneath the House of the Tiles.⁴¹² The consequences of this suggestion are quite interesting. If there stood an important house at this particular location in phase C, it is likely that Building BG was not the only house that needed to be pulled down in order to build the House of the Tiles. There is also, therefore, the possibility of inferring another sequence of spatial continuity including the House of the Tiles and its largely unknown predecessor, possibly at variance with the predecessor-successor connection made between the two recognised corridor houses. The result would be a looser symbolical connection between Building BG and the House of the Tiles than has been previously assumed. The building program, in this scenario, stands out as even more deliberate and value loaded. The new corridor house was established not only at a different location but also on a different alignment to that of Building BG, a more or less N–S alignment was exchanged for an E–W alignment. The change could reflect the alignment of an older house at the new location, as the alignment of the House of the Tiles also most likely reflected the alignment set by House 115/117, still standing further to the west. Why was the House of the Tiles realigned? I will return to this question below. For now it should be noted that the spatial contact between the old Building BG and the new House of the Tiles was not com-

⁴¹⁰ Wiencke 2000, e.g. 47–49 (mid phase B).

⁴¹¹ Wiencke 2000, 154f.

⁴¹² Wiencke 2000, 155.

pletely broken but upheld through their intersecting corners (NE and SW corner, respectively).

The fourth and final sequence comprises the EH III phase, and starts with the well known tumulus formed over the House of the Tiles after its destruction (*Fig. 30*). The relation between the users of the House of the Tiles, the way it was destroyed, and the builders of the tumulus cannot be ascertained at this point, and thus neither can the relation between the builders of the tumulus and the people behind the first apsidal/Lerna IV (EH III) structure at the site.⁴¹³ The episodes were probably quite close in time and connected also with certain “dumplike deposits”. These were “dumps from widespread clearing operations at the site and included material from the immediate vicinity and from areas well to the north.”⁴¹⁴ The first construction connected with Lerna IV, phase 1, was the post-hole structure called ‘the Chieftain’s House’.⁴¹⁵

This house was probably short-lived,⁴¹⁶ but its location most likely symbolically important—located immediately east of, and touching but not transgressing the stone circle surrounding the tumulus. Soon afterwards the location was used for the construction of two large apsidal buildings to the north and for a trapezoidal structure to the south. The two northern houses may have continued in use also throughout Lerna IV.2 before they were followed in more or less the same place, though shifted to the NW, by two new buildings of the same form. The trapezoidal structure was succeeded by another two buildings of the same form. These were also shifted to the NW; that is, *in the direction of the tumulus*. In IV.3, the area of the three trapezoidal houses was taken over by a row of smaller apsidal houses, placed at right angles to the ones in the north. In terms of continuity of location and of walls there is a notable relationship between the northernmost of the larger apsidal buildings and its successors throughout EH III (*Fig. 31*).⁴¹⁷

The consecutive trapezoidal structures also share a common location, alignment, form and, in part, walls.⁴¹⁸ Within Lerna IV, phase 3, Banks acknowledges as many as four stratigraphical phases. The major two of these, the two earliest, are characterised in several cases by a rather extensive reuse of older walls. There is also evidence of at least two interim phases.

⁴¹³ But see *Chapter 5*, section on *The search for culprits*, for a consideration of the possibilities and their consequences.

⁴¹⁴ Banks in Rutter 1995, 4. The numerical phasing within Lerna IV replace Caskey’s Lerna IV A–D and is based on Rutter’s phasing of the pottery. In the text ‘phase IV.1’ should be read as “architecture attributed to Lerna IV, [*pottery*] Phase 1” (Banks in Rutter 1995, pls. 3–5) and is in accordance with the use in Banks’ summary of the architectural development (Banks in Rutter 1995).

⁴¹⁵ Caskey 1966, House A1.

⁴¹⁶ Banks in Rutter 1995, 4.

⁴¹⁷ Banks in Rutter 1995, 8.

⁴¹⁸ Banks in Rutter 1995, 6f.

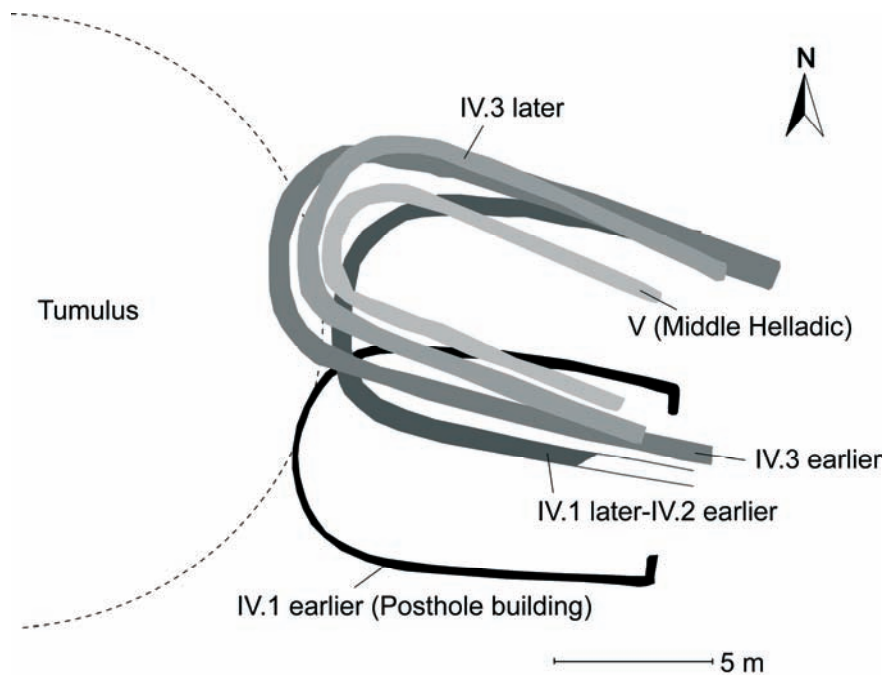


Figure 31. Lerna. Succession of walls of EH III–MH apsidal houses related to the tumulus (after Caskey 1966, fig. 5).

Within the area of the smaller apsidal structures this is represented by a series of post-holes connected with a clay floor, one time renewed, in a phase between the late phase IV.2 trapezoidal structures and the first of the small apsidal structures.⁴¹⁹ Another interesting example is related to the largest apsidal building of which the first construction was abandoned “for a short time fairly early in Phase 3”.⁴²⁰ The period of abandonment is recognised through the changing course of a street passing by the house. For a period the street expanded its course over the walls of the abandoned house, before the fill of the street itself was incorporated in the new wall on the old foundations.⁴²¹ As Banks concludes, it is impossible on present evidence to establish any exact sequence of events, that is, the contemporaneity of the varying buildings.⁴²² Both interim phases show that a certain time may pass between the abandonment/destruction and reconstruction. They show also that stages of architectural continuity, as in the case of the large apsidal structure, need not be immediately successive.

From late phase B of Lerna III, the open and mostly paved spaces of the succeeding phases appear as the focus of this part of the settlement at Lerna,

⁴¹⁹ Banks in Rutter 1995, 8.

⁴²⁰ Banks in Rutter 1995, 7.

⁴²¹ Banks in Rutter 1995, 7f.

⁴²² Banks in Rutter 1995, 8, 10.

around and on which most other architecture is concentrated. Wiencke concludes that the phase D open space in front of the House of the Tiles continued for at least six metres, and possibly up to ten metres to the east.⁴²³ It is interesting that this space was chosen for the first apsidal houses at the site. When the EH III builders considered the location for their houses, the open space may have been considered as a preferable place to build since no house walls were there to potentially disturb the plans. At this location the ground came already prepared for building, even if the closest vicinity was also free from houses. I cannot help thinking, however, that there is also a strong sense of deliberation in the positioning of the first known structures after the formation of the tumulus. It is difficult to escape the notion that the first post-hole apsidal structure, ephemeral as it may have been, was quite intentionally placed—linking up in some way with the past before it, deliberately breaking or connecting with a tradition. Furthermore, by its location it also continued the general E–W alignment confirmed by the House of the Tiles and set the pattern for the following EH III architecture.

As far as we can tell, the builders of the first post-hole structure had a clean slate to start from—except, that is, for the tumulus. In the light of this, the position selected for the next structure seems all the more symbolical. It is, however, a symbolism that could have been invoked both by newcomers and by the same people of Lerna in whose society the House of the Tiles played a significant role. It does not answer the question of what happened at Lerna at the transition to the EH III period. The same can be said for the fact that the EH III architectural phase, seen as a whole, put a definite end to a long use of this specific area for communal gatherings. This need not have been true immediately. In fact, the isolated post-hole structure can in many ways be seen as a less grandiose continuation of the pattern of the past as established by Building BG and the House of the Tiles. If the builders were newcomers, however, it is not likely that the new inhabitants were aware of the full history of this place. If, on the other hand, the builders were locals, the patterns of the past need not have been immediately interrupted but slowly, nevertheless, this did happen. Continuity was upheld in that the top of the hill continued to be at least one focus for activity in the Lerna locality. The continued history of building, however, shows that times had also changed and that, at least in part, new ideals governed exactly how the space was used.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Wiencke 2000, 286.

⁴²⁴ See further discussion in *Chapter 5*.

Living where others have lived before

The past, distant past or recent, is likely to have continued being heard of and seen—experienced—in many different ways. Tales of the past would have been continuously conveyed between people, by the old to the young, by residents to newcomers. In terms of architectural (and other) remains, traces of the old would have been visible and incorporated in the present, in large and small. Whatever reconfigurations were made within the excavated areas of Tiryns and Lerna, habitation continued in both places, from at least earliest EH II, throughout the Early Bronze Age. It appears that the focus for construction at Lerna, from the Neolithic throughout the EBA, remained within the main area of the excavation and especially around the location of the House of the Tiles, since it is the only excavated location with a complete stratigraphy.⁴²⁵ This long sequence of habitation resulted in an elevation into a mound that would have been visible and, I propose, important, for the inhabitants of Lerna. At Tiryns the excavated area of the Unterburg shows habitation layers dating from earliest EH II and throughout EH III. Below these layers, small deposits have been found of Middle Neolithic material, in crevices in the rock, and only scattered sherds of EH I.⁴²⁶ The major point is that the EH II settlers, when settled (probably building on older traditions), remained there apparently continuously for a period of some 700 years. This is the condition for the present chapter. Thus, at a general level, any continued habitation within a bounded space can be seen as an affirmation of the value of place and a specific locale. This value may comprise the appreciation of many factors, including, for example, offering a well defined living space, or being a location well adapted to the purposes of defence, trade, agriculture, fishing, mining, and so on. The purpose of the present chapter is the inclusion on this list also of the appreciation for living where others have lived before, the value of a place with a history.

I have proposed varying reactions to the past, and in the analysis presented above there are practices that may be seen as a total rejection of the physical remains of the past in the settlements; houses were pulled down and paved over. Other houses, however, were maintained over some time, house walls were reused in new constructions that therefore probably looked much like their predecessors. In studying the potentials for an essentially positive attitude towards the past in the Early Helladic settlements, I must therefore ask one major question: Can a destroyed building be evidence both of a positive consideration and a rejection of the past?

⁴²⁵ Wiencke 2000, 648.

⁴²⁶ Kilian 1983, 323, 326; Weisshaar 1983, 331; Weisshaar 1990, 15, 22. EH I has also been found in an as yet unpublished pure Taloti layer from the Oberburg (Weisshaar 1990, 22; Alram-Stern 2004, 590), apparently including whole vessels also. Kilian presupposed that older finds were removed in different planning and terracing actions (1983, 326).

Habitation continued in many settlements through many hundreds of years. In other cases, people left their traditional settlement grounds, only to return at a later point in time. In either case, the ‘composition’ of the people will have changed with time and other events. With our present state of knowledge we can only make informed guesses as to the correspondences between different archaeological materials present in a settlement through time. If an appreciation of the history of a locale was a factor for habitation, this appreciation may have been both general and specific. There may not have been any urge to ‘place’ the bits and pieces precisely on a time scale. We cannot know, either, the exact mechanics for how knowledge of the past was passed on. Our timeframes are not without gaps, whether we can see them in the archaeological record or not. In the discussions, I have read the publications ‘literally’. Different acknowledged phases of architectural development in a specific area are placed after each other to form a sequence. If there are objections to the sequence of things presented—and there should be—it serves to show, among other things, that the perceptions and attitudes of the past are a neglected issue in prehistoric (archaeological) research. In many cases, perhaps most, it is certainly impossible to ascertain the exact chronology of successive developments. Hence it is impossible to establish the exact relationship between the phases, if the continuity was unbroken or if months, days or years separated two architectural phases. I will nevertheless argue below for both spatial and temporal continuity—regarding a deliberate and informed reuse of a particular space to the level of an exact continuity in walls.

In the introduction to this part of the present study, I outlined two general questions: In what ways can architecture represent a meeting with the past, and how did the Early Helladic people act on this meeting? In the above, the focus has been on the second question, and I will therefore concentrate the rest of the chapter on the initial one; the fundamental question for a chapter with an architectural focus. In answer to this question, I would like to conclude that the meeting with a past may in architectural terms have come about primarily in two ways, giving two potential perspectives on the past:⁴²⁷ in the placement of *new beside old* and in the location of *new above old*, a horizontal and a vertical perspective respectively. It would have been possible to visually take in the former at any point in time during life in an Early Helladic settlement consisting of a mix of structures at varying points in their individual biographies. The vertical, consisting of physical remains of the past below ground, would have been more episodically visible, through the digging of bothroi and foundation trenches, as well as by their inclusion in stories and traditions that may be general or specific. Perhaps most immediately, however, the vertical may have been made visible in the very act of

⁴²⁷ Their importance in prehistoric societies is highlighted by Bradley (2002, 153–157), as presented in the introduction to *Part Three*, above.

house replacement. In these ways, the vertical as well as the horizontal could be experienced even on the individual level. I am not suggesting that each Early Helladic individual was necessarily actively reflecting on these processes and specific acts that may be seen as providing meetings with a past. I propose, however, that the individual experiences, coupled with oral traditions, shared memories and collective, more general views on what had come before, could have worked in unison in forming an appreciation of the passing of time, and shaped the roles of the past in the Early Helladic present. I will conclude this chapter with a consideration of the possible meanings of the two perspectives—for the Early Helladic people, as well as for our interpretations of the Early Helladic societies.

New beside old

A settlement must, in any case, at any given moment, have been a mix of buildings of different ages and in different stages of use and decay. This may be seen as an important basis for the awareness of the history of the settlements. In the case of Lerna, two corridor houses were erected closely together, one chronologically succeeding the other. Why was the House of the Tiles realigned? Some have suggested that it was to be better aligned against the winds, the sun and the sea.⁴²⁸ These factors could have been a part of the puzzle, but I do not think that they give a full picture. When the House of the Tiles was constructed, the builders chose to break with the alignment followed by its predecessor (cf. *Figs. 29 and 30*). Far from being the simple result of free choice regarding weather conditions, however, the survey has shown that the new building was set within a context of several still-standing structures of some antiquity, which is likely to have influenced the decision for the new location. I think that this context must have been meaningful for the Early Helladic people, and that it should also be meaningful for our interpretation of their actions. In her survey of the finds inside and outside the House of the Tiles, Nilsson recognises “the, by then, old House 117”, covering the full width of the later monumental building.⁴²⁹ The significance is, I think, just that—that it was old and above all that it was *there*. Also *there* were probably House 119, possibly a phase C building on the site of the House of the Tiles, and, of course, the open space, the terrace, in front of Building BG. Even if some building or buildings had to give way for the new construction, House 115/117, House 119, and the terrace, all seem to have been given certain precedence over the House of the Tiles. *The location of the new construction was adjusted to this pre-existing context.*

These circumstances, I think, put the position/importance of the corridor houses within the settlement of Lerna in a slightly different perspective. The

⁴²⁸ Shaw 1987, 64; Wiencke 1989, 504.

⁴²⁹ Nilsson 2004, 85.

change in location between Building BG and the House of the Tiles seems highly deliberate. Even if, contrary to what I have argued above, the older building was not in use up to a point close in time to the erection of the House of the Tiles, level ground for its foundations cannot have been easily accomplished. A long-lived, architecturally advanced and likely economically and symbolically important building was demolished, and the site was largely not reused. In one scenario the old location was for some reason considered functionally inadequate. It is possible that construction and demolition took place at the same time. Wiencke suggested that stones were taken from the almost finished fortifications for use in the House of the Tiles, and the same could have applied to the stones from Building BG. In this scenario the inhabitants of Lerna would have seen the new corridor building take shape at the same time as the old one slowly disappeared. Another scenario would be to consider the choice to leave the area of the former Building BG open as an act of reverence (in line with what later happened to the House of the Tiles), but the location and appearance of House 113 seem to be at odds with this suggestion. In a third scenario, it may be time to reconsider the affinity between the two corridor houses and suggest an alternative development for the House of the Tiles, at variance with that of Building BG. The possibility of a large structure beneath the House of the Tiles begs the question, of which house was the House of the Tiles a successor? Thus, in this scenario, it may be possible to argue for the presence of conflicting interests within and between groups of people active on the mound. Building BG, in a possibly deteriorating state, may have been an impetus for a rival group to take charge of the practices within this area of the settlement, which seems to have been devoted to communal affairs. In all scenarios the overlapping ground plans may have been a highly symbolical act,⁴³⁰ marking succession, and/or opposition.

The two corridor houses have dominated the discourse on Early Helladic Lerna, but with the survey I hope I have accomplished putting new emphasis on the surrounding architecture also. It cannot be emphasised enough that the excavated area of Lerna represents only a small part of the originally used space,⁴³¹ and perhaps a quarter of the area within a hypothesised line of the fortification, if following the contour of the mound (*Fig. 32*). An extension of the excavated area should most immediately have included the northern half of Building BG, and also given us some further information on the probably quite long-lived House 115/117. The presence of this house probably did direct the placement of the House of the Tiles. This is a fact that may perhaps indicate a special role of this house in the surrounding area, as also may the way in which its walls were closely copied as a replacement or reinforcement. If a larger extension of the fortification wall was known, the now

⁴³⁰ Cf. Bradley 2002, 65.

⁴³¹ Wiencke 2000, 3.

sole gateway into the area may be accompanied by others, suggesting a versatile use of the whole space within the wall.

Within the presently excavated area, the continuously open space appears as the core of this part of the settlement at Lerna. Although the House of the Tiles occupied a new space in relation to Building BG, it did not encroach on the previous open space; in fact, the yellow clay paving then applied,⁴³² once again defined and probably enlarged it. Long before that, however, the first sign of an open place suitable for holding large groups of people, is an extended pebble paving covering at its largest extent an area of at least 22 (E–W) x 15 (N–S) metres. Wiencke notes its marked borders of larger, flat or round stones as well as indications of the heavy traffic of what she prefers to call an open plaza rather than a street.⁴³³ The apparently well defined open space indicates a deliberate focusing of activity on this specific locality, a space that remained largely open from late Lerna IIIB through most of Lerna IIIC. The paving had been renewed more than once and also extended, and the upper paving covered the older architectural remains visible at the plan (*Fig. 28*).

Some time later (early phase C), a carefully executed, stepped ramp was constructed, ascending from the outside along the contemporaneous fortification towards the later gateway.⁴³⁴ In the next phase (mid phase C), the stairway was partly built over by tower A, but at the point where the stairway had ended, the gateway room A was created through the expansion of the fortification.⁴³⁵ Traces of steps from the stairway within room A suggest, although not conclusively, that this room was placed at the point where the top of the stairway had passed earlier.⁴³⁶ At this time, the large Building BG was also constructed circa 15 metres to the north–northeast of the gateway, possibly at the site of an earlier structure with substantial walls.⁴³⁷ The vestibule of the corridor building was placed over the earlier pebble paving, the building thus facing the main area of the earlier open space. The next development was the construction of two buildings, Houses CA and DM, one building on either side of the gateway stretching towards Building BG. In fact, as it is reconstructed by Wiencke, the eastern House CA, whose remains were extensively damaged by the later House of the Tiles, would have more or less touched the south-westernmost corner of Building BG. The extension of Room DM is unclear. Wiencke, however, favours the reconstruction that leaves a 1.60 metre space between the buildings,⁴³⁸ creating a

⁴³² Wiencke 2000, 283.

⁴³³ Wiencke 2000, 56–58.

⁴³⁴ Wiencke 2000, 93–96. Could the patches of a probable street west of Tower B (Wiencke 2000, 103) be the forerunner to the stairway?

⁴³⁵ Wiencke 2000, 117f.

⁴³⁶ Wiencke 2000, 95.

⁴³⁷ Wiencke 2000, 90, 196f.

⁴³⁸ Wiencke 2000, 140.

street leading from the gateway to the open space. The final development of the EH II series of events in the area was the levelling of the buildings of the area destroyed by a devastating fire, and the erection of the House of the Tiles. Thus, this new corridor left the same open space in front of the building, a space that was now surfaced by a layer of yellow clay extending around the whole of the building. A further street was also laid out at the time of the House of the Tiles, following a very similar course to that of the space between House CA and (slightly over) Room DM of the preceding period, into the open space in front of the House of the Tiles. As discussed above, the development in the area continued with the erection of the tumulus above the House of the Tiles, and the first house built thereafter, in EH III, was built touching the tumulus and on the very site of the formerly open and long-lived terrace. The open space was thereafter successively and completely built over by the apsidal houses of the period.⁴³⁹

The history of the area suggests that the inhabitants of EH II Lerna expected a considerable amount of traffic through the area, followed by a willingness to control this traffic. It suggests that certain routes were preferred and others were perhaps less acceptable. The open space in front of the successive corridor buildings appears to be the focus of the area throughout the period discussed here (an argument illustrated by arrows in *Figs. 28–30*). Except for an E–W street following the fortification in phase C/D or D and probably in the preceding phase, all movement is directed towards this point. The stairway is a strong indication that the inhabitants of Lerna expected visitors to follow the route indicated by them. The gateway room A confirmed an ingrained path and was the natural consequence of the lessened accessibility of the stairway, and perhaps also of the building of Building BG within the line of the fortification. Upon entrance through the gateway, a person would have been immediately focused on the large building ahead,⁴⁴⁰ or, perhaps at first, on the open space in front of it. For approximately three hundred years, movement within this part of the settlement at Lerna nevertheless remained quite constant. The architecture was altered but through these changes new constructions were made to adhere to an idea established at least in the time of the late phase B pebble paving and the subsequent stairway. There was a definite relationship between the gateway and the succeeding open spaces (including the corridor buildings), a relationship that must be interpreted as deliberate and grounded in tradition.

Although these structures were not all constructed in an uninterrupted sequence, their construction, and especially where they came to be located, appears to be following an idea set down at an early stage. If so, we have at Lerna a tradition of a place for communal gatherings stretching over perhaps two hundred years or more. So, while the architecture changed during these

⁴³⁹ See further below, *Chapter 5*.

⁴⁴⁰ Also, Nilsson 2004, 138.

years, there was constantly a mix of old and new placed side by side, with the open space to tie them together.

New on top of old

The discussions in this chapter are dependent on the stratigraphies as presented by the excavators or publishers of the respective settlements, and the two pictures presented for Lerna and Tiryns are different. Apart from the fact that they are both long-lived settlements, i.e. construction activity continued successively for many hundred years, this continuity was accomplished in two different ways. The architectural sequences presented for Lerna show that structures were made to replace others at limited locales, and this is also evident from the analysis above. The open space may have worked as a focus of the area around which histories were shaped in a way. While at Lerna the old was substituted by the new, at Tiryns the old was incorporated into the new by the reuse of walls. Considering this, the survey of Lerna seems to bring forth a sense of a general appreciation of place, while at Tiryns the architectural continuity is quite markedly illustrated in the close succession of walls set upon walls. I propose that the comparison between Lerna and Tiryns provides mutual support for attention to the past among the Early Helladic peoples. Although practices varied at Lerna and Tiryns, together they present a more complete picture. The material of Lerna in relation to that of Tiryns gives a 'function' above the purely practical/convenience-based interpretation of the potentially technical advantages of walls put upon walls. Instead, the Tiryns material when compared with that of Lerna, lends support to an acknowledgement of the development there as a continuity that transcends the obvious levelling followed by new constructions. Within the comparison there are, I argue, two concerns in particular that illustrate the importance of place through time:

- There was always a pre-existing context to which to somehow relate.
- Considerable work went into the location and construction of houses.

The first point has already been considered within the horizontal perspective, but it is similarly important when applying a vertical view to the developments. I have found it very rewarding to use architectural sequences as a way to highlight connections through time accomplished by placing new on top of old. An accompanying step must be to see what kind of continuity we are talking about within these sequences. Thus, what type of successiveness was involved in the appearance of the sequences. This is unfortunately often problematic, and this reservation needs to be borne in mind in continued analyses. Thus, the goal of the exercise lies not in the establishment of sequences, but in the suggestion of possibilities for the workings and potential meanings of the connections in the eyes of the Early Helladic people.

Concerning the second point, as we have seen, from the beginning of the Early Helladic period at Lerna the choice to live there was coupled with extensive measures to make this possible. The ridges left by the Middle Neolithic settlers were targeted from earliest EH II, and a considerable amount of soil was moved in order to create level ground for construction. When one construction had played out its function for one reason or another, the building was levelled. To pull down a building may not always have been an easy task. The superstructure of sun-dried brick may not have been so difficult to pull down; in some cases the decay had probably already started. The stone socles must have been another matter. In Lerna, these were not reused. In some cases the debris of the superstructure may perhaps have been used to fill out and raise the ground above the top level of the old walls. In other cases, the walls may have been partly dismantled, the stones possibly used in new walls. In the case of Building BG, the massive walls were pulled down to ground level. Instead of constructing anew away from earlier structures, the people of Lerna decided again and again to build anew on the very spaces where older structures were probably still standing. Several obstacles had to be met, as exemplified by the choice of the location of Building BG at Lerna, which necessitated massive foundations to make up for the sloping ground on top of the artificial hill.⁴⁴¹ Even if the time-scale is flawed, the exact chronological relationships lost, the consistency in the spatial correspondences makes the chosen locations seem highly intentional.

At Tiryns, old walls instead offered a firm foundation for the new. The questions are: Why were new walls set upon the remaining courses of the old? Is the answer simply that this was the most convenient way to deal with old walls? The functional aspect has been promoted elsewhere.⁴⁴² Although I will certainly not dismiss the possibility that the technical advantages were appreciated by the Early Helladic builders, I propose that what may have been more decisive for the location was the older building itself. Thus, that it could be a matter of a deliberate reuse of place that went beyond the practical. At Tiryns this did in fact take the form of actual reuse of walls. In EH II this remains a difference to Lerna. Also in EH III, there appears to be a closer correspondence between the apsidal houses at Tiryns than at Lerna. At Lerna the walls were not immediately reused but the place was. Thus, even if the use of old walls as substructures was the functionally preferred method of building anew, was the reuse completely neutral in terms of a wider than simply practical meaning?

My study is based on the notion that practices that we—from an extended perspective of time—can term continuity and change, coexisted at any given point in time, also in the Early Helladic period. For me, architectural adjustment in relation to the past in the past has proven to be a fruitful way of ex-

⁴⁴¹ Wiencke 2000, 185.

⁴⁴² E.g. Pullen 1990, 342; Wiencke 2000, 196; Hodder 2006, 143f., 165.

ploring this notion. Life changed, on any number of levels, but through the changes, I argue, went a thread of recognition and of an awareness of the past. This can be seen or inferred when surveying both change and continuity, and it is illustrated by the information from both Tiryns and Lerna. Maran has argued for the possibility that the area of a corridor house was ‘reserved’ for this very special type of building.⁴⁴³ For this suggestion to work for Lerna we must equate the ‘area’ with the full excavated area of Lerna and define all other structures as connected with ‘the corridor house complex’ as Maran also does.⁴⁴⁴ I think he may be right, but only in a general way. I suggest that the focus should be on the fact that function and layout of place, once established, in many ways directed future activities.

My aim with the study was to test the potential for discussing a past recognised in the settlements on a daily basis. The overall result could perhaps be anticipated already by the choice of including this chapter in the present book: the past—the architectural past—was obviously a large part of the Early Helladic present. Of course our arguments are formed by the archaeological material we meet and the questions we put to it. The survey has, however, resulted in the recognition of a number of ways in which the history was an active part of the present, and likewise a large diversity in the actions taken by the Early Helladic inhabitants of the surveyed settlements. The variation within and between settlements shows that deliberate and contextually specific choices were made by the inhabitants of the respective settlements in order to form their present. It is noticeable how many of these choices seem to be related to past practices in terms of alignment, layout, specific wall stretches and, above all, attention to a specific place. Thus, I think that it can be argued that people were aware of their past and valued it, whether it was grounded in specific memories or shared ideas of the value of traditions and ancestry, or both. At Lerna, in most cases, the free-standing houses were completely exchanged and newly built, but not ‘on’ the old. At Tiryns, on the other hand, this was what happened to a large extent, and life appears to have continued, in a way, within preset boundaries. At Lerna, the changes are likely to have been piecemeal even if they are presented as being held together within different architectural periods. Within these periods, however, the developments were probably not all-embracing but one at a time—the transition between periods not abrupt, but gradual. This would have happened in the same way at Tiryns, but nevertheless much remained the same. There were apparently large fires, each of which destroyed large parts of the buildings in the Unterburg. New walls had to be built upon old, floors raised or laid anew to (probably) deal with the debris of the destructions. But more than at Lerna, or at least, which is an important qualification, on a more detailed level of each individual structure (although the rooms are

⁴⁴³ Maran 1998, 195.

⁴⁴⁴ See also, *Chapter 2*.

given new numbers in the archaeological reports), my feeling is that the activities were part of a continuum. In some sense, or in some cases, the new rooms should, I think, be seen rather as rebuildings than as a new cycle of construction, occupation and abandonment/destruction. This is the feeling that I have from my point of view as a modern researcher. Is there room to suggest that the Early Helladic people may have viewed it in a similar way?

Considerations of meaning

There are differences between the analysed contexts at Lerna and Tiryns that have not yet been considered, but of which some are plainly visible in a comparison between their respective architectural plans. These differences concern the type of buildings that have been excavated. So, while the excavated area at EH II Lerna was at any given point in time made up largely of spatially unconnected structures, a pattern of multi-roomed structures soon developed at Tiryns in the manner of other contemporary settlements (e.g. Zygouries, Aghios Kosmas, Lithares).⁴⁴⁵ No multi-roomed complexes have as yet been found at Lerna, if we exclude the rooms of the fortification. These should, I think, perhaps rather be seen as a secondary feature and thus not the primary cause for construction.

Connected with these architectural differences are the types of interpretations of use that are generally applied to the two contexts. Nothing else has been suggested other than that the buildings of the Tirynthian Unterburg represent residential quarters. In stark contrast, all minor and major structures yet excavated of the EH II settlement at Lerna, at least from late phase IIIB, must be seen in the light of the overall appearance of the area, including fortifications, successive, defined open places, and two consecutive corridor houses. The complex of structures as a whole may therefore be characterised as public, or at least semi-public, and any residential aspect as being of subsidiary character. A further difference in connection with this lies in relative position. That is to say that the excavated area at Lerna occupied the top of the artificial mound with any further, perhaps more residential areas probably spreading out on the lower slopes and on flat ground. At Tiryns, the Unterburg held, at least from a visual and topographical point of view, a subordinate role to the Oberburg and its monumental Rundbau. Still, the residential areas of the Unterburg were set apart from the Lower Town spreading out around the foot of the rocky acropolis. The differences and similarities are illustrated in *Figure 32*. Can these differences be reflected also in the differences in the ways in which the past was acknowledged and used? The object of the survey has been to illustrate the importance and continuity of place. The different results may reflect different ways in which the historicity of place was perceived.

⁴⁴⁵ See above, *Chapters 2 and 3*.

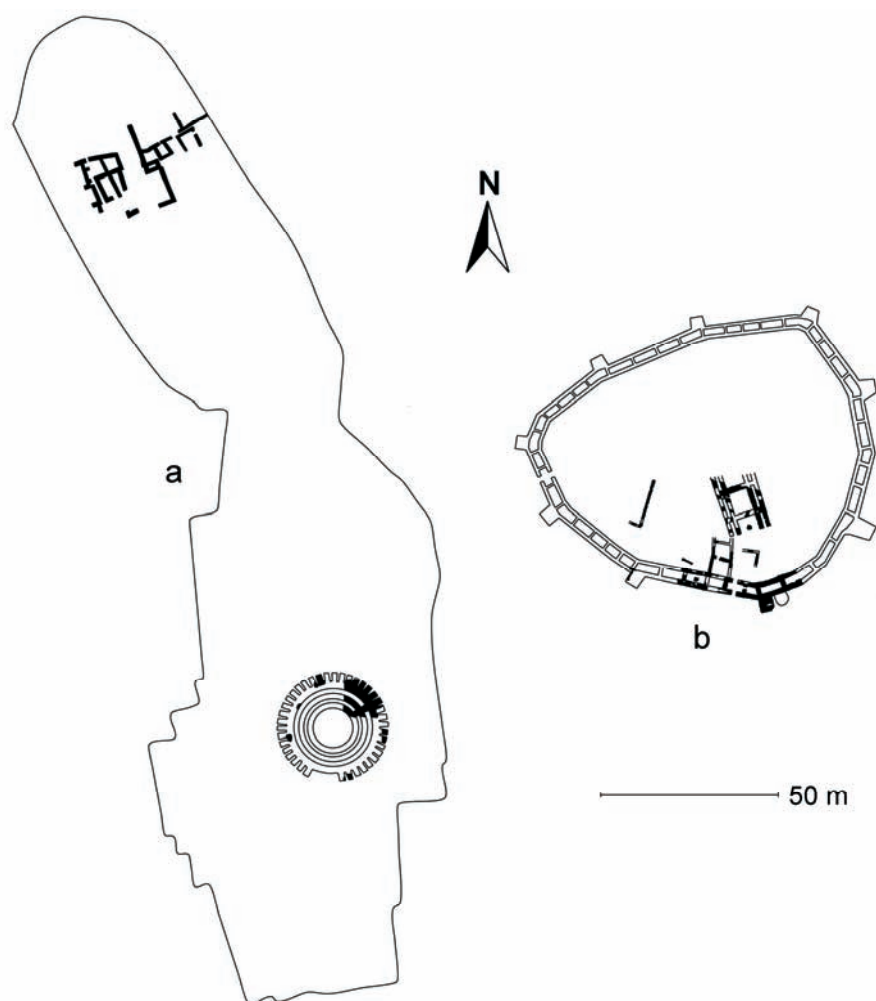


Figure 32. Comparison of Early Helladic architecture and topography at Lerna and Tiryns. Tiryns Horizon 8a with the room complexes in the Unterburg and the monumental Rundbau in Oberburg, and Lerna III, late phase C, with a hypothesized extension of the fortification wall following the contour of the latter mound (after Maran, *Archäologische Forschungen*, fig. 5, accessed 28/12/2006, and Wiencke 2000, plans 1, 7)

Halstead has raised and dismissed the possibility that tells of Neolithic Greece were built up deliberately, on the argument that the use of mudbrick and the *in situ* building (on earlier house remains), both important contributors to the build up of tells, would need to be a matter of communal choice on the parts of the inhabitants—a choice of continuity, being well aware of the consequences.⁴⁴⁶ More in line with the archaeological situation, however,

⁴⁴⁶ Halstead 1999, 87.

he continued, is to argue for a symbology of lineage and seniority on the house level in the choice of successive construction of separate houses which resulted in the separate elevation of certain houses.⁴⁴⁷ Thus, even if certain circumstances argue against a supposition that tells were formed as a communal act “to impress neighbouring villages”,⁴⁴⁸ the result of the individual choices was an appearance of a communal act, and the communal sentiments could have followed as a result. The tell-building choices could have worked on both levels.

At both Lerna and Tiryns, continued use of the areas under consideration led to a continuous rise of the level of the ground. The extent of this rise would, however, not be intelligible to someone without access to a considerably longer timescale than a single lifespan. Traces of the past history of a place would nevertheless find their way into the daily life of a present in a number of ways, as we have seen, and these could add to the oral tradition already connected with it. The rise of the land would, at any given moment, also set this area apart from the surrounding lower ground, without the need of active consideration of the causes for it.

It is also possible that individual structures may have been delineated from others by the extent of past activity concentrated in the area of that specific structure. It is, however, difficult from the present degree of publication of Tiryns to judge the rise in level of houses that are no more than roughly contemporary. Also, a factor for this ideology of tell-building societies to work is that houses are destroyed and rebuilt on a rather regular basis. An old house would otherwise retain a lower floor level than a neighbouring house, renewed on old ground. With a standard rise of *c.* 30 centimetres in floor levels between the structures of consecutive architectural phases at EH II Tiryns, the ground level would surely have generally risen through the years, partly within a single lifespan. It remains uncertain how this may have been perceived between separate room complexes,⁴⁴⁹ and, it appears as if many structures still survived to rather old ages. For the EH III apsidal buildings, five identical and consecutive ground plans of apsidal building 168, may have raised this house above its closest neighbours but this cannot now be ascertained.

For the Early Helladic material under consideration here, it seems therefore more potentially rewarding to concentrate on the *ideological basis* for remaining in a fixed place. In the case of Tiryns, the workings of the complex as an architectural unit remain uncertain. As has already been concluded above, however, it seems probable that the preserved wall stretches

⁴⁴⁷ Halstead 1999, 90. In the Late Neolithic period he sees a further development of this sentiment in the construction of megara on large central courtyards “*raised above* the rest of the village”, original italics.

⁴⁴⁸ Halstead 1999, 88.

⁴⁴⁹ See Hodder (2005; 2006, 151f., 161–163) for a discussion on the meanings of seniority among houses within Çatalhöyük.

and sections of rooms would fit together to form a tightly arranged complex of interconnected living compounds like those in Aghios Kosmas and Zy-gouries. Reused walls and similar layouts through the phases indicate change, but also considerable continuity. This continuity can perhaps partly be ascribed to restrictions put on the builders by surrounding architecture, but also, in parallel, continuity and change may be seen as the outward signs of continuity of ownership through the generations.⁴⁵⁰ By extension, it can be argued that the reuse of walls or the copying of wall stretches, that is, in effect rebuilding old houses in part or in full and thereby continuously using the same lived-in space, would have given symbolic meaning not only to the house itself, but to the household connected with this specific place within the settlement,⁴⁵¹ through time and through changes in composition of both people and rooms during perhaps several generations. The accumulative history, on a house level as well as on the settlement level, would be a source for place-based identity and work against the will for change.

Continuity in ownership is also a likely basis for continuous renegotiations of space between individuals of interconnected house complexes, as the conditions for each household changed with time. The case of Tiryns does not permit a full picture of how the composition of rooms and whole buildings changed through the five hundred years of EH II habitation. By peopling the transitions, however, it is easier to see the same individuals on both sides of a destruction—trying, after the fire could be extinguished, to rebuild—and how the choices fall on a reuse of the same walls in an attempt to recreate the past. That old wall stretches were not copied may mean that other persons saw a chance to take over the grounds of a destroyed building, if the former residents were unable to, but it may also mean that the fire gave an opportunity to adapt to new needs within the household. In the publications of Tiryns, the focus is on the fires as markers as the end of an old and the beginning of a new architectural phase. If a complete view of the habitation layers at the Tirynthian Unterburg was available, reconfigurations at other points are sure to have existed, rooms may have been added or removed, new doors and thereby patterns of movements created, within and between defined residential complexes.⁴⁵²

The quarters of the Unterburg must have housed a number of residential groups, extended families and individuals, at any given point in time, and through generations. It is easy to see how relationships between persons and households would have formed and developed in this setting. Longevity of ownership or purely of presence at a specific spot may have been grounds that could render to a person or a household a special standing within the

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. Frankel & Webb 2006, 3.

⁴⁵¹ Kotsakis 1999, 73.

⁴⁵² See above, *Chapter 3*. For the larger picture of spatial rearrangements through time, see the discussion of Frankel and Webb (2006) on the development of 33 households through the 500–600 year long history of the prehistoric Cypriot village of Marki.

community. It need not happen by default nor similarly mean social dominance over others, but it would be a good basis for social hierarchies to evolve, either deliberately or naturally. Thus, it is easy to see how seniority of place on the individual house level could work and be worked in the formation of power-relationships between different households and families, as Halstead suggested for Neolithic tells. As far as we can tell on the present evidence, a similar depth of habitation layers and tradition of rebuilding did not exist in the Lower Town. On the level of the whole Unterburg, this added place-value, and a possible ideology of seniority over place, may thus be similarly meaningful for communality within, as well as it may be for the creation of relationships between the Unterburg and other areas.⁴⁵³

In relation to the excavated area at Lerna, the interpretation needs to be adjusted to a context where the place-value and continuous use of space was less individualised. Of course, if the corridor houses were residences of rulers, the position of the buildings on top of the accumulated history of the settlement would surely be a useful sign of power, and for the right to rule on behalf of a single person or a smaller group. If instead the context of the fortification, the corridor houses and other buildings is seen as of largely communal value (albeit perhaps supervised by a smaller group), the importance of the past is likely to be on the same level. In this scenario, exact adherence to old ground plans loses importance. Not only because the spatially unconnected buildings allowed more freedom of movement than the dense arrangement of housing at the Tirynthian Unterburg, but also because the place-value is likely to have been tied to the larger area, centring on the successive open spaces, rather than on any one single building plot. Any negotiation of power and superiority would primarily have been on the communal level, directed towards a target outside the community that used the area, and towards any outsiders within it—displaying the community's seniority and place.

Overall, the meanings of the past are likely to have been many and diverse, working and being made to work on many different levels. The past, and at the same time the future, was in the hands of the Early Helladic people in all periods here surveyed. By looking at the architectural development, I have surveyed only one way in which connections were made in daily life, between the past, the present and the future. Focusing on the past, my conclusion is that we are right to argue for an awareness of the past, and how the histories connected to past times. By extension, however, I am not only suggesting that the correspondences are the results of generally positive attitudes to past ways, but also that these practices can be seen as part of a cul-

⁴⁵³ Cf. Kostakis 1999, 70: arguing for a duality of organisation between the acropolis and extended part of the settlement at Sesklo in which the tell stood for continuity and was built up by freestanding houses, while the lower town was characterised by discontinuity and clusters of rooms. Also Halstead 1999, 88.

tural pattern in which ‘ancestry’ was promoted. I propose that the power of the past within the Early Helladic societies may have resided in the ability to form identities and to set patterns for the future to be negotiated in a present. The value of place through time would have been in the creation of a link between the Early Helladic people, as individuals or as groups, and a specific spot in the landscape, in creating a base for upholding that link and for the potential role it had to play in the interaction between peoples and between people and their surroundings.

5. Mounds as markers

The arrangement was obviously deliberate, the circle being carefully and accurately laid out and the mound of debris graded to a fairly regular convexity. Earth was not brought in to form this mound; rather, considerable quantities of the fallen matter and burnt wreckage of the House of the Tiles were almost certainly carried away to leave an even shield-shaped tumulus. There was no grave or other structure in this place. The object signaled by the monument was the house itself.⁴⁵⁴

Whether the ruins of the House of the Tiles were treated with this extraordinarily elaborate attention as a mark of veneration or of execration we cannot at present even venture to guess.⁴⁵⁵

In this chapter I will take the opportunity to give extra consideration to a limited number of well-known but still not more widely interpreted group of contexts, namely the so-called ‘ritual tumuli’. In doing so I will step beyond the focus on a limited number of regions to a fuller Mainland perspective, since the tumuli are few but also found outside the study area, as are the more numerous burial tumuli that are mostly considered alongside the ‘ritual’ ones.⁴⁵⁶

The term ‘ritual tumuli’ was coined by Forsén in 1992 to distinguish the tumulus-shaped mounds, into which no burial was set, from the canonical tumuli (henceforth burial tumuli).⁴⁵⁷ The latter is mainly a phenomenon of the Middle Helladic period, when these burial tumuli found their greatest distribution and number, but there are also examples of EH III and even EH II date.⁴⁵⁸ Although there are tumuli without burials both before and after the EBA, within this period the ‘ritual tumulus’ is construction-wise as yet a phenomenon of the EH II phase. The aim of the chapter is twofold:

⁴⁵⁴ Caskey 1956, 165.

⁴⁵⁵ Caskey 1956, 165.

⁴⁵⁶ For other discussions on Greek tumuli and ritual tumuli, see Müller 1989; Forsén 1992, 232–237; Alram-Stern 2004, 293–296; Maran 1998, 229–231, all with extensive references.

⁴⁵⁷ Forsén 1992, 31, 36f.

⁴⁵⁸ For the most recent update on Early Helladic burial tumuli, see Alram-Stern 2004, 295f.

- Firstly, to perform a reanalysis of the term ‘ritual tumulus’ and question the coherency of a group of contexts that was formed rather arbitrarily, by their exclusion from the group of burial tumuli.
- Secondly, to perform in-depth contextual analyses of the milieus in which the mounds appear, including a consideration of the monuments through time with a focus on the practices and events related to the formation of the mounds.

As we will see, the EH II tumuli made an imprint on their surroundings in the next chronological phase as well. The discussion below will also show that since ‘tumulus’ is a term that belongs in the mortuary domain (and burial mounds belong to the Neolithic, Early Bronze Age and later prehistory in many contexts and regions, under different names: tumulus, kurgan, barrow), the term may be unfortunate as used in the concept of ‘ritual tumuli’. Although a different (unspecified) type of use is given to the ritual tumuli,⁴⁵⁹ and the term separates these tumuli without graves from the canonical types with graves, at the same time it keeps them still within the same conceptual group of phenomena. That both types of customs were somehow building on a prototype is understood.⁴⁶⁰ The separation of terms showed that this origin or prototype should not be considered to be the same for the two types of tumulus, and especially, that the search for earlier parallels to the burial tumuli should not be found in the ritual tumuli (they are among the earliest tumuli but still typologically and functionally dissimilar from the mostly later burial tumuli).⁴⁶¹ As shown by the rapid and complete acceptance of the term, Forsén’s call for a separation of terms was much needed, but I suggest that there is still a need to qualify the meaning of the term, and, above all, to give room for individual interpretations of each specific context.

As in the preceding chapter, I will consider the contexts from two different perspectives on time. I will consider the time around the formation of the mounds, coupled with a consideration of the possible roles of the mounds within a more extended and thus primarily linear timeframe—from their formation until the time when it appears that the monuments ceased to be a visible part of their respective communities. The latter qualification is based also on my common focus above, that any monument of this type, like the architecture considered earlier, would to some extent have influenced life in its particular settlement. Through analyses of how this influence worked, we may gain further insight into the roles the mounds were given from a conceptual point of view, by the people living and working in relation to them.

⁴⁵⁹ E.g. Alram-Stern 2004, 295; Forsén 1992, 37.

⁴⁶⁰ Forsén 1992, 232, 234f.; Maran 1998, 229–231. Alram-Stern (2004) most recently stresses that, if one discounts the tumuli of central Macedonia, the burial tumuli in their early phase were limited to the western parts of Greece, and points to the possible influence from the West Balkans (Alram-Stern 2004, 295f; Forsén 1992, 236f.; Maran 1998, 231f.).

⁴⁶¹ Forsén 1992, 232–237; Maran 1998, 229f. *Contra*, e.g. Müller 1989.

Thus, although I will be making use of one perspective on time unavailable to the contemporary inhabitants, I believe that a combination of a long and short perspective serves to widen and nuance our understanding of these Early Helladic monuments.

The ‘ritual tumuli’

Before I continue, however, let me briefly present details of the three contexts that are generally discussed within the concept of ‘ritual tumuli’ (Lerna, Olympia/Altis, and Thebes/Ampheion) and a fourth one that has recently been excavated to complement these (Thebes/Museum).⁴⁶² Although I will repeat much of the information outlined in the following paragraphs, this initial presentation will present an overview of the particulars that will be thereafter be considered separately in the following discussions.

- An almost circular mound was built over the remains of the fire devastated House of the Tiles at *Lerna*, in the Argolid (*Fig. 33*).⁴⁶³ As noted in the citation by Caskey above, it was formed from the extensive destruction debris of the corridor house, and it was given a border by carefully chosen stones in a single line. Smaller stones were also used to dress its surface. Its diameter was approximately 19 metres. The mound has been dated to the transitional phase between the destruction of the House of the Tiles and the erection of the first building in EH III, thus to the very end of EH II at the site.⁴⁶⁴ The earliest EH III house (Lerna IV.1, “Chieftain’s house”) was erected immediately beyond and ‘touching’ the border of stones around the tumulus, but the line of stones was not fully breached by houses until Lerna phase IV.3.
- An almost circular mound was erected on top of a natural rise of extremely hard clay, on the Altis of *Olympia*, in Elis, deep below the Classical remains of Pelopion (*Fig. 34*).⁴⁶⁵ It was encircled by a stone border constructed from upright stones, some of non-local origin,⁴⁶⁶ at approximately the mid-height of the natural rise at the time. The surface was covered with flat irregular stones. A layer of clay and sand mix, probably artificial and transported there, lay between the firm ground of the natural

⁴⁶² The find next to the Archaeological Museum at Thebes was added to the first three by Alram Stern (2004, 294) in consideration of the ‘ritual tumuli’.

⁴⁶³ Information below from Caskey 1956, 165f., figs. 3, 5; 1966; Wiencke 2000, 284f.; 297f., figs. I.107.b, I.108.a. See also *Chapter 4*.

⁴⁶⁴ Caskey (1968, 314) dated the tumulus to the beginning of EH III. Forsén (1992, 36) suggested instead a late EH II date and Wiencke (2000) includes the tumulus in her publication of EH II Lerna.

⁴⁶⁵ For information on the shape and formation of the tumulus: Rambach 2002, esp. 182–200; 2003, esp. 241–246; 2004, esp. 1214–1216.

⁴⁶⁶ Rambach 2004, 1219 (Mergelkalkbrocken).

rise and the stone cover. At the time of its construction, the diameter of the mound was 27 metres at the stone border, and its erection belongs wholly to the EH II period. The dating should be put earlier than latest EH II when the stone border was already overrun by extensive alluvial layers from the Kladeios river, and by the time of the construction of EH III apsidal houses (late or very late in EH III) only pieces of the southern part of the border may have been still visible. The mound, however, was still visible, with a diameter of 20 metres, or more.⁴⁶⁷ Still within the EH II period, human activity in the area resulted in a deposition of a considerable number of sherds, obsidian and shells of mussels and land snails on and beyond the mound.⁴⁶⁸ In late EH III, a number of apsidal buildings were erected by its foot, and an area on its east side is interpreted as an organised, enclosed cult area, directed towards the mound.⁴⁶⁹ In Middle Helladic I, after the destruction of the EH III apsidal houses, the mound appears to have been used as clay source, as large pits were dug into it.⁴⁷⁰

- On the Ampheion hill at *Thebes*, above what may have been an early EH (EH I?) cluster of cist graves, a construction was raised that has been likened to an Egyptian mastaba (*Fig. 35*).⁴⁷¹ According to the excavator, the hill itself was cut into two or three (depending on the side of the hill) superimposed terraces, decreasing in diameter towards the top of the hill. On the uppermost terrace a mound was built out of mudbrick, and this core was covered by a layer of earth. The base diameter of the mudbrick construction was over 20 metres.⁴⁷² In the interior of the mudbrick construction, the excavation revealed a plundered cist tomb. Close to the tomb was a pit which, at the time of excavation, contained some human bone, EH sherds, an EH sauceboat, an early MH saucer, four golden pendants and, some LH IIIB sherds. Spyropoulos dated the mudbrick construction, the earthen cover, and the grave to the Early Helladic period. Because of the later sherds in the tomb, an EH dating is generally accepted for the large constructions. In contrast to the view put forward by the excavator, the cist tomb itself is now considered by most researchers to be a later, probably early Mycenaean, adaptation of the earlier structure.⁴⁷³ Because of the many questions that are left unanswered by its publication, all details of this tumulus must be treated with caution.⁴⁷⁴ The context is

⁴⁶⁷ Rambach 2002, 185f.; Rambach 2004, 1214–1217.

⁴⁶⁸ Rambach 2003, 244–246.

⁴⁶⁹ Rambach 2004, 1229–1231.

⁴⁷⁰ Rambach 2004, 1231.

⁴⁷¹ Information from Spyropoulos 1972a; 1972b, 307f.; 1981, 102–112; Forsén 1992, 133f.; Faraklas 1996, 193–205. For the possibility of earlier graves, see Fossey 1988, 203; Faraklas 1996, 205.

⁴⁷² Spyropoulos 1972a, 20; Müller 1989, 19; Agram-Stern 2004, 689.

⁴⁷³ Forsén 1992, 133f.; Müller 1989, 19; see also Agram-Stern 2004, 293f., for further references as well as for views that follow Spyropoulos' original dating (p. 294, n. 329).

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Maran 1998, 230.

nevertheless included in the present study as part of the original group of three, and as a comparison for the interpretation of the other contexts.

- Recently, a large apsidal building was excavated behind the Archaeological museum at *Thebes* (Fig. 36).⁴⁷⁵ In connection with the building, separated from it by a narrow street, and partly surrounding it, were massive three to four metre wide walls/terraces built of stone and mudbrick to a great height. The area also included an outdoor area with pithoi and an open air hearth and could be dated to the late part of EH II (pottery with parallels to the Lefkandi-I complex). The house was not destroyed by fire, but the mudbrick walls were partly demolished and the pieces covered the floor of the house. Set into the destruction layer was the burial (!) of fourteen adults and one child; their bodies were placed sometimes one over the other, and the burials were provided with some grave gifts (pottery of types in line with the floor deposits of the house). The burial, house and monumental wall were thereafter covered by a mudbrick ‘tumulus’, still within the EH II period. Traces of EH III activity are “mostly missing” in the area, but MH graves and later activity destroyed the upper part of the tumulus, making it impossible to determine its size and shape. The minimum area covered by the tumulus was approximately 32 x 14 metres; the shape is thus far unknown.

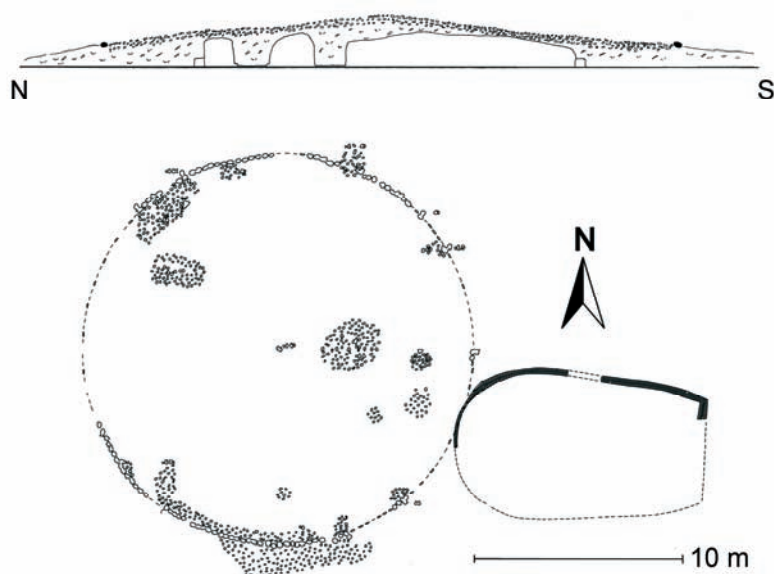


Figure 33. Lerna. Section (above; not to scale) and plan (below) of phase III/IV tumulus and phase VI.1 earlier posthole building (after Wiencke 2000, figs. I.107.b, I.108.a; Rutter 1995, plan 3; both courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

⁴⁷⁵ Aravantinos 2004; and for an analysis of the pottery: Psaraki 2004.

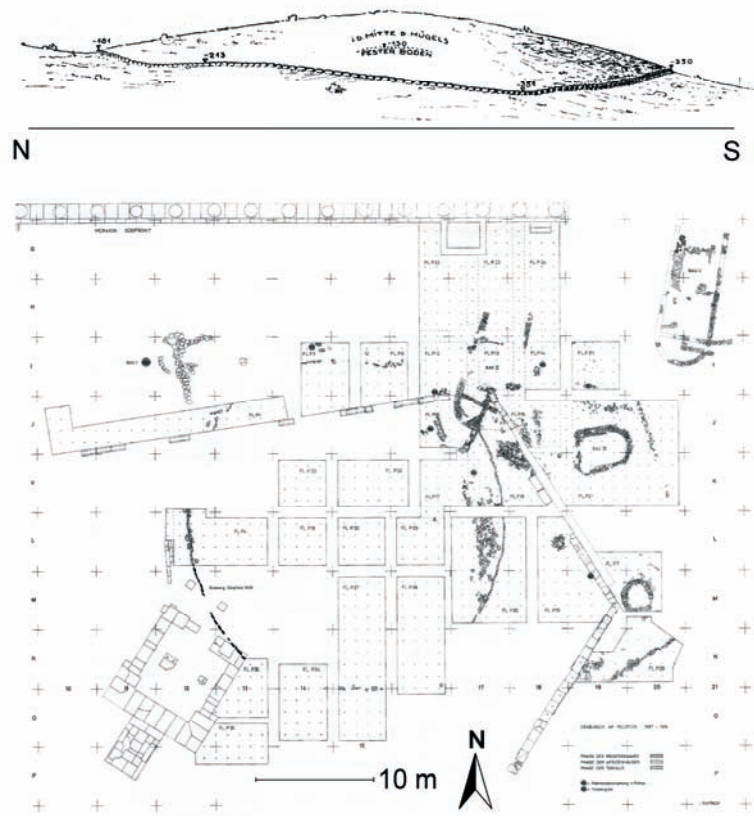


Figure 34. Olympia. Section drawing of view from the west (above, not to scale) and plan (below) of tumulus and other structures (after Rambach 2002, fig. 8; 2004, plate 1).

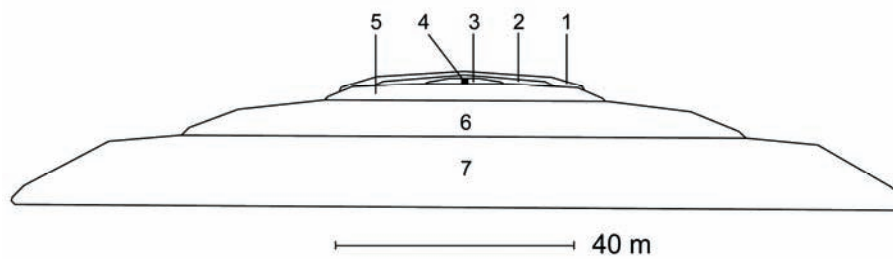


Figure 35. Ampheion hill at Thebes. Schematic section with tumulus: 1. new surface, 2. cover of pottery filled earth, 3. mudbrick tumulus, 4. grave, 5. upper section of the hill, 6. middle section of the hill, 7. lower section of the hill (after Spyropoulos 1981, plan 1).

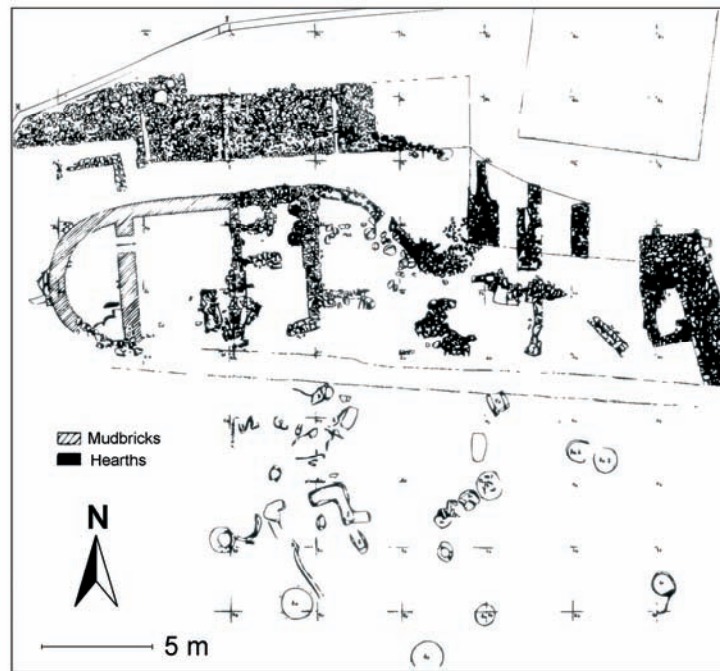


Figure 36. Thebes. Plan of the architectural complex by the Archaeological Museum, including the Early Helladic terrace in the north and east, and apsidal building (after Aravantinos 2004, plate 1a, p. 1263).

Specific and similar?

Based on this information: do we really need to group these monuments together under the term ‘ritual tumuli’? Are there grounds for a grouping in the way we group, for example, the corridor houses—are these phenomena so *specific* and so *similar*?

Let me start with the point of *similarity*. Forsén summarised the similarity: “The tumuli at Lerna, Olympia/the Altis and Thebes are similar in that they are ‘ritual tumuli’”.⁴⁷⁶ The main criterion for this is their non-use for burials, and, in addition, their size.⁴⁷⁷ The first criterion is what now sets them apart from the finds from the Museum plot at Thebes. However, although the burial of no less than fifteen individuals belongs to this context, the tumulus cannot be said to be a burial tumulus to be compared with the contemporary R-tumuli at Steno, Leukas.⁴⁷⁸ At Thebes/Museum the burial was not set into the tumulus but into the house, with the tumulus constructed

⁴⁷⁶ Forsén 1992, 234.

⁴⁷⁷ E.g. Forsén 1992, 31, 234–236.

⁴⁷⁸ For these, see e.g. Müller 1989, 5–16; Maran 1998, 102–105, Alram-Stern 2004, 293, 295.

above it. Despite the burial, the new find has more in common with the ‘ritual tumuli’ than with the burial tumuli, and is therefore a welcome complement to the interpretation of the original three. The sizes of all four certainly set them apart from burial tumuli, since they are at least twice the size of any of the contemporary burial tumuli from Leukas.⁴⁷⁹ They are monumental structures, a label they may share with the known fortifications, the corridor houses and the Tirynthian Rundbau. In terms of expenditure and special measures taken for their construction, the graves from the period should perhaps also be included in this larger group, but the graves we know of were largely below ground, mostly separated from the settlements and located in non-specific terrain.⁴⁸⁰ The fortifications, the corridor houses, the Rundbau and the ‘ritual tumuli’ were highly visible monuments. Although the mounds were not very high, the tumulus over the House of the Tiles perhaps raised only one to one and a half metres above the closest surrounding ground (standing lower than the House of the Tiles itself had once stood),⁴⁸¹ all four were placed on the top of a rise in the landscape and, with their size as well, they were clearly markers of their surroundings—also visible from a distance, as were their monumental contemporaries. Unlike these, however, the mounds were not functional centres: they were not lived in, nor used for defence (if this was the prime use of fortifications), they were not administrative centres (if the corridor houses were that), they were not storage areas, and they were not used for burials—they just *were*. Surely they had a use, but it is a use that we cannot pin down precisely today. Recent excavations at Olympia have yielded evidence to suggest that this tumulus was indeed a focus for activities, including eating, drinking and possible offerings at a point close in time to its construction.⁴⁸² I will return to this below. In this case of the Olympia/Altis tumulus, as with the others, it may nevertheless be that the use of the structures should be seen as partly or largely on a conceptual level, as the result of the sum of their parts: their appearance, their location, and what (if anything) lay below them.

Looking at these parts, the unity of the group fades and (as I would like to see it) ultimately disappears. Lerna and the two examples from Thebes are all constructed from mudbrick. At Lerna the mudbrick came from the destroyed House of the Tiles over which the tumulus was built and, in fact, as argued by Caskey, masses of mudbrick would have needed to be carried away from the site to form the tumulus. The Thebes/Museum tumulus, or tumulus-like cover, was also constructed over a destroyed (demolished) building or architectural complex. It may be that the upper parts of the mudbrick superstructure were used for this purpose, but the walls still stood to

⁴⁷⁹ Diameter of the R-tumuli at Steno range between 2.7 and 9.6 metres (Forsén 1992, 235).

⁴⁸⁰ See further below, *Chapters 6–9*.

⁴⁸¹ Wiencke 2000, 297, fig. I.108.a.

⁴⁸² Rambach 2002; 2003; 2004.

some height (the terrace/wall up to two metres at points), and the size of the area covered suggests that mudbrick needed to have been transported there also. For the Ampheion, no building appears to have once existed at the site and the mudbricks must certainly have been transported there for the purpose of building the tumulus. Also, in this case only the core of the tumulus was mudbrick, and was covered in turn by earth to form a tumulus of the size of the others. This mudbrick and earthen tumulus was constructed on top of the natural Ampheion hill, apparently cut in terraces, which gave it the appearance of a stepped pyramid. The ‘constructors’ of the Olympia/Altis tumulus also made use of a natural rise. In this case, however, the natural elevation was much lower, and the tumulus in essence formed this rise itself.

The similarities between Olympia/Altis and Lerna are often stressed and given prominence over other similarities they all may share. In fact, discounting Thebes/Ampheion, the two (until recently) remaining examples constituted the whole range of ‘ritual tumuli’. So, wherein lay the similarities? The answer must lie in the details: in the fact that they had a stone border, striving for circularity, and that the tumulus within this border had a surface cover of stones. In both instances the stones for the borders seem to have been carefully chosen and placed; round, water-worn stones of approximately 20 cm dimensions laid down in a single line at Lerna, and at Olympia flat, angular stones laid on their edge, one after the other. At Olympia the same stones made up the cover of the mound, while at Lerna smaller, uneven stones and gravel covered the mound. In both instances it appears as though the limits and size of the mounds were also defined by what lay beneath, a circumstance that illustrates a major difference between them. Thus, while the 19-metre-diameter mound at Lerna covered the width (but not the length) of the House of the Tiles, the 27-metre-wide stone border at Olympia encircled the pre-existing rise of a natural mound. In both instances it seems that the stone circles were not placed at the very base of the mounds, but some way up, forming a smaller circle than would have been possible.⁴⁸³ The different histories of the places in which these two mounds were created, in combination with the typological and spatial differences when including the two Theban examples also, is more than enough to cast considerable doubt over their treatment as a group based on similarity.

Thus, let us turn to the *special character* of these ‘ritual tumuli’ that could merit their treatment as a group. What about the stone border and stone cover—are they found in other contexts? What about tumuli over houses and the effort towards circularity? As already noted, overall, as a sum of their parts, these monumental mounds are indeed unique for their period and geographical region, and can superficially be considered as a group. On the level of their parts, however, there are also some parallels within the Early Hellenic period. The lines of stones, carefully chosen and placed one after the

⁴⁸³ For Lerna, see Wiencke 2000, fig. I.108.a.

other, marked the area around mounds at Lerna and Olympia as arguably special in some way. The line of stones set the area spatially apart from its surroundings and drew special attention to its extent. We can see the same manner of spatial separation of a chosen area in the mortuary sphere, where at Tsepi, and also in instances at Aghios Kosmas, single lines of stones form

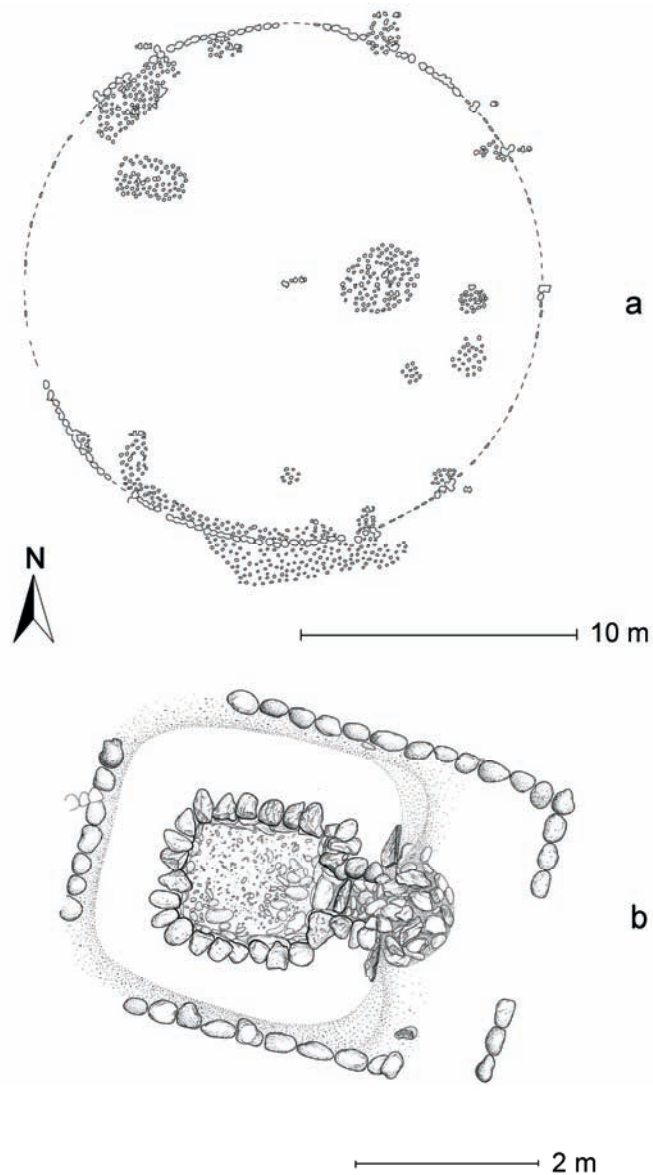


Figure 37. Lerna III/IV tumulus and Tsepi Grave 7 (after Wiencke 2000, I.107.b, courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Pantelidou Gofa 2005, fig. 52, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens).

borders around each grave, *reserving* the ground around each grave (Mylonas' choice of words).⁴⁸⁴ The carefully laid out frames of the graves at Tsepi closely resemble in technique (a line of stones, placed one after the other) as well as material (large round stones) the stone circle at Lerna (*Fig. 37*).

Within the domestic context, the stone covers at Olympia and Lerna, recall the stone pavings of late IIIB–IIIC Lerna as well as, in essence, the later phase IIID yellow clay paving around the House of the Tiles. Both pavings marked the areas they covered as open and set apart from the surrounding buildings. In these examples, as well as the tumuli at Lerna and Olympia, the pavings/covers marked their areas as special, and restricted other use of them. This marking of a 'territory' may be extended to fortifications and houses, although in these instances the structures restrict the view of the bounded space in contrast to the graves and open spaces where the stones add further definition to spaces left in full view.

Something similar?

So what about at the level above these details; do we need to look for origin or prototypes to explain their appearance? To support my negative answer to this question, I will do just that, or rather, I will broaden the view and, with focus on the deliberate and careful erection of circular mounds, look for parallels within Greece but beyond the study area.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, a number of phenomena may be emphasised for their similarity to our tumuli:

- Aghia Sofia, Thessaly, Late Neolithic period:⁴⁸⁶ A 6–8 metre diameter mound was erected above three successively constructed chambers. No burials were found in the mound and it seems as though the goal of the tumulus was to cover the room below it.
- Voidokoilia, Messenia, Middle Helladic period:⁴⁸⁷ An early MH tumulus (A) was erected on a small promontory close to the sea, over the core (central house) of a small EH II settlement. The not completely circular tumulus measured 13.70 x 15.20 metres and was "made of earth and covered by stones, retained by a peribolos". As building material for the tu-

⁴⁸⁴ Mylonas 1959, e.g. 66; Gofa 2005, e.g. 353.

⁴⁸⁵ Although I will limit the present survey of these general parallels to Greece, there are others to be found also outside Greece, e.g. the North European Bronze Age practice of locating burial mounds above long houses, discussed by Bradley (2005, 57–62).

⁴⁸⁶ Forsén 1992, 234f.; Milojevic *et al.* 1976, 6f.

⁴⁸⁷ Korres 1990, esp. 2–5 (Early Helladic period). A possible second tumulus (B) may have been located at the top of a hill some distance away from the promontory and clearly not connected with it (Korres 1990, 6). For an Middle Helladic dating of the Voidokoilia tumulus, as well as the tumulus at Papoulia, Messenia (also built on the remains of an Early Helladic settlement) see Forsén 1992, 100–103, 233f.; Maran 1998, 230; *contra* Müller (1989, 18) who allows for a dating of the two in the EH III period.

mulus, the debris and soil of the Early Helladic settlement was used.⁴⁸⁸ A small tholos tomb was cut into the tumulus during the Mycenaean period.⁴⁸⁹

- Lefkandi, Toumba, Euboea, Early Iron Age (Middle Protogeometric period, c. 1000 BC):⁴⁹⁰ The so called ‘heroon’ was a very large apsidal building, mudbrick on stone socles, approximately 47 metres long, located on the top of a small hill. At one point in time two burial shafts were cut more or less in the middle of the building, within the large central room. One held the remains of a man and a woman, the other a horse. The function of the building is still debated, as also is for how long, if at all, it was in use. Shortly after the burials the house was demolished and above it was constructed a mudbrick and soil tumulus (c. 25 metre wide, 50 metre long, 4 metre high).⁴⁹¹

The first example is a tumulus that Forsén was tempted to see as the prototype for the Early Helladic ‘ritual tumuli’, a suggestion that was rejected by Maran on chronological grounds.⁴⁹² The second example serves as a representative for burial tumuli mostly to be dated to the Middle Helladic period. Construction-wise, these tumuli show some diversity. Some, like the Voidokoilia tumulus, were constructed completely from earth, others had a core of stone and an earthen cover mound (EH II–III R-tumuli at Steno, Leukas, also Olympia/New Museum).⁴⁹³ Many of the burial tumuli had perimeters of specially chosen stones as well as stone covers, as did the Voidokoilia tumulus. Maran brings up the stone border as the only immediate connection to be made between the burial tumuli and the ritual ones.⁴⁹⁴ The building, graves and tumuli at Lefkandi, Toumba are to my knowledge unique for their period, but find a general parallel in the Thebes/Museum complex. A difference lies, however, in the time line; at Thebes, the burials were placed in the destruction layer of the complex below, and for Lefkandi the two shafts belonged to a phase before the demolition of the building.

In a recent article, Whitley has paralleled Lerna and Lefkandi, Toumba in a discussion of cycles of collapse in Greek prehistory. In an effort to do away with “the compartmentalization of ‘Greek prehistory’, and the fact that ‘prehistorians’ lose interest after about 1200 or 1000 BC”, he points to the similarities between the two sites in the monumental building, likely of at least partly public character, that lay below the tumulus, the construction of

⁴⁸⁸ Korres 1990, 6.

⁴⁸⁹ Also Rutter (2001, 133), referring to the uniqueness of this stratified sequence.

⁴⁹⁰ E.g. Popham, Calligas & Sackett (eds) 1993: esp. Coulton 1993, 52–56; Pakkanen & Pakkanen 2000; also Whitley 2004, esp. 197–200.

⁴⁹¹ Coulton 1993, 55, and 55f. for the amount of soil and manpower needed for the construction of the mound.

⁴⁹² Forsén 1992, 234f.; Maran 1998, 230; Alram-Stern 2004, 294f.

⁴⁹³ Müller 1989, 16–18; Forsén 1992, 88f., 235f.

⁴⁹⁴ Maran 1998, 231.

the tumulus and the aspects of social collapse that have been appended to the subsequent periods.⁴⁹⁵ Apart from the lack of a grave in connection with the Lerna tumulus, there are indeed many parallels both in appearance and in the debate concerning the function of the building, the low number of finds and the connected suggestion of the buildings being unfinished when destroyed.⁴⁹⁶ In terms of the tumulus over the building it must, however, be concluded that the lack of a grave at Lerna puts that tumulus in another light than the Toumba tumulus.

At Toumba and Lerna, as well as possibly at Aghia Sofia, the centring of the mound above the older house was clearly deliberate (at Toumba, however, the burials may have been the dominant reason). For the MH burial tumulus at Voidokoilia, as well as its parallels at Papoulia and Routsis,⁴⁹⁷ a definite connection cannot be made between the tumulus and a specific house, although, as centrally placed, the tumulus at Voidokoilia also came to be located above the central and possibly largest of the houses of the small preceding settlement. At these sites it seems to me very likely, however, that although some time had passed, the constructors and burial community of the tumulus had knowledge of the history of the site, and that this could have played a role in deeming the sites as suitable locations for the burial tumuli.

Mounds as markers

As a summary of the above, it can be concluded that on a detailed level there are parallels to be found for the ‘ritual tumuli’ even within the contemporary settlements. Close parallels are found within the context of spatially and functionally reserved areas. Thus, in answer to the question of the potential special character of the ‘ritual tumuli’, an answer may be that the measures and techniques used were not special, but that their ‘contents’ were—special but not specific. I propose that the importance may be not whether there was a grave, or a house, within the tumulus, or nothing at all, but that the same visual language was made use of; a language that emphasised the special position of this area within a larger setting. On the level of the complete structures, the parallels are chronologically and geographically widely dispersed, showing that the building of mounds and the marking of their perimeters are widely dispersed phenomena. The importance of the mound itself should be decided by the use to which it was put in each specific context. In the case of the barrows and the burial tumuli, the mound served as recipient of graves, at Lefkandi, Toumba (as well as at Thebes/Museum) the house served as recipient of the graves, the mound as a cover. The spatially

⁴⁹⁵ Whitley 2004, citation: p. 200.

⁴⁹⁶ The latter two points were not mentioned as parallels by Whitley (2004), but they are interesting and potentially significant from an epistemological and methodological point of view.

⁴⁹⁷ Forsén 1992, 100f. (Papoulia), 105 (Routsis),

discrete mound thus stands out as a geographically and chronologically widely accepted and contextually specific *marker*—its meaning is decided by its context. This appearance of a marker is also retained when no grave was involved. Furthermore, the often complex and varying histories connected with the locations of mounds show that it may be simplifying things by allowing for only one function. As markers, these mounds were powerful instruments for monumentalisation, and thereby visualisation of space as well as of place. This will give them a ‘life’ of their own, both beside and beyond what, *if any*, physical traces of human activity they held and/or covered, whether it was a house or a grave or both.

Considerations of time and space

In light of the above, it is time to leave typology aside and focus on the history of place in relation to these earthen or mudbrick mounds. A focus on history will be a focus also on practice: with the mound as a marker of human practice, both past and present. It is therefore important to devise a full time line of events, including not only the history up to the point when the mounds were erected, but also some period thereafter, when the mounds had gone from being markers of human practice to possibly directing/inspiring practices related to the mound, or even being the focus for them. One obvious similarity between the ‘ritual tumuli’ is that they were set within the limits of a *contemporary* settlement (with the likely exception of Thebes/Ampheion). The fact that they were not only set within or above a domestic context but also, at Olympia and Lerna, *remained* within a space of continued domestic activity gives an important view of both ‘before’ and ‘after’. In reference to the summary of the contexts above, with the addition of some earlier and later details, the result can be illustrated by four contextually specific sequences of varying length depending on available detail:

- Lerna (*Figs. 29–31, 33*): (possibly large unknown building → Building BG) → House of the Tiles → destruction → late EH II *tumulus* → (early EH III gap in activity?) → early EH III ‘Chieftain’s house’ → *EH III apsidal buildings and bothroi* → MH graves → LH I shaft graves and other Early Mycenaean graves.⁴⁹⁸
- Olympia/Altis (*Figs. 34, 38*): natural hillock → mature EH II *tumulus* → EH II ritual activity → early EH III gap in activity → late EH III apsidal buildings and cult complex → MH I rectangular buildings, graves and *pits for clay extraction* → later MH desertion and move to higher ground.

⁴⁹⁸ MH graves: Zerner 1990; LH I graves: Caskey 1955; 1956.

- Thebes/Ampheion (*Fig. 35*): possibly early EH graves → mature (?) EH II *tumulus* and cutting of natural hillock → EH III gap in activity (?) → *MH grave* (?) → LH graves (?).
- Thebes/Museum (*Fig. 36*): earlier activity? → late EH II apsidal building, terrace/wall, open air hearth and storage area: demolition → burial → late EH II *tumulus* → EH III gap in activity → *MH graves* → levelling: LH graves and architectural remains.⁴⁹⁹

The sequences account for the activity in the very area of the tumuli and in the closest vicinity of these areas as they are known from excavations to date. The place of the tumulus in the sequences is marked in italics, as also is the first time after its construction that the actual area of the tumulus was used for other purposes. The sequences hide a number of questions, however, especially regarding the activity intervening between these two points in the sequences. Even though these mounds were set within a contemporary settlement, it seems that activity was withheld from them for some time after their construction. This question how this should be interpreted was raised already by Caskey at the time of the excavation of the Lerna tumulus: “The construction of the tumulus must signify a kind of respect for the House of the Tiles that continued during the years immediately following, when the area within the circle was free of houses.”⁵⁰⁰ Wiencke has recently continued on this line, stating that: “One cannot escape the feeling that subsequent inhabitants, whether or not they were responsible for the destruction, were in awe of the site.”⁵⁰¹

The appreciation of the time passed may not have been of great importance for the Early Helladic users, i.e. the precise amount of time between events marking a linear time line. It may nevertheless say something of the power of oral tradition and the practices related to the monuments. The degree of accuracy with which oral tradition transmitted a tradition is, however, not considered here. Traditions are rather likely to have changed considerably over the time periods involved; they may even have been interrupted for some time. I do not believe our knowledge of the practices by the monuments is complete enough to evaluate this. My focus here has instead been to see, from my point of view as a modern analyst, how practices in the vicinity of the tumuli developed over time, and how the tumuli may have played a role in these practices.

⁴⁹⁹ For the later activity: Aravantinos 2004, 1256; Psaraki 2004, 1259.

⁵⁰⁰ Caskey 1956, 165.

⁵⁰¹ Wiencke 2000, 297.

Lerna

At the point in time of its construction, and some time thereafter, the mound must have been a clear marker of the area, rising about 1.5 metres over a largely unoccupied area of the settlement. The construction was in itself a considerable effort that included clearing away a lot of debris (including the debris that was transported away to achieve the shape of the mound), transporting stones to the site (apparently unused stones for the circle were found in several places)⁵⁰², and ultimately the accomplishment of the final appearance of the mound with stone circle and stone cover. These practices would have required both time and effort. For some years thereafter, the only structure in the area was a posthole building, an ephemeral construction in stark contrast to the mudbrick on stone socle structures that came before and after. Caskey estimated the use phase of this house to “only a year or two; possibly ten or fifteen years; probably not much longer.”⁵⁰³ How much time passed between the erection of the tumulus and the construction of this house? Here we have two views to consider. On the one side we have Maran who, on the basis of pottery sequences and stratification at Tiryns, has concluded that the part of the settlement thus far excavated at Lerna following the construction of the tumulus stood unoccupied for “eine Zeitlang.”⁵⁰⁴ On the other hand, Rutter rejects any suggestion of hiatus at Lerna during this period and refers the differences in the pottery assemblage to local preferences and differing circumstances for the EH II–III transition.⁵⁰⁵

Thus we cannot say with certainty either how much time passed between the destruction of the House of the Tiles and the formation of the tumulus above it, or how much time passed between the latter and the first house. Although a more exact time frame would be preferable, I think the conclusion must nevertheless be that it was not many years; perhaps it was even a continuous sequence. It is perhaps unlikely that the creation of tumulus was a finished idea at the point of the destruction of the House of the Tiles. It may have been, however, if the destruction was deliberate and the tumulus was the planned finale of that sequence of events.⁵⁰⁶ Thereafter, the fact that the apse of the first apsidal building “touched the border of the tumulus without encroaching upon it”,⁵⁰⁷ suggests that the stone circle was clearly visible at the time. Caskey could not discern any stratigraphical differences

⁵⁰² Wiencke 2000, 285.

⁵⁰³ Caskey 1966, 146.

⁵⁰⁴ Maran 1998, 176.

⁵⁰⁵ Rutter 1995, 645–647; 2001, 114–116.

⁵⁰⁶ A ritual burning, unconnected with any hostile invaders, was suggested by Weisshaar (1983, 354), a suggestion that was rejected by Forsén (1992, 33) on the basis that we do not know what other destructions may have happened at this point in time in unexcavated areas of the settlement. This is a very important argument for our general view of Lerna but it does not eliminate the possibility that the House of the Tiles was still deliberately destroyed by non-hostiles.

⁵⁰⁷ Caskey 1966, 145.

between the three houses of his phase A of the EH III period (houses A1–3), of which one (A3) was published by Wiencke as either contemporary or slightly earlier than the House of the Tiles, and the other noted by Banks as belonging to structures of the later phase IV.1.⁵⁰⁸ The transitory nature of the house, in contrast to earlier and later architectural customs, is also an indication of the little time between idea and realisation of that idea, as well, perhaps, as a need for speedy construction. This first house seems certainly to have been somehow connected with the tumulus, the spatial connection seems highly deliberate, and it is possible that we should consider that the house even had a function in relation to the tumulus. If the constructors of the house were newcomers to the area, as argued by Caskey,⁵⁰⁹ the location of the first (known) house abutting the tumulus may have been seen as a clear statement of superiority and new order, and the house may very well live up to its nickname as ‘the Chieftain’s house’. If on the other hand, the house should be placed within a more or less continuous sequence, perhaps we are looking at a structure to be connected with the keeping, protection or even veneration of the tumulus and that which it symbolised?

Caskey estimated that the time that the area of the actual mound was free of houses was at least two or three generations.⁵¹⁰ Before any houses were actually built fully on the mound, however, bothroi were cut into the mound,⁵¹¹ and the houses, or the apses of the houses succeeding the first posthole building, began to back up to and probably over the stone circle of the tumulus. Furthermore, in the first EH III phases it seems that the houses were constructed with their apses towards the tumulus, while from at least phase IV.2 late this pattern was relaxed and some were also aligned and opened up towards the tumulus, suggesting the activity areas in front of the houses must have included the tumulus area even if the house walls did not.⁵¹² In relative terms it was first in late phase IV.3 that a house was erected fully on the area of the tumulus. In absolute years, this must have meant a time span of around one hundred years from the erection of the tumulus.⁵¹³ A number of houses built on the stone socles of earlier houses, a number of renewed floors, and a general use of the area must during this time have considerably raised the floor level of the area east of the tumulus. As at Olympia, although for other reasons, the stone circle is likely to have disappeared under the continuously accumulated debris, maybe even at an early

⁵⁰⁸ Caskey 1966, 147; Wiencke 2000, house 113; Banks in Rutter 1995, pl. III.

⁵⁰⁹ Caskey 1966, 144f.

⁵¹⁰ Caskey 1956, 165.

⁵¹¹ Caskey 1955, 165; Forsén 1992, 36; Wiencke 2000, pl. 32. For the final date of these bothroi, we must, however, await the publication of Elizabeth Banks’ study of the architecture of Lerna IV. The trenches covering the actual tumulus are not included in Rutter’s analysis of the Lerna IV pottery (Rutter 1995).

⁵¹² See, Banks in Rutter 1995, plans 4–5.

⁵¹³ See, Rutter 1995, 641, for an estimate of the number of years the different phases within Lerna IV may have lasted.

date. The surface of the tumulus must also have begun to deteriorate, as suggested by patches of the stone cover found immediately above the stone circle both in the south and the north.⁵¹⁴ The slow shifting of building activities in the direction of the tumulus likely reflects to some degree this rise in ground level.⁵¹⁵

As a comparison to the +6.50 m,⁵¹⁶ estimated as the top level of the original tumulus, the floor level of the posthole building lay at +5.03 to +5.10 m, the floor levels from roughly the same area in the succeeding IV.2 phase lay at around +5.30 m, and in the IV.3 phase from levels of +5.56 m to a high of +6.25 m. The latter measurement is the level of the latest floor of the house immediately next to, but outside, the original stone circle of the tumulus.⁵¹⁷ We can only speculate as to how this may have affected the choices made by the builders of the apsidal buildings in relation to the original stone circle, but when house D2 (Caskey's designation)⁵¹⁸, next to the house with the +6.25 floor level, became the first house to fully 'breach' the stone circle, the rise of the tumulus was no more, at least not as seen from beyond its eastern section. Clearly, a stone clad mound standing maybe 1.5 metres above the surrounding ground level would not have tempted the builders at an early stage, whether or not the destruction debris within the tumulus was also considered an unfavourable foundation for house building.⁵¹⁹ As the ground level rose, however, the set apart character of the mound would have diminished. Moreover, one single house may perhaps have helped to pinpoint the tumulus, but the increasing number of houses, standing close together, in combination with the rise in floor levels, must have very much lessened the impact of the tumulus.

Thus, after the time of the first house, any 'reverence' in the form of spatial reservation of the area of the tumulus cannot be confirmed. The mound would have continued for some time to be a marker of the area and, as such, a likely focus for at least oral tradition as a visual preservation of the historicity of the site, but this need not have greatly restricted other activity in the area.

The tumulus at Lerna and its early analysis has been of considerable importance for many areas within Early Helladic discourse, and has played a leading role in the attribution and analysis of other 'ritual tumuli'. As such, another lengthy analysis in a series of analyses of this tumulus was merited to highlight certain points, but it is now time to move on to the next three sequences as laid out above.

⁵¹⁴ Wiencke 2000, 284, fig. I.101.

⁵¹⁵ Cf. Nilsson 2004, 102.

⁵¹⁶ The elevations are given here as in the Lerna publication, with '+' marking the elevation above a fixed point, equivalent to the mean ground-water level (Wiencke 2000, 8).

⁵¹⁷ Banks in Rutter 1995, 4–9.

⁵¹⁸ Caskey 1966, 149f.

⁵¹⁹ Maran 1998, 177.

Thebes

In the other three cases, the EH III occupation in the area of the mounds seems to be much more ‘straightforward’: either EH III activity is more or less non-existent, or it begins much later and is clearly separated from the EH II levels of use. The sequence for Thebes/Ampheion is nevertheless still very uncertain and will probably remain so. Because of the many questions left open by its publications, anything that is said about this context needs to be followed by a question-mark on some points. The scholarly opinion seems to accept an EH II date of the tumulus, and many favour a MH or early Mycenaean date for the grave within it.⁵²⁰ Traces of EH III activity, however, may be present in the sherd material, but this has left no architectural traces. In general, structures of any prehistoric period appear to be mortuary, except for the original tumulus (?), as pits in the bedrock below the tumulus may be graves of EH I or early EH II date.⁵²¹

A few sherds of EH III date are noted for the area Thebes/Museum,⁵²² but this tumulus seems in essence to have sealed not only the architectural complex below it but also Early Helladic activity in the area. The missing EH III activity in the area may mean that activity there was deliberately limited, perhaps over the whole hill on which it stood. Later activity has destroyed evidence of the full extent of the tumulus, its edges, any cover and marked border it may have had,⁵²³ and later excavation may reveal EH III activity close by. Until then, we may visualise the tumulus as a large mudbrick mound, standing at least two metres (as this is as high as some stretches of the monumental terrace/wall have been preserved)⁵²⁴ above the surrounding ground, on top of a hill, covering and preserving the memory, perhaps, of the monumental constructions, and burials, below. It was likely a very visual monument that would have found a match in the (somewhat earlier?) tumulus on the adjacent Ampheion hill.⁵²⁵ Since even the Early Helladic date for the Ampheion tumulus cannot be definitely confirmed, however, neither can this visual connection. Thus, it is better not to go into a discussion of what the superficial likenesses in material and location may have meant.

⁵²⁰ E.g. Forsén 1992, 133f., 232f.; Rambach 2003, 243.

⁵²¹ Fossey (1988, 203) noted that the tomb of Ampheion may have covered up an EH I cemetery, “the only *clear* indication yet of the occupation at Thebes for that phase” (original emphasis). Faraklas most recently also mentions a possibly earlier, possible burial activity at the site of the later tumulus (Faraklas 1996, 205).

⁵²² Psaraki 2004, 1259f.

⁵²³ Aravantinos 2004, 1259.

⁵²⁴ Aravantinos 2004, 1258.

⁵²⁵ The potentially symbolically potent and highly visual location of that tumulus was noted recently by Nilsson (2004, 127, 130): “Separated from the settlement, it was a conspicuous sight to the north. It is monumental and, yet, with all the labour that must have been put into it, it appears to be of no use. Then, the only explanation is that it was either a memorial monument or a place of worship and ritual, or possibly a combination of both.”

Olympia

In contrast to Lerna and Thebes (with the possible exception perhaps of Thebes/Ampheion), the tumulus erected on a small rise on a ridge running from the Kronos mountain at Olympian Aspis marked the *beginning* of activity in the area as we know it. In fact, the tumulus is the thus far the oldest structure from Olympia as a whole.⁵²⁶ Sherd material, however, also includes material of Final Neolithic and EH I date.⁵²⁷ As far as we can tell, the formation of the tumulus *created* a focus for perception and for activity in this area. It may be hypothesised that the fact that the choice fell on this particular rise was likely not a ‘spur of the moment’ decision, considering the amount of effort put into its formation: it may instead have been somehow grounded in an earlier history that has left no traces, it may have been a purely oral one, or the choice may also have been grounded on the fact that this particular rise conformed to certain criteria that were favourable for the role it would later play.

EH II pottery, but so far no definite structures, has been excavated at several places at various distances from the Pelopion, suggesting that the tumulus was in no way isolated but rather within an area already extensively settled in EH II.⁵²⁸ Pottery and other finds collected in the closest vicinity of the tumulus suggest not purely domestic activity but, as proposed recently by Jörg Rambach, come together in an assemblage that may shed light on the activity for which the tumulus was created. Thus, the material collected in trench P 20 at the eastern limits of the tumulus (a large percentage of fine open vessels including many sauceboats, a number of obsidian blades and a large number of land snails and mussels) is, I find, convincingly presented as the possible remnants of feasting activity focused on the tumulus; as suggested, it is the result of occasions when snails and mussels were eaten and offered in a seasonal fertility ritual.⁵²⁹ I will come back to this assemblage later on, and the discussion in *Chapter 9* will show that this assemblage has many similarities with assemblages in some Early Helladic mortuary contexts under consideration in that chapter.

This activity, including drinking vessels and land snails, seems to have been directly connected with the establishment of the tumulus within EH II. At the end of this Early Helladic period the area was affected by floodings from the nearby river. A thick alluvial clay layer put an end to EH II activity and the next use phase is datable to late EH III.⁵³⁰ In the earlier half of the

⁵²⁶ Rambach 2004, 1217.

⁵²⁷ Rambach 2002, 181f.

⁵²⁸ Rambach 2002, 187f., Rambach 2003, 229–232, fig. 4: Prytaneion (less than 100 metres to the N), N and NE of the stadium (from 200 metres to the east), the site of the New Museum (450 metres to the north), and the site of Trani Lakka some 700 metres to the north.

⁵²⁹ Rambach 2003, 243–246.

⁵³⁰ The dating of the apsidal buildings by the tumulus is discussed in Rambach 2001. *Contra* Rutter 1995, 644; Maran 1998, 18–23.

period, activity may have been concentrated in the area of the New Museum.⁵³¹ When people returned to the tumulus it was apparently to live, and to continue the tradition of specialised activity directed at the tumulus. In this later phase, however, the practices were enacted within a formalised ‘temenos’ (Fig. 38): a physically demarcated area (stone wall or stone based fence or bank), a house with opening directed at the centre of the tumulus, a probable in-built stone well, deposits of whole vases and large patches of ash and burning.⁵³² Furthermore, a sort of platform and a line of stones were erected at the then base of the tumulus (whose circumference had shrunk with the flood-raised ground), and by its side was found a miniature bronze axe.⁵³³

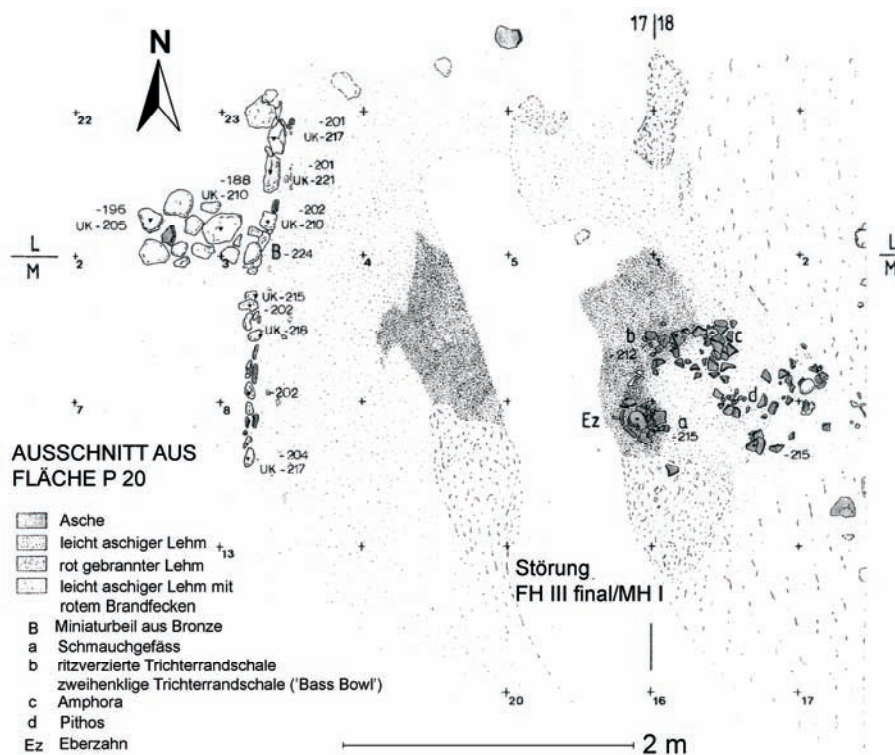


Figure 38. Olympia, Pelopion excavation, EH III. Arrangement of stones and find contexts by the eastern EH III limit of the EH II tumulus, cf. Fig. 34 (after Rambach 2002, fig. 22).

⁵³¹ Rambach 2001.

⁵³² Rambach 2002, 194–198.

⁵³³ Rambach 2002, esp. 194, fig. 25.

Rambach presents a convincing interpretation of this area as a formalised cult place focused on the tumulus. The tumulus was probably not the visual marker it once was, at least not judging by the difference in height. The centre of the tumulus then rose probably a little over a metre from the ground level in the area of the cult place at the eastern foot of the mound, in contrast to the 1.9 metres in the same area at the time of the formation of the tumulus.⁵³⁴ A connection between EH II and EH III activity cannot, of course, be confirmed, but the special role of the tumulus seems at least in essence to have been the same, despite the changes it may have undergone in the intervening time. Rambach emphasises the strong presence of pottery influences from the Balkan Cetina culture, and that breadth of these parallels must signify an actual and significant presence of people from these areas at EH III Olympia.⁵³⁵ By extension, he hints at the possible influence that the custom of burial tumuli in the Cetina culture may have had on the choice of the area of the EH II tumulus for habitation as well as for cult directed at the tumulus in this late EH III period.⁵³⁶

Habitation in the area continued into the early Middle Helladic period. At this time, or possibly a little earlier, the large pits, apparently for clay extraction, were dug into the tumulus, signalling according to Rambach that the people of the community had lost their respect for the tumulus.⁵³⁷ Some MH II–III sherds have been found, but habitation appears to have moved some two hundred metres to higher ground, perhaps on account of the danger of floods.⁵³⁸ I do not believe that the pits, nor the move, necessarily mean that the tumulus had lost its standing in the minds of the people living next to it. That the late EH III apsidal buildings and cult place were erected where they were, despite the apparent danger of flooding, suggests some determination and ‘target-orientation’ on the part of their inhabitants. The move may, but need not, mean that this mindset had weakened, or that the history of the tumulus had lost its place within it.

⁵³⁴ Rambach 2002, 185. The *minimum* height of the centre of the tumulus is set to –100, i.e. centimetres below modern ground level (Rambach 2002, 185), and the ancient ground level measurement by the *in situ* broken vases is given as –215 (Rambach 2002, fig. 22), which would result in an altitude difference of 1.15 metres.

⁵³⁵ Rambach 2002, 193. These parallels have also been emphasised and analysed by many others and most extensively by Maran (1998) in relation to a trade route along the whole coastline of the Ionian and Adriatic Seas, and their role in the ‘Kulturwandel’ of late Early Helladic Greece.

⁵³⁶ Rambach 2002, 194. He does not rule out the possibility of the presence of graves at this time on the top of the tumulus, of which no traces now remain.

⁵³⁷ Rambach 2002, 198

⁵³⁸ Rambach 2003, 187. The candidates for a MH II–III settlement phase are the SE slopes of the Kronos mountain and a smaller hill at the other, northeastern end, of the Stadium.

The importance of context

On the whole, the history of the tumulus under the Pelopion appears quite different to the other three examples. As at Lerna there was considerable activity in the EH III period, but at Olympia there seems to be no doubt that the tumulus played an active part in forming the practices in the area. In contrast, at Lerna it seems as though this active role of the tumulus may have been circumscribed from an early time, even if its history may have been kept alive. At the Museum plot in Thebes, like at Lerna, the tumulus put a stop to EH II activity in the area, but in the former location, activity appears to have been suspended until the Middle Helladic period. It is noteworthy that at both Theban examples the activity in this period consisted of burials, apparently not accompanied by habitation. This was also true at Lerna, but after an EH III habitation phase and with habitation close by.⁵³⁹ Also at Olympia a number of MH graves were noted, but they were mostly pithos burials of children and were set among the houses and not apparently into the actual tumulus.⁵⁴⁰

I will not venture a suggestion at this point as to what may lie behind the choice of location for the MH burials, but both Theban locations were well defined visual markers set apart from the main Kadmeia, and the MH burials at this location at Lerna occupied the top of the mostly artificial settlement mound. The differences in the histories of the tumuli after their formation may to some degree be found in their topographical location in their closest surrounding locality. The build up of the mound at Lerna, along with the excavation to date, show that the resulting hillock had been the focus of activity in its locality possibly since Late Neolithic times. At Thebes and Olympia, Early Helladic as well as Middle Helladic activity has been found widely dispersed, partly as a result of being sites much more extensively investigated, but, their topographies are also more varied and comprise a larger diversity of topographically defined areas for settlement and other activities.⁵⁴¹

A marked difference remains, between the tumuli at Lerna and Thebes/Museum on the one hand, and the Olympia tumulus (and possibly Thebes/Ampheion) on the other, and that lies in the apparent reason for their formation. This fact runs parallel to their history after this initial choice to mark out these specific spots in the landscape. What lay behind this choice and how can we interpret their meaning?

⁵³⁹ Milka, forthcoming.

⁵⁴⁰ Rambach 2002, 198.

⁵⁴¹ For generals on Thebes and Olympia, see e.g. Symenoglou 1985 and Rambach 2003, respectively.

Focusing attention: creation of memory?

In relation to the practices considered in the preceding chapter, the formation of the tumuli appears to a greater and perhaps more ‘official’ degree as deliberate actions to make a visible statement in relation to a past. The tumuli are few and would have been conspicuous in their respective settlements for some time at least; they were large and located on high ground. I would say, therefore, that the tumuli may also be seen as deliberate actions to create and make visible a *memory* of the past. The shape of the mound, the means that were taken to mark the chosen spots should, I think, be seen as independent of what actually existed, or not, within and below them. As we have seen, the chosen means to this end are not specific in themselves but find parallels in many contexts and times. On a small scale, the details can be found within the marking out a selected space as somehow special and restricting other use of it. On a large scale, in the creation of mostly artificial mounds the parallels come largely from the mortuary sphere.

The Early Helladic tumuli were neither as large, nor their impact on history as great as some later examples (e.g. the burial and memorial mound formed after the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC), but they were quite elaborate and they did influence the activities in their surroundings for some time thereafter. Coupled with this space- and practice-directing influence, we must also include their potential roles in the oral traditions of the communities by and within which they were set. In Olympia the full time scale may have been in the region of four to five hundred years. If the two phases of use in this particular place should be seen as somehow connected (its special standing not necessarily translated to cult continuity *per se* and thus given a similar meaning), it hints at an oral tradition of considerable force including this once natural hillock. At Thebes, the two tumuli may have been visual markers in their original shape for a duration of at least the EH III (lasting 100–200 years), enough even to suspend activity possibly well into the Middle Helladic period (another perhaps 300 years). How they were then perceived, if at all as human constructions and/or in any way special, we can only guess. The timeframe at Lerna appears to have been much more limited, but a generation may have passed between the construction of the tumulus and the first of many solid stone socle houses.

We cannot today say how long these tumuli did actually live on in the memory of the people living in their vicinity, and how these memories may have appeared and changed through time. Furthermore, I believe that this consideration must be seen as detached from the *intentions* of the constructors of these monuments. I believe also that when these specific monuments were erected, something very specific was marked, especially so if something is below and apparently connected in time with the monument. It may, however, also have been a recognition of some unspecified ‘past’. The intentions at the time of construction may be connected with commemoration of

some sort. In the cases of Lerna and Olympia at least, the perimeters were carefully arranged and marked, signalling that the areas of the tumuli were supposed to be respected. The suspension of activities from all four contexts, appears to be a further indication of some rules of engagement in relation to the tumuli. These do not necessitate the application of a positive value, nor a negative one. Suspension of activities, for example, may be regarded as a result of reverence or of safety precautions, or perhaps both, building on a memory or knowledge of what the tumuli symbolised at any given moment after their formation. From the present evidence, we can nevertheless assume that these types of monumental measures were only utilised in exceptional cases.

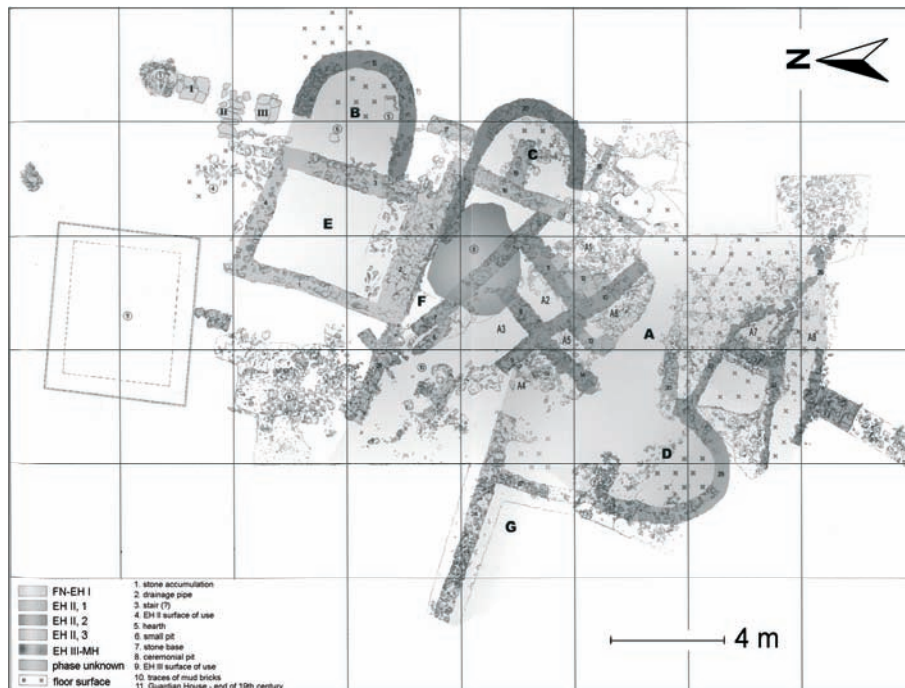


Figure 39. Apollo Maleatas, Epidauros. Plan of excavated Final Neolithic to Early/Middle Helladic structures: EH I graves marked with Roman numerals (top left); EH II, 1: building A; EH II, 2: apsidal buildings B–D; EH II, 3: rectangular buildings E–G; and the filled circular area in the middle is the EH III/MH ceremonial pit, set into earlier structures (after Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, plate 1).

Towards the other end of the scale of monumentality we may perhaps place the findings from the area of the later sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas near Epidauros in the Argolid (*Fig. 39*).⁵⁴² Anthi Theodorou-Mavrommatidi has recently published in preliminary form a context of finds that may prove to

⁵⁴² Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, esp. 1178–1180.

be the remains of EH III/MH ritual activity on the site of an EH II settlement on top of the Kynortion Mountain. Habitation at the site reached back to Final Neolithic, continued through EH I, and ended in EH II. No structures could be attributed to the succeeding EH III phase, but a large pit (3 x 4 x 0.8 metres) appears to have been dug within the wall of the abandoned EH II buildings, destroying walls of earlier phases but remaining within those of the most immediately preceding House F. The finds from the pit are only summarily presented, but the pit represents a stratified deposit including finds of both EH III and Middle Helladic date, also including remnants of burning, clay objects and animal bones. The excavator concludes that the pit is the likely remains of a ceremonial deposit, a remnant of periodical visits to the abandoned settlement. Perhaps the pit and an as yet unstudied activity surface nearby will prove to be remains of an early cult place, grounded in, and perhaps directed towards, the memory of the earlier settlement.

If this example illustrates a case when the memory of human activity connected to a certain place is utilised in a later period for ritual purposes, the tumuli actively preserved the past and laid the grounds for remembrance while being constructed. What may be specifically marked and perhaps commemorated in this way: events, persons, structures or a more unspecified past? Even if only four examples, there is a clear distinction to be made between the two groups of two. In the case of Thebes/Museum and Lerna, the focus appears to be the structures below, or anything connected with them. In the other two contexts, the intention appears rather to be the creation of a focus, as the archaeological material gives no other obvious clues for the reasons behind their formation. Two related but still different scenarios. In a longer perspective on time, the two appear to have resulted in similar practices in relation to the mounds but, considering the time of inception, the stories appear to diverge and will therefore be considered separately below.

The search for culprits

I think it is difficult to escape the notion that the tumuli at Lerna and Thebes/Museum did in fact preserve in some way the memory of the buildings or structures below, or an important event connected with these structures. At Thebes/Museum, however, the picture is further nuanced by the presence of burials in the destruction debris. What was really marked by these two tumuli? Was it the building itself, the idea of the building, the way it was destroyed, the activities that took place within it, the people that used it or was the building chosen as the symbol of something else?⁵⁴³

Tringham has recently emphasised the potential power resting in the last days of buildings in preserving or creating memory.⁵⁴⁴ Fire, or the destruc-

⁵⁴³ Cf. Wiencke 2000, 297.

⁵⁴⁴ Tringham 2005.

tion in itself, may for example be the prime stimulus to preservation or creation of memory. In this scenario, and in the case of Lerna and Thebes/Museum, the tumuli may be seen as primarily the markers of this act, and of the house only secondarily. The event in itself would have the power to bind people together in the memory of the event, closely coupled to place in which the event took place.⁵⁴⁵ As noted by Tringham: “[i]n a fire, all senses are brought to life.”⁵⁴⁶ This is certainly a sentiment that provides a powerful background when considering the impact of the experience of the intense fire that brought the end of the House of the Tiles at Lerna. As a further nuance to this are the possibility of practices such as *domicide* and *domithanasia*. *Domicide* as the killing of houses is not a new concept, but is complemented by Tringham with the new term *domithanasia* to emphasise the potentially ‘friendly’ intentions of fires, fires set by the inhabitants or by friends or agents of the inhabitants, because the time for that house had come.⁵⁴⁷

Caskey saw the violent destruction of the House of the Tiles as the work of foreign invaders and that these newcomers erected the tumulus as a signal of either “veneration or of execration” as in the introductory citation above.⁵⁴⁸ This influential interpretation has inspired the heading for this section. Destruction by foreign invaders sets the scene for the search for culprits, and for the contention that the destruction of the house was against the will of the former users of the destroyed structure, whether the fire was intentional or accidental. But is it really culprits for whom we should look? The House of the Tiles was destroyed by fire; how violent and how much the large spread of the debris was caused by the subsequent cleaning of the area is unclear. The House of the Tiles was not followed by a new corridor house, unlike the way in which it itself was erected arguably as the successor of the older Building BG. As far as we know, the corridor house as a phenomenon was not continued into the EH III period at any settlement. As have already been noted, the House of the Tiles yielded few finds, except for the deposit of sealings, and what, if anything, they may have sealed.⁵⁴⁹ One interpretation of the paucity of finds has been that the building was cleared out before its destruction.⁵⁵⁰ If so, the cause may have been robbery by intruders, but it could also be the clearing of the building by its users. Despite its recent and meticulous publication, the context of the House of the Tiles leaves many questions open, and the material leaves room for many alternatives for its

⁵⁴⁵ Tringham 2005, 106–108.

⁵⁴⁶ Tringham 2005, 107.

⁵⁴⁷ Tringham 2005, 117.

⁵⁴⁸ Caskey 1956, 165; 1966, 144f.

⁵⁴⁹ See Nilsson (2004, 82–102, and tables 5–7), for a thorough survey of both the contents and earlier interpretations of the building. See also *Chapters 2 and 3*.

⁵⁵⁰ Caskey 1960, 293; Wiencke 2000, 301 Pullen suggested one further interpretation in which the building may have been undergoing repairs with much of the possessions of the occupants stored in Room 11, where the sealing deposit was found (Pullen 1985, 252).

interpretation. Was the destruction so violent that it needed to have been actively maintained?⁵⁵¹ One alternative is that the House of the Tiles was deliberately burned down and the spot marked by a tumulus as a memorial of its function, its central position within the society and as a marker of things that had been but were no more.⁵⁵² If the fire was unintentional, the motive for the tumulus may still have been similar. Whatever alternative is chosen, the location of the building and of the later monument, more or less on the top of the hill, is surely significant.

At Thebes, the apsidal building, and the monumental terrace/wall, was not, unlike many other buildings in the late EH II period at Thebes, destroyed by fire. Instead they seem to have been demolished; a fact that at first glance suggests a greater degree of intentionality than does destruction by fire. Little is yet known about this architectural complex and especially of the connection within the structures–burials–tumulus sequence. The time scale for the whole sequence seems to be within late EH II, the same type of pottery was found in the floor level of the house and as grave goods in the burials. The limited spatial distribution and the internal relationships between the skeletons in turn give the appearance of a mass burial. If considering the whole sequence of events, the connection between the dead and the buildings seems to me to be clearly indicated, and we may ask if these individuals were not intimately connected with the buildings, and also if their deaths were not intimately connected with the ‘death’ of the building complex. If the demolition was deliberate, the death of the buried individuals may even have been the cause for the destruction and for the ceasing of activity in the area, as well as for the tumulus that so effectively sealed it that scarcely no digging and building activity in the later prehistoric periods breached the massive mud brick layer over the burials and habitation layers below.⁵⁵³

As has been argued by Maran, a new population group may take over a settlement without leaving many traces in the archaeological record,⁵⁵⁴ and, conversely, I believe it can be argued that evidence of widespread violent destruction may be present within an unthreatened, coherent community. Perhaps it is too simplistic, but if the destructions and demolitions at Lerna and at Thebes were deliberate, it seems more likely that the people that engineered the end of the buildings were somehow connected with their former use (whether intruders were approaching or not). If, as Caskey suggested for Lerna, the people who caused the end of the buildings were newcomers, and if the buildings were in good order (which they seem to have been), there seems to be less reason to destroy what could still be used. One reason

⁵⁵¹ See Stevanović 1997 for the deliberate burning of buildings, as well as the discussion in *Chapter 3*.

⁵⁵² Cf. Wiencke 2000, 297f.; Nilsson 2004, 102.

⁵⁵³ Psaraki 2004, 1259.

⁵⁵⁴ Maran 1998, 456 (in relation to the question of ‘the coming of the Greeks’).

would be to make a symbolic statement, but this could equally be achieved by continued use. If, on the other hand, the destruction of the house was unintentional, whether by locals, newcomers or other force, the locals seem to be more likely inclined to mark the spot of the accident, while newcomers instead would seem more likely inclined to level and build anew.

All in all, I myself am more inclined to regard these tumuli as monuments built by the people who once used the buildings, whether their destructions were deliberate or accidental.⁵⁵⁵ Although this can never be more than a hypothesis, I am also more inclined on the present evidence to extend my suggestion and regard the destructions as deliberate, an act for which the rationale, however, may have been different, and for which there are many alternatives. If interpreted in this way, the destruction of the buildings, and the tumuli above them, may not only have signalled the death of the house, the people and/or society it was connected with, as cautiously suggested by Wiencke,⁵⁵⁶ but also an act of deliberate *killing* of the building, because, perhaps, of its connection with the people and the society.

In terms of the creation of memory, I believe it is very likely that the manner of destruction was an important part in the formation of the tumuli thereafter. The tumuli would in this scenario be a preservation of the memory of what lay below, but also the creation of a memory of a specific event or events which may be the destruction and/or the formation of the tumulus itself. For Thebes/Museum the dead may have been leading characters in the events and part of the reason for the demolition as well as the tumulus cover formed thereafter.

The power of monuments?

Turning to Olympia and to Thebes/Ampheion, the same line of argument clearly cannot be used. In these cases the tumuli appear to have been built over nothing. The real power of monuments is perhaps just that; that they can be a tool in the creation of history from nothing. However, since very little comes from nothing I will not leave the discussion at that.

Spyropoulos viewed the builders of the Ampheion tumulus as Egyptians building on an Egyptian prototype, and drew parallels with the stepped pyramid of the Pharaoh Djoser of the fourth dynasty Old Kingdom Egypt (c. 2600 BC).⁵⁵⁷ The proposition has been widely and thoroughly rejected.⁵⁵⁸ Other proposals have also been concerned with the tumulus as the creation of a home away from home by connecting it with the 'Kurgan tradition'.⁵⁵⁹ A similar inspiration seems to lie behind the proposed connection between the

⁵⁵⁵ Also Forsén 1992, 36.

⁵⁵⁶ Wiencke 2000, 297.

⁵⁵⁷ Spyropoulos 1972a; 1981.

⁵⁵⁸ E.g. Faraklas 1996, 194.

⁵⁵⁹ As mentioned by Forsén 1992, 134.

Cetina culture custom of burial tumuli and the motivation behind the Cetina culture influenced apsidal houses by the EH II tumulus and the establishment of the cult complex there.⁵⁶⁰ As an interesting aside, the so called ‘kurgans’ barrows of mid Late Copper Age Hungary (c. 2800 cal BC), have in turn in their own regional context been suggested to be signalling the presence of Pontic newcomers to the region. An alternative proposal has in this case been to see them as a means to deliberately connect with the ancestral values of earlier tell societies by imitating the shape of the tell (from which they are apparently very difficult to distinguish in the modern landscape).⁵⁶¹

Following Rambach’s new dating of the Altis apsidal houses to the second half of the EH III period, at the point in time of the EH III activity by the Pelopion tumulus an actual burial tumulus in the area of the New Museum would already have existed. This tumulus, displaying many similarities with the R-tumuli at Leukas, has been paralleled with Lerna phases IV.1–2 and thus with the first half of the EH III period.⁵⁶² The Cetina culture influence of the pottery exist in the Altis area but also by the New Museum and may perhaps be seen also in the New Museum burial tumulus based on the similarities with the R-tumuli and the common interpretation of these grave monuments.⁵⁶³ There are obviously questions that still need answers regarding the relative chronological relationships within EH III Olympia, and the answers will surely prove interesting for future interpretation of the formation, use and re-use of the Olympia tumuli in EH III.

In EH II, however, when the tumulus got its shape and form, the people behind it created a fixed point in the landscape, either by singling out and giving definition to a hitherto history-less and unmarked locale, or by durable means reinforcing an already existing bond between the people of the area and this small hillock. There are many alternatives for why this specific place was chosen, and some have already been considered above. Whether or not it was grounded in a past history of the locale, the formation of the tumulus made sure that the spot with its tumulus would occupy a special position within the conceptual world of its contemporaries for some time to come. By the formation of the tumulus the people responsible for the stone circle and the stone cover had perhaps not created a past but surely safeguarded the memory of the place as special in some way *and* laid the grounds for a continued focus on the tumulus as a result of it.

⁵⁶⁰ Rambach 2002, 193f.

⁵⁶¹ Chapman 1994, 68f.

⁵⁶² Müller 1989, 16–18; Forsén 1992, 88f.; Rambach 2001, 328.

⁵⁶³ Maran 1998, 450–457. Rambach (2001, 333) commented on the circumstance the Cetina culture influence appears to have been present in Olympia and western Peloponnese throughout EH III and even into early MH, and not only the first half of EH III as in northeast Peloponnese.

‘Ritual tumuli’ reconsidered

In the cases of Thebes and Lerna, the masses of debris over the destroyed houses could have invoked the idea of a tumulus shape in the way that a pile of anything naturally thins out towards its borders in a circular pattern. Similarly, the natural shape of the hill at Olympia is likely to have influenced the shape of the EH II tumulus. The line of stones at Lerna and Olympia can be seen as the carrying out of that idea—that is, an idea of circularity. In fact, at both Olympia and Lerna, the individuals involved in the formation of the tumuli went through some trouble to ensure almost perfect circularity. At Olympia, the stone border was set at considerably varying height around the hillock to create the appearance of roundness, in spite of the oval shaped natural rise.⁵⁶⁴ At Lerna, as already mentioned above, debris needed to be transported away to achieve the final definition of the mound. The stone border and cover at both Olympia and Lerna put the final touch to the shape, establishing them as circular. In both these cases the stones for the construction were carefully chosen. This material at Olympia consisted partly of non-local stones, while at Lerna the stones were perhaps local but they were closely similar in shape as well as size, as were the smaller stones of the cover.⁵⁶⁵

At Lerna, the circular shape stood in contrast to the rectangular building that lay below, and at both sites the shape was different to all other architecture in the settlement, both earlier (Lerna) and later (Lerna and Olympia), at least in durable material and as far as we know today. One circular built structure from the Altis was included by Forsén among the three sites where circular buildings had been found (also Voidokoilia and Orchomenos).⁵⁶⁶ To these should be added at least the Rundbau at Tiryns and a circular structures recognised by the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey (EKAS), as well as the circular structure encircling the Chasm at Eutresis.⁵⁶⁷ The circular building at the Altis was recently interpreted as the enclosure wall of a well in use within the EH III cult area by the tumulus. Wells and pits of different kinds may also be included within the group adhering to a circular shape. The latter do not generally play any specific role in the discourse, but as soon as *built* circularity is a factor the interpretations become divided and hesitant. Interpretations often turn to special purpose: watchtower (EKAS, Rundbau),⁵⁶⁸ granary (Rundbau, Orchomenos Rundbauten, Voidokilia),⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁴ Rambach 2002, 182.

⁵⁶⁵ Rambach 2004, 1219; Wiencke 2000, 284, fig. I.101.

⁵⁶⁶ Forsén 1992, 198, noting also (p. 128, n. 2), the notations by excavators of possible circular buildings at Pylos and Tsoungiza.

⁵⁶⁷ Tiryns Rundbau: e.g. Kilian 1986; Maran 1998, 198f.; Eutresis: Caskey & Caskey 1960, 138f., 148, 156f., 162f.; EKAS: Rothaus *et al.* 2003, 44.

⁵⁶⁸ Maran 1998, 198f.; Rothaus *et al.* 2003, 44.

⁵⁶⁹ Kilian 1986, 67f.; Maran 1998, 198f.; Nilsson 2004, 147–149, 175f., 188; Korres 1990, 4.

decided by the shape of a well (Olympia/the Altis), or a “building with a special meaning” (e.g. Voidokilia, the Chasm at Eutresis, EKAS).⁵⁷⁰

Obviously, these examples have little in common other than their circular shape, and the interpretations are rightly diverse and contextually specific. What was the meaning of circularity? Was there a meaning? Circularity and roundness are organic forms, visible in much of nature around us. It is also a form that comes naturally when shaping, for example, a pot or when manufacturing a wicker basket. Circular houses are certainly not uncommon in other regions and times, but they are nevertheless so to Early Helladic Greece, at least when the construction technique is the same as in standard rectangular houses. So why the extra effort of circularity? And where do the tumuli fit into this, both the burial and ‘ritual’? Although we are not likely to find the answer, I think the question is worth some reflection. Did the builders, by striving for circularity, aim for likeness with something, did the shape have a meaning in itself, or are their final shapes ultimately the result of an ambition of symmetry, a way of creating order out of chaos?

In this chapter, I have considered the tumuli as markers and also as potential memorial monuments. It should be kept in mind that memorial monuments may be both positively and negatively loaded, again following Caskey, they may signal reverence but also disdain in the hands of different people. Furthermore, as visual and monumental markers in their surroundings they become the focus for memory and histories. The intention in these cases may have been otherwise. Covering something up may mean to hide that which is below from view and protect the surrounding from any physical or symbolical ills that may be perceived as connected with them. Even if cases of visually elaborate monuments such as the Lerna tumulus indicate at first glance a positive attitude towards what lay below, the elaboration may be an act of appeasement. The monuments that do not cover up something below may be similarly interpreted (connected with this is Rambach’s suggestion for the interpretation of the *in situ* finds in the EH III cult area as a final act to appease threatening dangers which soon after caused the abandonment and destruction of the EH III houses)⁵⁷¹.

Finally some words again on the concept of ‘ritual tumuli’. The four Early Helladic examples that have formed the basis for the present discussion are tumuli in that they are man-made and/or elaborated, round mounds, which may be set as a neutral description of the concept of ‘tumulus’. They may be said to be ‘ritual’ in that they are not burial tumuli, i.e. not used strictly for burials. ‘Ritual’ is a commonly used designation for something that is not of any apparent use in itself or for which the use is unknown. It should be

⁵⁷⁰ Korres 1990, 4 (citation); Caskey & Caskey 1960, 162f. (arrangement for chthonic cult activity); Rothaus *et al.* 2003, 44, mentioning tumuli as an alternative interpretation to defensive bastions.

⁵⁷¹ Rambach 2002, 198.

noted, however, that only at Olympia is there evidence for actual ritual activity directed at the mound.

The four instances are to my mind neither similar enough nor specific enough to merit their association under the concept of 'ritual tumuli'. In fact, they are all unique cases, as parts of unique and contextually specific series of events. If the term 'ritual tumuli' should be used as a common designation for these different contexts—and as it is as well established in the scholarly discourse as it is, it serves a purpose—it should be a carefully qualified use. A road to a future better understanding of these monuments, and of others that may still be uncovered, is to try to understand their specific histories and the different reasons that may have enticed the Early Helladic people to take on these monumental measures to mark, seal, protect and/or remember.

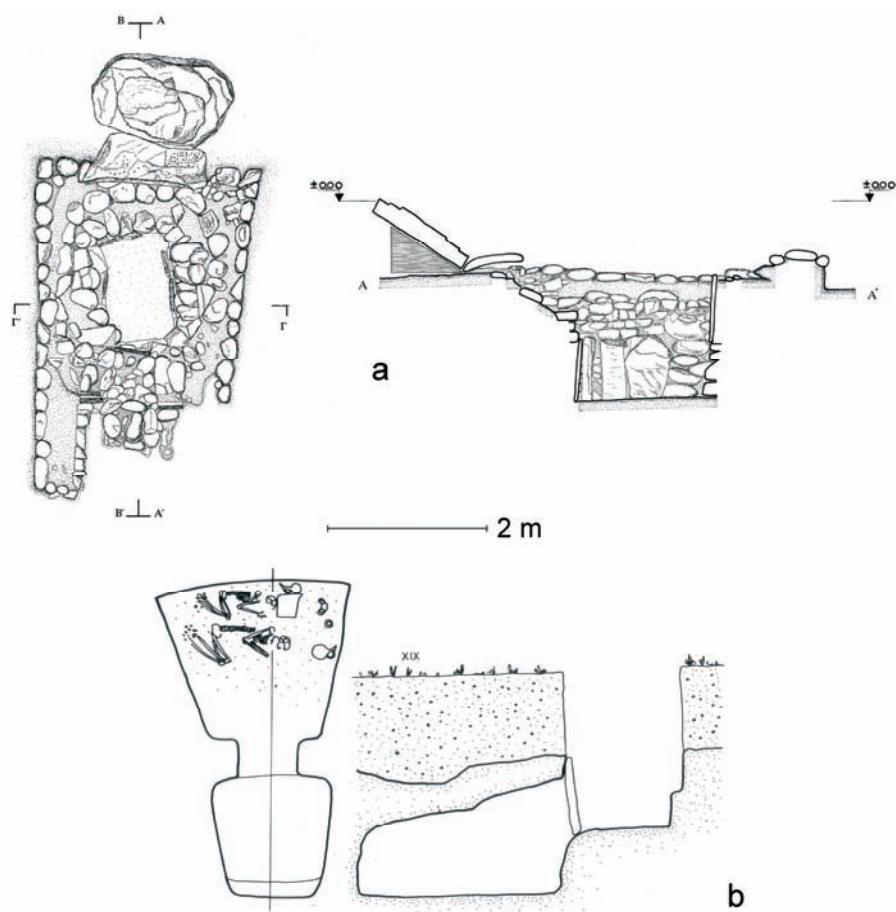


Figure 40. Early Helladic grave types: (a) cist grave (Tsepi, Grave 16) and (b) chamber tomb (Manika, Grave 134) (after Pantelidou Gofa 2004, figs. 108–109, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens; Sampson 1988a, fig. 39).

Part Four.

Locating the dead

EH tombs and burial customs, though occasionally the subject of synthetic analyses, have not attracted very much attention for the simple reason that EH tombs are not very numerous and rarely contain very much in the way of grave goods.⁵⁷²

If we are to gain a greater understanding of the life of the Early Helladic peoples, we need to give greater attention to their tombs and burial customs in the context of the society as a whole. We also need to give more attention to the settings of the mortuary sphere, not only in relation to the contemporary settlements but as social spaces in their own right. In the absence of obvious sanctuaries or signs of deities, practices concerning death tend to be the aspect of life which is put most closely in contact with the prevailing world-view, the ways in which the people of the period relate to the world around them. In contrast to later periods of the Bronze Age on the Greek Mainland, and to the Early Bronze Age of Crete and the Cycladic islands, however, research on Early Helladic mortuary practices has been scarce, as Rutter remarked in his review of the period, as cited above.

The reason for this is, however, I believe, probably to be found in the research traditions of the period rather than in a scarcity of tombs or a shortage of their contents. In a comparison between the EBA Cyclades and Crete on the one hand and the Greek mainland on the other, a contributory cause is most likely the different visibility of settlements in the archaeological record of the regions. On the Mainland, the settlements appear simply to have drawn attention away from the less visible tombs, while the reverse has been true for the Early Cycladic and Early Minoan periods. Thus, in contrast to Rutter's remark, I propose that there is considerable room for exploration of Early Helladic mortuary customs, but that this possibility has been left

⁵⁷² Rutter 2001, 116.

largely unexploited. The present aim is to make an effort to amend this situation to some degree.

The essential features for the two following chapters can be summarised as ten points:⁵⁷³

- The Early Helladic people buried their dead in graves.
- The graves could be simple pits, cist or built tombs, chamber tombs or even a well (*Fig. 40*).⁵⁷⁴
- The standard treatment of the dead in graves was inhumation.⁵⁷⁵
- Graves were generally separated from the settlements.
- Graves are sometimes found within the settlements.
- Extramural graves were often multiple burials.
- Intramural graves were generally single burials.
- Extramural graves were often clustered into cemeteries.
- The dead were generally accompanied by grave goods.
- The grave goods in each grave consisted of a small number of vessels and small finds, few in relation to the number of individuals in the grave.

Each of these ten points alone provides grounds for further exploration of Early Helladic mortuary customs. The statements are generalised and there is room for some variation in the practices. They are the result of a purely descriptive and typological survey of the available material; *the main questions must now be what these statements and their internal relationships may have meant for the people of the Early Helladic period, in terms of actual practices and their possible meanings.*

The focus of the present part of the book will be on the location of the tombs, and more specifically on the relationship between the so-called intramural and extramural burials (*Chapter 7*), as well as on the relationship between the extramural cemeteries and their contemporary settlements (*Chapter 8*).⁵⁷⁶ However, to provide a further basis for these discussions it is necessary to consider the chronology of the Early Helladic burials and their relationship with each other as well as with other parts of the Aegean Early Bronze Age. As will become evident, mortuary customs changed over time and there were important regional variations (*Fig. 41*). Both aspects are significant for our interpretation of the material.

⁵⁷³ For summaries of Early Helladic tombs and burial customs, see e.g. Pullen 1985, 88–156; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 5–13.

⁵⁷⁴ The first burial tumuli are also evidenced in the Early Helladic period, although outside the regions here considered (of definite Early Helladic date: the R-tumuli of Steno on Leukas and at Olympia/New Museum, see discussion in Forsén 1992, esp. 232–237; Maran 1998, 229–231, as well as *Chapter 5*).

⁵⁷⁵ For possible cremations, see summary with references in Alram-Stern 2004, 302.

⁵⁷⁶ Although the particulars of the Early Helladic mortuary sphere within the studied regions, such as tomb architecture, grave goods and practices will be hinted at in *Chapters 6–8*, I refer to *Chapter 9* for a detailed analysis and wider references.

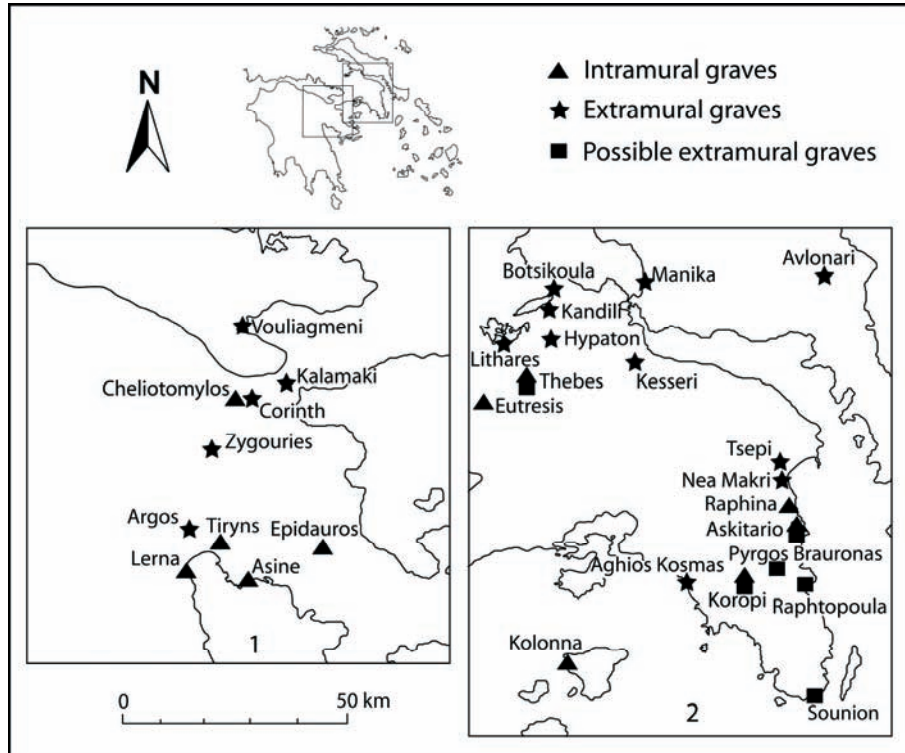


Figure 41. Early Helladic intramural and extramural locations with graves mentioned in the text.

6. Mortuary variability through time

The first phase of the Early Helladic period has long been without burials assigned to it,⁵⁷⁷ and Early Helladic burial customs have largely been equated with EH II in chronological terms. This EH I void is, however, beginning to be filled, partly by newly excavated graves and partly by the reassignment of graves from earlier excavations. Three EH I graves have recently been excavated at the Apollo Maleatas sites near Epidauros in the Argolid.⁵⁷⁸ Outside the regions in the present study, a whole cemetery was recently investigated at Kalamaki in Kato Achaia, south of Patras in the north-western Peloponnese. The chamber tomb cemetery is dated to EH I, with a proposed beginning early in this phase.⁵⁷⁹ Furthermore, in his comprehensive restudy of the chronology of Early Helladic settlements, Maran came to the conclusion that the cemeteries of Aghios Kosmas, Tsepi and Manika all possibly date back to the final stages of the EH I period.⁵⁸⁰ Based on Cycladic parallels, Rambach has pushed two of these three cemeteries back even further into the EH I period, concluding that nothing that was found within the graves at Aghios Kosmas need be dated any later than the Kampos group, which he dates within the latest phase of the EH I period.⁵⁸¹ In her recent publication of the Tsepi cemetery, Pantelidou Gofa also considers the greater part of the material to be contemporary with the EC I period, and parallels are found to the early phase of the period (parallels that Rambach assigns to the early EC I so-called Panayia assemblage of pottery and small finds).⁵⁸²

It is not within the scope of the present study to judge how these latest reassignments will affect the proposed chronology for other graves, especially those found in Attica and Euboea featuring material with parallels in the Early Cycladic cemeteries. It is clear, however, that some of the grave goods at both Aghios Kosmas and Manika also belong to the later EC II Keros-Syros assemblages and should retain an EH II date. This later date is also

⁵⁷⁷ Rutter 2001, 116f.; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 15.

⁵⁷⁸ Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1171f. Also, twelve EH I intramural burials of subadults (eleven newborn and one >1–7 yrs, including a double burial of two newborns, possibly twins) are reported by Kanz and Großschmidt (forthcoming).

⁵⁷⁹ Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, dating: esp. 379; also summary in Alram-Stern 2004, 680, pls. 40–41.

⁵⁸⁰ Maran 1998, 81f., 94–97.

⁵⁸¹ Rambach 2000b, 263f. For a wider discussion of the implications of this suggestion see *Chapter 9*: section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

⁵⁸² Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 324–327, 356; Rambach 2000b, 258, 263.

strongly suggested by the material of Early Helladic type, most notably the presence of sauceboats, saucers and bowls of EH II types, and by the same material from the nearby settlements.⁵⁸³ Some of the burials at Manika are also to be assigned to an even later period, with parallels in the Lefkandi I complex of pottery; thus to the second half of the EH II period.⁵⁸⁴ So, on present evidence, as with most other Early Helladic assemblages, a majority of the graves should still be assigned to the EH II period.

This rise in the number of recognised burials is reversed in the EH III period, a period to which only very few burials have yet been assigned. The most visible of these in earlier research have been the intramural child burials at Lerna, since they were once used by Caskey for inferences of a population influx during the EH II/III transition.⁵⁸⁵ By analysing and summarising the chronology of the intramural burials, Forsén could show that intramural burials were not a new feature of EH III as once proposed by Caskey.⁵⁸⁶ In fact, these burials remain, to date, among the very few burials to be certainly dated to the EH III period, only complemented by burials from Kolonna on Aegina (these also intramural infant burials).⁵⁸⁷ However, like the increasing numbers of EH I burials, the same may well prove to become true for this latter period.⁵⁸⁸

Attempts to create a more precise chronology of the Early Helladic mortuary record have been few. One exception has been the special consideration of the EH II–III transition, and then, most notably, Forsén's analysis of intramural burials and burial tumuli.⁵⁸⁹ Few, if any, inferences have, however, been made of possible differences *within* the recognised sub phases of the period. As noted by Pullen, much of the material cannot be precisely dated. In his studies he has therefore chosen to approach the mortuary data "from a chronologically static point of view".⁵⁹⁰ After Maran's recent chronological review of much of the available mortuary and settlement data, however, a similar static view seems too cautious—even misleading.

Thus, considering the new datings, I propose that there are several observations and suggestions to be made based only on a very rough division of the Early Helladic period into two halves. From the distribution of intramural and extramural graves as illustrated in *Figure 42*, it can be noted that:

⁵⁸³ Rambach 2000b, 255; Maran 1998, 82f.; 95–97.

⁵⁸⁴ Maran 1998, 95–97.

⁵⁸⁵ Caskey 1960.

⁵⁸⁶ Forsén 1992, esp. 237–240.

⁵⁸⁷ Welter 1938, 510 (pithos burials); Felten & Hiller 2000–2001, 18.

⁵⁸⁸ An EH III date has been proposed for a grave at Argos and for two graves found at the excavation of the Agricultural Prison by the acropolis of Tiryns, but the date of these have been debated (Pullen 1985, 118f.; Forsén 1992, 49, 51, both with further references).

⁵⁸⁹ Forsén 1992, 232–240.

⁵⁹⁰ Pullen 1994, esp. 115. Also Pullen 1985, 88–156.

- A majority of extramural burials belong to EH I or to the first half of the EH II period.
- All intramural burials belong to EH I, the second half of the EH II period, or to EH III.
- There is no sure example of an extramural cemetery with corresponding, contemporaneous intramural burials in a nearby settlement.
- There are few excavated cemeteries or clusters of graves that can be connected with a contemporaneous settlement.

The first point has a bearing on what role we give the cemeteries and the graves in the economic development of the Early Helladic period. The first three points illustrate differences that should be meaningful in our understanding of the development of the society through the course of the Early Helladic period. The last two points put emphasis on the problems of comparisons between cemeteries and settlements. All four points show that a chronologically static view of the mortuary record is, on today's evidence, oversimplified.

Thus, from a transitional EH I/II period, when cemeteries of cist graves and chamber tombs appear in larger numbers within the study area, it has been suggested that they should be seen in the light of the growing differentiation of settlement space, societal change, and of the agricultural developments of the period, which put a new emphasis on the ownership of the lands and its produce.⁵⁹² Evidence of social groupings ('corporate groups'), as argued by Pullen, could be found in the graves commonly used over some time for several consecutive burials, and in the visible markers of these graves (a single row of stones marking the border of one or, in a few instances, two graves).⁵⁹³ Maran has recently questioned the usefulness of these groupings as a characteristic of the economic and societal changes of the EH II period, when evidence shows that multiple serial burials already existed in the Late Neolithic.⁵⁹⁴ Neolithic graves within the study area are nevertheless still

dorou-Mavrommatidi 2004), Asine (Pullen 1985, 118), Lerna (Zerner 1990), Tiryns (Kilian 1983), Cheliotomylos (Lavezzi 2003), Perachora-Vouliagmeni (Hatzipoulou-Kalliri 1983), Thebes (Demakopoulou & Konsola 1975, Pullen 1985, 133f.), Kolonna (Kantz & Großschmidt, forthcoming), Askitario (Theocharis 1953–1954; Maran 1998, 79f.), Aghios Kosmas (Maran 1998, 81–83), Koropi (Kakvogianni 1987), Tsepi (Rambach 2000, 255, 258, 263; Gofa 2005), and Manika (Maran 1998, 95–97). Corinth, Kalamaki and Zygouries have been generalised to the EH II period (Pullen 1985, 106–112, 117), while Botsikoula, Kandili and Lithares are given an earlier onset due to their Cycladicising character, in analogy with Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas. The extramural graves at Askitario have not been excavated and are given a general EH I–II dating on account of the finds on which a cemetery was surmised (Theocharis 1955a).

⁵⁹² Cavanagh & Mee 1998; Pullen 1986a, 82. A similar interpretation has been brought forward for the earliest graves in the Cyclades (see Broodbank 2000, 150).

⁵⁹³ Pullen 1985, for corporate groups and a summary of the argument, esp. 37–42, 145f., 370f.

⁵⁹⁴ Maran 1998, 227.

rare.⁵⁹⁵ One well defined LN cemetery, however, was located downhill from and to the west of its contemporaneous settlement, some kilometres distance from the modern village of Tharrounia in the mountainous area of central Euboea. The excavation there revealed eight irregular pit-like graves lined with upright limestone slabs. After the dead were placed in the graves, the cists were probably sealed by flat cover slabs.⁵⁹⁶ The Tharrounia graves are comparable with the Final Neolithic cemetery of thirty-five cist graves at the site of Kephala on the island of Kea, close to the south-eastern coast of Attica.⁵⁹⁷ However, although formal cemeteries already existed in the later phases of the Neolithic period, it is nevertheless evident that at the beginning of the Early Bronze Age there was a notable increase in the number of defined spaces for the dead, set apart from the spaces of the living. I suggest, therefore, that the qualification to be made is not if formal burial grounds also existed earlier, but when there is an increase in their numbers, and when they can be used in an argument for the workings of their societies.

On present knowledge, these cemeteries flourished before the period of the corridor houses, and before the period when it is suggested that the economy culminated, in the latter half of the EH II period. Thus, as the evidence stands today, and especially if an increasing number of graves should be assigned to an even earlier phase, the extramural cemeteries are rather to be connected with the *emerging* economic growth and diversification, and to be connected more clearly with the *early* Early Helladic period (the first half), and the changes that have been attributed to this period. The cemeteries cannot be used as evidence for kinship groups or as basis for ranking in the latter half of the EH II period, and should not be generalised into pertaining to the Early Helladic period as a whole.

In contrast to extramural cemeteries, however, intramural burials appear in just this latter period. It is difficult to make any suggestions as to what may lie behind this apparent shift, if it proves to be real and not the result of preservation and excavation. It may be that the strong connection of intramural burials with this period is the result of the better preserved late EH II settlements. On the other hand, Lithares and Manika have shown no burials within the settlement despite well preserved architecture from the first half of the EH II period. In fact, as stated above, in the cases where connectedness and contemporaneousness of settlement and cemetery can be supported or assumed (Aghios Kosmas A, Manika, Lithares, Zygouries) no intramural burials have been recorded.⁵⁹⁸ There are sites of the latter half of the period

⁵⁹⁵ Of twelve locations mentioned by Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 5–13, catalogue: 12f., with references), six are cave sites, three within settlement areas (Lerna, Charoneia, Tsoungiza), two definitely extramural (Tharrounia, Argive Heraion), and one undetermined (Athens Agora).

⁵⁹⁶ Sampson 1993a, 86–91.

⁵⁹⁷ Coleman 1977; Pullen 1985, 103f.; Broodbank 2000, 149f.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Pullen 1985, 144.

where a cemetery has been supposed but not excavated (Askitarío) or where new areas of the Early Helladic settlement are continuously being excavated (Manika, Thebes⁵⁹⁹), that may very well fill out the gap.

From *Figure 42* it is also clear that there are not only chronological but also regional differences (also *Fig. 41*). While the majority of extramural burials are located in the central and eastern parts of the study area (Euboea, Attica and Boeotia), most of the intramural burials come from the Argolid, a region for which the first definite extramural burial is yet to be found, and from Boeotia. Displaying both extensive formal cemeteries and a number of intramural burials in the later settlement at Thebes, Boeotia may be seen as the region where different traditions meet. These traditions may be seen as partly resulting from the different geographical locations and their most immediate interaction zones.

Coastal interaction

Cycladic parallels are often cited in relation to Early Helladic grave goods in Attica and Euboea. Formal cemeteries were a distinct part of the Early Cycladic societies from the earliest Early Bronze Age, and have dominated archaeological research in the region.⁶⁰⁰ The cist tomb, as the predominant grave type in the cemeteries of Attica, also finds many parallels in the Cyclades. The parallels in material culture are naturally important for the synchronisation of the contemporary cultures and thus for the establishment of working relative chronologies between the Early Helladic mainland and the Early Bronze Age of the Cycladic islands and beyond. The reasons for these resemblances have also, however, been continuously discussed, origins have been sought, and the mortuary customs have been characterised as to varying degrees ‘Cycladicising’. The discussions have been concerned with the level of actual Cycladic presence on the Mainland, and conclusions drawn have varied from Cycladic colonies to a distinct willingness to imitate Cycladic practices, to Cycladic type vessels as sought-after exotica.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁹ From Thebes, there is already one grave recorded that may possibly be contemporaneous with the intramural instances (Keramopoulos 1910, 250f, see further below, *Chapter 8*), but few details have been published.

⁶⁰⁰ Dumas 1977; Broodbank 2000, 48–67, for a review of research on the Early Cyclades).

⁶⁰¹ References to the Cycladic element are ubiquitous in discussions of early EH material culture in Attica, Euboea and Boeotia. E.g. Theodoridis 1955a; Mylonas 1959, 155; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987, 260–264; Sampson 1988b; Pieler 2004; Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355–359. Also Carter 1999; Broodbank 2000, chapter 9 (pp. 276–319). For a similar discussion on the Cycladic influence on Crete, see for Aghia Photia, Day, Wilson & Kiriati 1998; Broodbank 2000, 301–304; for the Mesara: Carter 1998. Similar issues have also been debated concerning the Anatolian type shapes and techniques adopted from the second half of the EH II period (e.g. Rutter 1979, 8; Broodbank 2000, 311–316).

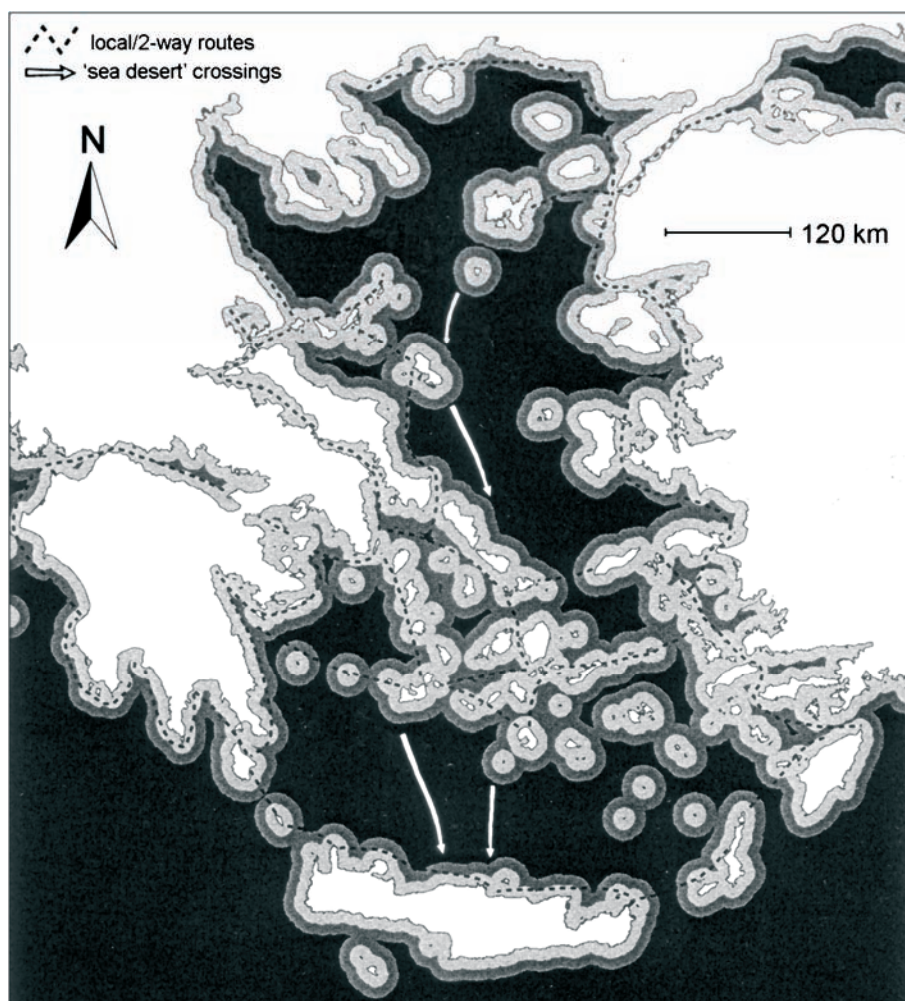


Figure 43. Major maritime routes in the Early Bronze Age Aegean, showing 10 and 20 km distances from land, the maritime deserts of the norther and southern Aegean, the main networks of two-way voyaging and the directional one-way crossings that imply cyclic voyaging (with permission of Cambridge University Press from Broodbank 2000, fig. 94).⁶⁰²

It is too much to suggest, however, that Euboea and Attica have been caught up in and placed on the losing end of a terminological grey zone between what was once established as Mainland, and the connected material culture as Early Helladic, and the islands and their Early Cycladic cultures. While Attica is undeniably mainland, Euboea is often classified with the islands,

⁶⁰² 20 kilometres is the approximate distance that a small canoe can cover in a day, while a bigger longboat could cover about 40–50 kilometres per day (for conditions for early Cycladic sea travel, see Broodbank 2000, 101–106, 258–262, 287–291).

but nevertheless more often than not placed within the Early Helladic cultural sphere. All parallels with the Early Cycladic sphere are thereby classified as 'foreign' and in need of explanation. As a result of their geographical position, Euboea and Attica were more immediately connected with trade routes running along their coasts, and with the eastern islandscape in general, than with the Argolid and Corinthia (*Fig. 43*).

Rather than suggesting Cycladic colonies or a Cycladic presence, however, I propose that it is more rewarding to see the material culture of Euboea and, above all, of Attica, as the result of a position that encouraged the inhabitants to apply and adapt influences from both the islands and the rest of the Mainland. As comprehensively contended by Broodbank, the Cycladic islands can be seen as a large zone of interaction in which different islands played varying parts.⁶⁰³ Rather than applying a generalised cultural scheme over all the islands, he argues for the presence of smaller zones of interaction to complement the large, and for a considerable degree of regionalisation within different parts of the Early Cycladic cultural sphere. Rather than seeing the Grotta-Pelos and Keros-Syros material cultures as omnipresent, he forwards a view of these assemblages as artificially constructed unities. He illustrates instead how different communities chose unevenly from these sets of objects and ideas that circulated within the general sphere of the Cycladic islands by way of a well-developed system of exchange, based in turn on a positive ideology connected with seafaring. He further argues that the Cycladic seafarers should also be seen as the prime movers of goods and ideas beyond their closest islands, most notably towards Crete in the south and Euboea and Attica in the north.

I think it is difficult not to see the coastal settlements of Euboea and Attica taking active part in this general sphere of interaction. Like the different islands, the inhabitants made choices on which aspects to adopt and where to make use of them. With this view, 'Cycladic' or 'Helladic' may be seen as a purely terminological problem.⁶⁰⁴ For the purpose of the present focus, the emphasis on the Cycladic character material culture of Attica and Euboea has, I feel, both held back and directed the discussion. Perhaps most importantly, the terms 'Cycladic' or 'Helladic', say nothing of how the material culture was actually put into practice by the inhabitants of the different communities.

The terminological problem has also, as strange as it may sound, drawn attention away from the regional differences *within* the Early Helladic mortuary sphere. These differences appear to be partly connected with the interaction of the coastal communities of Euboea and Attica with the cultures of the contemporary islands. The geographical location of these regions is also one likely basis for the chronological considerations related above.

⁶⁰³ Broodbank 2000, esp. chapters 6 (pp. 175–210) and 9 (pp. 276–319).

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Day, Wilson & Kiriati 1998.

East vs. south

On a general level, the differing historical development within the study area may be seen to lie within two clusters of regions: Euboea and Attica to the east and Corinthia and the Argolid to the south. The discussions of the graves will show that variation also existed within these two groups and that the historical developments were in reality much more localised. The main division is important as a basis for the problems that may be connected with treating the Early Helladic Mainland as an undivided whole, thereafter contrasted with the islands. Furthermore, the basis for treating Attica and Euboea as a group, and in contrast with the Argolid and Corinthia, is supported by some archaeological circumstances.

The southern regions are characterised by clearly defined, multi-phased settlements from an early period complemented by a large variety of smaller, mostly inland communities, as evidenced by the many intensive surveys conducted in these regions.⁶⁰⁵ From the surveys,⁶⁰⁶ the first half of the Early helladic period is characterised by a dispersal of sites and only one recent discovery of isolated graves apparently within the community. The second half of the period is characterised by a decrease in the number of sites and a nucleation of settlements to mostly coastal locations, coupled with monumental buildings and use of seals. As illustrated in *Figure 42*, the number of sites with intramural burials increases but, for the second half of the EH II period, is nevertheless outnumbered by the extramural burials. The latter, however, disappear in the final EH III period along with any evidence of centralised economy, while the intramural burials increase in number.

The history of the eastern regions is much more fragmented, as no intensive surveys have been conducted. The evidence from the first half of the Early Helladic period is nevertheless dominated by the many extramural burials in three large cemeteries and several isolated graves.⁶⁰⁷ Most graves are noted for their many parallels with examples from the Cycladic islands. The settlements of this first half of the EH period are only fragmentarily known from the scant remains below the much better preserved settlements of the later period.⁶⁰⁸ The settlements from this latter half of the period are, conversely, complemented only by a lower number of extramural graves and by isolated instances of intramural burials (*Fig. 42*). The only definite cemetery with late graves is Manika where a part of the graves are assigned to the

⁶⁰⁵ For a list of surveys and publications of them, see Rutter 2001, table 1, p. 98, and later additions: p. 148f., n. 217.

⁶⁰⁶ E.g. Forsén 1996 (Berbati-Limnes Archaeological Survey); Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994 (Southern Argolid Exploration Project); Wright *et al.* 1990 (Nemea Valley Archaeological Project).

⁶⁰⁷ Manika: Sampson 1985; 1988a; Aghios Kosmas: Mylonas 1959; Tsepi: Pantelidou Gofa 2005; general, including isolated graves: Pullen 1985.

⁶⁰⁸ E.g. Aghios Kosmas, phase A (Mylonas 1959, 15–20), and Askitarío, phases 1 and 2 (Theocharis 1953–1954, 62f., fig. 4).

second half of the EH II period and even a late phase of this period. In this period the region gives witness to contacts further east, in the form of Anatolian types of pottery, including the technique of the fast pottery wheel, as well as the use of seals, but, to date, no corridor houses or other monumental buildings.⁶⁰⁹

How are we to deal with these regional differences? The two groups rely on the basic supposition that people and ideas travel, and travel more readily over shorter distances. It seems clear that both on a local and on this general regional level, geographical location matters for the composition of the material culture. The possibilities for coastal interaction inherent in the location of Euboea and Attica were surely responsible in part for the development of the early and formalised cemeteries. Furthermore, it is possible to argue that only the lack of intensive surveys is responsible for the fact that the dispersal of sites in the first half of the period in the Argolid and Corinthia cannot be paralleled in the east. I think that an indication of an increase in sites is nevertheless to be found in the many single and clusters of graves in the region. If so, the presence of these cemeteries in the east should be seen as the result of an adoption of a visual language that was familiar to the inhabitants in these areas, but that clearly took other forms for the inhabitants to the south, where these cemeteries are lacking. Conversely, the visual language of the corridor houses was familiar to the inhabitants in the south but, as far as can be seen, not adopted in the east, although there are similarities in the settlement structure, the use of seals and the odd intramural burial.

Pottery styles are, however, the main unifier and signifier of the Mainland cultures towards any external contemporaries. Stylistic developments have proved to show how external influences may stimulate the merging and slow diffusion of styles over considerable distances.⁶¹⁰ In the middle of this we find Boeotia, as well as the island of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf, connecting the east and the south by way of land and sea. Both regions saw the development of the corridor house in the latter half of the EH II period. Boeotia, in contrast with Aegina, however, also displays the formalised, extramural cemeteries (although unfortunately published to only a very limited degree) and, at least to some extent, the Cycladic parallels in the first half of the Early Helladic period, as well as the larger numbers of intramural adult burials to be found in the second half of the period in the south. At Aegina, no extramural burials of the period have as yet been found, and little is known of the settlements of the first half of the Early Helladic period. Notable, however, is that Kolonna on Aegina provides the only parallel thus far to the EH III intramural infant burials at Lerna.

⁶⁰⁹ Rutter 1979, regarding the Anatolian pottery and technique. For seals, e.g. Pullen 2003, table 2.

⁶¹⁰ See e.g. Rutter 1995, 468–477), for the development of EH III style pottery at Lerna.

The historical development: a hypothesis

On this basis it is time to take a step back and review the position of the cemeteries in their chronological and regional contexts, and their position within the economic development of the Early Helladic period. The result for the present work is a hypothesis for the interconnectedness of many developments within the Early Helladic period within and between the studied regions.

The initial and important observation is that the most of the extramural cemeteries belong to the same period as the greatest number and dispersal of Early Helladic settlements throughout the landscape. This dispersal of sites, which started in the Final Neolithic period,⁶¹¹ and the first formal burial grounds appears to be dated to around this period. It is, however, towards the end of EH I and the beginning of EH II that we can first clearly see a wide distribution of settlements coupled with a larger number of formalised mortuary spaces. The EH II intramural burials, on the other hand, belong to a period when the number of settlements decreased (and even more so in EH III).⁶¹² The carefully marked out graves at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas suggest a conscious emphasis on visibility and intra-cemetery differentiation of the mortuary space, and also the presence of some type of social groupings as argued for by Pullen.⁶¹³ The formalisation of these cemeteries and the clustering of graves into cemeteries suggest, however, I believe, a focus on the settlement as a whole. Whereas each separate tomb can be said to illustrate the smaller group or individual, defined by the presence of other graves, the cemetery itself defined the whole group and the settlement and/or region. With the dispersal of settlements, I propose that the growing number of equally sized settlements may have been an impetus to define the group of each separate settlement by a common burial ground. A formalised burial ground could in this scenario play the dual role of reinforcing the connection between a smaller group and the new land, while at the same time marking the seniority of this group's connection with this part of the landscape, in relation to external factors. Some finds of isolated, multiply-used graves may indicate that this was a practice that was adopted even down to the level of single farmsteads.⁶¹⁴ It is also possible that some larger cemeteries served many dispersed farmsteads in the greater area around the cemetery, a scenario that may apply to Tsepi, where no settlement has yet been found.

In the latter half of the EH II period, when the people collected at selected locations and the economy appears more restricted and centralised (this is the period of the corridor houses, fortifications and the use of seals as a

⁶¹¹ E.g. Johnson 1996.

⁶¹² E.g. Forsén 1996; Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994; Rutter 2001, 122–124.

⁶¹³ Pullen 1985, 145f.

⁶¹⁴ E.g. Nea Makri, where an apparently isolated grave with 14 individuals was found (Theodoraki 1980).

probable administrative tool), the cemeteries as the definition of the group may have outlived their use. With the monumentalisation and formalisation of the settlements, the settlements themselves may have taken over the role of adding definition to the group and providing an arena for the negotiation of power between smaller groups of people or between individuals. In line with the discussion in the preceding chapter, with continued and extended habitation, the appreciation of the past, also, may have gone from being displayed in the multiply-used grave to the reuse of space within the settlements. While the settlement as a whole remained an outward statement of unity, the negotiation on the level of the smaller group may have developed towards a more pronounced emphasis on the family. Choices made primarily on a family basis are likely to be more varied and leave less easily distinguished marks on the landscape, even if culturally stipulated ‘rules’ were followed.⁶¹⁵

This hypothesis, however, is not without problems, as there is also a possibility that what appear to be chronological differences may also depend on regional differences of potentially great importance, complicating generalisations over the study area and over the Early Helladic period as a whole. In sum, in contrast to the large, formalised early cemeteries of the east, the mortuary contexts in the south are less elaborate and formalised, coupled with the nucleation of population and the presence of corridor houses, administrative techniques and fortifications. Except for the burials and the corridor houses, the same development can be seen to characterise the second half of the Early Helladic period in the east. As already stated above, I would therefore like rather to identify the multiple burials in discrete, formalised cemeteries with the emerging economic growth. In addition, I am inclined to see the evidence from Corinthia and the Argolid as belonging to a period of greater economic stabilisation. Manika on Euboea stands out as the notable exception to this generalisation with an (albeit lower) number of graves from the second half of the EH II period. It is a settlement and cemetery that did by far outgrow its EBA contemporaries and its historical development appear to be equally singular.

Further analyses and excavation are needed to confirm my hypothesis, which is built on the currently available evidence. It is, for example, impossible to say on this present evidence if the regional differences are real; that is to say, if they (1) would stand continued excavation and investigation, aiming to fill the gaps in the chronology and material culture, which would suggest similar processes in the east as in the south, and (2) will prove to be actual differences in how the society was organised. Also, even if the processes did prove to be similar, it would not mean that there were not also re-

⁶¹⁵ Throughout the EBA there is bound to have been mortuary practices that did not leave any lasting impression on the archaeological record: exposure, burial at sea, single graves (pit or otherwise) etcetera.

gionally varying processes involved. I argue nevertheless that some of the regional differences were a result of the geographical position by which Attica and Euboea, through their contacts with the Cyclades, or even their co-existence with the ‘Cycladic’ way of life, were more likely to adopt similar mortuary practices that suited the dynamic processes of their period. It is also all the more interesting that Boeotia stands out as an intermediate between these eastern areas and the south, in terms of practices and material culture, throughout the EH period, and all the more unfortunate that their extensive cemeteries remain so little known.

Problems of inequalities, and cemeteries as social arenas

I have earlier drawn parallels between the tell societies of northern Greece and the Balkans (as well as Hungary and Bulgaria) on the one hand, and the continued habitation in many Early Helladic settlements on the other.⁶¹⁶ In the Neolithic comparative material, the status display in the cemeteries has been contrasted with the egalitarian basis of the tell settlements with which they were connected. The cemeteries have been described as a new arena necessary to encompass the expressions of emerging social inequalities between the household groups of the otherwise ancestor based tells.⁶¹⁷ This is an interesting supposition, but the Early Helladic cemeteries cannot, at least on present knowledge, be seen as arenas where inequalities in terms of economic wealth were displayed.

As in most contexts of the Aegean Bronze Age, attempts have been made to quantify and qualify the grave finds. One aim of Aegean Bronze Age studies in general has long been to divide graves into different levels of wealth or poverty.⁶¹⁸ Common for the Early Helladic period, as for the Late Helladic period, however, were multiple burials in which it is often impossible to connect individuals with specific items. Furthermore, in the Early Helladic period, grave goods were few, in many cases there were none, or they have been found outside the grave chamber (Aghios Kosmas).⁶¹⁹ Moreover, the number of vessels in relation to the number of individuals in one grave shows that not every burial was accompanied by ceramic vessels or small finds (cf. *Table 9, Chapter 9*). Thus, it is of course possible to see variation in the number of vessels and small finds between graves, differences that may or may not be coupled with similar differences in certain aspects of the tomb structure. Large and well-built tombs may be rich in finds, but a similarly large assemblage of grave goods may be found in the

⁶¹⁶ See, *Chapters 4–5*.

⁶¹⁷ Chapman 1991, 160, 164f., 168.

⁶¹⁸ BA: Cavanagh & Mee 1998; EBA: Pullen 1985, 144–146; Sampson 1988a, e.g. fig. 14, 59–62.

⁶¹⁹ Mylonas 1959. See further, *Chapter 9*.

smallest of graves.⁶²⁰ Ultimately, I believe that there are too many skeletons, too few grave goods, and too great a formalisation in grave goods and grave types to draw any conclusions about this variation. Also, we should not overlook the possibility of perishable items having been placed as grave goods.⁶²¹ Inequalities surely existed in Early Helladic society, as in all societies, but in terms of grave goods, it seems a better point of departure to argue that there was no *material* or *durable display* of inequalities in wealth or social status within the Early Helladic cemeteries. If inequalities were displayed it is more likely to have been through expressive practices of another kind.

To this end, the concept of cemeteries as social arenas is also a useful perspective for these apparently quite customised cemeteries. Regardless of any visibility or monumentality, cemeteries are likely spaces for practices which served to illustrate both family and community bonds. I suggest that the discrete space *in itself* served as a strong enough basis for a series of practices, emphasising the family but also the community, over the line symbolically separating the living and the dead. The presence of a spatially defined burial ground in itself puts emphasis on identity and on rights to use the ground, as well as the individual, multiply-used grave. I have suggested above that the appreciation of the past in the past within Early Helladic settlements was a sense of history (private and/or communal) and a willingness to acknowledge, adapt, manipulate and build in different ways on that history (*Chapter 4*). I will argue that the importance of the cemeteries may have been at least threefold, comprising three possibly simultaneous perspectives. Firstly, any practices related to the cemeteries, to the graves and burials, are likely to have included elements of a very private or individual-specific nature. Secondly, the cemeteries are likely to have included practices that involved a large proportion of the inhabitants of the settlements, both actively in specific practices and by generally following communal practices relating to the caring of the dead and their presence in a possible afterlife. Thirdly, at the same time, and especially when the practices around one individual grave had for some reason been discontinued, each grave is likely to have been included in the symbolical whole that was the cemetery.

In relation to the Neolithic (and early EH I?) practices, when a larger number of discrete cemeteries emerge in late EH I or the EH I/II transition, they can be classified as arguably *new* social arenas—they were not only more numerous, but their appearance also suggests both formalisation and customisation. In this surely lay a sense of lineage and descent along family lines, possibly connected with growing specialisation and demands on agri-

⁶²⁰ Sampson 1988a, fig. 14 (pp. 59–62)

⁶²¹ Cf. Wiencke 1989, 505, suggesting in relation to the paucity of finds other than ordinary eating and drinking vessels from the House of the Tiles, that “prestige goods may have been perishable for the most part”. Also, see Agram-Stern 2004, 339; Rambach 2000b, 175–180, for the likelihood of grave goods in organic material, basketry for instance, in early EC graves. Also, *Chapter 9*.

cultural land.⁶²² In relation to this, however, I argue, the group continued to play an important role as it would in any settlement-based social arena (the emphasis between family and group would have varied with the context).

It is on the cemeteries as social arenas in relation to the settlements that I will focus the continued discussion on Early Helladic mortuary customs. Not, however, in the first instance in the sense often used today with reference to the build up and periodic reconstruction of social relations and the society as whole,⁶²³ although this will also be allowed to play a part. The focus instead will be on the cemeteries as a social *arena* per se—on the different uses of space and on the symbolic and practical position of the practices of the cemeteries within Early Helladic society as a whole. The reason for assigning the mortuary practices to a place outside the settlements may be many and various. Cross-culturally, death is often connected with notions of pollution, and with elaborate practices to deal with the situation. Another reason could be the need for a new arena for status competition and status confirmation, as suggested by Pullen and Chapman for two different areas and times.⁶²⁴ The question remains whether the latter were the result of an initial separation or the actual cause of it. It can, however, be concluded that: *the separation in itself suggests that there was a need within the society for this differentiation.*

The actual distance of the separation between settlement and cemetery varied, but the spaces (almost) never geographically overlapped. Both were, however, active parts of Early Helladic society and, as such, did overlap. In relation to a chronologically and geographically far distant society, Peter Jordan has illustrated how this interconnectedness of cemetery and settlement works today among the Siberian Khanty. Having noted how young men on a skiing trip in the surrounding landscape went through considerable trouble to ensure that they had not encircled the cemetery, a culturally restricted action, Jordan comments:

In this sense cemeteries and sacred places exert a presence that must be responded to even in times and places that lie outside the context of the immediate visit. [...] When holy sites and cemeteries were visited I felt a sense that we were entering places that were located outside the routine world, yet that were still able to exert a presence within it.⁶²⁵

The bond between settlement and cemetery in this modern day, small scale society resulted in a routine avoidance of the latter on a daily basis, in answer to a wider appreciation of the special standing of the cemeteries and the practices related to them. The cemeteries were located outside the routine

⁶²² Cf. Pullen 1985; Keswani 2004, 11f.

⁶²³ E.g. Damm 1991; Hamilakis 1998.

⁶²⁴ Pullen 1985; Chapman 1991.

⁶²⁵ Jordan 2003, 225.

world but still made an imprint and partly directed actions within this world. In the following I will try to illustrate the potential complexity of the Early Helladic cemeteries in relation to *their* settlements, a link that may not have been much different to that presented in the citations above. In *Chapter 7* I will begin my discussion with the examples of when the separation of the dead and the living appears not to have applied; when the dead remained within the spaces of the living. Thereafter, in *Chapter 8*, I will consider some different aspects of locating the graves in the Early Helladic landscape and continue on to a discussion of what in the end made up a favourable place for the dead of the Early Helladic societies and how the separation from the settlements of the living was accomplished.

7. Positioning the intramural

The spaces of the dead were generally separated from those of the living, but there are no rules without exceptions: in certain cases the separation between the living and the dead was at least spatially broken.⁶²⁶ I will thus begin with the so-called intramural graves, by reviewing the present archaeological material and positioning it in relation to the Early Helladic extramural contexts. ‘Extramural’ and ‘intramural’ have long been the terms commonly used to define the location of burials outside and inside the settlement. The walls originally designated by these terms are the ‘city walls’, which in the case of the Early Helladic period and other prehistoric periods, need to be symbolical since most settlements were not encircled by a wall, or the line of a wall has not been ascertained. A second set of walls often referred to in relation to the two terms are the walls of the individual houses. Due to the problems of excavation and to unclear excavation reports it is usually exceedingly difficult to determine the relationship between burial and house. This is unfortunate since the relationship is of course highly important for the process of determining the position within the Early Helladic societies of the dead buried in this physical and symbolical context. A further problem may also lie with determining where, at different points in time, the spaces of the living end and the cemeteries begin, or if perhaps the two coexisted, either contemporaneously or shifting through time. Drawing from mostly Middle Helladic contexts in the Argolid, Eleni Milka has recently made us aware of the inadequacies of the present terminology in these cases.⁶²⁷

I hope that her call for a more accurate terminology will be heard and that the present lack of it will encourage a more careful use of the existing terminology, with care taken to the specifics of each context. ‘Intramural’ and ‘extramural’ in the present study, therefore, should be understood in geographical terms: as burials within the general area of a contemporaneous settlement, or as burials clearly separated from settlement. In the Early Helladic context, burials in the vicinity of contemporaneous or other houses remain few, but they are potentially important for our understanding of the Early Helladic ways of relating to death and the dead.

⁶²⁶ See Alram-Stern 2004, 280–299, esp. 296f., for a more extensive summary of intramural burials within the Aegean Early Bronze Age, also with further references.

⁶²⁷ Milka, forthcoming. I am greatly indebted to Eleni Milka for providing me with a copy of her paper before its publication.

Another important point to establish from the outset is that what we have in terms of graves is not the full array of Early Helladic dead. Apart from cemeteries that may await our detection in the modern landscape, other ways of treating the dead should not be excluded, and the likelihood of alternative mortuary behaviours grows even more likely along with continued exploration and exploitation of the modern landscape.

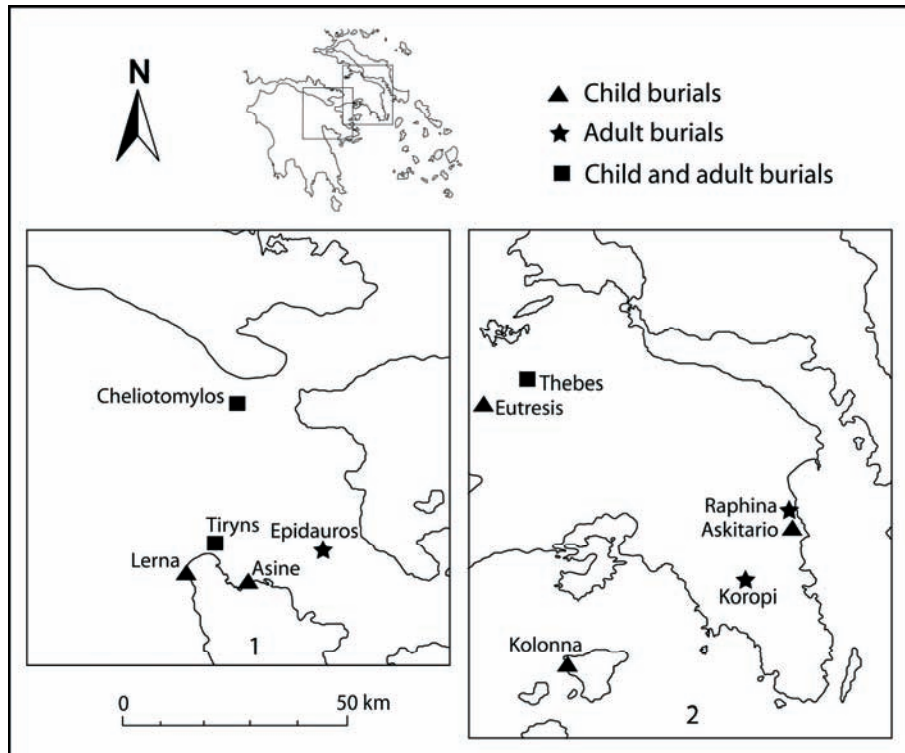


Figure 44. Child and adult burials within the study area.⁶²⁸

Although still very limited, the number of known intramural burials continues to grow slowly but steadily, and they are to be found in all regions within the study area as illustrated in *Figures 44*. In many of these cases the stratigraphy is uncertain, but we can conclude that intramural burials appear in some isolated cases in EH I (Epidauros) and thereafter in greater numbers in late EH II (e.g. Asine, Askitaro, Koropi), as well as in EH III (e.g. Lerna, Kolonna) (*Fig. 42*).⁶²⁹ The burial of infants under the floors of houses is a

⁶²⁸ For references on the contexts included in *Table 44*, see below for separate consideration and also Pullen 1985, 106–140; Forsén 1992, 237–240, and site specific pages in that volume. The complete number of infant graves at Kolonna is unpublished and so is the number of graves that should now be assigned to EH III at Lerna.

⁶²⁹ See also, Forsén 1992, 237–240; Alram-Stern 2004, 296f.

phenomenon often mentioned, and intramural burials are also frequently equated with the burials of children, generally with infants.⁶³⁰ As also in the Middle Helladic period,⁶³¹ however, *both* children *and* adults have been found buried within the settlements of the Early Helladic period. On a general EBA level within the studied regions, the number of children is somewhat higher than that of adults. If divided into sub periods, the tendency is that the adult burials can be assigned to the latter half of the EH II period,⁶³² while the child burials belong to both EH II and EH III. Unfortunately, the material is too limited to make any final interpretations on these circumstances.

Burials of children

Although rather more child burials than adult burials have been found within the settlements, very little is known of the circumstances of these graves. The type of graves used for child burials were most often simple pits (Eutresis) or natural cavities in the rock (Asine, Tiryns). In some instances the skeletal remains were connected with larger vessels as containers of a sort. At Tiryns, within the lowest stratum, recorded on bedrock and in its crevices, a large EH II bowl was found, turned upside-down on a paving of small stones (within a large pocket in the bedrock). The earth below the vessel was fine and loosely packed and contained “zwei winzige, noch unausgeformte Zähne”⁶³³ In Room 28 in House E at Askitarío, the skeleton of a two-year-old child was found on a paved floor below pieces of a large pithos.⁶³⁴ In both these cases it is difficult to ascertain how the burials were connected with the use of the larger space in which they were found, and more specifically if, and in that case, how, they were connected with a floor level.

A common view is that children were buried below the floors of houses in prehistoric contexts, as the infant from Eutresis appears to have been: the pit cut in virgin soil immediately below a floor, the skeleton bedded on small stones.⁶³⁵ A similar connection seems to apply for the Askitarío case (although the reading is here that the child was placed on *the* floor; arguably the floor of the whole room). Despite many excavated well-defined rooms of the Early Helladic period (except for the Askitarío case), no child grave has been published as unequivocally connected with the inside of the standing

⁶³⁰ E.g. Pullen 1994, 126.

⁶³¹ Ingvarsson-Sundström 2003, esp. 133–140.

⁶³² Check EH III cist burial in Thebes from references given in Alram-Stern 2004, 281, dating: p. 284.

⁶³³ Gercke & Gercke 1975, 9f., vessel: cat no. 10, p. 14. This grave was found below the acropolis, by its eastern foot. It is still likely intramural, as EH II habitation seems to have existed in these eastern parts of the Lower Town also.

⁶³⁴ Theocharis 1955b, 115. The child skeleton is described as that of a two year old child.

⁶³⁵ Goldman 1931, 221.

walls of a contemporaneous building. We can say that the graves of children have been found in relation to Early Helladic buildings, probably many times contemporaneous, but unfortunately we cannot specify how close this relation generally was. There are other reasons than may be put forward for the presence of any burial below a floor. Which came first, the burial or the house? If we are to gain a better understanding of the circumstances of these burials, they need to be given more individual room in the scholarly discourse.

As noted above, the number of child burials appears to be increasing slightly within the EH III period. From Kolonna on Aegina “several chalk pits and a number of child burials” were noted from a layer immediately above a widespread EH II stratum.⁶³⁶ Nine infant burials are recorded as coming from EH III Lerna: seven pits, a cist and a jar burial.⁶³⁷ These two EH III contexts still await final publication, and will hopefully expand our knowledge of intramural child burials in general. It should be noted, however, that the rise in the number of child burials within EH III in relation to EH II does not correspond to a rise in the number of sites in which these have been recorded (only Kolonna and Lerna within the study area), but to the number of examples recorded from *each* site. Although regionally limited, the higher frequency of intramural child burials (possibly mainly infant burials), coupled with the lack of intramural adult burials in the same areas, may, I believe, still be seen as a cautious indication in favour of Caskey’s suggestion of a change in mortuary customs in EH III.

On a wider scale, and according to the evidence from Early Helladic extramural cemeteries, adult burials are in a large majority. As many questions still remain regarding the intramurally buried children, it may therefore prove interesting to put what we know of these in relation to the archaeological record of the burial of children in extramural contexts. Discussed as a whole, the fragmented record of child burials may still provide some clues as to the position of the burials of children in relation those of adults, as well as to the general relationship between extramural and intramural burials.

Children in extramural contexts

To digress from the present focus on intramural burials, it should be noted that there are unfortunately few cases where a settlement and a nearby cemetery have been equally well studied and published. If there were more, we

⁶³⁶ Felten & Hiller 2000–2001, 18. Burials mentioned by Welter (1938, 510) were pithos burials (plural) which suggests that they were for the burial of very small children, if not newborns (if they were primary burials). Recently briefly reported for Kolonna also: 9 EH III/MH intramural burials of children below one year of age, but also 12 EH I intramural burials (11 newborn and one >1–7 yrs) (Kanz & Großschmidt, forthcoming).

⁶³⁷ Forsén 1992, 37, following Blackburn (1970, 29–33). Pullen (1985, 116f.) mentioned only four burials, while Zerner (1990, 23) mentioned eight.

would have a better chance of weighing the evidence regarding children and adults in the burials. At Lithares, the ages of the dead are not mentioned, neither are any burials noted from within the settlement.⁶³⁸ At Manika no burials have been noted from within the settlement, but children are found buried within the tombs of the cemetery, in instances separated in pots (as a secondary burial).⁶³⁹ Similarly, at Aghios Kosmas, no burials are noted from within the settlement. Burials of children are, however, found in the cemetery: (a) in separate graves (17, 18, 25) or (b) in separate small 'side' burials, more or less directly connected with larger graves (9a, 11a, 21a, 24a), (c) in the fill above one larger grave (21), or finally (d) mixed with the bones of adults within chambers of standard size (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 15).⁶⁴⁰ Thus, although no separate burials of small children were found within the settlement, there seems to be evidence for slight deviations from the custom regarding the rituals connected with the death of a child. The custom in the case of Aghios Kosmas, based on a mainly adult record, would be the burials within the chamber of a multiply-used grave.

Regarding the biological age of these 'children', the term 'child' here is a somewhat broad concept. In the three first groups above, 'child' can be equated with small children, possibly infants, represented by tiny fragments of bone (Graves 18, 25, 9a, 21a, 21), while in some cases no bones were found at all, and their assignment as child burials rests on the size of the grave and resemblance to the graves and pits in which bone fragments were found (Graves 17, 11a, 24a). When found with the bones of adults, ages were given to the bones in two instances (Grave 1: 14 years; grave 15: 12 years), whilst we have to rely on a note by Mylonas that bones of children of unspecified age were also found in other cases (Graves 2, 6, 7, 8).⁶⁴¹ No children or infants, and only one skeleton recorded as 'subadult' (estimated age: 17), were among the more or less complete skulls examined by Angel.⁶⁴²

It is uncertain to what degree the skeletons of children were actually noticed at Aghios Kosmas, especially if buried among the bones of adults. On present evidence, it appears that children above one year of age are generally under-represented in the skeletal material at Aghios Kosmas; between the 'small child' and the 12-, 14- and 17-year-old males. Although of questionable statistical value, these data from the Early Helladic period are generally comparable with the results of a full osteological analysis of Middle Helladic subadults (≤ 15 years) at Asine and Lerna. In the first half of the second

⁶³⁸ Spyropoulos 1969a; Tzavella-Evjén 1985.

⁶³⁹ E.g. Sampson 1988a, Graves 81 (i.e. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1984, grave 7), 134 and 168.

⁶⁴⁰ Mylonas 1959, 117.

⁶⁴¹ Mylonas 1959, 117. The presence of children in these graves was not further mentioned in the discussions of each grave.

⁶⁴² Angel in Mylonas 1959, 169, 173, table 1. It is uncertain whether this 17-year-old male is identical with the child from grave 2 mentioned by Mylonas (p. 117). It is likely, however, that skulls of adults were not only better preserved but also considered more useful for the aim of the study which included the measurements of skulls for inference of race.

millennium, around 70% of the recorded deaths within this age group were within the first year of the child's life.⁶⁴³ The absence of older children (>1 year) apparent also in this Early Helladic material is thus similar to MH Asine and Lerna. The skeletons of children are potentially as likely to be preserved as are those of adults, but they are more susceptible to environmental, individual and cultural influence that may impede their preservation,⁶⁴⁴ a factor that may explain the slight deviation from an otherwise realistic mortality curve. In terms of the visibility of the infants/young children in the Early Helladic material, there are grounds for noting the separate burial for this group of children, a practice that may instead have helped their identification in these instances.

It is noteworthy that in seven instances, a special grave (a small copy of the large ones) or pit was dug by the side of the main grave; the child was thus placed by itself in a separate grave quite in contrast to the many skeletons in the main chamber. Only four of the much more numerous adult skeletons in this cemetery were found under any other circumstance: two as isolated piles of bones on the then floor outside Grave 3 (burials 3a and 3b: A and B in *Fig. 75*), another similarly outside Grave 14, and a fourth supine and extended in a shallow rectangular pit in an area to the north of Graves 25 and 30.⁶⁴⁵ Does this mean that children had a somewhat different standing within the mortuary domain? The examples of child burials outside the main grave, where a child was buried in the fill above the cover slab, may be a clue. This, together with the other child burials, suggests that even if many more children than recognised were buried within the main chamber, there were not so few instances when the burial of a child was accomplished without the main grave being opened.

The practice of constructing special miniature tombs or pits in the vicinity of the main burial chamber, for the burial of smaller children in parallel with the interment of children among the bones of adults in the main chamber, is also found at Tsepi.⁶⁴⁶ From Manika and Nea Makri comes evidence for special handling of children within the main chamber.⁶⁴⁷ The fact that, within the

⁶⁴³ Ingvarsson-Sundström 2003, 110–114. Asine: 76.7% (N=103); Lerna 63.7% (N=137).

⁶⁴⁴ Ingvarsson-Sundström 2003, 29–35.

⁶⁴⁵ Mylonas 1959, 118, 107 (Area of the extended skeleton), 94 (grave 14), 75 (Grave 3, two instances of bones: Areas A and B).

⁶⁴⁶ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, Graves 15 (2–3 years) and 27 (two children, one c. 2 years old). Another, grave 5a, was suggested to be for a child on account of the size of the pit, but no bones were found and no cover slab, similarly an as yet unexcavated grave of small size is suggested to be a child burial (grave 32). Within the chamber: e.g. grave 5, p. 53 (two-month-old infant, jaw of child, 6 years), grave 24 (child jaw associated with miniature jar).

⁶⁴⁷ Manika: Sampson 1988a, 64; Alram-Stern 2004, 710; Nea Makri: Theodoraki 1980; Alram-Stern 2004, 549. Sampson (1985, tables 27–30, 385) suggested also that the majority of the 25 burials excavated in 1982 in the Beligianni and Georgiou plots contained only women and children. See also Pullen (1994, 119) for a summary of the osteological analysis of 22 of the graves excavated in 1982: 3 infants, 11 children, 5 youths and 26 adults, and of the 31 adults and youths, 13 could be sexed as females and 11 as males.

extramural cemeteries and graves, the children are to a greater extent than the adults treated individually, sets these burials apart from the model of multiple grave use in extramural contexts, and places them instead in closer connection with the intramural examples.

Burials of adults

Similar problems pertain to the adult burials as to those of children in determining the relationship with nearby architecture. In a few instances, however, the connection between house and tomb appears to be somewhat better substantiated. At Thebes, a pit grave with borders marked by large, round stones was found below a MH wall and close to four unconnected walls of Early Helladic date. Both grave and walls are attributed to the second phase of Early Helladic habitation at the site.⁶⁴⁸ In the grave were found the remnants of two skeletons that had been disturbed by the later wall.⁶⁴⁹ Although almost touching one of the walls of the same general date, it seems likely, considering the stone rim or cover, that the grave was located outside the houses. In a few other cases also, graves seem to be connected with the immediate activity area of a contemporary house. At Koropi, an adult was found buried under the floor of an outdoor area of an Early Helladic building.⁶⁵⁰ At Thebes, the burial of an adult was found below the floor of an EH II building on the western slopes of Aghios Andreas hill.⁶⁵¹ In both cases a connection, i.e. contemporaneity, between burial and floor is indicated by the wording in their publication. A similar case, although the details are little known, may be the tomb connected with the metal workshop near the settlement at Raphina. If they were contemporaneous, a close relationship seems to be indicated.⁶⁵²

In the case of the three graves, each with one burial, from the site of Apollo Maleatas by Epidauros,⁶⁵³ the problem lies not in deciding the relationship to nearby architecture, but whether there was, in fact, nearby architecture at the time of the burials in EH I. The graves themselves were simple pits but they were each covered by a large number of cover slabs, resembling the graves at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas as well as contemporaries on the Cycladic islands. No architecture could be securely assigned to the period, but a settlement is surmised from the small finds and the number of sherds

⁶⁴⁸ Demakopoulou & Konsola 1975, 49, fig. 2; Konsola 1981, 110, 151f., n. 67, site II 8; Symenoglou 1985: site 166.

⁶⁴⁹ Demakopoulou & Konsola 1975, 49, pl. 20f. The finds consisted of two touching crania, one of them with parts of the chest and spine apparently in situ. Further remains are two long bones, apparently twisted around, and more human bones were found outside the grave.

⁶⁵⁰ Kakavogianni 1987, 97.

⁶⁵¹ Konsola 1981, 110, 152, site III 7. Date: EH II. Symenoglou 1985: site 6.

⁶⁵² Theocharis 1955a, 287. See also above, *Chapter 3*, section on *Special purpose buildings*.

⁶⁵³ Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1170–1173, 1182.

from vessels of domestic use.⁶⁵⁴ As the burials are not spatially set apart from the supposed settlement, the graves are here treated as intramural, but it should be noted that these graves display a degree of formalisation on a par with the extramural graves of, for example, Aghios Kosmas: the graves were placed three in a row, they were similarly constructed and sealed with cover slabs. Two installations were also found that may be connected with the mortuary ritual: by Grave 1, a natural cavity covered with stones to some height, and by Grave 2, just beyond the cover slabs, an assemblage of pottery and small finds, traces of burning, organic material and bones of a lamb on a large sherd.⁶⁵⁵

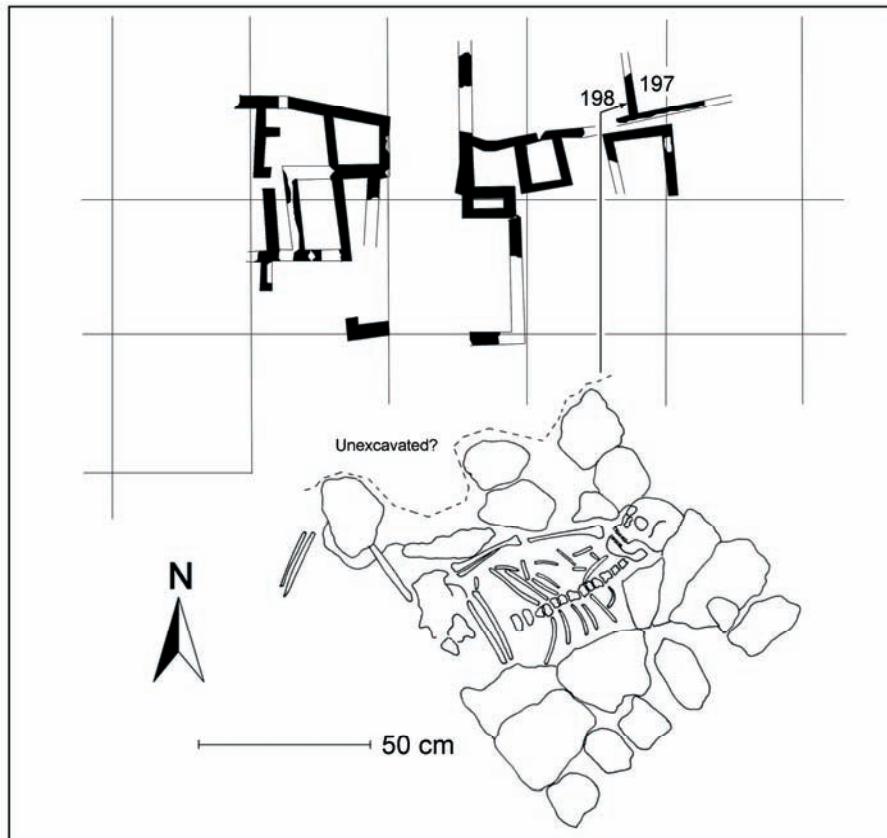


Figure 45. Tiryns. Burial from the west wall of Room 197 of Horizont 8a in the Unterburg (after Kilian 1983, figs. 39b, 48).

⁶⁵⁴ Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1169f.

⁶⁵⁵ Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1171f. See further *Chapter 9*, section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

A special adult burial is noted from the Tirynthian acropolis. From the limited information given by Kilian, it can be concluded that it was a woman and that she was put into the N–S wall of Room 197 sometime during EH II.⁶⁵⁶ On the *in situ* photograph (presented as a drawing in *Fig. 45*), the body is placed perpendicular to the wall and surrounded by stones. The cranium appears as one ‘human stone’ in line with the other stones in the eastern facade of the wall, the hip bone (?) similarly in the eastern facade. The photograph is difficult to interpret, but the skeleton appears to be well preserved—at least the upper body. The wall thus holds only the body from head to hip, the legs are placed in a contracted position, the femur (thigh bone) skirting the length of the wall pointing to the north, the tibia (shin bone) located outside the area of the wall. (Alternatively the body is preserved only to above the hip and what can be interpreted as the hip bone and legs are just stones.) It seems unlikely that the burial was set in the wall during its use-life. The burial did not include any grave goods and is presumably dated on stratigraphical grounds.⁶⁵⁷

Rooms 197 and 198 were destroyed in a large fire sometime in the second half of EH II (end of Horizont 8a), and were followed by scattered finds and floor levels, but no walls, from the transitional phase 9.⁶⁵⁸ No other Early Helladic burials have been found in the Unterburg, and the EH II female stands out as unique. One possibility for the location of the burial in the wall is that it was somehow connected with the fire that destroyed the building. In this scenario, the woman, possibly a victim of the devastation, was laid to rest in the ruins of the (her?) house. In another scenario, the woman was already entombed when the wall was constructed, but it is difficult to account (from my modern perspective at least) for the superficial placement of the legs and cranium in relation to the wall facades, even if the walls were plastered. In either case, the positioning of the body in the wall must have been highly deliberate. There is no information as to whether any stones were removed during excavation from above the skeleton, or if what can be seen on the photograph was indeed the top of the stone substructure before the sun-dried bricks had followed. If stones were removed, it would not, however, affect either of the two scenarios; in both cases it would safeguard the location of the body and make the location look more like the burial it was.

⁶⁵⁶ Kilian 1983, 318, fig. 48.

⁶⁵⁷ Pullen 1985, 119.

⁶⁵⁸ E.g. Kilian 1983; also above *Chapter 4*, section on *Incorporating practices*. Forsén (1992, 47) called for some caution as to the dating of this burial. The position of the skeleton within the wall suggests, nevertheless, at least that the wall was visible when the body was set within it, and stratigraphically it must belong to a phase before Tiryns’ transitional phase when a clay floor covered the area. The burial should, however, rather be dated to a phase after the destruction of the phase 8a room and not to phase 7 as Forsén suggested.

A possible parallel is the incomplete skeleton found within House B in Berbati, and associated with a bronze dagger and three vessels, and partly covered by a large pithos set in the ground.⁶⁵⁹ The stratigraphy of the find remains unclear. Pullen considered the context “not a regular burial per se, [...], rather, the remains of a person killed in a destruction of House B or its predecessor.”⁶⁶⁰ It is worth noting that if he is right, the person was killed (“accidentally or intentionally”⁶⁶¹) and left (buried) in the destruction debris, possibly soon to be built over by a new structure. The incompleteness of the skeleton (apparently only leg bones preserved) needs, however, to be explained.⁶⁶²

These examples from Tiryns and Berbati, like the others above, illustrate the difficulty of ascertaining exact relationships and courses of events. They can also be seen to illustrate the character of these burials as spatially isolated events in the area they were found, that is, not following the tradition of being buried where others have been buried before (in a context of consecutively used graves). The instances of Tiryns and Berbati especially, but also the other adult burials above, may perhaps more than the extramural ones be seen as sparked by individual or at least conflicting choice (to break with the tradition of extramural burials, whether these were graves below ground or otherwise) and special circumstances. The potential importance of special circumstances relating to the death or the dead is further supported by the recently excavated apsidal building, graves and tumulus by the Archaeological Museum at Thebes.⁶⁶³

As discussed above, the context of finds from this site can be interpreted as an act of preserving and creating a memory, of a structure, an event and/or the persons buried, as well as that the tumulus may also have been a way to safeguard the surroundings of possible ills that may have been thought to be connected with the locale.⁶⁶⁴ The burials of the fifteen individuals were set into the destruction layer of the central room of the large apsidal building. Some of the skeletons were positioned over others and, above them all, and the building, a tumulus was created.⁶⁶⁵ The relationship between the different events cannot be fully ascertained from the presently published material, except that they all took place in late EH II (corresponding to the Lefkandi I/Kastri phase).⁶⁶⁶ It should be noted, however, that although the skeletons were set into what is called a ‘destruction layer’ it was apparently not a de-

⁶⁵⁹ Säflund 1965, 109, fig. 89, 110f., 123f. One of the vessels, the so-called fruitstand, was dated by Wiencke (1989, 498, n. 16) to late EH II.

⁶⁶⁰ Pullen 1985, 121.

⁶⁶¹ Forsén 1992, 55.

⁶⁶² See further discussion below, *Chapter 9*, section on *Considering the articulate and the incomplete*.

⁶⁶³ Aravantinos 2004; Psaraki 2004.

⁶⁶⁴ See above *Chapter 5*.

⁶⁶⁵ Aravantinos 2004, 1258f.

⁶⁶⁶ Psaraki 2004, 1259f.

struction by fire,⁶⁶⁷ and the motive behind the abandonment of the building, and the means of destruction, whether they were deliberate or otherwise caused, remains uncertain. It seems nevertheless reasonable to allow for a not very long period of time between the different events. I have argued above for the possibility that the buried individuals were closely connected with the activity in the building complex, and that their death may even have been the cause for the demolition of the building and their later burial within it.⁶⁶⁸

However the sequence of events may be reconstructed, the context of the fifteen individuals encourages a picture of a specially arranged burial ritual, adapted to the unique circumstances of a likewise thus far unique architectural complex. Although uncommon, the mass burial is, however, not unique within the study area, nor within the Early Helladic period. The well of Cheliotomylos and its contents have been known since their first mention by Shear in 1930, and by the partial publication by Waage almost twenty years later. Although (or rather because) many questions remain concerning this context, it deserves a full description in this discussion of arguably intramural burials.

The well at Cheliotomylos

Pottery from all Bronze Age periods has been found over the top of the mound and on the northern slopes of the Cheliotomylos hill, about one kilometre northwest of ancient Corinth.⁶⁶⁹ An excavation was carried out in 1930 at the northern foot of the hill in order to locate the limits of Corinth's nearby Northern Cemetery. Apart from the continuation of the cemetery there, with mainly Roman burials, the excavation revealed an Early Helladic well shaft.⁶⁷⁰ The well, originally 16.65 metres deep, was one metre in diameter and was excavated to its full depth of 17.35 metres below modern ground level (*Fig. 46*).

In the well were found sherds of some 150 vessels of which more than 50 could be completely or partly restored.⁶⁷¹ In the well were also 20 to 30 human skeletons of both adults and children.⁶⁷² The pottery was found throughout the shaft but was most numerous between 13.00 and 13.70 metres below

⁶⁶⁷ Aravantinos 2004, 1257.

⁶⁶⁸ Chapter 5, section on *The search for culprits*.

⁶⁶⁹ Blegen 1920, 3; Shear 1930; Waage 1949; *Gaz.* A 53: Mylos Cheliotou. Measurements from the shaft are presented as given in Waage 1949.

⁶⁷⁰ Waage 1949, 415, n. 1.

⁶⁷¹ After a summary of vessels mentioned in Waage 1949 (417–420) that gave 53 more or less restored vessels and fragments of another 79 vessels, plus many without precise figures. Shear (1930, 404) mentioned 51 completely- or partly-preserved vessels.

⁶⁷² Twenty skeletons were aged: five adolescent to subadult, three young adult, five middle-aged, three old, and four children (6–12 years) (Waage 1949, 422).

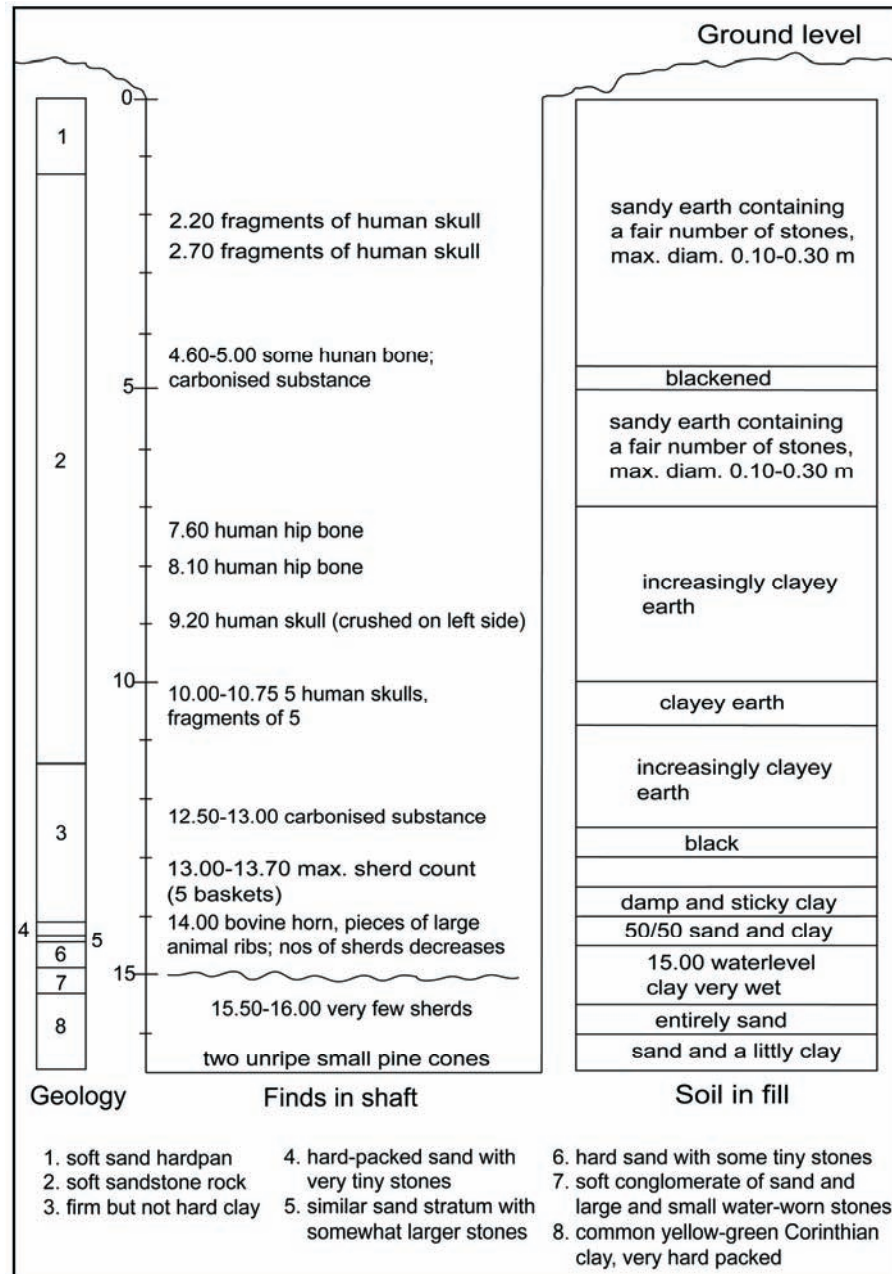


Figure 46. Cheliotomylos. Find circumstances of the Early Helladic well (information from Waage 1949, 416f.)

ground level, where five baskets were collected.⁶⁷³ In the stratigraphy, the largest mass of pottery overlay some strata with a decreasing amount of sherds and an increasing amount of water and pure clay. The lower strata were apparently the use-fill, with the actual filling in of the well shaft starting with the mass of pottery.⁶⁷⁴ Next, above the pottery, came a 0.50-metre stratum “black from the carbonization of some substance”,⁶⁷⁵ and some two metres above that began the layer with human remains.

This rather sensational find is often passed over rather casually, and classified side by side with more ‘ordinary’ burials from the Early Helladic period. The context of the find, however, can be further analysed, even if much is lacking in the available publications. The results will have an impact on the position of the find within Early Helladic burial archaeology.

One major question concerns the preservation of the bones. The skulls received special attention, but what was the state of other bones? Could the bones form complete skeletons, or were the skulls over-represented? In only one instance was a *skeleton* mentioned in the stratigraphy.⁶⁷⁶ Most of the human remains (read: skulls, which was the part of the skeleton most diligently noted) were found at between eight and eleven metres below ground level. The majority of the bones were found “inextricably mixed up and usually broken”⁶⁷⁷ in the narrow space of one cubic metre. The crania and mandibles (jaw bones) were nevertheless in most cases reported to have been found in correct relation to each other.⁶⁷⁸ The consensus seems to be that this, in combination with the fact that the majority of the remains were found within one cubic metre, indicates that the assemblage was a multiple burial and an isolated event and, as Waage concluded, that “bodies and not skeletons must have been thrown into the well”.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷³ Waage 1949, 416. The majority of the vessels consisted of sauceboats and small bowls or saucers, with a small number of larger bowls and basins as well as a few closed vessels such as jars and pitchers. The context of the finds presented here, in the text and in *Figure 46*, derives from the summary in Waage 1949, pp. 416f.

⁶⁷⁴ John C. Lavezzi refers in the Corinth centenary volume to his forthcoming restudy of the material and dates there the “main or closing fill” to Corinth EH II Middle, roughly equivalent to Lerna IIIB–C, and the “use-fill” to an earlier phase with Cycladicising elements (Lavezzi 2003, 73, n. 25, and p. 71, table 4.5, for a correspondence with Lerna chronology).

⁶⁷⁵ Waage 1949, 416.

⁶⁷⁶ Waage 1949, 146, at a level of 8.10 metres below ground level.

⁶⁷⁷ Waage 1949, 421.

⁶⁷⁸ Waage 1949, 416, 421. Aleš Hrdlička of the Smithsonian Institution who examined the skeletal material reported the skulls to be very fragmentary with no cranium and only few jawbones preserved complete.

⁶⁷⁹ Waage 1949, 421; Pullen 1985, 114f.; Forsén 1992, 73. See also Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 15) who noted the well under intramural burials but contended that “this must be classified as informal disposal since the dead had apparently been thrown in unceremoniously”. Rutter (2001, 123, n. 119) interprets the fill in the well as a “mass grave”, “possibly representative of an unsettled subphase within EH II when there was unusually high mortality due to either warfare or disease”.

Considering the unusual choice of a well for an interment, and the dense clustering of the majority of the bones within one metre of the whole length of the shaft, I agree that a single event deposition does indeed seem to be the most likely scenario. In that case, however, I cannot see how it can be possible that actual bodies were thrown into the well. It is difficult to see how 20 to 30 fleshed bodies could fit in the full length of the shaft, even less how about fifteen of them could result in a concentration of one cubic metre. Thus:

- If bodies and not skeletons were thrown in, it must have been mostly heads and only few other bones in order to produce the compact composition of the assemblage. In this scenario we must take into consideration a beheading of some sort.
- If complete skeletons were present, they must have been deposited in more or less skeletal form. The articulation of the skull and jawbone can be explained by remnants of tendons of a not fully decomposed skeleton, or the considerate or functional placing of the skeletons in a bundle of some sort in order to keep the bones together before deposition. In this scenario, it could be a matter of preferential treatment of the skulls as has been noted from some other Early Helladic graves,⁶⁸⁰ in which case other bones may be only sparsely represented.

As it is expressly stated that the skulls were given *special* attention, the second, and secondary, option seems the most likely. One apparently isolated skeleton was also noted in the stratigraphy and Waage accounted for the seemingly general problem of recovering any complete skeletons or even long bones in a complete state.⁶⁸¹ Despite the preserved relative position of skull and jawbone I propose that it is more credible to regard the composition as created by *skeletons* deposited in the well, *not* bodies. It seems also likely, therefore, that the bones were already mixed up at the time of deposition, or that they were mixed up when deposited in skeletal form.

As Waage has already commented,⁶⁸² to approach the secret of the well, two questions must be asked: What was the meaning of the bodies in the well, and why was the well chosen for the interment? To attempt to answer these questions I believe it must first be clear that the bodies must be envisioned to have lain at another location *outside* the well for some period of time. This place may have been informal (bodies being left where they ‘fell’) or, if the skeletons are more or less complete, most probably in a grave of some kind. One major problem is to account for the time that must have

⁶⁸⁰ The stacking of skulls along one side of the grave chamber as evidenced for example in Tsepi grave 2 (Pantelidou Gofa 2005, figs. 12–13).

⁶⁸¹ Waage 1949, 416.

⁶⁸² Waage 1949, 422.

elapsed between the deaths and the secondary deposition of the *skeletons* in the well shaft. I can see many possibilities, and all of them are necessarily speculative:

- For some reason it may have been necessary to disturb and relocate the burials in one or several nearby graves.
- A catastrophic event, especially an inexplicable disease, or some act of violence, causing the death of up to thirty persons, must have caused considerable turmoil. Whether or not the deaths occurred in areas in the vicinity of the grave, the survivors may have quickly and haphazardly buried their dead and/or simply left them for fear of the forces that caused the deaths. The final deposition then, may have been after the time that was needed or was considered customary in these events, or when the primary burials were encountered again by people possibly unconnected with the deaths.
- The dead were placed in an intentionally temporary grave as part of a two-phased burial practice. The choice of the well may indicate that a formal grave was unavailable, or not thought necessary or even wanted at the time of the secondary burial.

The well can then be argued to have been the intended final resting place (in which case a symbolical reason may lie behind the choice),⁶⁸³ or the well was at hand when the need arose (a functional reason that need not exclude any symbolical considerations). It is possible that the well, sometime in its use-life, was given a ritual role and thereafter filled in continuously with the pottery found in it. Many of the vessels were found practically intact.⁶⁸⁴ However, as both bones and pottery in the well, at their peak, appear to have been very tightly packed, it is reasonable to interpret the main fill as one connected event, composed of some closely consecutive if not fully simultaneous phases. The soil between the main accumulations of pottery and human bones may be an indication of some separation in time between the two deposits. Considering that pottery, as well as human bone, was found throughout the shaft, it seems possible also that the quantity of soil may be somehow connected with the ritual of deposition.⁶⁸⁵

Within either of the possible scenarios, the layering of the deposits in the shaft indicates a considerable degree of deliberateness in the separation of different types of materials deposited in the well, even if bones and pottery are mixed to a certain degree throughout the shaft. The assemblage suggests

⁶⁸³ Chthonic cult has been suggested in relation to the Chelitomylos well shaft, in connection with the Chasm at Eutresis, where, however, no human bones were found (Caskey & Caskey 1960, 163).

⁶⁸⁴ Shear 1930, 404.

⁶⁸⁵ An analysis of pottery joins would certainly be valuable to fully ascertain this fact, as would a more detailed stratigraphy of the finds in the shaft.

a ritual and deliberate removal of the skeletons from their primary resting place to their final deposition in the well. The large amounts of pottery can be remains of vessels deposited with the dead, possessions/household vessels of the dead, preserved in the vicinity of their resting place, or offerings at the time of the deposition of the dead in the well (perhaps as part of a feasting ceremony, although the animal remains in the well shaft were few in comparison).⁶⁸⁶ The sheer number of vessels seems to preclude the interpretation of the pottery as traditional grave goods, as they are normally never as numerous in Early Helladic graves. In sum, the choice of the well falls outside what we, from our present standpoint, can dub 'normal practice', and so do the finds within it. The story told by the well find is a story of an extraordinary event. Whichever scenario may explain the initial deaths and their primary, unknown resting place, the deposition in the well appears nevertheless in large part as a thoughtful act not without ceremonial considerations.⁶⁸⁷ Whether the well was the intended or simply the available locale, the context of the assemblage suggests a sacralisation of the space, and an act in a manner *on a par* with practices indicated in other Early Helladic burial contexts.

Children, adults, intramural and extra-ordinary

Forsén noted that the Cheliotomylos well was not a burial *per se* and excluded it from her consideration of intramural burials.⁶⁸⁸ I would say that it is perhaps not a traditional Early Helladic *grave structure per se*, but much suggests that the ceremonial aspects were not diminished. Whether the well was an intramural grave is difficult to decide. To my knowledge, no excavation has been conducted on the crest of the small Cheliotomylos hill, but thick layers of debris have been noted generally on the mound.⁶⁸⁹ No other architectural remains have been reported from the excavation that uncovered the well. With reference to the location of many Early Helladic settlements, the crown of the low hill is the likely position of one (central?) part of the settlement, which does not preclude that habitation continued down the northern slopes. The well may thus have been located on the outskirts of the settlement (at the closest convenient point for the digging of a well?), and also differentiated by elevation from the habitation areas. As a well, it must nevertheless have been closely connected with the daily life of the inhabitants of the settlement. What effect the burial in the well had on the use of the area, or if the choice fell on a well no longer used, is impossible to say on present evidence.

⁶⁸⁶ Waage 1949, 421.

⁶⁸⁷ *Contra* Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 15. Cf. a possible parallel noted by Maran (1998, 293, with reference), the Middle Helladic shaft within the western cemetery at Eleusis.

⁶⁸⁸ Forsén 1992, 73.

⁶⁸⁹ Blegen 1920, 3.

Similarly, the skeleton at Berbati has also been called “not a regular burial *per se*”.⁶⁹⁰ I suggest that it is to ‘miss the point’ not to also call these contexts burials, or to single them out from other ‘burials’. What really is the definition of a ‘burial’? One important definition, I suggest, is *intentionality* and, to a certain degree, *formalisation*: an intentionality of leaving the dead at a certain location, not necessarily in a predetermined, somehow built, grave, and with consideration given to general practices concerning the last stages of the procedures following a death. Even if the possibilities were limited at the time, due to the surrounding circumstances, location, lack of time, neither intentionality nor formalisation need to be absent, although perhaps circumscribed. In short, I see a burial primarily as an act or a ritual. No EH ‘burial’ falls outside this definition. Based on the evidence we have of the, more or less, intramural Early Helladic graves from the study area, I think we can nevertheless say that the intramural graves were the result of choices that were to some extent other than the ones resulting in the common handling of the dead outside the settled area. This does not necessarily mean that the choices broke with the norm, or the custom, but it may. It may also mean that the custom allowed choices other than the more common ones under special circumstances. Thus, within the smaller group of intramural graves, I think instead of looking for patterns and rules, we should allow for the flexibility of the human mind and effects of unexpected events. On account of the low number of intramural burials, signalling that a majority of the dead were deposited outside the settlements, the conclusion lies close at hand that special circumstances occasioned the intramural instances.

Instead of saying that intramural burials fell outside the norm, it is perhaps better to interpret them as ‘atypical’ in the relationship between intra- and extramural burials, with the qualification that what may be typical or not within the available archaeological material would not necessarily be so if the full array of Early Helladic burials were available to us (now complicated by chronological and regional variation as well as preservational factors). With that said, in comparison with the preserved instances of extramural graves, a first conclusion is that in the Early Helladic period the intramural burials were indeed atypical in several ways:⁶⁹¹

- Less effort was given to the grave itself, in most instances these graves were simple pits or natural crevices.
- Few graves contained more than one skeleton—if they do, they appear to be one event mass graves.
- The burials were spatially isolated events—they generally do not appear in clusters.

⁶⁹⁰ Pullen 1985, 121; also Forsén 1992, 55.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. the initial listing of Early Helladic burial characteristics above, introduction to *Part IV*.

I propose that extramural burials may be characterised with *tradition*, multiplicity and solidarity, and if so, that the intramural burials in contrast may be said to stand for *variation* and isolation, both in terms of the number of individuals within each grave as well as the location of the grave in relation to other graves.

This twofold division is based on the present evidence of burials within the whole of the Early Helladic period, and is potentially flawed in several respects. Apart from the fact that the variety in the extramural mortuary record was in all probability originally much wider, the intramural and extramural burials of the present sample are not chronologically contemporaneous. Throughout the period, however, the intramural burials remained atypical; *a majority of the dead were deposited outside settled areas*. We cannot say that throughout the EH period, a majority of the extramural depositions were in a grave reused many times, as in the available cemeteries, or that there were special areas for the dead.⁶⁹² It is possible that a majority of the dead were placed at different locales in the landscape without a common arrangement. It is probable, however, that there existed at all times a common understanding of how the death and the dead of the society should be handled, and a majority choice, however general, of keeping the living and the dead separated. The dualism between tradition and variation can therefore be seen as upheld through the Early Helladic period, but the details in the relationship may have changed. While the bullets above highlight the differences in the material that we have at our disposal, they also form the basis for an argument of mortuary variability through time.⁶⁹³ They may also pinpoint the characteristics of burials we would ordinarily not find or be able to locate if they were situated outside the settled area.⁶⁹⁴

Many variables must necessarily be accounted for if we are to gain a greater understanding of the choices that formed the Early Helladic mortuary record. This is perhaps especially so for our picture of the position of individuals below adult age within prehistoric societies. Children are underrepresented in the Early Helladic mortuary record to a greater degree than adults. The mortality among infants is likely to have been high, and this fact says something about the degree to which the graves or other final resting places of these infants have been found. In today's western societies, the death of a child is connected with many strong emotions. In the case of the death of children there is an immediate understanding of the emotional pain that could have been involved. In relation to intramural child burials, it has also been suggested that the house and perhaps the settlement as a whole could have had the power to balance events like the death of an infant.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹² See further below, *Chapter 8*.

⁶⁹³ See above, *Chapter 6*.

⁶⁹⁴ See further, *Chapter 8*, section on *Modern detection*.

⁶⁹⁵ Hodder 1990, 97.

Childhood is also a period that is, or at least we now think should be, a period quite different from that of adulthood. There lies, however, a great interpretative problem: in this way ‘children’ are treated as a largely uniform group in relation to the Early Helladic archaeological material. Thus, there is obviously a difference between a two-year-old and a ten-year-old individual, and the grouping of children does not take into account cultural variation in the relation between biological and social age. In the end, it must be contended that any suggestions made here may correspond to the original circumstances and/or are more or less taphonomically conditioned. More wide range osteological analyses are needed to decide to which degree taphonomy is involved.

If we nevertheless try to sum up the evidence presented above on the burial of children, that is, the available archaeological record with all its potential faults, some provisional statements can be made. Firstly, in terms of the division on account of age, it can be noted that the majority of the intramural child burials appear to be of very small children (in EH II infants–2 years; in EH III infants), those in separate graves or pits by the side of the main grave in extramural cemeteries are small children (if aged: 2–3 years), while the children within the main burial chamber, when aged, range from infants to early teenagers. Secondly, the specially dug graves and pits by the side of the main graves were reserved for children, and mostly each for one child, in contrast to the main chambers with multiple skeletons. The type of tomb (deep, shallow, built grave or earthen pit, etc.) is a factor that may influence the preservation of any bones, but in these cases it may even have had a positive effect on the visibility of children in the Early Helladic mortuary record.

On present evidence, it seems that in many cases small children in the early extramural cemeteries did receive special attention by being buried in individual graves,⁶⁹⁶ something that in fact positions them rather closer to the intramural instances than their extramural contemporaries. The low number of child burials may perhaps also say something about the varying ways in which children of all ages were treated after death, but this is a suggestion where taphonomy is highly decisive. On the basis of the special graves for children in the early cemeteries, and the predominance of infants in the EH III intramural record, it can perhaps nevertheless be cautiously suggested that there was greater leeway for the treatment of children after death. This flexibility may have been connected with the social position of children up to a certain age, perhaps up to an age of 2–3 years. With the potential for a greater integration into the workings of the community through a life time, it is probable that there was a greater spectrum of culturally accepted choices available for the caring of an individual at the beginning of this process

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Mylonas 1959, 117: “[...] indicating that perhaps in special cases only or for special reasons individual graves were made for children.”

(which need not begin at zero). The choice of burial site could fall on the space nearby or within the family, multiple grave, under the floor or just around the corner from one's house, or anywhere in the settlement or in the landscape with a special meaning to the person/s making the choice. The predominance of newborns in the (still limited) material from EH III Kolonna and Lerna suggests a certain formalisation of this practice within these communities.

This hint of formalisation is not evident in the intramural record of the preceding EH II period (or later EH II, as it were). Children of any age are rare, as are the burials in total, but the range of the children's ages are nevertheless greater. Some of the children in EH II intramural contexts are found together with adults (Cheliotomylos, Thebes/Museum). These burials are extra-ordinary in many respects. In some instances it is possible to argue for a special, possibly unexpected event as the driving force behind the unusual choice of location for a burial. The burials in the destruction debris of the apsidal house at Thebes, in the Cheliotomylos well, and in the wall at Tiryns are extraordinary finds. Other intramural burials of adults (or of children) are perhaps not so special, except, that is, for the fact that they were found where they were, within the settled area.

In the end, the intramural graves are few, and there is no pattern in their location or structure as there was in the extramural cemeteries. The pattern lies in their variation and singularity. Whether or not they were contemporaneous and somehow connected with the buildings in their closest vicinity, the burials were located in the general area where people still went about their everyday lives, quite in contrast to a location in an extramural cemetery, or extramurally deposited dead. The choices behind the intramural burials stand evidently in contrast to what we can tell were customary for the treatment of the dead within the Early Helladic period. The sources of this may have been many and varied; perhaps the uninfluenced or opposing mind of a person close to the dead; deliberate, approved and even culturally stipulated exceptions to the general rule on the reasons for special circumstances or for special personages, and/or unexpected and extraordinary events calling for extraordinary measures. In comparison to the graves used many times in extramural cemeteries, with the single interment, the isolated grave, the individuality of the person will be continuously intact, whereas, after a while, the dead in a multiply-used grave are more likely to be incorporated into the group of the bones of other, previous dead. Even if the burial was one of many individuals, the special circumstances and the atypical location may have awarded the burial a special position within the community, and would have helped to keep the memory of the act intact for some time.

Some concluding words

It is worth making a final note of an aspect of the intramural burials that does not stand in contrast to the extramural examples. That is the number and appearance of the grave goods. Again, we do not yet know of any settlement with both intramural and extramural burials, so no full comparison can be made; there can be local distinctions. On a general level, the spectrum ranges from a few items to none at all. A majority of the intramural burials in fact had no grave goods at all. This cannot be given decisive importance, however, since they are so few. One further aspect of this is that they are mostly single interments. Many extramural, multiple burials were found without accompanying material items,⁶⁹⁷ and it is clear that not all burial ceremonies included depositions of grave goods along with the dead, or at least no *non-perishable (recognisable)* items. Few child burials have been found with anything at all apart from the brittle skeleton. Two burials from Asine and one from Lerna therefore stand out, with many associated grave goods. At Asine both graves were found with three bowls respectively, one of them also had two whole and two half obsidian blades.⁶⁹⁸ The infant in EH III Grave BB3 at Lerna may possibly have been accompanied by as many as five vessels.⁶⁹⁹ Again, I think we make too much of the material if we give greater importance to these few instances out of a small selection than to those without grave goods. The differences may reflect the standing of their parents or themselves, but it may also reflect the preferences of the same. Similarly, the grave goods associated with the Thebes/Museum burials, comprising pottery, bone artefacts and obsidian blades,⁷⁰⁰ may reflect a related variety of preferences and/or be a reflection of the nature of the deaths and burials.

In summary, it is apparent that the intramural burials differ from their extramural contemporaries in many ways. They are exceptions in the comparison, but not necessarily exceptions that confirm the rule of extramural cemeteries. I suggest they should instead be seen as exceptions that confirm the rule of variability and individuality in relation to the experience of and ways of dealing with death. The differences can be found on a structural, geographical and temporal level. And the differences may be partly chronological, as we have yet to find and examine a closely contemporaneous set of intramural and extramural burials from an interconnected pair of settlement and cemetery. We have no basis, however, for arguing anything but that they all belong to the same general group of 'burials', emotionally and ritually.

⁶⁹⁷ E.g. Aghios Kosmas Graves 9 and 20 were both found without grave goods, either inside or outside the grave, and they contained 12 and 16+ individuals, respectively (Mylonas 1959).

⁶⁹⁸ Frödin & Persson 1938, 339f.

⁶⁹⁹ Pullen 1985, 116f.

⁷⁰⁰ Aravantinos 2004, 1259.

8. The spatial separation of death

Cemeteries are discrete areas, separate from settlements. Cemetery and habitation areas may be contiguous, as at Manika, but usually a distance of several hundred meters separates the two areas, as at Zygouries and Agios Kosmas. A number of sites included in this study apparently are cemetery sites without a known settlement in the immediate vicinity. This distance between settlement and cemetery may be part of the reason cemeteries are not well represented in the archaeological record of EBA Greece.⁷⁰¹

Where the Early Helladic graves were located, and our possibilities today of locating them, are issues that have bearing on how we understand and interpret these graves. Pullen summarises in the citation some of the characteristics and the problems these characteristics may cause for their archaeological detection. The burials within settlements have already been discussed above; they are burials that have been found during excavations of a known settlement area. Their discovery is generally a fortunate ‘by-product’ of the search for habitation levels. Extramural burials, on the other hand, were located outside the settled area and therefore outside the area most often examined by archaeologists. That is to say, they are generally not the focus for archaeological activity, if the tombs were not visual markers to attract attention, such as the Early Minoan tholoi, or, as in the Cyclades, that landscape and prehistoric practices favoured the preservation of tombs over settlements. In both cases, the relation between settlements and cemeteries was the opposite of that on the Early Helladic mainland, that is, many graves and few settlements. In Crete, in contrast to the study area, the house-graves, and the tholoi of the Mesara plain were also constructed *above* ground as very poignant monuments of the societies’ dead, and of communality among the living.

For the interpretation of the Early Helladic burials, several perspectives are of importance. A play on the English verb ‘locate’ as in the title of this part of the book, will give at least three of these perspectives, referring to the acts of finding and placing. The initial considerations of chronology and regional variation have located the burials in time and space within the Early

⁷⁰¹ Pullen 1994, 126.

Helladic period and the study area. The following sections will focus on the spatial separation of death from some further viewpoints:

- How can we today trace Early Helladic burials? (*Modern detection*)
- How were the people of the Early Helladic period aware of the location of burials? (*Past knowledge*)
- Who were buried in the Early Helladic graves? (*Representativeness*)

After the consideration of the intramural burials in the preceding section, these points and the remainder of the chapter will be concerned with the extramural location of the burials. The initial three perspectives will therefore lead on to a fuller analysis of the major fourth perspective:

- *Where* did the people of the Early Helladic period chose to place their dead?

Modern detection

Regarding the first issue, of how we today can trace the Early Helladic burials, it is evident that even more so than the settlements, the cemeteries elude modern archaeology. Distance may be one aspect (as Pullen notes in the citation above), but it should also be considered that undisturbed Early Helladic cemeteries would not, in contrast to settlements, have left a scatter of pottery on the ground by which they could be distinguished. Nor did they generally cover several chronological phases like many settlements do.⁷⁰² Generally, therefore, there are no accumulations of debris to pin-point their location or to direct work leading to their discovery. Overall, the way Early Helladic graves are detected seems to be by modern construction works, thus rescue excavations (e.g. Manika, Tsepi, Kalamaki), or deliberate attempts aimed at locating the graves of an already known settlement, or as a part of a more general wider survey of such an area (Zygouries, Lithares, Aghios Kosmas). Another possibility is, of course, the importance of information from local inhabitants with a close and long-term interaction with the surrounding landscape.

The graves by the Boeotian lakes: a case-study

The following summary of an area with an apparently especially high detection rate of Early Helladic graves will serve to illustrate the various problems

⁷⁰² One exception is Zygouries, where graves have been found dating to EH, MH, LH, Geometric (outside the most densely occupied part of the cemetery), and Roman periods (Blegen 1928, 42–74).

connected with the modern day detection and recording of Early Helladic burials, as well as attempting to resolve some identification problems connected with these cemeteries. The area under consideration is the vicinity of the modern lakes Likéri/Hylike and Paralimni to the north of the Theban Plain and its immediate surroundings (*Fig. 47*). A first archaeological investigation of graves in the area was published as early as 1931, and the years of 1969 and 1970 saw the publication of a number of references to Early Helladic cemeteries in the area.⁷⁰³ These have been recorded under different names in later surveys: *Loukisia*, *Paralimni* (two sites), *Lithares* and *Likéri*.⁷⁰⁴ The different names are unfortunate, as I believe that they give the appearance of more cemeteries than really existed. The varying names used would suggest a total of five different cemeteries from the limited area of the lakes. It appears, however, that this number should be modified.

The cemetery of Likéri was found by Papademetriou on the western slopes of a hill at a location called Anakoli. He noted cist graves higher up the hill and circular rock-cut graves lower down the hill, closer to the shore.⁷⁰⁵ The cemetery at Lithares was discovered by Spyropoulos and the later publisher of the nearby settlement, Tzavella-Evjen, to the east of the mouth of the creek passing the settlement (*Fig. 54*). The location of the cemetery was more specifically presented as being on the western slopes of the Kokkinosvrachos mountain, at a location called Anakoli.⁷⁰⁶ From these descriptions, the location of Lithares and Likéri appears to be one and the same; the rock-cut graves by the lake shore seem to be part of the same cemetery excavated by Spyropoulos. Furthermore, Fossey listed the two sites and their publications as one.⁷⁰⁷ Spyropoulos himself also mentioned the publication by Papademetriou, noting that this earlier survey remained on the eastern side of the creek and was thus distinct from the later excavated settlement.⁷⁰⁸ Thus, instead of listing Lithares and Likéri as two separate cemeteries, I suggest that they be treated as parts of the same cemetery.

Two further clusters of graves have been investigated by the northern corner of Lake Paralimni and were briefly published by Faraklas in two arti-

⁷⁰³ Papademetriou 1931 (Likéri); Spyropoulos 1969a, esp. 36–43 (Lithares); 1969b (Kesseri); 1970, 224–226 (Hypaton); Faraklas 1969a, 174f.; 1969b (Paralimni).

⁷⁰⁴ E.g. Loukisia: Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979, site G 42; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 22; Paralimni: Pullen 1985 (2 sites), 136; Konsola 1981 (2 sites, 34 and 34a); Likéri: Konsola 1981, 39; Pullen 1985, 134f.; Lithares: Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979, site G 30; Konsola 1981, 39; Pullen 1985, 135; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 22.

⁷⁰⁵ Papademetriou 1931; Pullen 1985: Likéri.

⁷⁰⁶ Spyropoulos 1969a, 28, 37; Tzavella-Evjen 1985, fig. 1.

⁷⁰⁷ Fossey 1988, 244f.

⁷⁰⁸ Spyropoulos 1969a, 41, 46. See e.g. the location of Likéri as marked out by Konsola (Konsola 1981, map 3, site 31: Likéri), compared with the location of Lithares marked out by Tzavella-Evjen (1985, fig. 1)—the location is the same. Lithares is by Konsola marked on the hill to the west of the creek and should therefore denote the settlement only.

cles of 1969.⁷⁰⁹ One of them was located by the foot of the Botsikoula hill-ock, 500–700 metres east to north-east of the acropolis identified with ancient Isos, on the Mount Ptoon side of the lake. The other was located on the other side of the lake, by the foot of the Kandili hill and thus geographically distinct from the known settlement by the lake (henceforth: Paralimni: Botsikoula and Paralimni: Kandili).⁷¹⁰ Spyropoulos also reported a further two clusters of graves by the Theban plain: at Hypaton (3 graves), and at Kesseri near Schimatari (8 graves), the latter outside the area of the lakes.⁷¹¹

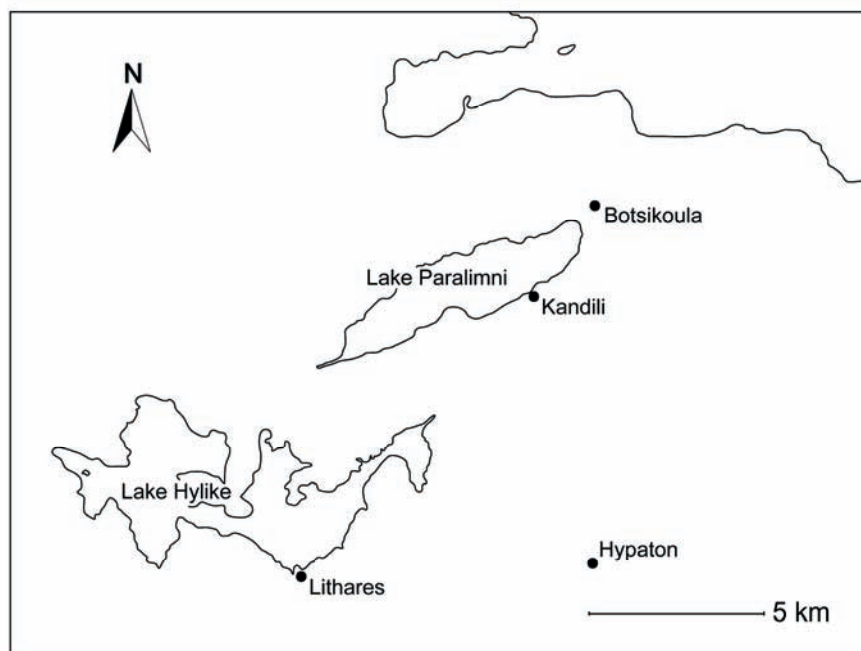


Figure 47. Northern Theban Plain and lakes with Early Helladic cemeteries (information from Spyropoulos 1969a; Faraklas 1969a)

Although the number of cemeteries in this area may be lower than it first appears, the number of detected cemeteries and graves within a limited area is still notably high. The details of the discovery of these three cemeteries by the lakes and the two other locations were not recorded. Their discovery

⁷⁰⁹ Faraklas 1969a; Faraklas 1969b. In these two articles, the two cemeteries are recorded as located by the lake Paralimni. Loukisia, as used by Hope Simpson and Dickinson (1979) and later by Cavanagh and Mee (1998), however, is never mentioned. Loukisia is the name of the modern community around five kilometres distant from the lake, and was used rather unfortunately by Hope Simpson and Dickinson as part of their common strategy of connecting smaller sites to 'nearby' modern villages.

⁷¹⁰ Faraklas 1969a, 175.

⁷¹¹ Spyropoulos 1969b (Kesseri); Spyropoulos 1970 (Hypaton).

within just a few years must presumably be ascribed to good contacts between the archaeological authorities and the local population, partly perhaps also to individual researchers and their time spent in the area, and a portion of good luck.⁷¹² Spyropoulos characterised the cemetery of Lithares as a “lucky/chance find”,⁷¹³ which seems a little odd since he apparently knew of the graves previously recorded in the area by Papademetriou and also by Dodwell.⁷¹⁴ The exact location of these, however, may have been unknown in 1969, and the area of the graves thereby ‘rediscovered’, explaining the apparent ‘double’ investigation and publication of the cemetery.

The problems of detection and preservation

It is noteworthy and unfortunate that so little is known of what must be the at least two hundred graves making up the three grave clusters in the immediate area of the Boeotian lakes, with two more not so far away. The publications and original references to them seem oddly limited. It is difficult to judge how this limited information corresponds to the actual preservation of the graves and their finds. The graves at Kesseri were reported as robbed, and illegal excavation is unfortunately an omnipresent activity working against the efforts of archaeological investigation. In the present case there are also indications that the factors that have worked towards the detection of graves may at the same time have worked against their overall preservation. Thus, even if it does not fully explain the shortcomings of their reports, one clearly significant problem for the detection as well as preservation of graves lies in the changing conditions of the natural landscape.

Just as they can be hidden from view by an unknown depth of later deposits, the graves could be eroded away or temporarily hidden. The two cemeteries by Lake Paralimni were revealed when the level of the lake receded as the result of the draining of the Kopais basin in the late 1960s (in contrast to drainage of the same basin in the late 1800s that caused the enlargement of the lakes).⁷¹⁵ The approximately one hundred graves by Paralimni: Botsikoula are now located around one kilometre from the lake shore, but these were flooded when the lake was at its greater expanse, causing most of the

⁷¹² Further examples of several cemetery sites being recorded within a more or less limited region are by Adamantios Sampson for central Euboea and by Dimitrios Theocharis for the east coast of Attica. Sampson (e.g. 1985, 337f.) reported four Early Helladic cemeteries in central Euboea (plus the LN cemetery at Skoteini Tharrounia: Sampson 1993a); and Theocharis (1955a) five areas with Early Helladic graves noted by himself and others (not including Askitarion, which was published later). The fact that Spyropoulos’, Sampson’s, and Theocharis names appear on the publications does not make clear where these researchers’ involvement began along the time sequence from detection to the publication of the finds.

⁷¹³ Spyropoulos 1969a, 36f.

⁷¹⁴ Spyropoulos (1969a, 46) mentioned graves noted by Edward Dodwell (*A Classical and Topographical tour through Greece*, II, 1819, p. 53), and referred also to Papademetriou’s work in the locality and his find of graves.

⁷¹⁵ Fossey 1988, 226; Faraklas 1968, 139f.

bones and grave goods to dissolve or disappear.⁷¹⁶ Other areas of graves have also been partly submerged and eroded by rising water levels since the Early Helladic period (Lithares, Aghios Kosmas).⁷¹⁷ In other instances, graves have only been surmised/identified from sherds, small finds and slabs on the surface (Sounion, Raphtopoula, Askitarion).⁷¹⁸ If in these instances the surface finds come from graves, the graves must have been disturbed in one way or another for the finds to be visible. For the present barren character of these areas, erosion is likely to be a major factor.

Thus, although graves do not leave surface finds in the way settlements do, they are often placed in areas susceptible to the external forces of nature. Reviewing the references to the grave contexts mentioned in the present study, it will be evident that most finds belong to a period now almost half a century back in time, although, as in the case of Tsepi, these were only recently finally published.⁷¹⁹ Unlike the constantly rising number of Early Helladic settlements, the number of cemeteries has changed very little since 1980. In the years thereafter, the heyday of archaeological field survey, only a small number of finds of new locations with single or clusters of possibly or definitely extramural graves has been reported.⁷²⁰ These finds, however, were not the results of field surveys, but generally of rescue excavations or “topographical reconnaissance surveys”⁷²¹ dependent on local information. To my knowledge, no archaeological intensive field survey has yet added to our list of known Early Helladic graves.⁷²² These surveys have brought a

⁷¹⁶ Faraklas 1969a, 175. The recession of the water from the northern corner of lake Paralimni revealed apart from the Early Helladic graves many later prehistoric and historic finds on the thereby created plain and also at other areas of both lakes (Spyropoulos 1971).

⁷¹⁷ Mylonas 1959; Spyropoulos 1969a.

⁷¹⁸ Theocharis 1955a, 287; 1955b, 115. Furthermore, on the presence of surface finds, Kakavogianni has suggested cemeteries at the border of the settlements at Koropi (on the slopes of a hill just NW of the excavated area were found coarse sherds and obsidian, and also noted were small tomb-like elevations which had been excavated in their centre, probably illegally) and at Pyrgos Brauronas (west slope of the elevation where the temple/shrine of Agios Dimtrios is situated, to the east of the settlement) (Kakavogianni 1988, 324, n. 14).

⁷¹⁹ Pantelidou Gofa 2005. The excavation was initially conducted by Spyridon Marinatos in 1970–1972 (see Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 15–20, for the history of the excavation).

⁷²⁰ Within the study area: e.g. the cave burial by Lake Vouliagmeni (Koumouzelis 1989–1991); Aghios Georgios/Avlonari and Kalogerovrisi (e.g. Sampson 1985, 337f.; Sampson 1993b); Nea Makri (Theocharaki 1980); Eleusis/Magoula (Papangeli 1995). Outside the study area, most notably the EH I cemetery at Kalamaki, Achaia (Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, located close to a previously known Mycenaean cemetery). See further Alram-Stern 2004, 278–296, for extensive references.

⁷²¹ Pullen 1994, 117. A better description, I think, for the otherwise so-called extensive surveys.

⁷²² The reference by Alram-Stern (2004, 281: “Kistengräber und gebaute Gräber”) to Keller (1985, 165–175) is unclear. The reference is to Karystos and must refer to site 82 (Karystos: Ay. Nikolaos) of the Southern Euboea Survey, where “a few poorly preserved bone fragments and obsidian waste fragments” were found, together with coarse ware pottery “appearing to be EBA in date”, and smooth white pebbles (Keller 1985, 130). In the illustration of EBA survey results from the Perakhora Peninsula Survey, a cemetery is marked by the west end of the lake (Fossey 1990, fig. 4). The site is not specifically mentioned and it should perhaps be

considerable increase in the number of known Early Helladic and other Bronze Age sites, but there has not been a comparable expansion of the mortuary data.

In the end, the possibility of us finding the dead of any society is dependent on the way in which that group of people chose to handle the dead of their communities. The Argolid is one of the best surveyed and, on the whole, most extensively researched Bronze Age areas of mainland Greece. Apart from the possibility that they may have been destroyed, eroded or covered with sediments (an ever-present possibility for this particular region),⁷²³ another possible explanation is simply that we do not have comparative data for the Argolid. We have no graves and therefore we do not know how to differentiate between mortuary and settlement finds in the landscape, or if such a difference indeed existed. As will be considered further in *Chapter 9*, there appear to be notable differences in what is deposited as grave goods between the studied regions. Seen on a inter-regional scale, the set of objects, common in graves of Attica, Euboea and possibly also Boeotia but not in their contemporaneous settlements, make up together with the stone constructed graves a tool for the visual recognition of graves in these area that the other regions under consideration lack. Of potential wide-reaching consequence, on a regional scale, is thus that while the mortuary context in Attica especially is set apart from a contemporary domestic one, in Corinthia they appear not to be. Thus, while in Attica a displaced cover slab, an isolated piece of frying-pan or marble vessel are all acceptable and accepted markers of a nearby early Early Helladic grave; a rock cut chamber tomb and a sauceboat are likely to go unnoticed. In sum, the dearth of Early Helladic graves in Corinthia, and in extension Argolid, may be real, but it may also to some part be a result of these large scale regional differences. In the Argolid and Corinthia we may very well pass over mortuary remains without recognising them as such, that is if no human bones are visible. As the investigations in the region continue, I think the likelihood is increasing that the lack of extramural graves in the area is due to more than just a lack of recognition.

Graves are found because, in a sense, they were constructed to be found (although long-term preservation was perhaps not a consideration at the time, nor was modern detection). This at least can be said to hold true for built graves with inhumations; the typical Early Helladic mortuary custom as we know it. *Other types of interments or placements of the dead are likely to completely pass us by.*⁷²⁴ Finally, the likelihood of finding clusters of graves will always be greater than the possibility of stumbling on one or a few iso-

equated with the cave or grave excavated there, however, not as a survey result but as a result of illegal excavation that came to the ephorate's attention (Koumouzelis 1989–1991), or as a result of construction work (Hatzipoulou-Kalliri, Elisavet 1983).

⁷²³ Zangger 1993.

⁷²⁴ Cf. Chapman 1994, 41f.

lated graves. The latter will more likely be found in extensively excavated areas such as within settlements or special purpose areas (e.g. Corinth).⁷²⁵ Heermance and Lord concluded in their publication of the Corinth grave that it is impossible to say whether graves similar to the one published had escaped later destruction and modern detection but, like the grave that they did find “[...]—only a lucky accident will bring about their discovery.”⁷²⁶

On a general level, and taking an overall view of Early Helladic mortuary behaviour, joint practices of larger groups, in this case the cemeteries, will always be overrepresented at the cost of the isolated practices of one or several individuals.

Past knowledge

It is evident that much needs to coincide if more information on extramural burials is to become available to us, or their recovery can be put down to pure chance. If we try to visualise how single or clusters of graves were known to a greater public in the Early Helladic period, a similar picture is indicated. Based on the experience of finding extramural cemeteries today, in combination with what we know of the appearance of cemeteries and the individual graves, their visibility on a regional level would have been limited.

The Early Helladic cemeteries are likely to have been of local importance, connected with one specific settlement and/or possibly smaller outlying farmsteads. Most of the known cemeteries seem to be connected with a nearby settlement, and the two are likely to have been closely interconnected by everyday practice and acquired knowledge. Jordan’s observations from the daily life of the Siberian Khanty,⁷²⁷ should not be directly applied to the Early Helladic reality, but rather be seen as a reminder of the potential force of the interconnection between the spaces of the living and of the dead, unlike the modern (western) observation of a more or less fixed duality. I think we should regard the knowledge of the location of the cemeteries as awareness from an early age, as also any practices connected with it.⁷²⁸

On an inter-settlement level, however, if each settlement had an individual burial ground, a similar awareness is not as obvious, or even likely. I believe we generally tend to underestimate the movement of Early Helladic people in the landscape. This movement, however, would not have been general for the population of each community, and the ‘home’ region was probably of limited extent. We can only speculate as to the significance of

⁷²⁵ Pullen 1985, 110–115, with references.

⁷²⁶ Heermance & Lord 1897, 332.

⁷²⁷ Jordan 2003; also *Chapter 6*, section on *Problems of inequalities, and cemeteries as social arenas*, for citation and discussion.

⁷²⁸ Cf. Hodder 2006; and *Chapter 3*, on the socialisation into the practices of daily life.

the resting place of close relatives in far away cemeteries, as a result of, for example, inter-settlement ‘marriage’ alliances, which could form connections with these cemeteries. A cemetery as a sign of a long-term presence at a locale and within a region would be an argument of some force in quarrels between settlements and communities over some aspect of its use. In general, however, I believe that the location must have been obvious to a person immediately connected with the cemetery. It may also have been obvious to its closest neighbours, for whom its presence there may have been an issue, and who may have been moving in its vicinity on a daily or regular basis, *but how would the cemetery have been perceived by the uninitiated passer-by?*

The visibility of the graves, although marked above ground, should not be over-emphasised, and, in any case, the visibilities of Early Helladic graves can in themselves never have been very high at a distance. We cannot today, however, determine the “skin of the land”⁷²⁹ around the graves we have located. Trees, groves or forests, or the absence of them, may have helped to create a bounded space and limit and/or enhance their visibility. The limits of cemeteries may thus have been naturally marked, or nature may have been helped to give definition to the area, special markers may have signalled the proximity to a cemetery,⁷³⁰ perhaps a simple fence or markers of some sort indicated a boundary. In other cases, the limits may have been purely symbolic. In these cases too, however, well-trodden paths may not only have marked the way to the cemeteries but also have been good indications of the pattern of movements around them. If we could only reconstruct the network of paths in the territory of an Early Helladic settlement, we would have taken a major step on the way to reconstructing spatial arrangements within it.⁷³¹

In all cases, the Early Helladic cemeteries, spatially distinguished from the areas of the settlements, whether bounded or unbounded, would probably have been places set apart from ordinary practice, visitations circumscribed by sets of ‘rules’. I believe it is likely that a similar set of rules guided practices at most cemeteries, but it is also probable that the rules were highly contextual, even if generally similar. A settlement could perhaps be seen as an indication of a nearby cemetery, but the knowledge of its exact location would have been dependent on certain learnt experiences, at least if the distance and relation between them were not such that the connection could be easily made (e.g. Aghios Kosmas). For the uninitiated passer-by, the meeting therefore is likely to have been accidental.

Nevertheless, when a cemetery was approached it is likely that even the unconnected visitor would have recognised the graves as such, and perhaps fallen into a general set of behavioural rules, rules arguably of respect, fear

⁷²⁹ Tilley 1994, 73f.

⁷³⁰ In an example from the Siberian Khanty (Jordan 2003, 222), branches heaped over the path signalled the entrance into the area of the cemetery and the distinction between this area and the world of the living.

⁷³¹ E.g. Robin 2002; Ingold 2000, 205f.

and/or avoidance of the dead. A fine-tuned appreciation of the rules and considerations that the graves may have projected in different ways, such as of kinship, inheritance and hierarchy, must I think have been highly contextual, and thus limited to the users of the graves. This is an important point when arguing for graves as statements of inter- or intra-group competition and as statements of land ownership in the Early Helladic societies, and puts emphasis on who were the recipients of the argued display of kinship.

I propose that, in this sense, the cemeteries are a complex contradiction in the combination of communal and competitive aspects they included. The stranger may have had a general cultural understanding of a defined mortuary space. She or he may have connected it with the nearby settlement, and to their common connection, and perhaps seniority, with this part of the land. The definition of a 'stranger' remains to be determined, but based on the discussion above, she or he would not have been much better equipped to find and interpret the finer elements of contemporary cemeteries than we as archaeologists are today. As with most cemeteries, it would seem that Early Helladic cemeteries were *in their particulars* a strictly local affair, requiring a certain amount of previous knowledge for the markers to be interpreted as intended.

Representativeness

Having considered the modern and Early Helladic ways of finding and interpreting the graves of the Early Helladic period, it is time to consider what we are actually finding today. How does what we find relate to the original spectrum of mortuary behaviour? It is clear that a differentiation was made between spaces more suitable for the living and spaces more appropriate for the dead. In *Chapter 7*, we have seen how the division was not absolute and that in some instances burials were located within the settlements. We can today say with some confidence, however, that, as a rule, the Early Helladic peoples buried their dead *outside the settlements*. Based on present evidence, a majority of these graves were arranged in clusters, and often in numbers that can be called cemeteries.

The differentiation in itself suggests that we should allow for some kind of conceptual and symbolical boundaries resulting in the separation of spaces that can be observed in the archaeological record. The survey below will show that the way the differentiation was effected was highly contextual. In some cases symbolical boundaries seem to be the only thing that once told the inhabitants of the current spatial organisation. In other cases it can be argued that the conceptual boundaries were enforced and illustrated to us today by more tangible geographical and topographical aspects.

Before I move on to a survey of the location of graves and their relation to settlements, it is appropriate to reflect on some other types of differentiation

of importance for the survey. Thus, there was obviously in most cases a differentiation made between the habitation and mortuary domains. Was there also a differentiation made within the population of a settlement in relation to the mortuary domain? Thus, can the cemetery population be translated as representing the whole of the Early Helladic population from any given settlement, or was it only smaller groups within the population that were allowed or wanted to use the cemeteries for their burials? Do the known cemeteries contain a reasonable number of individuals in comparison with the known settlements?

The survey of intramural graves and child burials suggests that small children in particular were cared for after death in a greater variety of ways, and that all children are underrepresented in the Early Helladic mortuary record, for a number of reasons. Furthermore, the graves in any one cemetery differ between themselves in many respects. The differences relate to the number of dead in each grave, the number and type of grave goods preserved in each grave, and to some degree the form and alignment of the grave structure. This, I suggest, indicates varying practices and preferences, but not necessarily varying status. The multiple use of graves is likely to be grounded in some form of kinship (whether biological or other), something that is further suggested by the burials of children in separate graves but within the border of the main grave, indicating that, at least within the large clusters of graves, a number of social groupings were represented.⁷³² In sum, the indications are of variation of location, form and occupation.

On the level of the number of graves, thus the burial population, it must be assumed that many cemeteries remain to be found. Graves are not as easily detected as settlements, and I think we are justified in saying that the distribution of settlements and clusters of graves is today uneven at best. Whether or not all graves were clustered into cemeteries is an impossible question to answer, but I think that most likely they were not. On the representativeness, it can safely be argued that the four graves and the thirty or so individuals from Zygouries⁷³³ cannot possibly represent the whole population of the nearby community. In instances where we have a larger number of graves, this conclusion is not as obvious. To conclude on this matter we would need to know the number of inhabitants and the average number of births per year of the studied community, as well as the exact duration of the use of the connected cemetery. However, even at Aghios Kosmas with 151+ skeletons and further empty graves,⁷³⁴ the likely conclusion is that a large number of dead are missing from our record. If Maran is correct in assigning all graves to the first phase of the Aghios Kosmas settlement (Aghios Kos-

⁷³² See further discussion in *Chapter 9*, sections on *Marking the spot; The nearest and dearest?*.

⁷³³ Blegen 1928, 43–55.

⁷³⁴ Information from Mylonas 1959 compiled by Pullen 1985, fig. 17.

mas A),⁷³⁵ the duration of the cemetery's use may be set at around two hundred years. If the number of a static population is set to one hundred, and estimating each generation to have lasted approximately 25 years,⁷³⁶ a simple and *very* tentative calculation would result in 800 persons to be buried during the two hundred years. The 151+ skeletons would then constitute less than quarter of the expected deaths at the Aghios Kosmas, phase A settlement, and the phase B deaths are then completely unaccounted for.

Table 4. *Calculation of the number of people to produce the existing number of burials (using a range of cemetery use phases of 100–600 years).*⁷³⁷

Cemetery	Approx. no. burials (graves: average no. of burials in each grave)	Number of people needed to produce the existing burials					
		100 yrs	200 yrs	300 yrs	400 yrs	500 yrs	600 yrs
Zygouries	40 (4: 10)	10	5	3	3	2	2
Lithares	150 (c. 50: 3)	38	20	13	9	7	6
Paralimni: Botsikoula	300 (c. 100: 3)	75	37	25	19	15	12
Tsepi	600 (66: 9.5)	150	75	50	38	30	25
Aghios Kosmas	200 (c. 60: 4)	50	25	17	13	10	8
Manika a	900 (c. 300: 3)	225	112	75	56	45	37
Manika b	3000 (c. 1000: 3)	750	375	250	187	150	125
Manika c	9000 (c. 3000: 3)	2250	1125	750	562	450	375
Manika d	15000 (c. 5000: 3)	3750	1875	1250	937	750	625

If we instead assume that the available burial population in the larger cemeteries gives an accurate picture of the number of dead of their settlements, we can start at the other end to estimate the population needed to produce the existing osteological record.⁷³⁸ The calculation in *Table 4* is based on a generation of 25 years, i.e. a theoretical renewal of a static population every 25 years. The span from 100–600 years is presented to allow for the uncertainties in the chronologies of the cemeteries. Six hundred years is the approximate duration in absolute years from the last phase of the EH I to the end of the EH II period (c. 2800–2200 BC), which should be the maximum duration of use for the Manika cemetery, from a possible beginning in EH I, to the

⁷³⁵ Maran (1998, 82f.) concluded that there are no definite signs that any of the graves are contemporary with the late EH II settlement of Aghios Kosmas, phase B.

⁷³⁶ I am hereby using the years per generation proposed by Bintliff 1977, 83f., and which was also adopted by Broodbank (1989, 2000).

⁷³⁷ The number of burials divided with the numbers of years, multiplied with 25 will result in the number of deaths per generation, corresponding in turn to the number of inhabitants per generation—the contemporaneously living group of people in a static population renewed every 25 years.

⁷³⁸ The calculations are based on Broodbank 1989, 323–325, table 1; Broodbank 2000, 178, table 5.

Anatolian (Lefkandi I) shapes in the grave goods of the last phase of its use.⁷³⁹ Furthermore, for Manika I have included four alternatives: the actual number of excavated graves,⁷⁴⁰ the maximum estimate,⁷⁴¹ as well as two intermediate numbers. Not all recognised graves have been excavated, and some were found empty. I have therefore used the average number of burials per grave and the approximate number of graves in order to calculate an approximate number of bodies for each cemetery in total. When no average is available, the comparatively low estimate of three burials per grave has been used (marked with italics). Such calculations have previously been used for Early Minoan tholos tombs, and most recently for the Early Cycladic cemeteries. The numbers in *Table 4* also correspond to a nuclear family producing approximately 20 bodies per century (or five bodies per generation).⁷⁴²

Table 5. *Calculations of population size of settlements with connected cemeteries (using a 100–300 range of people per hectare).*

Site	Approx. size in hectares ⁷⁴³	Population/theoretical families of five					
		People per hectare					
		100	200	300	100	200	300
Zygouries	1.155	115	23	231	46	346	69
Lithares	0.7	70	14	140	28	210	42
Aghios Kosmas	1	100	20	200	40	300	60
Manika	50	5000	1000	10000	2000	15000	3000

After emphasising again that these calculations rely on a diachronically static population, let us look at the implication of the numbers in *Table 4* for the Early Helladic cemeteries and society. As a basis for comparison, *Table 5* presents the estimated size of population based on the size of settlement area within an estimate of 100–300 people per hectare and with the results displayed also in terms of theoretical families of five.⁷⁴⁴

⁷³⁹ Maran 1998, 95–97.

⁷⁴⁰ Sampson 1988a (189 graves, excavated by Papavasileiou, Sampson, and Sapouna-Sakellarakis), Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1988, 193f. (13 graves); 1989, 157 (40 graves); 1995, 315f. (9 graves); 1996, 289–300 (48 graves); and 6 graves excavated by Tsountas (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 233); i.e. a total of 305 graves so far published.

⁷⁴¹ Sampson 1988a, 126.

⁷⁴² Bintliff 1977, 83f.: Cf. Broodbank 1989, 232f.

⁷⁴³ In the case of Aghios Kosmas and Zygouries, the size corresponds to the approximated available space within the topographically defined hill or rise (Mylonas 1959, fig. 2; Pullen 1985, 261). For Manika it corresponds to the lower estimate (50–80 ha) of the area of habitation (Sampson 1985, 21: 45–50 ha; 1988a, 124: 70–80 ha), and for Lithares it is equal to the estimated size of the EH II settlement (Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 9).

⁷⁴⁴ The upper value for the calculation corresponds to the 300 persons per hectare suggested by Renfrew for EBA settlements (1972, 251). To account for the uncertainty of this estimate, I have included also the population densities of 100 and 200 people per hectare, in my calculations. For a discussion of Aegean EBA settlement demography, see Pullen 1985, 259–263;

The four graves at Zygouries may be said to correspond to a use by two families during one hundred years, or by one family each during about half that period (Grave 20, with 15+ skeletons, could correspond to one nuclear family of five during 75 years). As also noted above, this would, however, correspond to a very small minority of the inhabitants of the mound, even when calculating for a population at the lower end of the range, of 100 per hectare. The available material for Lithares, Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas indicates that they all correspond to a use phase within the spectrum of 200–400 years, whether all EH I, partly EH I and EH IIA, or mostly EH II. For Aghios Kosmas, 25 individuals (or five families) may perhaps be a realistic number of inhabitants for the five houses excavated, but these houses are probably only one part of the original settlement. For Aghios Kosmas there is no exact comparison to be made between *Table 4* and the preserved architecture, since the graves may all be older than the phase B settlement to which this architecture belongs. It can be noted, however, that even using the lowest estimate of population per hectare, the existing burials would correspond to approximately half of the population group (50 of 100). Considering Lithares, the number of fifty graves included is probably too low, as it corresponds only to the graves recorded by Spyropoulos. The actual number of graves was perhaps closer to that of Paralimni: Botsikoula (at least 100 graves), and would thus correspond well to a population of 100 persons per hectare. In relation to the *c.* 20 houses of the best preserved settlement,⁷⁴⁵ a somewhat higher population may perhaps nevertheless be indicated.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the calculations in *Table 4* seem more realistic when we do not have a settlement, however fragmentary, with which to compare. The graves at Paralimni: Botsikoula may have served a small settlement for a longer period of time, or a somewhat larger settlement for a shorter period. The numbers calculated for Tsepi would in fact not be at all unrealistic for a settlement such as Aghios Kosmas or Lithares, in the lower range of years. On the level of one grave, Grave 12 at Tsepi has thus far revealed the highest number of skeletons, and the 27 burials would correspond to a single family use over 135 years.

The results for Manika give a wide range of alternatives to choose from, and the 50–80 hectares of land settled at one time or another allow for a large population, even if all parts of the settlement were not contemporaneous. Ultimately, too many variables remain uncertain to draw any wide-ranging conclusions. When Broodbank came to the conclusion that similar calculations for *c.* 89 % of all known EC cemeteries imply a nearby settlement of one to four nuclear families, depending on the duration of use and

Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, appendix B, 542–547; Broodbank 2000, e.g. 86f., 177f. (suggesting 200–300 people per hectare as a likely occupation density). A nuclear family average size of five is favoured by Broodbank (1989, 324).

⁷⁴⁵ Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 12f.

size of cemetery,⁷⁴⁶ he did not have connected settlements with which to compare. Information from the connected settlements may or may not have made a difference, and the EC settlements may very well be on the whole smaller than their Mainland contemporaries. On the basis of the Early Helladic material, and the comparison that can be made between settlements and cemeteries, it is suggested that the cemetery populations as calculated in *Table 4* do not represent a reasonable number of individuals for the living population at their respective settlements (*Table 5*). In order to reconcile the inconsistencies between the two tables, some alternatives need to be considered:

- Not all graves within the known cemeteries have been found.
- The settlements were much smaller (in size or in number of inhabitants) than suggested by the excavated remains and/or their relation to their topographical location.
- The settlements were more limited in duration than a strict adherence to the general chronological periods; alternatively, they were not continuously inhabited.
- The cemeteries were more limited in duration; alternatively, they were not continuously used.
- Other places for and/or ways of depositing the dead were adopted in parallel or interchangeably with the inhumation in multiply-used graves in the known cemeteries.

On the overall estimate for Manika, and the fact that new graves keep being excavated there, it seems evident that not all graves have been found or excavated. This is certainly true for the Early Helladic mainland as a whole, where cemeteries and graves surely lie undiscovered. Whether or not this is true for the cemeteries at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi is more difficult to ascertain, but it seems nevertheless probable that, in these cases, a majority of the graves of these particular cemeteries have been found.⁷⁴⁷ This does not preclude the possibility that other cemeteries existed in the area (as is already indicated by the North and the South cemetery at Aghios Kosmas), in the present manner of the spatially dispersed groups of graves at Manika. If not, however, the second alternative could also be a viable option; either the site or the buildings were less densely occupied than space allowed. The

⁷⁴⁶ Broodbank 1989, 323

⁷⁴⁷ Mylonas (1959) appears to have cleared a large area, exposing two distinct groups of graves, the North Cemetery at least was considerably spread out and some apparently isolated graves were found (Graves 20 and 31). Pantelidou Gofa (2005) reports of many only partially excavated or only superficially known graves in the area, and the general plan seems to indicate a decreased grave density in certain areas, and she argues for an organically growing cemetery (2005, 357). However, she states also that the full extent of the cemetery is not known (357). There is certainly room for further graves both at Tsepi and at Aghios Kosmas.

settlement organisation of the EH I–early EH II settlement phase at Zagani where only half of the available space of the plateau appears to have been used for housing, goes to show that settlement space may have been quite variably used.⁷⁴⁸ It is also possible that future analyses of pottery and other finds from cemeteries and their settlements will be able to refine the chronology of the period and the specific sites.

Until then, or until more graves have been found connected with settlements, I propose that the general supposition must be that a large part of all Early Helladic burials remain undiscovered or, more specifically, that not all persons were buried in a manner that would allow us to find them today.

Cemetery or mortuary area?

In his 1994 article on Early Helladic mortuary customs, Pullen concluded that: “The majority of the dead were buried in tombs located in cemeteries. Small infants, however, were sometimes buried intramurally, often in a vessel of some sort.”⁷⁴⁹ I suggest that this is a statement that begs many questions, as well as creating some new ones. On the basis of the survey above, the definition of ‘the majority’ needs to be nuanced with reference to the representativeness of the cemetery populations as well as the problems of modern detection. Also, even if largely unanswerable, the question remains of the location of the ‘minority’. Furthermore, it may prove interesting to examine more closely the wording of the citation and specifically some of the other terms used.

The term ‘cemetery’ is in the present study used in two senses. When coupled with specific remains it is used primarily to denote the formal and tightly arranged clusters of a large number of graves, such as those at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi. This also seems to be the meaning intended by Pullen, as he referred mainly to Tsepi, Aghios Kosmas and Manika.⁷⁵⁰ The large number of graves at these locations places them in contrast with smaller groups of graves as well as instances of single, isolated graves that existed in parallel and that may or may not have been connected with other graves in the area. How many graves, then, does it take to make a ‘cemetery’? I would like to propose that the answer must be that the actual numbers of graves need not be decisive, nor the after death treatment. ‘Cemetery’ is a term which, in a wider interpretation, can denote the result of a decision of an individual or larger group of people to define a special place for the location of their dead. That it is also a term often taken to mean a large cluster of *graves* (or *tombs*, as in the citation), indicating a burial below ground or a related practice, is probably because this is one tangible mortuary custom

⁷⁴⁸ Steinhauer 2001, 28–34.

⁷⁴⁹ Pullen 1994, 126.

⁷⁵⁰ Pullen 1994, 126; see also the introductory citation to *this chapter*.

that also has a long history in certain regions of the world. The term ‘*burial*’ similarly directs one’s thoughts to consider in the first instance burial below ground, especially if this practice is confirmed from the studied region. I would instead like to see the terms kept flexible, and the deciding factor for their use be the formalisation and customisation of the practices of a differentiated mortuary space. In this sense, all spatially defined mortuary domains may be said to correspond to the term ‘cemetery’, at least if including a number of depositions above the single and isolated instance. The term ‘burial’ could then still be used instead of the term ‘disposal’ for example, which may perhaps be neutral to the type of after death treatment, but certainly not to the values connected with it. Within the Early Helladic sphere, a wider use of the term ‘cemetery’ would also mean that even the single graves may be said to be cemeteries, as the multiply used, extramural graves imply recurrent and customised visits to a specific location for the deposition of the dead.

Connected with this latter point is the possibility that several cemeteries may conceal some of the loosely arranged patterns of graves that we know of today. I propose that these loosely arranged spaces may be better encompassed within the term *mortuary areas*. This term could be used for less formal and less densely arranged burial grounds, and could also encompass several cemeteries. As with the cemeteries, for the Early Helladic period the term would imply an area set apart from the spaces of habitation. At Manika, for instance, graves have been excavated over a large area, and Sampson has suggested a more or less continuous distribution, reaching up to a full size of 5,000 graves or more.⁷⁵¹ This has yet to be confirmed by excavation. The clusters of graves at Manika may, in essence, be seen to represent several large and small cemeteries. They all, however, belong to a more or less coherent group of graves, a defined burial ground, a mortuary area, largely set apart from the inhabited space. This type of loose arrangement may also have been the practice at Lithares, with the group of cist graves on the hill slope, and chamber tombs by the shore.⁷⁵² Two single Early Helladic graves have also been excavated at two separate locations to the west and south-west of the lake at Perachora-Vouliagmeni, distinguished from the excavated settlement by some three hundred metres.⁷⁵³ At all three sites, the separate

⁷⁵¹ Sampson 1988a, 124, 126.

⁷⁵² The graves excavated by Spyropoulos (1969a) combined with the graves recorded by Papademetriou (1931), as discussed above, *this chapter*, section on *The graves by the Boeotian lakes—a case-study*.

⁷⁵³ W: Hatzipouliou-Kalliri 1983; SW: Hatzipouliou-Kalliri 1983, 373, n. 25. Furthermore, the nearby cave (c. 300 metres W of the excavated settlement), interpreted as an ossuary, would belong to the same mortuary area (Koumouzelis 1989–1991). On the settlement: Fossey 1973. As an interesting parallel, the probability has been noted for the island of Skyros of at least four Early Helladic cemeteries from locations close to the settlement by modern Chora on the NE part of the island, on the surrendering of whole vases to the museum authorities (Parlama 1984; Davis 2001, 41).

graves and groups of graves may or may not have been connected with as yet undetected graves. If they were not continuous, however, the graves may be said to belong to different cemeteries, or, to single graves within the same mortuary area. Although they were not part of a common undertaking, their placement could have rested on a common understanding for the separation of spaces and a general appreciation of an area as appropriate and perhaps dedicated for the purpose.

A similar scenario has repercussions on the importance we give to the cemetery as a whole. Just as the individual graves within one large and formalised cluster of graves can signal varying social groupings and preferences, so these clusters of graves taken together can represent a special social grouping within a larger community. What we see as the majority choice, the presently known extramural burial grounds, may be only one choice of many. One settlement may have several cemeteries or spatially limited clusters of graves. Other practices may also have been adopted in parallel. We can only speculate as to which form the latter practices may have taken, and they may have left few or no traces. Whether inhumations, cremations or exposure, mortuary customs without any durable grave structure above or below ground will surely pass us by, as will, for example, burial at sea. All these are likely and even probable parallel practices for the Early Helladic societies throughout the period.⁷⁵⁴

Alternative or complementary practices for the disposal of the Early Helladic dead seem more and more plausible for the study area as the landscape becomes increasingly exploited and archaeologically surveyed. I think we should allow for a wide range of possibilities where the smaller clusters and individual disposal areas were perhaps the most common, but where the large concentrations of durably built graves are the most likely to be detected today. On the level of small settlements or farmsteads of limited duration, I think that it probably meant one common mortuary space which, in terms of graves, could mean one single instance or a small cluster. However, whatever forms these areas took, the traces of them in the landscape would be even more ephemeral than their settlements. With larger populations, however, the communal choice may also fall on a common cemetery, but, with increasing heterogeneity within the community, the possibility increases that this could be complemented by other cemeteries/disposal areas and that divergent choices were made on the level of the individual or a smaller group.

In answer to the question of who were buried in the cemeteries, we are probably more constrained by our present state of knowledge than we would like to acknowledge. In terms of distribution of sex and age, a rough average

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 15) who also considered “more elusive practices, such as exposure or excarnation”, as an option to fill out at least some of the gaps of the EH I mortuary record. These practices were contrasted with the burial in cemeteries, which was seen as a very likely option for a general rule.

seems to be represented, although children remain underrepresented (or under-visible). The variability within the cemeteries, including the multiple use of each grave, indicates a certain degree of heterogeneity within the cemetery populations that may be translated to different groupings in the settlements and imply an average of the population of any settlement. On the other hand, if, as indicated, there are inconsistencies between cemetery and settlement populations, a place in any cemetery may in itself have been a statement of class, affiliation or the preferences of particular groups and/or families.⁷⁵⁵

Choosing a place

Where, then, did the people of the Early Helladic societies choose to place their dead, and how did these locations relate to the domain of the living and to daily life within the settlements? We have seen that one choice was to place them together with other dead, within one grave as well as in clusters of graves. It is now time to examine in detail where these graves were located in relation to the settlements and to the Early Helladic landscape as a whole.

I believe that one important aspect of any landscape is its inherent and shifting possibilities for the definition of space, stimulating and enforcing the perceptions and uses of these spaces as distinct within a whole. Natural and man-made boundaries in the landscape have the potential to guide and to some extent even direct human practices. This, I propose, is a point of great importance for habitation as well as mortuary domains. The aspects I will emphasise in the present survey are natural features such as rivers and the variability in the landscape, with notions of distance and altitude. My aim is to survey the different ways in which the areas of the dead were set apart from the main areas of habitation as we know them from excavation. While stressing the potential importance of the natural landscape, it is also important, however, to similarly stress that the aim of the survey is not to supply a model to be applied to the Early Helladic period as a whole. It will instead become evident that each adaptation to the landscape was highly contextual. I will argue, however, that, as a general rule, the variations in the immediate landscape around each settlement influenced the way in which the cemeteries were incorporated into the daily practices of each individual settlement.

⁷⁵⁵ For a discussion on cemetery use as reflecting social structure and social classes in later periods, see Ian Morris' writings on death-rituals of Classical Athens (e.g. Morris 1992).

Table 6. *Aspects of topographical differentiation between cemeteries and tombs from nearby settlements (* Uncertain date and/or unexcavated)*

Site	Distance from settlement (c. metres)	Direction from settlement	Topography in relation to settlement
Zygouries	500	to the west	separate topographic feature
Perachora/ Vouliagmeni (1) cave; (2) grave Thebes* ⁷⁵⁶	300	(1) to the west; (2) southwest	(1) higher altitude, separate topographic feature; (2) along the lake
	(1) 300; (2) 800, from Aghios Andreas	(1) to the west; (2) to the north	(1) lower altitude, and possibly river Dirke; (2) separate hillock
Lithares	400	to the northeast	across a creek
Hypaton	hundreds	to the south	lower altitude
Aghios Kosmas	100	to the east	lower altitude
Paralimni: Bot- sikoula	500–700	to the east– northeast	lower altitude; separate topographic feature
Askitario*	<100	to the east	lower altitude
Raphtopoula*	1300	to the east	island vs. Pounda headland
Manika	0–1000	to the east to south	originally topographically distinguished?

A prerequisite for the exercise is a corpus of graves and clusters of graves that can be certainly connected with a nearby settlement. Ten definite and probable instances of tombs with nearby habitation areas are thus listed in Table 6, along with information on direction, distance and topography; together they form the basis for the following discussion. It should be noted that the connection here is supposed on the basis of proximity and the absence of any other alternative settlements in the vicinity. In densely settled areas the distance would also have varied within the general area of habitation, as can be seen for Manika and Thebes. At Manika, houses have been found over a very large area approaching the area of the cemetery in a line from the east to the south (*Fig. 50*). The possible Early Helladic graves from Thebes, another extensively and varyingly settled area, are not well known. One grave of possible Early Helladic date was found by the river Dirke, west of the Kadmeia. A set of pits were discovered beneath the EH II tumulus on the Ampheion, suggested to have been looted or cleaned-out graves from an early Early Helladic phase.⁷⁵⁷ The distances and directions given for them above are approximations measured from the Aghios Andreas church, on top of the southernmost of the postulated ancient hills of the Kadmeia.⁷⁵⁸ Although this area has the highest density of finds from the Early Helladic period, habitation has also been excavated elsewhere on the Kadmeia. It is

⁷⁵⁶ The differing values refer to (1) the possible Early Helladic grave by the Dirke river, and (2) the pits found beneath the tumulus on the Ampheion hill.

⁷⁵⁷ Dirke: Keramopoulos 1910, 250f.; Faraklas 1969b; Konsola 1981, 111, 163f.; Ampheion: Spyropoulos 1973; Konsola 1981, 111, 163f.

⁷⁵⁸ Dakouri-Hild 2001, 104.

impossible therefore to make any closer connections between the graves and any specific part of the Early Helladic Kadmeia.

Differentiation by distance

Although the measure of *distance* is a difficult aspect for settlements that are only patchily excavated, I will argue that it was nevertheless an important aspect of differentiation. It is also important today in reference to the problem of locating Early Helladic graves and clusters of graves, and it is important for the understanding of the role of the dead in the lives of the living in Early Helladic society. In this regard, distance is closely connected with, in the first case, the topography of the locale chosen for settlement. I propose that the choices of location for settlement *and* cemetery must be regarded as deliberate and in most cases carefully considered. It follows that, in order to gain a greater understanding of life in the Early Helladic communities, we need to include in our interpretations a careful consideration of the potential motivations behind these choices. Whether natural preconditions were consciously taken advantage of or not, once the location and differentiation was established, the spaces thereby defined were probably mutually enforced in the tradition and daily practices of the Early Helladic society, as well as in the varying landscape.

As illustrated in *Table 6*, the distances between cemetery and settlement within the study area vary widely, from less than one hundred metres to around one kilometre. That the distance is generally three hundred metres or more may be one further aspect impeding the discovery of Early Helladic graves and cemeteries, as argued by Pullen in the citation in the beginning of this chapter.⁷⁵⁹ In many (most?) cases nevertheless they were close enough that “the communities which built them can have had no aversion to proximity” as Keith Branigan concluded for the Mesara tholoi.⁷⁶⁰ Of the ten examples above, Manika is notable for being both at the top and at the bottom of the scale of distance between graves and settlement—geographical distance and proximity existing within the same settlement.

Border zones: the case of Manika

Manika was an exceptional settlement in many ways, especially in terms of the size of the settlement as well as of the cemetery. Sampson has estimated the original number of graves in the Manika cemetery to about 5,000, if the area of the graves were fully utilised for graves.⁷⁶¹ Even if only a small part of the estimated number of tombs once existed, the mortuary area at Manika was very large. It would have covered most of the southern and part of the

⁷⁵⁹ Pullen 1994, 126.

⁷⁶⁰ Branigan 1998, 17f.

⁷⁶¹ Sampson 1988a, 126.

eastern limit of the settlement facing the well-used inland areas to the SE as well as the Lelantine Plain to the south, with which they were surely inter-linked. Unfortunately, we still lack the amount of information that would allow a comprehensive overview of the area. We cannot say if the great extension is partly a matter of horizontal stratigraphy of house plots, contemporaneous or not, or how dense the settlement or cemetery was.⁷⁶² Nevertheless, we can say that habitation and graves remained *generally* separated, but also that the distance between them was, at points, only metres, and in one instance even may have overlapped.

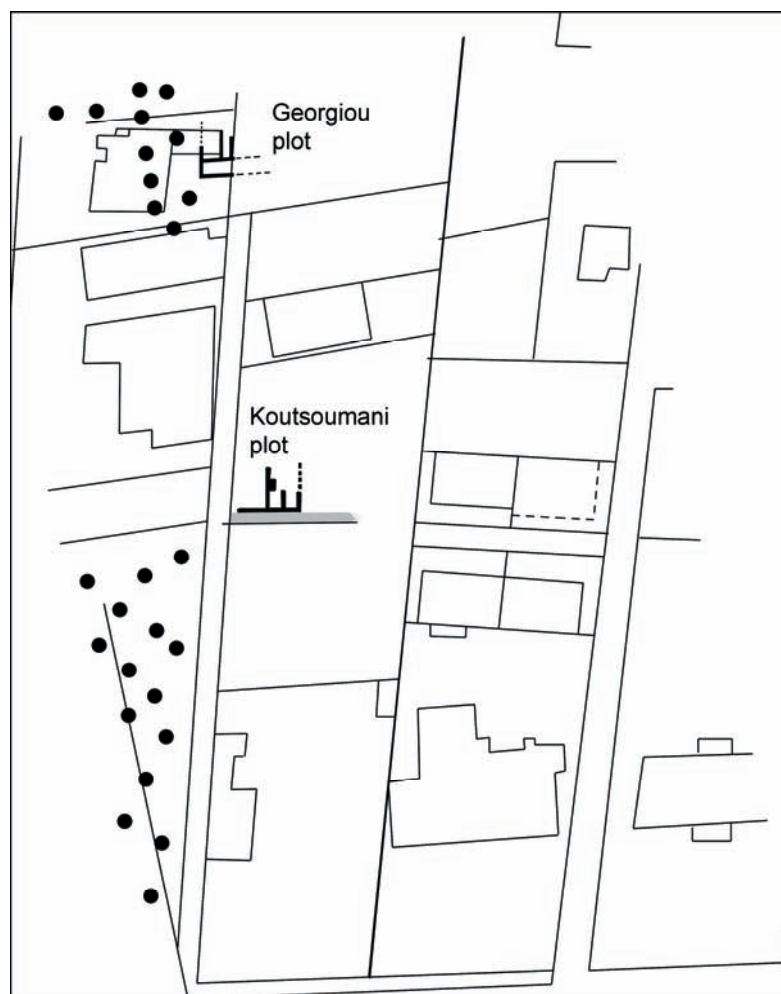


Figure 48. Manika. Location of the border zone between habitation and mortuary spheres (dotted), marking the location of the excavated remains of the Georgiou and Koutsoumani plots (after Sampson 1985, fig. 27a).

⁷⁶² Horizontal chronology: Maran 1998, 93, with references.

Thus, in the most south-easterly section of the settlement, at plots A. Koutsoumani (sector VI:3) and N. Georgiou (sector VI:5), Sampson reported house structures in areas immediately adjacent to graves of the cemetery (Fig. 48).⁷⁶³ In the Koutsoumani plot, house structures were excavated only a few metres from the southernmost graves of the Beligianni plot excavated by Sampson in 1986. The great majority of these graves are dated to Manika 2, but a number of later graves are mixed with the earlier.⁷⁶⁴ The house structures were dated to the Manika 3 phase. Furthermore, in the Georgiou plot (Fig. 49), just 50 metres west of the Koutsoumani plot, house structures were found less than one metre from the closest graves. In fact, fragments of wall were also found in connection with the *dromoi* of two tombs (VII and XVI). In terms of dating, Sampson reported EH I (Manika 1) and early EH II sherds in the lowest layer around the graves, the graves themselves were dated to early EH II (Manika 2), and the pottery of the house to later EH II (Manika 3). Sherds of both EH II phases were found around the graves in the highest stratum.⁷⁶⁵ Based on the fact that the finds *within* the graves were older than the deposit of the house, Sampson emphasised nevertheless that the deposit of the house clearly had nothing to do with the necropolis.⁷⁶⁶ He instead interpreted the walls above the graves as protective walls for the graves, having a special meaning related to the burial practice.⁷⁶⁷

With the occurrence of late EH II material around the graves also, in combination with the nearby house structures in the Georgiou plot, this interpretation of the walls above the *dromoi* is puzzling. Therefore, based on the evidence of later EH II sherds also around the graves, and the proximity of the house structures, an alternative seems equally possible. Instead of giving the walls above the *dromoi* a unique ritual function, I believe it is more reasonable to assume that the walls all belong to houses of the later phase. Both the Koutsoumani and Georgiou plots bear evidence of the border zone between settlement and cemetery.

The chronology developed by Sampson has been questioned, most recently by Maran.⁷⁶⁸ Sampson put Manika 2 and 3 parallel with the earlier and later phase of the cemetery, also termed EH IIa and EH IIb. Maran has instead dated Manika 3 to a period before the Lefkandi I phase (developed to late EH II in his terminology), arguing consequently that the settlement

⁷⁶³ Sector IV:3: Sampson 1988a, 19, figs. 27a–b, adjacent to tombs of the Beligianni plot (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1984; 1987a; Sampson 1985, 158–185; Sampson 1988a, Graves 51–82, 128–171); Sector VI:5: Sampson 1985, 80–90, also fig. 53 on p. 187, adjacent to tombs of the Georgiou plot (Sampson 1985, 186–199, Sampson 1988a, Graves 83–99).

⁷⁶⁴ Sampson 1988a, table 14, pp. 59–62: 16 of 76 graves contained finds dated to the later phase.

⁷⁶⁵ Sampson 1985, 80, 186.

⁷⁶⁶ Sampson 1985, 84.

⁷⁶⁷ Sampson 1985, 193, 196.

⁷⁶⁸ Maran 1998.

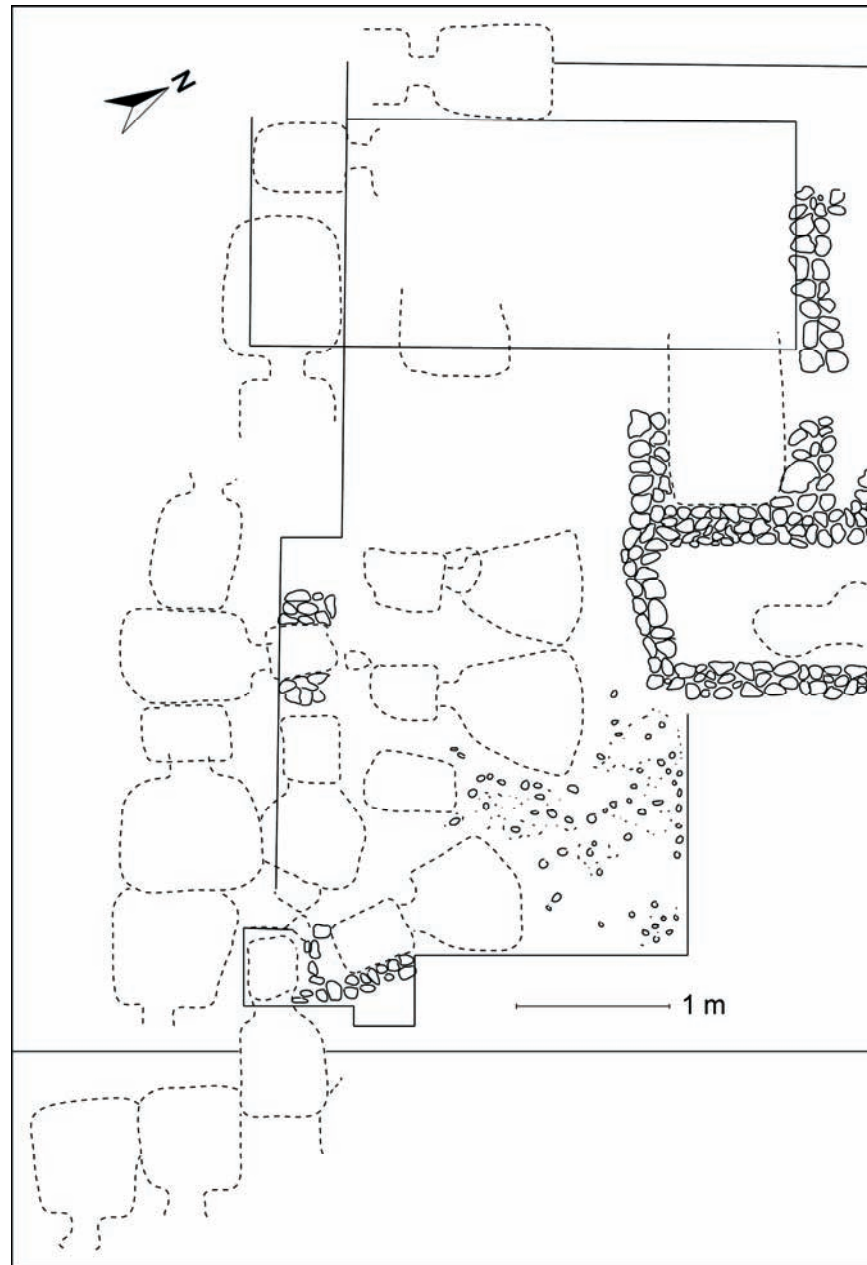


Figure 49. Manika. The Georgiou plot with graves and house architecture (after Sampson 1985, fig. 53).

layers of a phase corresponding to Lefkandi I have not yet been found.⁷⁶⁹ He dated the earlier phase of the cemetery to early EH II, possibly going back into EH I. Furthermore, in his survey of the pottery of room 1 in the Georgiou plot complex he allowed for a possibly later dating of this assemblage, based on the presence of a tankard with parallels in a late phase of EH II.⁷⁷⁰ Based on Maran's new chronology, the following development of the border zone can be put forward, including the adjacent Elaiotriviari and Beligianni plots with graves:

- EH I general activity (Georgiou)
- late EH I and early EH II graves (Beligianni, Georgiou, Elaiotriviari)
- EH II house structures (Koutsoumani, Georgiou, Elaiotriviari?⁷⁷¹)
- late EH II (Lefkandi I-phase) graves (Beligianni, Elaiotriviari)

The combined information from the border zone as summarised in these points gives indications of *a constantly negotiated border*. The picture that emerges is one of changing activities in this border zone between settlement and cemetery.⁷⁷² In sum, I believe it can be argued that the boundary between settlement and cemetery need not be absolute. The development at Manika also calls into question the visibility of the graves and the meaning of the graves for the inhabitants of the nearby structures. Within the Georgiou plot it seems that the graves are all indeed earlier than the house structure. Based on Maran's dating, it may be that the deposit in the Georgiou house, room 1, was contemporary with some of the later graves of the two adjacent plots.⁷⁷³ It is, however, impossible to say whether or not this was an actual contemporaneousness of use within the established periods. Based on Maran's dating, however, both Manika 2 and 3 of the settlement could have been contemporary with the earlier graves of the settlement. It is therefore possible that the house in the Koutsoumani plot dated to Manika 3 were in use at the same time as the earlier graves. I suggest that two preliminary and general suggestions can be made for this specific area at Manika:

- Visibility of the graves would appear to have been upheld.
- Proximity between house and grave was not unacceptable.

⁷⁶⁹ Maran 1998, 91f.; due to horizontal stratigraphy or later agricultural activity.

⁷⁷⁰ Maran 1998, 91.

⁷⁷¹ Traces of a wall were also found in connection with grave 127 (Sampson 1988a, 27, fig. 30), of the Elaiotriviari plot, immediately west of the Georgiou plot.

⁷⁷² See Milka, forthcoming, for an interesting parallel and thought-provoking discussion of shifting phases of habitation and burials at locations in the Middle Helladic Argolid.

⁷⁷³ Maran (1998, 97) especially mentioned grave 171 of the Beligianni plot and the Georgiou deposit as contemporary.

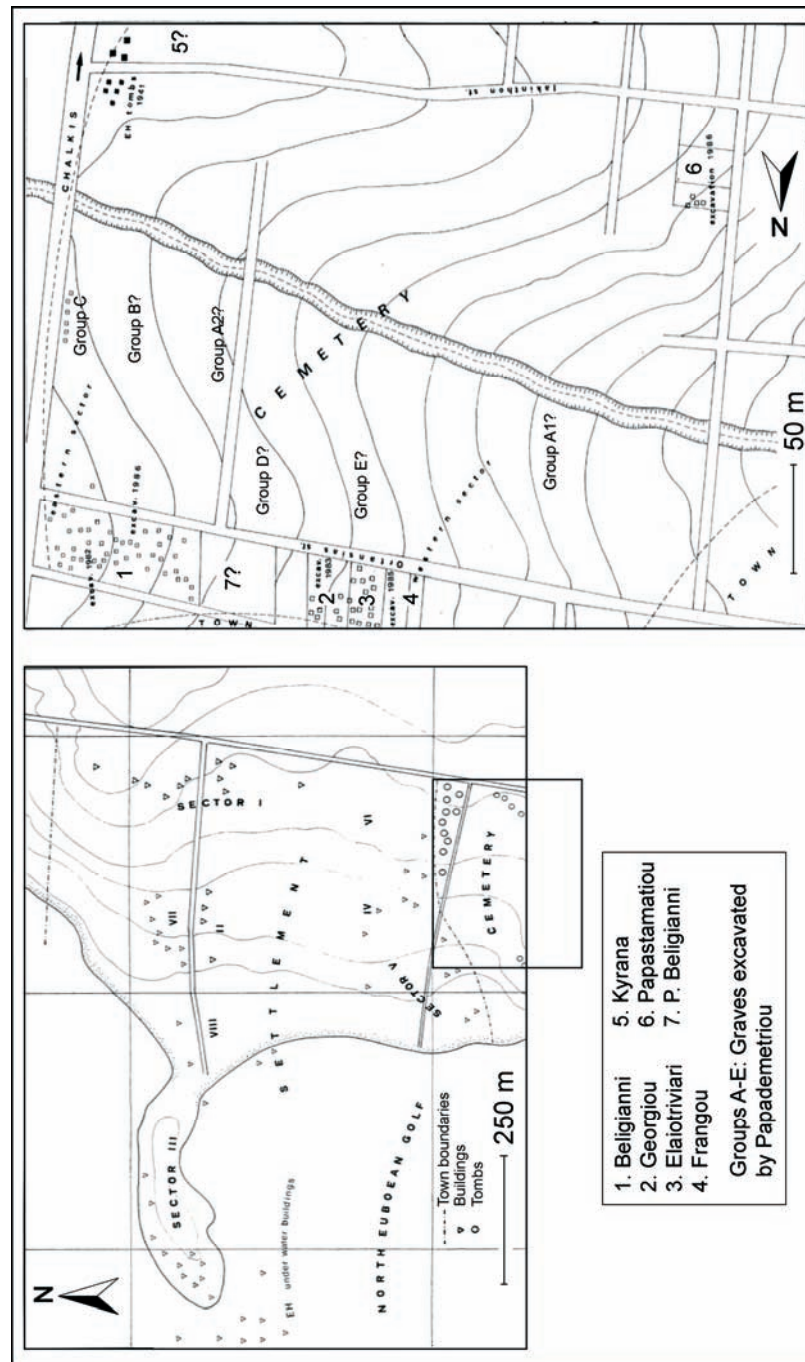


Figure 50. Manika. Plan of settlement and cemetery (after Sampson 1988a, figs. 2, 28).

In this limited area, visibility of the graves would have been an important factor. Generally, the relationships between the graves of the two phases in the two adjacent grave plots suggest that the later graves were dug with respect to the earlier examples. Furthermore, other graves in the areas were probably used in both phases.⁷⁷⁴ In the Koutsoumani plot, the graves and house were close but, as far as the present record can tell, the two did not overlap, spatially or chronologically. In the Georgiou plot they may have. I think it is likely that the graves of the Georgiou plot were inactive and had possibly been so for some time before the later constructions. Possibly contemporary graves existed, however, not far away, and the use of the area for graves is likely to have been known. If, therefore, the walls over the graves were not erected for the graves but are remains of other houses, it is likely that the constructors of the houses knew of the existence of graves. With their construction they would have moved into an area more or less surrounded by graves. Why these adjacent or even overlapping activities? It may have been a matter of a special function for the house structures, possibly related to the cemetery in some way. I believe, however, that it is equally likely that the activities were unrelated and that proximity was nevertheless acceptable, at least for the users of these particular houses. Building on or very close to known graves may never have been completely neutral to the former character of the place. It is, I think, possible that the meeting of settlement and cemetery may furthermore reflect a certain amount of heterogeneity in the population of EBA Manika. Groupings within the population may accordingly form different attachments to various parts of the mortuary area. The relationship between mortuary and habitation areas in this Manika case-study should probably be seen as relative, allowing for the impact of time, needs and personal attachments (or detachments) at any given point in time. In any case, the mortuary area with its graves must have made up a tangible part of the daily life in this border zone, whether they were completely contemporaneous or not. Geographical distance was not here an end in itself, at least not within this specific context and time.

In this border zone it is clear that the house structures were later than the first arrangement of graves in that area. The best preserved remains of housing of the Manika 1 and 2 phases, however, have been found in the northern sections of the settlement (Sections I, II), the areas farthest from the cemetery (*Fig. 50*). The best deposits of Manika 3, on the other hand, belong to the southern and south-eastern sections (IV and VI), in the vicinity of the cemetery.⁷⁷⁵ According to Maran and others, the Lefkandi I-phase settlement remains unexcavated.⁷⁷⁶ Thus, without forgetting the forces of later agricul-

⁷⁷⁴ According to Sampson (1988a, table 14), Graves 61, 71 and 148 of the Beligianni plot and grave 102 of the Elaiotrivari plot.

⁷⁷⁵ Sampson 1988a, 76f.; Maran 1998, 89–93.

⁷⁷⁶ Maran 1998, 93.

tural activities, and environmental factors such as erosion, on the preservation of later levels, it seems that there may have been a gradual expansion of the area used for habitation, from north to south, in line with a horizontal stratigraphy as earlier suggested. The limits of the necropolis may thus have already been firmly established in early EH II, with the distance between the necropolis and the settlement becoming closer as the settlement expanded. In this scenario, the habitations of the northern sections were originally some three hundred to five hundred metres distant from the nearest graves, and located at opposite sides of the cauldron. Although partly facing each other, the two areas would thus have been topographically distinguished.

Differentiation by topography

Proximity of houses and cemeteries was thus not unacceptable, even to the point where they were completely adjacent and even overlapped. At Manika, any person passing in or out of the inhabited space from the area of the south-eastern inland and the southern Lelantine Plain would have skirted or could even have passed right through the cemetery. Illustrative of the latter point is the road passing in a north-south direction past the house structures of the Koutsoumani plot, apparently leading right into the area just west of the Beligianni graves (*Fig. 48*).⁷⁷⁷

Similar circumstances existed at Aghios Kosmas, where two cemeteries were excavated NE and SE of the settlement.⁷⁷⁸ The exact location of the cemeteries was, however, not illustrated in the 1959 publication by Mylonas. Their location was nevertheless described:⁷⁷⁹ they were located immediately to the south and to the north of the neck of land connecting the headland with the mainland. Furthermore, for the North Cemetery, the cist graves occupied a line along the coast, with the built graves further inland; there may be destroyed or submerged graves to the west and south; and the entrances of the graves in the North Cemetery were directed towards the headland. Taken together, this information and the photos of the publication allow a reconstruction as in *Figure 51*.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁷ Sampson 1988a, 19, figs. 27a–b. It is likely that also the space between the Beligianni and Georgiou plots were used for graves. The P. Beligianni plot excavated by Sapouna-Sakellarakis in 1988 and 1989 (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1988; 1989), were reported as abutting to the old S. Beligianni (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a) although the exact relation was not stated.

⁷⁷⁸ Mylonas 1959, 64–120.

⁷⁷⁹ Mylonas 1959, 66, 115f.

⁷⁸⁰ Contra the reconstruction by Travlos (1981, fig. 8), where the cist graves are placed in a line towards the inland rather than along the coast. With the new reconstruction it should be noted that I deviate partly from the north–south direction given by Mylonas for the North cemetery. Other indications suggest that the information given for directions is not quite accurate (e.g. directions given in figs. 1–2). Also, an entrance from the south is not geographically compatible with the entrances directed towards the headland at this coastal location.

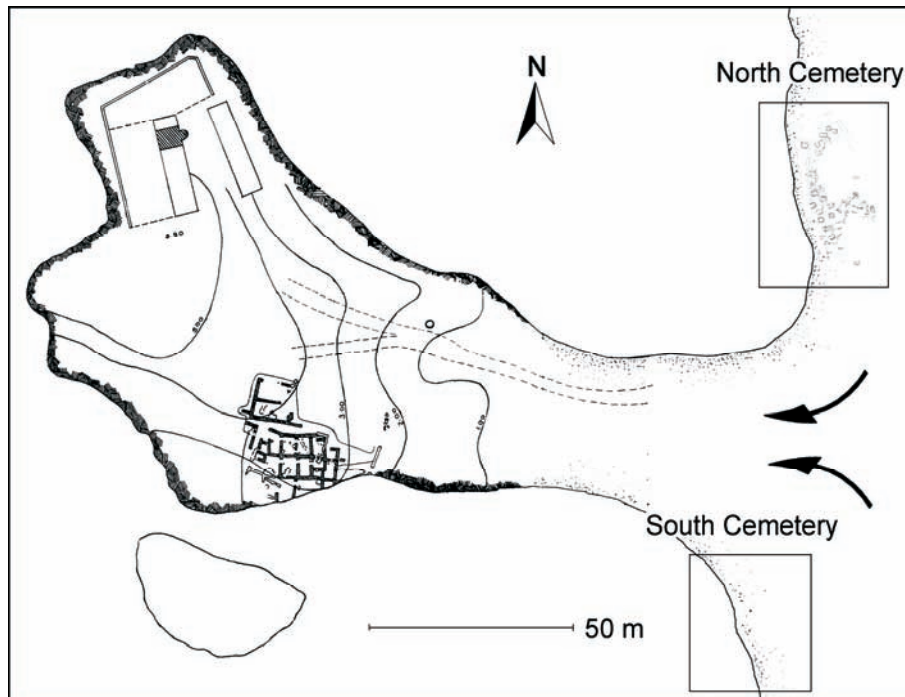


Figure 51. Aghios Kosmas. Location of excavated settlement and cemeteries, and with the inland route towards the settlement marked by arrows (information from Mylonas 1959, 64, 66, 115f., and fig. 2)

It is important to note, however, the low altitude of the land around the rise of the headland, suggesting that the lay of the land around it may have changed greatly since the Early Helladic period. The headland may at one point have been a low coastal hillock as also suggested for the much larger Manika headland.⁷⁸¹ Nevertheless, it seems clear that the North and South cemeteries at Aghios Kosmas flanked the directly inland approach to the excavated areas of the settlement and are likely to have done so in prehistory also.⁷⁸² The distance between the two cemeteries and the settlement at Aghios Kosmas was about one hundred metres. The extent of the settlement is, however, not known beyond the excavated areas. In any case these cemeteries, like the cemetery at Manika, must have been a tangible part of the daily life of the settlement, visually and by movement of people within the locality, even more so, perhaps, than for the vastly extended Manika settlement.

⁷⁸¹ Kambouroglou, Sampson & Maroukian 1989.

⁷⁸² Further possible indications may be the direction of the street of the Early Helladic settlement and also the gate of the late LH fortification wall towards the neck of the headland, indicative of one route of the approach to the low hillock in Mycenaean times (Mylonas 1959, 58).

Both Manika and Aghios Kosmas are located in about one-kilometre-wide coastal zones where the land is quite flat and homogenous.⁷⁸³ There was no great diversity of natural features to help the differentiation of different “rooms” in the landscape. As we have seen, these cemeteries and settlements were more or less contiguous in parts. Nevertheless, at Aghios Kosmas, the excavated area of the settlement was distinguished from the cemeteries by the slight rise of the modern headland, and possibly also by water in this low-lying area beyond the headland. Also, there always remains the possibility of less distinct natural markers, which are lost to us today, which may have made up ‘borders’ or in various ways helped to define the area. A majority of the graves at Manika have been found on the settlement side of the small stream suggested to have passed the area. It was initially thought that this stream constituted the southern border for both settlement and cemetery, but later excavation also revealed graves on the southern side of the bank.⁷⁸⁴ It now seems rather that the cemetery came to be arranged *around* this stream (*Fig. 50*). This area and the suggested northern limit of the settlement where the earliest house remains have been found are areas where the higher inland draws closer to the sea and together form a shallow cauldron between them, with lower land and a lower gradient slope.

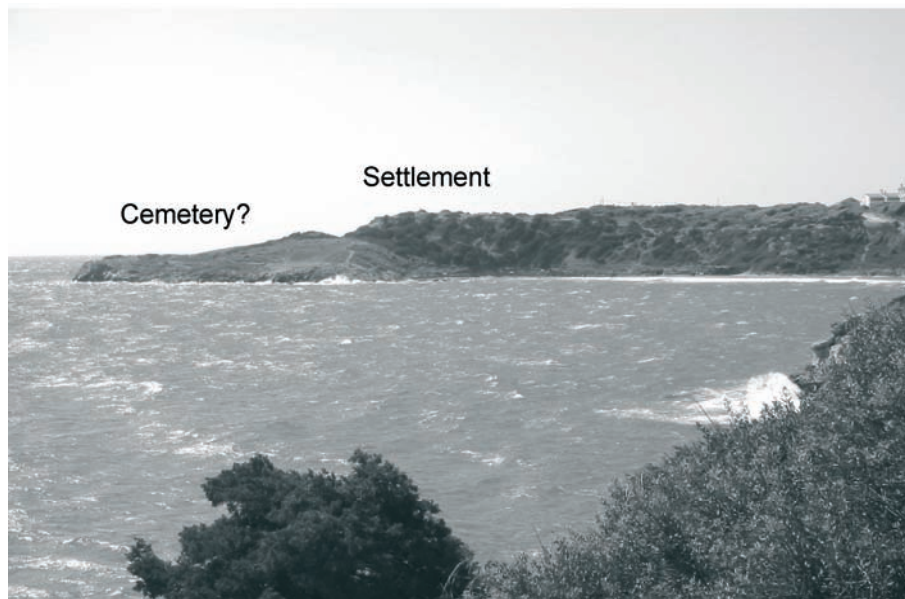


Figure 52. Askitario from the west with the location of the settlement and possible cemetery on its headland indicated.

⁷⁸³ As noted by Mylonas (1959, fig. 45), an area of several small mounds and hillocks once existed between Hymettos and the sea. These were levelled for the construction of the now former airport at Elliniko. The distance to these would have been one kilometre or more.

⁷⁸⁴ Sampson 1988a, 124. Graves south of the stream: i.e. plots Papastamatiou and Kyrana (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987b, 207; 1988a, 194; 1991; Sampson 1988a, Graves 172–189).

The topographic aspect generally appears strong in a survey of the differentiation of habitation and mortuary domains within the study area. One example may be the site of Askitarío. The promontory on which this site was located consists of three distinct levels, and the remains of the settlement itself are to be found on the broadest and highest part of the headland, stretching out into sea from the east coast of Attica (*Fig. 52*). Its south-western side, where the headland meets the mainland, is the only side not bordered by steep cliffs or slopes. At this point remains of a fortification wall have also been found, and SW of it a circa 10-metre-wide ditch, cutting off the settlement from the surrounding land.⁷⁸⁵ Due to the slight rise of the triangular settlement plateau towards the NE, the lower tip of the headland remains out of view from most of the triangular settlement space. Thus, someone standing within the settlement would have been standing on a visual ‘island’, the view also cut short by the rising mainland beyond the ditch. This means also that the lower tip of the headland was clearly distinguished and invisible from the top of the headland, even if only less than one hundred metres distant from it. From this lower plateau, the ‘invisible’ tip of the headland, Theocharis reported surface finds of frying-pans, Cycladic pottery and marble vessels, which he interpreted as the remains of a cemetery.⁷⁸⁶ I think that in this case the topography could very well be argued to have influenced the location of and interrelationship between habitational and mortuary spaces.

It may perhaps be argued that the location of the cemeteries here and at Aghios Kosmas at least were choices made out of necessity, since the location chosen was the location at hand. I believe, however, that the discussion should be taken some steps further. Thus, at Askitarío higher ground was readily available to the west of the headland, but, as far as is known, not utilised in the Early Helladic period. The settlement and cemetery were, as such, a unity, distinguished in their turn from the rising mainland by a wall and ditch.⁷⁸⁷

In only one case in the mortuary contexts listed in *Table 6* are the burials located at a distinctly higher altitude than the settlement. This is the so-called cave ossuary by Perachora-Vouliagmeni. The cave is located on the steep rocky side of the range of hills protecting Lake Vouliagmeni from the Corinthian Gulf (*Fig. 53*). The burials were of both adults and children, but almost half of the bones came from individuals in their early teens, suggesting perhaps deaths due to some epidemiological disease (e.g. anaemia, thalassemia).⁷⁸⁸ The cave was found on the steep seaward side of the ridge, in

⁷⁸⁵ Theocharis 1953–1954, 63f.

⁷⁸⁶ Theocharis 1953–1954, 115. This interpretation of the location of the finds reported by Theocharis is specified in comparison with the one found in Pullen 1985, 131, where the formulation “to the east of the headland where the fortified settlement of Asketario is located” is, I think, misleading.

⁷⁸⁷ Theocharis 1953–1954, 63f.

⁷⁸⁸ Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 230, in collaboration with osteologist E. Stravopodi.

contrast to the settlement which must have been directed instead more towards the lake area. The cave would have been largely invisible from the settlement, and stands in contrast to the two tombs found on lower ground by the sea.⁷⁸⁹ There is a possibility that the special character of the cave burials was motivated by certain circumstances surrounding the death of the individuals deposited there; the cave remains a unique example for the Early Helladic period.

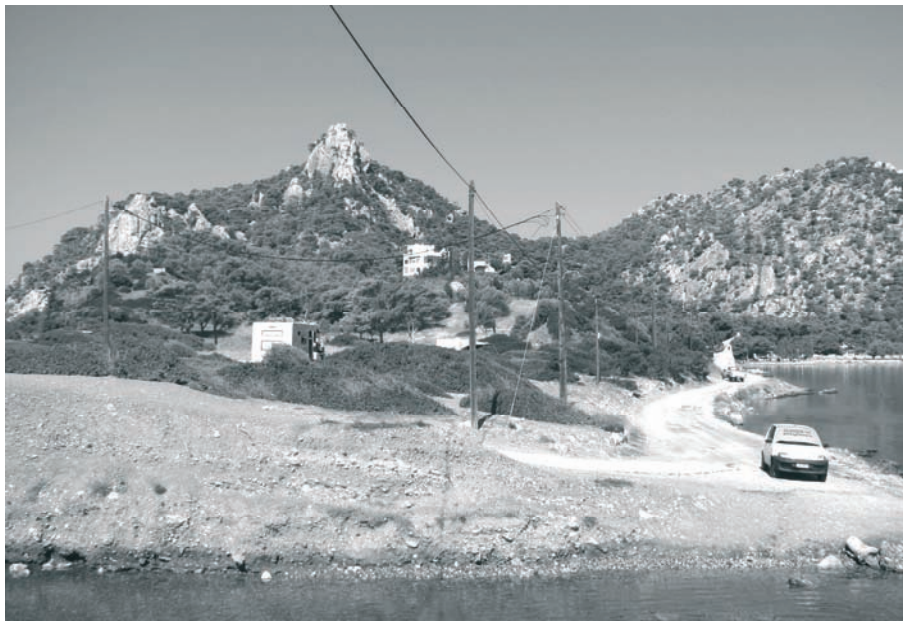


Figure 53. Perachora-Vouliagmeni. View from the east over the channel connecting the sea and the lake (right) towards the area of the Early Helladic settlement. The location of the cave is by the lower of the two bare and steep faces of the rock to the left in the picture, facing the sea.

Apart from this exception, I would like to propose that there is a general tendency in the material to permit the suggestion that the preferred location for the cemeteries was on ground lower than their settlements. This is especially discernible for the cemetery locations that remain in contact with the settlement areas, i.e. when graves and habitation are arranged around the same topographical feature, as was the case at Aghios Kosmas and possibly at Askitarío. Variations in altitude may therefore have been one aspect of deliberate distinction between areas for different activities. Apart from Aghios Kosmas and Askitarío, a similar arrangement can be seen at Hypaton and Thebes. At Hypaton, three graves of the Early Helladic period were excavated below the prehistoric acropolis, several hundred metres to the south,

⁷⁸⁹ Hatzipoulou-Kalliri 1983, 373.

at the site of the modern village, on a spur reaching out into the Theban Plain.⁷⁹⁰ Both sites at Thebes itself which have graves possibly datable to the Early Helladic period, are distinguished topographically from the main part of the Kadmeia: one by the river Dirke, west and below the Kadmeia, and the other on a separate and lower hillock to the north.⁷⁹¹

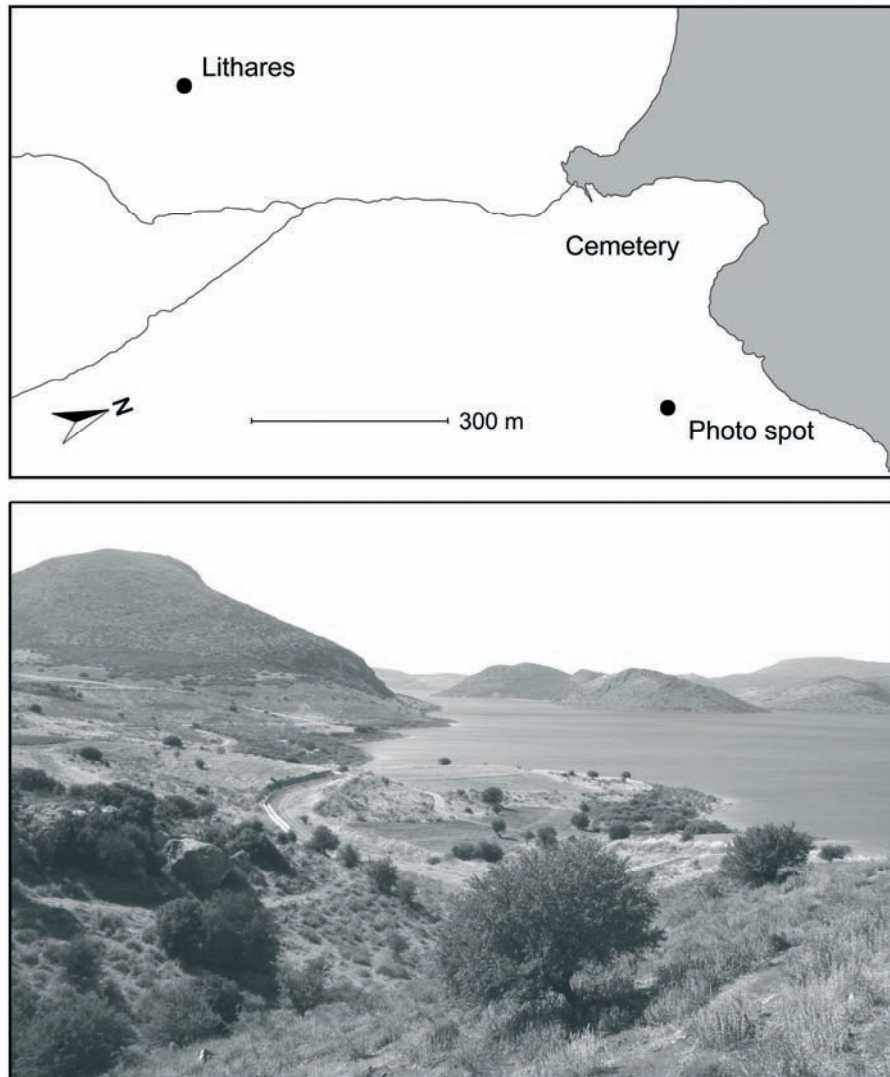


Figure 54. Area of Lithares and Lake Hylike on the northern fringe of the Theban Plain (information from Tzavella-Evjen 1985, fig. 1).

⁷⁹⁰ Spyropoulos 1970, 226.

⁷⁹¹ Keramopoulos 1910, 250–252; Spyropoulos 1973, 249; Konsola 1981, 111, 163f.

In these instances the two areas were distinctly separated, the distance between them three hundred metres or more. The separation is further effected by topographical differences. In the Dirke instance it is unclear on which side of the river bed the finds were made.⁷⁹² The cemetery excavated by Spyropoulos at the site of Anakoli by Lithares, however, was clearly located on the east side of the creek passing the settlement, emptying into the Hylike lake today, and possibly in prehistory.⁷⁹³ The cemetery was located out of sight and facing the area of the modern lake, some four hundred metres away from the settlement (*Fig. 54*). In search of the tombs connected with the Early Helladic settlement at Zygouries, Blegen finally found Early Helladic tombs on the Ambelakia hill. The site is located some five hundred metres to the west of the settlement, on the east slope of the ridge stretching out from the nearby mountain massif (*Fig. 55*).⁷⁹⁴ In contrast to the Lithares cemetery, the area of the Zygouries graves would have been visible from the settlement to the initiated eye. In contrast to Manika and Aghios Kosmas, however, no other of the known cemeteries would have been obviously along the path of the notional visitor to either settlement. In many cases the cemeteries were located out of sight of a person standing within the excavated areas of the settlements. In other cases they could have been visible, but the Early Helladic graves were not eye-catching and to spot them would certainly have called for a certain previous knowledge of their location, as has been argued for above.



Figure 55. Zygouries. View towards the west and the extended Ambelakia ridge.

⁷⁹² Keramopoulos (1910, 250) referring to the right bank of the river Dirke.

⁷⁹³ Spyropoulos 1969a.

⁷⁹⁴ Blegen 1928, 43–55.

Discussion of contemporary material

In order to put the Early Helladic graves into perspective, I would like to draw on a contemporary mortuary phenomenon from Crete. The Cycladic material, although often similar in tomb type and grave goods, does not suffice in this case, since we lack the relationship there between settlement and graves. The tholos tombs of the Mesara Plain of south central Crete, on the other hand, form a large and largely contemporaneous body of comparative material for the relationship between spaces of the living and of the dead.⁷⁹⁵

The Mesara tholoi have attracted increased scholarly interest during the last decade or so.⁷⁹⁶ Although we will see that there are clear differences between the Early Helladic and Early Minoan material, discussions of distance and topography have potential for both, and the comparison is interesting. In terms of location, Joanne M. Murphy emphasised that many of the tholos tombs were located on a raised area or a slight hill.⁷⁹⁷ Branigan, in contrast, saw no general trend as regards the tholoi being built on, by or in relation to any prominent features of the natural landscape, or in any prominent locations.⁷⁹⁸ Despite the apparent contradiction of their statements, they both emphasise the intervisibility of settlement and tomb, as well as the view from the tombs of the larger regional landscape.⁷⁹⁹ In his analysis of the relative arrangement of settlements and tholoi in the Mesara Plain, Branigan nevertheless found considerable variation in the relationships.⁸⁰⁰ For a majority of the 21 cases of interconnected settlements and cemeteries, the tombs were located either to the north or to the south of the settled area. The rest of the tombs were located in most other directions, but only one with a postulated location to the west of the settlement. He concluded that topographic reasons may explain individual locations but emphasised that the avoidance of a westerly located tomb should be seen as an effect of the general avoidance of an east-facing entrance to the tombs.⁸⁰¹ He further concluded that almost all known tombs were built within 250 metres of their settlements.⁸⁰² Thus, his conclusion was that the proximity of tombs and settlement was deliberately created so that while “the living can see, and oversee, the dwellings of the dead, the dead cannot reciprocate”.⁸⁰³

In contrast to the Mesara tholoi, the material on the Mainland does not allow any generalisations on distance, as we have seen, nor on direction. All

⁷⁹⁵ For a discussion of the placement of tholos and chamber tombs in relation to their respective settlements in Mycenaean times, see Wells 1990, 127f.

⁷⁹⁶ E.g. Branigan 1998, in which six contributions dealt with material from the Mesara tholoi.

⁷⁹⁷ Murphy 1998, 30.

⁷⁹⁸ Branigan 1998, 13f.

⁷⁹⁹ Branigan 1998, 14–19; Murphy 1998, 27–32.

⁸⁰⁰ Branigan 1998, 18, table 2.

⁸⁰¹ Branigan 1998, 19, table 3.

⁸⁰² Branigan 1998, 16f., table 1.

⁸⁰³ Branigan 1998, 19.

directions are represented among the ten settlement-cemeteries. There was a tendency for a westerly or an easterly direction to be preferred, but I believe that the basis is too weak to make any serious suggestions to this effect for the Early Helladic material. The situations were varied. If we nevertheless allow ourselves to generalise on the present material from the study area, some preferences for the location of graves and cemeteries can be suggested.

As stated initially, the lay of the land around the settlements appears to be the clue for a greater understanding of the relationship between the spaces for habitation and their connected graves on the Mainland. The first observation is that the potential of the surrounding landscape was used for the manipulation of space. As it can be argued that the variations in the landscape were used for the definition of settlement space, the formalised and common mortuary domain was arranged in the same way, as separated from the spaces of the living. The means used were variations in altitude, and topographic features such as rivers and eminences. Distance, however, does not appear to have been a deciding factor, nor perhaps visibility, both in contrast to the graves of the Mesara Plain. This difference may be at least partly connected with the differences in the type of graves. The Mesara tholos tombs were erected *above* ground, with one of their main objectives, as I see it, to *be visible*. Following Murphy and Branigan, they were located so as to be visible from the settlements, as territorial markers,⁸⁰⁴ and/or as markers for the stability and identity of their communities.⁸⁰⁵ The Early Helladic graves, on the other hand, were not that prominent above ground.

It may seem most convenient to argue that the Early Helladic people placed their dead where the landscape allowed them to be placed. This is, nevertheless, partly my point. Furthermore, however, it is evident that they made a choice from many alternatives. The Early Helladic people placed their cemeteries or clusters of graves outside the settlements, and they chose a space somehow topographically set apart from the habitational spaces. That the locations chosen cannot easily be generalised, in terms of distance, direction and means of separation, is, I propose, because they were choices of individuals, or groups of individuals, adapting to a pre-existing landscape. Thus, in making their choices, these individuals were limited in their alternatives by the landscape around them, but, I argue, they also recognised and made use of the possibilities inherent in that same landscape. Therefore, in a flat coastal zone, the cemeteries as at Aghios Kosmas came to be located less than one hundred metres from, and probably in many ways incorporated into the daily life of the settlement. For the same reason, it seems not unlikely that the surface finds of marble vessels and stone slabs on the island of Raptopoula in the Porto Raphti Bay do indeed indicate nearby graves pos-

⁸⁰⁴ Murphy 1998, 30;

⁸⁰⁵ Branigan 1998, 19f.

sibly connected with the Pounda headland some 1,300 metres away (*Fig. 56*).⁸⁰⁶

The general conclusion is that proximity was not unacceptable, and a certain distance not a necessity. On a local level, local preferences and topography were important. Many graves were nevertheless located only some hundred metres away, whether visible or invisible from the settlement. If the distance had been much larger, the connection between them would in any case have been lost to modern archaeology; even today we make the connections on negative evidence. I think it can nevertheless be argued that although visibility and distance were not primary factors, a certain proximity at least was important for keeping the bond between the living and their dead.



Figure 56. The islands of Raphtopoulo (left) and Raphtis (right) from the west and the area of the Early Helladic settlement on the Pounda headland.

It would be nice if this survey could have ended with a number of points that could be used to find new Early Helladic burials. The fact remains, however, that there may very well be several spots in the immediate landscape around any given Early Helladic settlement that could match the fleeting results of the survey, and the final choice would have been highly contextual. In the

⁸⁰⁶ Theocharis 1955a, 287.

end, I believe, the place chosen was probably a locale where many factors came together to match a conceptual model of how a grave and/or graves should be placed.

The spaces of the dead are likely to have been set apart symbolically and by practice from those of the living, whether separated by one or by one thousand metres. As Branigan concluded: “Death may have been spatially almost on the doorstep, but conceptually it was to be kept firmly at a distance.”⁸⁰⁷ This statement, however, tells only half the story. The cemeteries are likely to have been deeply intertwined in the histories and traditions of the people using them. Daily movement in the landscape around the settlements would have meant varying contacts with the cemeteries. Practices concerning death and the cemetery would probably have been constantly emerging in daily life and thought. We are likely also to miss out on a large part of the meaning of the site of a grave or cluster of graves. Just as the location of a settlement may have been grounded and sanctioned in the local mythology and history, so are the sites of graves likely to have been. The histories in this case may be individual, but for larger clusters of graves they would also at some point have become communal. I will leave this discussion, therefore, with a survey of one possibility. It seems that certain locales for graves were sought out not only because of their definition and separation from their settlements, but also because of their individual characteristics—locales with a view.

A grave with a view?

In the survey above, visibility has been discussed from the point of view of the settlements. In the relationship between settlement and cemetery, it is the former which tends to be emphasised. We can say that Early Helladic extramural graves and cemeteries, in themselves, were not likely to have been visible to the degree of, for instance, the Mesara tholoi. Visibility, like proximity, it seems, was not a necessity, nor a problem. Whether visually connected with its settlement or not, however, the graves and clusters of graves also had *a view of their own*. This view may have contributed to the choice of that specific location.

All graves would have had a view of course. In the material under study, there is one obvious differentiation to be made: between the graves located inland and those located by the sea. Apart from the intervisibility between tholos and settlement, Murphy emphasised the view from the tholoi over the cultivable land as a means of confirming a hold over and responsibility for this land by the families using the tholoi. Building on anthropological parallels, she also presents the possibility that the ancestors buried in the grave could have been looked on as overseeing that the responsibility was re-

⁸⁰⁷ Branigan 1998, 26.

spected and, if needed, taking over this commitment of the living.⁸⁰⁸ I am not rejecting the possibility that the location of the Early Helladic graves may have been regarded in a similar way. In the Early Helladic case, without the graves having a prominent appearance, the view from the graves may certainly be a way to a wider understanding of the chosen locales. It is also an attractive way of visualising a continued presence of the dead within the cemeteries. To emphasise the view *from* the graves and not *of* the graves requires a certain personalisation of the grave and the dead ‘ancestors’ within them, to be paralleled perhaps with the visiting living members of the clan or family. Thus, both could potentially have been regarded as beneficiaries of the view. The varying alignments of the individual graves, at least for the Early Helladic examples, suggest that the view, if one was intended, did not mean the actual view of the interred from their positions in the graves, but the view from the locale as a whole, dependent on its general topographical location. I believe that this view may have played an important role in the choice of location as well as for the arguably special character, atmosphere perhaps, of a locale once marked out as a locale especially for the dead.

It is clear from the discussion above that the view from some cemeteries and graves (e.g. Zygyouries, Aghios Kosmas) included the settlement. Most known graves, like the settlements, occupied spaces at the fringes of open flat land. Although generally at a lower altitude than the settlements, many graves were placed on lower hills, slopes or spurs. Whether or not a nearby settlement is known, a higher altitude would therefore arguably mean a better view of the surroundings. The view may thus have been the simple result of the location. The location, in turn, may have been chosen as being favourable for the construction of the graves.⁸⁰⁹ Suggestions have also been made that graves and settlements were located on land unsuitable for cultivation, and this may have contributed to the choice.⁸¹⁰ In terms of the latter, most graves were indeed placed in locations unsuitable for cultivation and, inland, that meant often that they instead were located with a view over cultivable areas. I believe, however, that it is important to allow for the possibility that these considerations were only possible parts in a potentially more complex motivation.

The extramural mortuary domain would have occupied a special position within the Early Helladic society, in relation to the everyday inhabited space—connected as it was to its own distinct spatiality, and working after its own specific temporality.⁸¹¹ The cemeteries were, in many ways, placed at the fringes of settlement life as well as in border zones within the landscape.

⁸⁰⁸ Murphy 1998, 30–32.

⁸⁰⁹ Dumas 1977, 55.

⁸¹⁰ Graves: Murphy 1998, 28; Pullen 1985, 142; Settlements: Forsén 1996, 117.

⁸¹¹ E.g. Hamilakis 1998, 118.

On a regional level, the cemeteries frequently occupied similar locations to the settlements. On the local scale, however, they may be seen as geographically and conceptually liminal to their settlements and to life in the settlements.⁸¹² Liminality in this case needs to be seen as relative, from the point of view of the people living in the settlements. This may have had a bearing on the choice of location. Furthermore, wherever located, I propose that the graves in themselves, being a phenomenon connected with death and transition, would have infused this place with the same special, arguably liminal, meaning and position within the Early Helladic society. A special location may therefore not have been a prerequisite for the placement of a cemetery, but it may nevertheless have been deliberately chosen to underscore the transitional character of the mortuary domain. In some instances this character is particularly well illustrated in the choice of location of the cemeteries, in relation to the settlements as well as to the local topography.

Attica can be described as an ‘almost island’ (lat. *peninsula*) in many respects, not only in terms of its geographic location, but also in terms of its close connection, both geographically and culturally, with the Cyclades.⁸¹³ The sea was never far away, small settlements dotted the coastline, and some of them have been connected with graves. Of these, the graves at Aghios Kosmas in fact comprise the only excavated cluster of graves by the sea. These were located close to the settlement in a rather unremarkable coastal zone. It is worth considering also, however, that the ground was low and sandy. In digging their graves, it appears that the Early Helladic inhabitants of this settlement sought out the areas of compact crust in an area that was not completely appropriate for the purpose. The thought occurs, therefore, that apart from a location near the settlement, proximity to the sea was also preferred. A further indication is the coastal location of both the North Cemetery as well as the South Cemetery (*Fig. 51*). Thus, instead of expanding the cemetery inland from either position, the people continued to make use of this coastal stretch, most probably causing movement to and from the settlement to pass close by and through this extended area of graves. At Askitario, if the surface finds do indeed tell of undisclosed graves at the site, the location chosen was one of lesser altitude, stretching out into the sea. Similarly, the unexcavated graves at Sounion were facing the sea. Theocharis noted graves on the southern edge of the peninsula, not far from the Temple of Poseidon, and dated them to the Early Helladic period by the surface material of obsidian, sherds and a stone figurine of “island” type. A contemporary settlement was noted at an unspecified location nearby.⁸¹⁴ Both the latter grave locations, if correctly placed here, are today steep and barren.

⁸¹² For liminality: van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969.

⁸¹³ Broodbank 2000, 68.

⁸¹⁴ Theocharis 1955a, 287.

Both had settlements nearby but the view must have been of the sea and not of the settlement.

Both the location of the settlements at Aghios Kosmas and Askitarío, and their established or proposed relationship to a nearby cemetery, find interesting parallels in the EBA Cyclades. The topography of the low headland by Grotta on Naxos is very similar to the appearance of the Aghios Kosmas area, both the modern conditions (or in the case of Aghios Kosmas, rather the conditions at the time of excavation and before the area was thoroughly overbuilt)⁸¹⁵ as well as the estimated EBA conditions (*Fig. 57*). In the Cycladic case, the EC settlement (Grotta) was located just at the inland base of the headland. The Aplomata cemetery was located some 200–300 metres to the northeast.⁸¹⁶ In a comparison between Askitarío and Chalandriani-Kastri on Syros, it is clear that the finds in the latter area cover much larger distances, and that the area is not a headland like Askitarío. The overall arrangement, however, was much the same. Thus, as at Askitarío, the earlier EC II Chalandriani settlement was located on a higher plateau, while the four groups of graves spread out on the lower slopes and plateaus all the way to the sea. The later EC II Kastri settlement was located nearby, at lower altitude, but instead on a separate and steep hill (*Fig. 58*).⁸¹⁷

Indeed, strikingly, many Early Helladic graves were located by water of some sort: by the sea or by a lake. They are often located on a hill slope directed towards the sea, and often so close to the sea or lake that they have now been completely or partly submerged and/or eroded by the water. Can this circumstance be translated into a meaningful and intentional symbolical connection made between the dead and water? A symbolic connection between graves and water on the Mainland, however, is not without problems. Apart from the obvious problems of approaching a prehistoric world of symbols, the material itself presents a number of problems. Firstly, many locations have been pinpointed based only on surface finds. The presence of graves, especially in Attica, has often been supposed based on the presence of marble vessels and stone slabs, i.e. common grave finds and supposedly misplaced cover stones of cist graves. Another problem must be that the location of graves was to a large degree guided by the locations of the settlements. A settlement by the sea was likely to result in graves by the sea. A third complicating factor to which we constantly return are the changes in the landscape and especially the sea level during the last five thousand years.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁵ Mylonas 1959, fig. 1 (photo of the headland at the time of excavation).

⁸¹⁶ Broodbank 2000, 218–220, fig. 66. This coastal area has suffered many disturbances subsequent to the EBA, and both settlement and cemetery may have been larger than indicated by the present evidence, and the relationship between them is hence impossible to ascertain (p. 220).

⁸¹⁷ Broodbank 2000, 212–216, fig. 63.

⁸¹⁸ See above, *this chapter*, section on *Modern detection*.

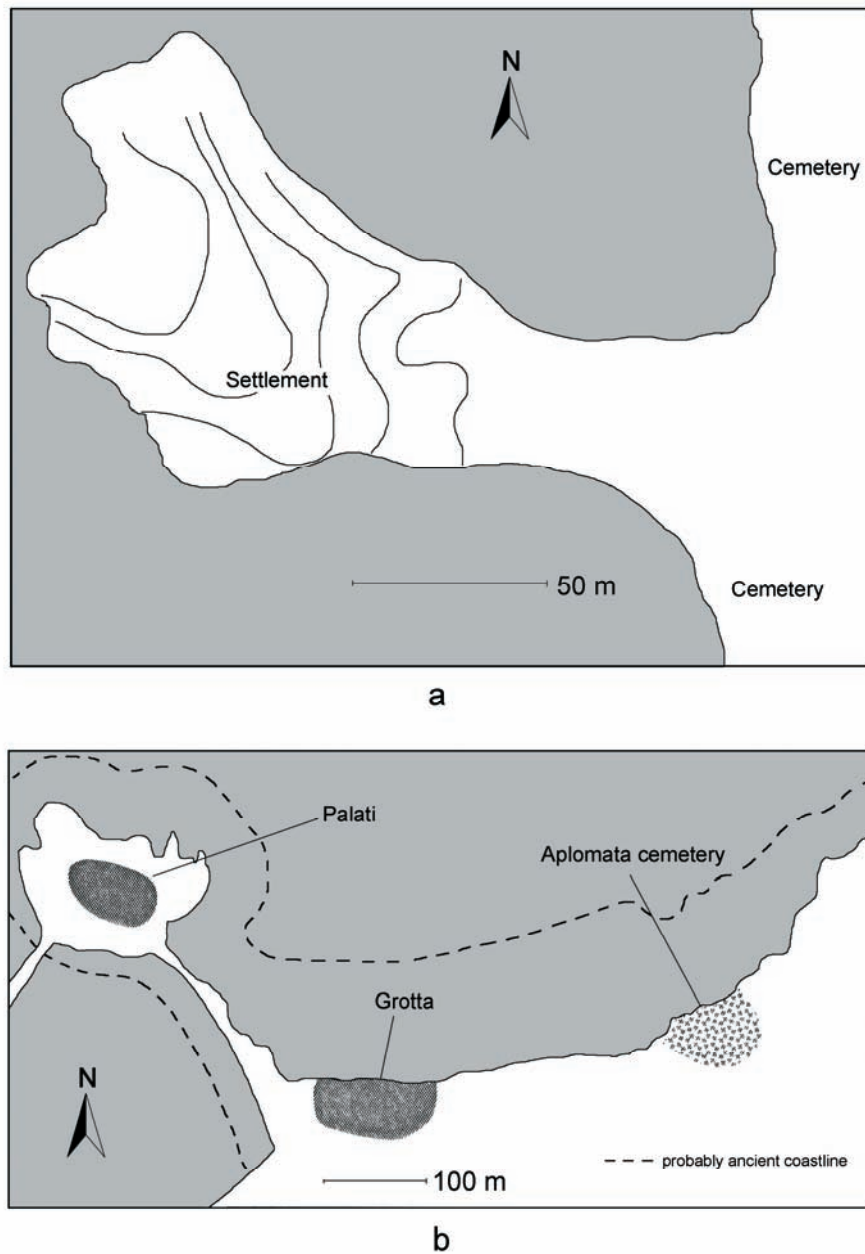


Figure 57. Aghios Kosmas in Attica (a) and Grotta-Aplomata on Naxos, showing the approximate extent of the ancient shoreline and of the main occupation and burial areas (b) (after Mylonas 1959, plan 1; and Broodbank 2000, fig. 66, with permission of Cambridge University Press).

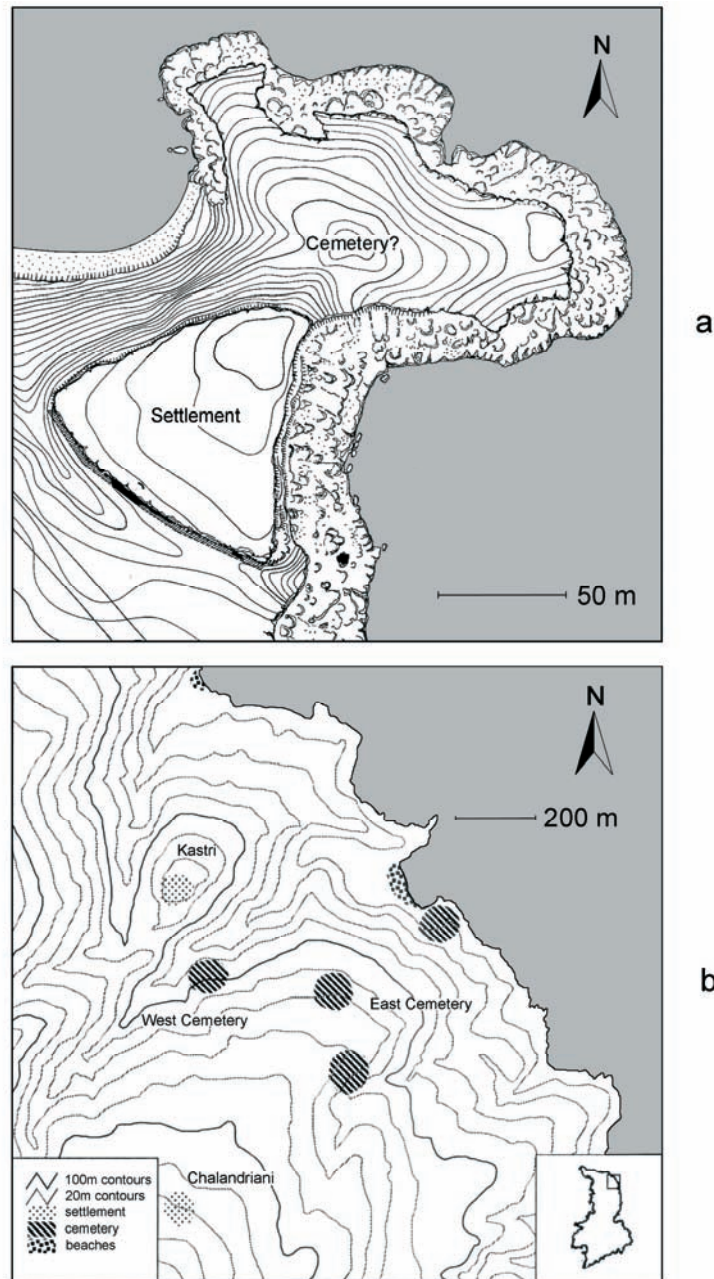


Figure 58. Askitarion in Attica (a) and Chalandriani-Kastri on Syros (b) (after Travlos 1988, fig. 482; and Broodbank 2000, fig. 63, with permission of Cambridge University Press).

This last factor is essential for the interpretation of the cemeteries around the modern lakes of Paralimni and Likéri/Hylike. All three cemeteries appear to have been facing the area of the modern lakes. Lithares was located on the northern slopes of the mountain Kokkinosvrachos, at the shore of the lake Hylike/Likéri. The two Paralimni cemeteries were located at points that were once by the shore of that lake. The appearance of the two areas in the Early Helladic period remains, however, uncertain.⁸¹⁹ The low altitude of the lake basins is likely to have made them prone to at least periodic flooding and marshy conditions. The settlement connected with the Paralimni: Kandili graves is as yet unknown. Whether dry or wet land, the view from the Paralimni: Botsikoula graves would have been mirrored in the view from the settlement. At both Lithares and Paralimni: Botsikoula, the cemeteries appear to have been distinctly separated from the inhabited space, and in both cases the graves would have been in more immediate contact with the low-lying areas.

In the Paralimni: Botsikoula case this was the result of a hill being chosen for habitation. What is noteworthy about Lithares, however, is that the view from the area of the graves was apparently quite the opposite of that from the settlement. Thus, while the settlement faced the open southern plain, the graves were located in an area ‘at the back’ of the settlement, with the view to the south cut short by rising ground and the hill on whose slopes they were located (cf. the location of the Perachora-Vouliagmeni cave in relation to the settlement). Furthermore, some of the graves at Lithares (Spyropoulos’ chamber tombs), at the time of excavation and possibly in prehistory, were located where the combined rivers of the Theban plain meet the lake, on a peninsula formed at the mouth of the creek.⁸²⁰ Thus, Lithares also belongs to a group of cemeteries and graves that can be tentatively connected with water in the form of rivers or streams. Apart from Lithares, the graves at Manika are scattered on both sides of the small river bank suggested to have carried a stream “at one time”.⁸²¹ Finally, one further example is the possible Early Helladic grave by the river Dirke, framing the Kadmeia to the west.

In terms of view, the survey has been directed on the basis of the cemeteries or clusters of graves as a whole, since we are often dealing with supposed graves or only partly excavated cemeteries, and the material refutes any generalisations over the study area. Regarding the cases where a precise view is available, the direction of the entrances to each graves, the material is even more varied than the cemeteries as wholes, there is no common denominator to be found like that suggested by Branigan for the tholos tombs of the Mesara. The variation in the Early Helladic material applies between cemeteries

⁸¹⁹ Spyropoulos 1971; Fossey 1988, 226.

⁸²⁰ Spyropoulos 1965, 37, pl. 37.

⁸²¹ Sampson 1988a, 124.

as well as among the graves within one cemetery. It is interesting to note, however, that at Tsepi, in the one case where all graves within a cemetery seem to be pointing in the same direction, the opening is directed towards the southeast, which in this context is directly towards the coast *c.* 2.5 kilometres away (*Fig. 68*).

So, water or land, what were the intentions behind the exact location of the graves in the Early Helladic period? In many cultures, water is and has been a symbol of life, of purification and of rejuvenation, and, as such, a part of many rituals and mythologies. Water as in the sea, it has been suggested, can be seen in the inter-linked spiral motif on the EBA so-called ‘frying-pans’ (*Fig. 59*).⁸²² These frying-pans were common finds in Early Cycladic as well as Early Helladic graves in the first half of the period.⁸²³ On the one hand, land was probably a factor of growing importance during the Early Helladic period, marked by an intensification of land use and tenure. On the other hand, water and the open sea was also an important social arena, especially perhaps for the ‘almost islands’ of Attica and Euboea.⁸²⁴ It is clearly impossible to give an answer to questions of the intention behind specific choices of locales. It has not been intended, therefore, that the survey in this section give answers, but that it present possibilities.

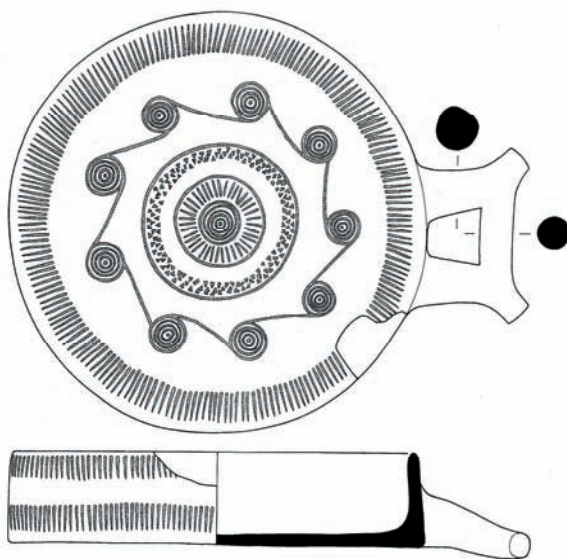


Figure 59. Tsepi. Frying-pan from Grave 13 (no. 13.1) (after Pandelidou Gofa 2005, plate 16, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens).

⁸²² E.g. Renfrew 1972, 421.

⁸²³ Coleman 1985. Ships and fish were represented as surrounded by spirals, suggesting the open sea. See also Broodbank (2000, esp. 191–193, 215f., 256–267) for a multifaceted analysis of the position of the island of Syros in the early Cyclades, and the unique presence of the longboat motif on frying-pans in the Chalandriani cemetery.

⁸²⁴ See further discussion in *Chapter 6*, and *9*.

The location of graves, both relative to the settlements and to the local landscape, is yet another path towards a greater understanding of an Early Helladic world of thought. It seems fitting, therefore, to end this discussion with a consideration of how the site of what was to become a cemetery was first chosen. Are we to think that when choosing a site for habitation the Early Helladic people also marked out a place for the burial of the first dead? Or is it more likely that the question of a burial ground arose with the first death in the new community? If so, did the choice lie with the individual, or individuals, most immediately affected, or was the choice a communal affair? These are questions that we cannot answer today but they are questions that have some significance for how we understand Early Helladic society.

It is my contention that we should recognise much more than we tend to do that what we see in the archaeological material is the result of individual action. Therefore, variations should be emphasised and generalisations be held general. However, even if the location was originally an individual choice, the choice was influenced by a general appreciation of how things were done in that specific community, and perhaps by a certain world-view of a smaller or greater area of the Early Helladic mainland. Furthermore, when the choice was made and the first grave was placed, it may well have influenced the placing of additional future graves and their role in the Early Helladic society. Any singular and isolated graves that existed in the Early Helladic landscape are likely to have remained a private concern. Once a cemetery was established, however, a greater area was singled out from the surrounding landscape, ascribed a special status, and helped to form the set of practices that will be described below.

Part Five.

Connecting the living and their dead

In this last part of the book it is time to connect the issues of life and death within the Early Helladic communities. I will attempt to do this in two very different chapters that together form the concluding part of this work. In *Chapter 9*, I will continue my exploration of Early Helladic material culture and practices by an in-depth study of Early Helladic mortuary customs. In the final *Chapter 10*, I will present my view of the present book as a whole—as a summary and a look ahead.

That I have chosen in this concluding part to concentrate on the mortuary sphere is in part a natural follow up to the preceding three chapters. After locating the graves and the cemeteries in time and space, it is time to turn to the potential that rests within the mortuary sphere itself for information on the life and death of its Early Helladic users. The Early Helladic mortuary sphere is, in my view, much underestimated and under-explored. Due to the relative permanence of the grave construction and related material, such as (some) grave goods, and to some degree the skeleton itself, these have formed the main focus for studies into the Early Helladic mortuary record. Interpretations have mainly been conducted on a descriptive and quantitative basis: emphasising artefacts and architecture, and furthermore their role as evidence of chronological development and inter-regional contacts.⁸²⁵ In a wider view, the interpretations have also been concerned with the social persona (including gender) of the dead, and by extension with the social and economic organisation of Early Helladic society.⁸²⁶ In *Chapter 9*, although using the artefacts as an interpretational base, I propose a practice-oriented rather than an artefact-oriented analysis, and will therefore return to *the actual practices related to the Early Helladic mortuary domain*—linking the living with the dead, and quite physically with death.

⁸²⁵ Eg. relevant excavation reports, and in overview: Cavanagh & Mee 1998; inter-regional contacts within the early Cyclades: Broodbank 2000.

⁸²⁶ Pullen 1985; Sampson 1987; EC material: Doumas 1987.

The mortuary sphere is where many time scales intersect in a very tangible way. A death within a small scale community, such as those of Early Helladic times, is likely to have touched the lives of many, constituted a marker in the routines of daily life. At the same time it would have initiated a set of practices having very strong connections with this daily life. *Chapter 9* is concerned with the potential of the archaeological material for tracing the practices following an Early Helladic death, through the different stages and rituals connected with it.⁸²⁷ Anthropological parallels talk of stages of dying, and stages through which the deceased travels from the time of his or her death, until they are finally incorporated into the realm of the dead and of their ancestors. The conception of these stages and the rituals vary widely, and so does the appreciation of the 'life' for the deceased after death. Common is the notion of some kind of afterlife, whether it is in a far away land, good or bad, or in the actual space of the cemetery, in settlements of the dead. Similarly varied is the notion of the possible interaction and interest of the dead in their still living community.⁸²⁸

Death, and everything connected with death, is commonly related to a variety of rituals for the well-being of both the living and the dead. These rituals begin by the 'death-bed' and are concluded, or culminate and gradually die out, after an often specified amount of time. Although symbolically connected with the notion of the soul (or similar) of the deceased, these rituals are also very closely connected with the continued existence of the physical body of the individual. Different stages of these rituals can be plainly seen or inferred from the archaeological record of skeletal and material culture remains available in the Early Helladic mortuary contexts. The closed graves have the great advantage of preserving frozen moments from within the mortuary rituals from the time of burial.

The questions I will ask concern the type of vessels and objects that were considered appropriate in different cemeteries, how they were used and how these choices affected the practices following an Early Helladic death. Furthermore, I will consider the importance and structure of the grave itself, and its connection with mortuary practices and with concerns within the Early Helladic societies as wholes. Throughout, the emphasis will be on the persons variously involved and affected by these practices, making the choices and performing the rituals. In order to keep this focus, I will have you follow the Early Helladic practices by way of a story of a notional Early Helladic death, as introduction to and in parallel with discussions of the archaeological material. The account will respect but also go beyond these actual remains in an attempt to visualise and bring to life the practices and the people engaged in the events occurring following a death within an Early Helladic

⁸²⁷ Cf. Parker Pearson 1999, for a wide variety of viewpoints towards the study of death and burial.

⁸²⁸ E.g. Jordan 2003, 216–221; van Gennep 1960, 146–165.

community. The story is fictional of course, but serves the important purpose also of including some of that which time may have concealed.

Furthermore, while regional and local histories are a common focus throughout this book, I will now take the opportunity to move the discussion to the level of individual objects, or in most cases to the level of groups of objects. In terms of method, comparisons will be made between eight mortuary contexts for which the contents have been published in adequate detail. The eight contexts are comprised of multiple graves in cemeteries (Tsepi, Aghios Kosmas and Manika), and smaller groups or single graves (Perachora-Vouliagmeni, Kalamaki, Zygouries, Corinth and Cheliotomylos), from which the grave goods have been sufficiently published. In case of Manika, a selection has been made among the published graves, while the remaining seven contexts have been analysed in full.⁸²⁹ The statistical results of the analysis are presented below in a number of tables and diagrams. The composition and character of the contexts will be presented in detail as part of the discussion; the essentials are presented here in *Table 7*.

Table 7. *Essential data for the eight graves and grave clusters under primary consideration in the chapter.*

	Tsepi	Aghios Kosmas North	Manika	Perachora- Vouliagmeni	Kalamaki	Zygouries	Cheliotomylos	Corinth
	30 (incl. 2 side burials)	38 (incl. 6 side burials)	c. 300	2	1	4	1	1 (2 ch.)
Excavated graves								
Finds	128	119	121	52	21	115	141	19
Graves with finds	26	25	33	2	1 (+?)	3	1	1
Graves analysed ⁸³⁰	30	38	46	2	1	4	1	1

There are chronological differences within this group, as discussed in *Chapter 6* (see further *Fig. 42*). This means that the results of comparisons of material culture below may be partly chronologically based. The comparisons will be made at points within the narrative of *Chapter 9*. These will

⁸²⁹ Tsepi: Gofa 2005 (including only the fully excavated graves); Aghios Kosmas: Mylonas 1959, 64–120; Manika: included are the graves from the Georgiou and Beligianni plots (Sampson 1985, 158–196; 1988: Graves 51–71, 83–99; Sapouna Sakellarakis 1987: 8 graves, recorded in Sampson 1988a as Graves 75–82). Dates according to Sampson (1988a, fig. 14, p. 59) are EH 2 (16 graves), EH 2 and 3 (2 graves), EH 2? (3 graves), EH 3 (4 graves) and 21 graves that could not be chronologically determined beyond being Early Helladic; Perachora-Vouliagmeni: Hatzipoulou-Kalliri 1983; Kalamaki: Broneer 1958; Pullen 1985, 154f., n. 13; Zygouries: Blegen 1928, 43–55; Pullen 1985, 106–110; Cheliotomylos: Waage 1949; Corinth: Heermance & Lord 1897.

⁸³⁰ This number gives the full range of graves that was sampled for their contents (in all instances but Manika that means all published and fully excavated graves from the respective graves or cemeteries) and the differences with the category ‘Graves with finds’ give the number of graves in which no grave goods were found.

complement the considerations already made of the regionality and chronology of grave types among the studied regions, and primarily between the east and the south. There are differences but also similarities.

Broad generalisations on issues of regionality, as presented in *Chapter 6*, should, however, be complemented with the local and context specific. I will argue in *Chapter 9* that there may be an important distinction to be made between objects destined to a greater degree to be used in the mortuary context, and those that finally end up within the graves. This is an argument that will be concerned with the function of vessels and their place of deposition in some Early Helladic burial contexts. For whatever else the grave finds were considered suitable, and in whatever context they were also used, they were chosen as appropriate, symbolically and individually, for the burial in which they were found, and for deposition within the mortuary domain in general. With this, I would like to return the focus to the mortuary context itself, and the function of the objects in this context—as it is in these contexts they were deposited and in these contexts they were found.

9. Narrative of a death (and life)

The narrative is that of the death of a woman of about 35 years old (my own age, and probably a middle-aged to old woman by Early Helladic standards).⁸³¹ She dies an undramatic death, and is buried in a multiple tomb within a larger cemetery. It is important to note that what will be described is the sum of my chosen part of the available evidence (an extrapolation from the material culture we have), compacted into one series of events. The story is thus geographically non-specific, combining separate traits from different locations. In reality there are likely to have been considerable deviations, in composition as well as detail, from this generic sequence of events following an Early Helladic death. *There are numerous other stories to be told.* Variations in the archaeological remains will be discussed when available; in other cases these alternative sequences will have left no trace. The variations will have depended on the preferences and life histories of the dead, as well as their survivors, as actors within the traditions of a specific cultural (regional, local, topographic, geographical, symbolical) context. Most importantly also, the burial in a grave in a formal cemetery or mortuary area is chosen with respect to the archaeological material available to us today. This, for many of us, so familiar burial, however, is only one alternative of many that is likely to have been practised during the Early Helladic period.

Although situated within Early Helladic society, the choices I have made in building the story, have led to a story with which I can feel comfortable (which seems realistic to me). It is easier to build a story on familiar ground than to reconstruct the unfamiliar. The episodes in the story are not far from my own experiences and the experiences of others, in modern Europe at least. This general similitude may be real or it may be only superficial, as the Early Helladic individuals imbued similar practices with far different meanings. The story will be told piecemeal with sometimes extensive, discursive sections following each part of the story.

So begins my story:

⁸³¹ For problems concerning the aging of adults (over-representation of young adults and under-representation of middle- and old-aged individuals) and therefore establishing average life expectancies, see Triantaphyllou 2003, 218.

The day is drawing to a close, the sun has set. The heat of the day has been exchanged for the soft warmth of the early summer evening. By her side, where she is lying, sits her youngest daughter. During the day that has passed it has been clear that her time was near. Family members and many others have passed through the room, saying a word or two before they continued with their chores, collecting firewood for the fire, weeds for the next meal. Now, since her body has gone to rest and her spirit set free, her daughter has sat watchful by her side, while others went to see to the final preparations for the ceremonies which will follow after these last hours in the house where she has lived most of her life.

By her head, therefore, now stands the small, small jar with its fine incised pattern, filled with scented oil, and beside it a bundle of leaves with dried herbs. Outside, in the yard, a jar stands, filled with beer. Over the fire-place simmers the pot with stew. She is dressed in her favourite clothes.

Preparing for burial

The story begins within the settlement at the time of death, and even before that. Any death in Early Helladic society would have closely affected a group of people. The number of people affected is likely to have varied with the degree of complexity of the integration of the deceased, while living, into the life of the village or community. By extension, therefore, I would argue that the death of a person well integrated into the life of the community would lead to a higher number of persons affected and a greater likelihood of a ‘traditional’ burial. ‘Traditional’ is meant here to refer to a set of practices common to a group of people and therefore prescribed by the tradition or convention of that group. In the case of our woman, ‘tradition’ was burial within a built grave in a cemetery, but other scenarios are equally possible. Age, however, need not be the only factor deciding the degree of integration, and the specific parts of the rituals are furthermore likely to vary with the wants and needs of the dead as well as of the living in each case, to a greater or a lesser degree, and quite possibly also with the manner of death.

In our case, the death of the woman has been imminent for some time. The people with the responsibility of caring for her after her death, and seeing to the ceremonies to follow, will have had some time to prepare. One task would have been to see to the paraphernalia to be used in the coming rituals. Most notable to us among this paraphernalia are the objects we find in the context of the graves. The durable, archaeologically recognisable grave goods, however, were not many within Early Helladic graves; they generally do not even correspond to the number of skeletons per grave. The

perishable grave goods, however, may have been many, and possibly more varied than the ones we can survey today. In either case, the practices following an Early Helladic death would usually have started in the settlement.

A regional and contextual analysis of burial contexts will here serve the dual purpose of suggesting local patterns for the composition of grave finds, as well as giving further insights into the activities behind that composition. Broodbank has recently presented a very persuasive argument for the existence of ‘small worlds’, contextually specific histories, in the early Cyclades, while simultaneously stressing a considerable movement of people, goods and ideas over sometimes large distances.⁸³² Moreover, he succeeded in visualising these differences in a way that did not allow the statistical data to overshadow them.⁸³³ Although his choice of presentation was partly due to the varying preservation of the material analysed, the method is also commendable on an interpretative level. The analysis of the eight Early Helladic cemeteries will follow his model by presenting a number of diagrams and tables in which the specific compositions can be viewed and compared. The actual statistical data have been suppressed in favour of an emphasis on the relative compositions. As for the Cycladic material, the eight grave contexts differ in many ways, in number and character of finds as well as in numbers of graves found (*Table 7*, above). While Broodbank emphasised variations based on decoration and decorated ware, the analysis presented here is based mainly on production material and, later on, on the function of the vessels and objects found in the different grave contexts. Seen on a cemetery level, and for the present purpose, a similarly based analysis potentially provides information on a number of issues.

Let us start by looking at the distribution of material (*Fig. 60*). The first observation is that pottery makes up a large percentage at a majority of sites. At Kalamaki and Corinth, pottery vessels were the only material recognised, and at Perachora-Vouliagmeni only one stone vessel interrupted their dominance.⁸³⁴ In terms of volume, pottery comes out on top at all sites. What is also apparent, however, is that while pottery vessels always occupy a central position in the analysis and publications of mortuary remains, the pottery is often outnumbered by the sum of objects of other materials and, in cases, by one single other material. Thus, one vessel can contain many small finds, as illustrated by a stamped and incised pyxis that was found upside-down but filled with obsidian blades, chips and cores outside Grave 3 at Aghios Kosmas (*Fig. 75*).⁸³⁵ A clear regional difference is visible here. That is that although the variation in material is quite large at Zygouries, the relative

⁸³² Broodbank 2000.

⁸³³ Broodbank 2000, esp. chapters 6–7.

⁸³⁴ Kalamaki was found during road construction and small finds may have been lost, but the latter two appear to have been excavated as sealed deposits.

⁸³⁵ Mylonas 1959, 74, 76, vase no. 164.

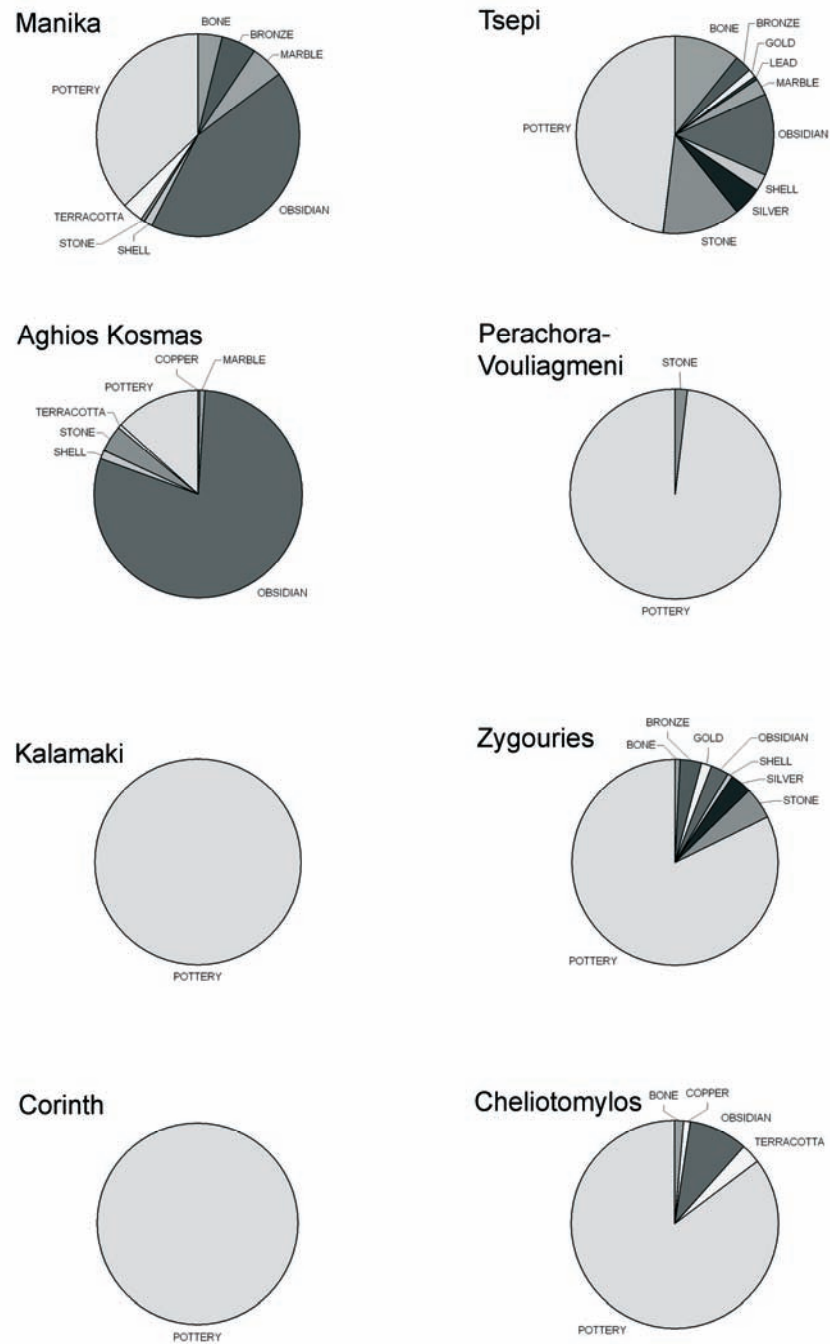


Figure 60. Popularity of material in the eight cemeteries from Table 7.

popularity of pottery was unchallenged throughout Corinthia. In Attica and Euboea, on the other hand, while pottery was common, the relative popularity stopped at less than fifty percent.

Several points require consideration. Firstly, a qualifying note on chronology. As discussed in *Chapter 6* and mentioned above, the cemeteries of Attica and Euboea appear generally earlier than those of Corinthia (*Fig. 42*), and only the cemetery at Manika has been established to have been used in the late EH II period also. In considering differences between the areas, this should be borne in mind. However, the level of variation in the materials used is likely to partly reflect the access to, or perhaps integration into the trading networks active at the time. I propose that this is one explanation for the large variation found at Tsepi, as well as at Aghios Kosmas and Manika, all cemeteries used by people with geographically easy access to the trade routes operating along the coasts of Attica and through the Euboean gulfs.⁸³⁶ In this context, the evidence from inland Zygouries stands out. Although relatively low in number in comparison with the pottery found, the range of deposited material displays a variation equalling that at Manika. It is especially noteworthy that this variation is accomplished within only three graves, in comparison with the 33 graves with finds sampled from Manika. Whether this should be interpreted as persons of high status being buried in these graves is difficult to say. It is clear, however, that these persons had similar access to the required exchange networks as did the people of the mostly earlier cemeteries in Attica and Euboea. That, of the sampled graves from Corinthia, only the three graves at Zygouries display this variation may be the exception that proves the rule, or the circumstance that defines the limited basis for comparison available from Corinthia. If the basis is sound, however, and the low variation of material is confirmed by additional finds, it is more likely due to local preferences and/or individual abilities, and these may both be chronologically grounded, rather than that actual lack of access was the motivation behind the compositions of the burial contexts.

Secondly, there are the individual contexts presented in the diagrams. On the one hand, the fundamental data for Attica and Euboea is based on a much larger number of graves than the material from Corinthia. On the other hand, while the data from Manika comes from only one site, Corinthia is represented by five different sites with similar tendencies. Furthermore, included in the data is all material recovered from the contexts of the graves (more or less whole vessels and objects). In most cases this is translated into the material found within the grave. At Aghios Kosmas, however, a majority of the finds were found outside the grave, a circumstance that will be considered in detail below. Similarly, included in the data from Zygouries is the material from the fill of the graves as well as the finds from within the grave. The fill

⁸³⁶ Cf. Broodbank 2000, chapters 8–9, see esp., figs. 94 (*Fig. 43*, above) and 109 for illustration.

material was analysed by Pullen and interpreted as *in situ*, possibly material removed from its context of deposition in preparation for new burials, but used again for the infilling of the graves.⁸³⁷ Finally, the status of Cheliotomylos as a ‘real’ burial has been questioned. As argued above, however, its overall context is on a par with most burial contexts, although the numbers of dead and deposited vessels, as well as the form of the grave, are atypical.⁸³⁸

A third point requiring consideration is the large number of obsidian at some sites. Again there is a considerable regional variation, with a relative popularity that outnumbers the pottery at both Aghios Kosmas and Manika. In a popularity analysis, the sheer number of obsidian blades and flakes may be considered to dominate the result and overshadow any other variation. *Figure 61* therefore presents the data from Aghios Kosmas excluding the obsidian, showing that even without the obsidian, or by including a lower amount of obsidian, as in the other contexts, the result nevertheless tends towards that of Attica and Euboea rather than that of Corinthia.

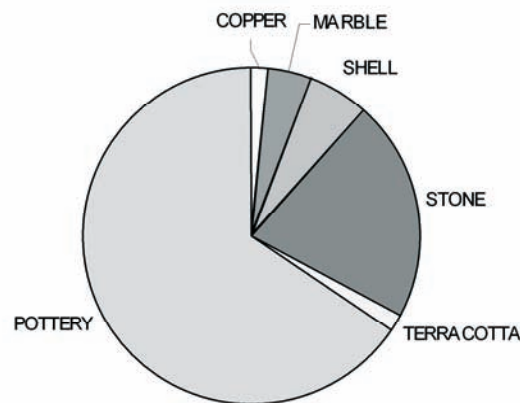


Figure 61. Illustration of the range in material at Aghios Kosmas, excluding obsidian.

Obsidian from the Cyclades (Melos) has been found to have been ubiquitous on the Mainland from long before the Early Helladic period, and the value of the material is generally considered to be low (at least below any special purpose pottery deposited in burial contexts, and clearly below any metal artefacts which tend to receive extra consideration).⁸³⁹ The inclusion of value

⁸³⁷ Pullen 1985, 108–110. Not included in *Fig. 60* are a large number of numbered but unidentified body sherds. Other non-feature sherds were also discarded by Blegen during excavation.

⁸³⁸ Above, *Chapter 7*, section on *The well at Cheliotomylos*.

⁸³⁹ See, however, Carter's (1999) extensive analysis of obsidian in the Aegean EBA mortuary sphere and his discussion of obsidian knapping as a prestigious and important part of mortuary ritual. Further below, *this chapter*, section on *Read(y)ing the body*.

in the discussion of grave finds is something that forms part of the discussion of grave finds as prestige goods, and the prestige of the dead in the graves considered. What tends to be forgotten, I believe, or nevertheless remains undiscussed, is that any material is potentially equally difficult and/or time-consuming to procure. In relation to pottery, therefore, any material may equal or surpass the social and symbolical value of any one item of pottery. Furthermore, what gives prestige to an object? This is not an easy question, and the answer may be one or a combination of any number of factors: rarity, place of origin (exotica), abundance, age, content (in the case of vessels), and connection with specific persons or activities. All of these are likely to have affected how any object was ultimately perceived, and all objects must have brought with them a history and a meaning for the people that came in contact with them.⁸⁴⁰ Part of that history can be approached through the material from which it was made. By positioning ourselves around the time of an Early Helladic death we will also see how the choices of material affected the practices around that death.

Immediately striking is the variation of material deposited though time in the graves considered. In this case, Zygouries, with eight different materials recognised, is on par with Manika, one above Aghios Kosmas, and only surpassed by Tsepi, which had a variety of as many as ten different materials, including all known metals. Most of these materials were neither naturally nor readily available at any one settlement. The variation indicates shifting preferences and choices, apart from different possibilities and involvements in the trading networks of their time. The sources for the materials considered were potentially many and diverse.⁸⁴¹

Recent lead isotope analyses of metal objects from EBA Lerna, Lithares and Tsoungiza have produced interesting and varying results. For the source of copper at Lerna, the largest sample, the Cyclades was found to be dominant and to have a possible chronological precedence over Laurion. At Lithares the distribution of the two was equal, whereas at inland Tsoungiza only copper from Laurion was recognised, together with two pieces of copper with a possible source on Cyprus.⁸⁴² None of these three are included among the eight sites under primary consideration here. The burial grounds for Tsoungiza and Lerna are not known, and the cemetery at Lithares has too few details published. Analyses of Early Bronze Age metal artefacts are, however, not common, and these serve therefore as examples of the metal

⁸⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. Broodbank 2000, 262–267.

⁸⁴¹ Broodbank 2000, 79f., 157–159, 292–299, for resources and trade in the Cyclades: copper (Laurion, Kythnos, Kea, Seriphos), lead (Laurion, Siphnos), silver (Laurion, Siphnos), obsidian (Melos), emery (Naxos), marble (esp. Naxos and Greater Paros), volcanic rock for grindstones (Melos, Thera, Anafi). For pigments, see Hendrix 2003a, 428f., n. 70, : cinnabar sources, albeit poor (Naxos, Chios, Samos, Euboea), azurite as a copper mineral from locations with copper ores.

⁸⁴² Kayafa, Stos-Gale & Gale 2000.

trade as we know it. Some metal artefacts from Manika have also been sampled, and lead isotope analyses revealed very diverse provenances. Thus, the metal analysed was concluded to have come from the Cyclades (including a silver ring from Siphnos), Feinan Jordan, and Laurion, with the possibility also of metal from Egypt and the Troad. No copper or other metal sources have been identified in Central Euboea, the area around Manika, and all metal must have been transported over at least some distance.⁸⁴³ In terms of the actual production of the metal objects found in our graves, scientific analyses do not provide an answer. The metal may have been traded as a raw material or as finished goods. At many places in Attica, tools and installations for metal working have been found, and although we do not know where the people of the Tsepi cemetery lived, some of the metal items in the graves may very well be all Tsepian in finishing as well as initial working of the metal (no scientific analyses have been published for this settlement).

Obsidian is one material that we know was imported, but we also know that it was available and worked at a large number of sites on the EBA mainland. Manika, Aghios Kosmas and Lithares in particular have produced abundant evidence of on site obsidian knapping. Other material, such as bone, does not need to be specially imported. The bone tube pigment containers at Manika are nevertheless considered to be imports from the Cyclades because of their similarity, in shape and incised pattern, to the bone tubes common on the islands.⁸⁴⁴ Although marble is available on the Mainland, specialised pottery and marble vessels are often considered to be imported from the Cyclades.⁸⁴⁵ Finally, analyses of pottery have proven exchange of pottery as well as of ideas and techniques during the EBA, over varying distances, within the study area and the Mainland as well as beyond.⁸⁴⁶

It would be too extensive to thoroughly survey the full range of possibilities for the provenance and the modes of procurement and production of different materials and objects. Even if the material for manufacture of an object was available at a site, it may not have been produced there, and vice versa. Broodbank has made an excellent case for the central role of the Cyclades in the control and distribution of different metals and objects during the Early Bronze Age.⁸⁴⁷ Similarly, Maran has considered the importance and effect of the metals trade during our period, with special focus on trade with central and western parts of the Mediterranean.⁸⁴⁸ Nilsson has surveyed the

⁸⁴³ Stos-Gale, Sampson & Mangou 1996, esp. 60, table 3.

⁸⁴⁴ Sampson 1988a, 117.

⁸⁴⁵ E.g. Sampson 1985, 387f.; 1988a, 117. Pantelidou Gofa (2005, 356), however, emphasised that not one Cycladic import vase has been found at Tsepi to date.

⁸⁴⁶ E.g. Attas 1982; Rutter 1995, 663–749 (Appendix); 2001; Broodbank 2000, esp. chapter 9.

⁸⁴⁷ Broodbank 2000, e.g. 292–299.

⁸⁴⁸ Maran 1998, for conclusions on the structures and motives of trade in the third millennium BC., see esp. 432–457.

possibilities of and archaeological evidence for specialised production at a range of Early Helladic settlements.⁸⁴⁹ Therefore, although direct contact with obsidian quarries at Melos, for example, was possible, and surely an option that was utilised from time to time,⁸⁵⁰ for our Early Helladic people, indirect trading was most likely the dominant method of procurement of raw material as well as finished products. Obviously, there would have been communities or groups actively utilising the sources of raw material and others processing it further.⁸⁵¹ In the case of metals, the indications are that extraction and primary smelting was specialised and segregated, while secondary smelting and object manufacture occurred within the settlements (the presence of moulds, etc.).⁸⁵² Pottery, however, is likely to have been generally produced at most sites, although shapes, decorations and techniques could have been varyingly specialised, regionalised and in different demand.⁸⁵³

We should also give some consideration to the *contents* of the pottery, and especially the contents of the closed vessels found in grave contexts, and to other kinds of perishable materials. These materials may have been more often locally available or produced, such as wicker for baskets, hides, and cloth for textiles. Textiles, for example, could be demanded in specific qualities, techniques, and/or decoration. In the case of the vessels deposited, were they valued objects in themselves, or neutral containers for contents that they most likely held when deposited in the grave?⁸⁵⁴ There is a tendency, especially perhaps within prehistoric archaeology, to treat pots as artefacts rather than as objects for use. Although residue analysis on pottery is an available scientific method today,⁸⁵⁵ in our interpretations we still tend to forget (or not consider) that the vessels found in different contexts would have contained something, at one time at least. The small incised pigment containers,⁸⁵⁶ for example, give an indication that, in instances at least, the vessels and their contents were a unit, desirable as a set and traded as a set. Pigments themselves may have been traded over large distances, and would not in all instances be readily available.⁸⁵⁷

Broodbank noticed a shift connected to the EB I Grotta-Pelos group of decorated pottery—a shift from open vessels to small, closed, transport-

⁸⁴⁹ Nilsson 2004.

⁸⁵⁰ See, Pullen 1985, 334–336; Torrence 1986; Carter 1999, 17–35; Broodbank 2000, 297f., for views on the ways that Melian obsidian was procured.

⁸⁵¹ EBA evidence for extraction and primary smelting of metal: E.g. Mine 3 at Thorikos (Spi-taels 1984); special purpose metallurgical installations and slag heaps on Kythnos (Broodbank 2000, 294).

⁸⁵² Broodbank 2000, 294.

⁸⁵³ E.g. Attas 1982; for Crete: Day, Wilson & Kiriati 1998.

⁸⁵⁴ Cf. Pullen 1985, 340f.

⁸⁵⁵ E.g. Tzedakis & Martlew 1999.

⁸⁵⁶ For an example of blue pigment being preserved on the interior of a small incised jar, see Mylonas 1959, grave 7, p. 86, no. 193.

⁸⁵⁷ Hendrix 2003a, 428f.; Alram-Stern 2004, 315, with references.

friendly shapes, suggesting that these were vessels for “a viscous substance of some value, such as honey or an unguent”.⁸⁵⁸ The transitional EB I/II Kampos group bottles, a small globular bottle with narrow neck, is given the epithet of being, somewhat later, the first Aegean shape with a special purpose design for the transportation of presumably valued liquids.⁸⁵⁹ For Aghia Photia on NE Crete, it has been suggested that the narrow-necked bottles and pyxides once contained unguents or other substances important for the funerary ritual, and the content was thus the important aspect. The fabric used for small narrow-necked Kampos bottles, was shown by means of ceramic petrology to have a clear provenance somewhere in the Cyclades.⁸⁶⁰ The use of pyxides has also been debated in other contexts, with suggested uses ranging from jewellery boxes to containers for ointments, cosmetics or specific foodstuffs.⁸⁶¹ In terms of liquid contents for jars in general, different oils may be considered, as well as beer and other beverages (decoctions), and possibly wine. Bowls with contents, however, should perhaps not be seen as traded as a set, open vessels being less transport-friendly, but could in grave contexts, as in any other context, have held cooked food or primary products such as grain or fruit.⁸⁶² Finally, herbs could have been potent gifts and/or ritual paraphernalia to have been introduced into the mortuary sphere in durable or perishable containers. In these cases, can either one of the two—content or vessel—be seen as symbolically the superior of the other?

On a full cemetery level as we know it today (or part cemetery level in the case of Manika), it is apparent that many factors were involved in producing the variation of material illustrated by the graves under consideration. In the case of every individual level, the grave gifts of durable type were not many, the perishable items could have been many and varied, and both are equally likely to have been traded and/or produced locally. For present purposes, therefore, in the preparation of a set of grave gifts, it is important to note that the original production and procurement of the actual and surmised grave goods was not a business that was completed in a day or two. The question is how, when, why and by whom they were finally brought together.

⁸⁵⁸ Broodbank 2000, 169.

⁸⁵⁹ Broodbank 2000, 301.

⁸⁶⁰ Day, Wilson & Kiriati 1998, 138, 144: in this article these vessels are called ‘Pyrgos bottles’, but see Broodbank 2000, 302, for the use of ‘Kampos bottles’ also in these instances.

⁸⁶¹ See, Alram-Stern 2004, 339, with references.

⁸⁶² Charcoal and “slight traces of grain kernels” were noted in the vessels in the grave chambers at Corinth (Heermance & Lord 1897), and Broodbank (2000, 167), mentions grain residues from a Cycladic kandilia, possibly indicating a fermented beverage.

Grave gifts or possessions?⁸⁶³

Some of the offerings had been in use and were evidently not acquired specifically for the grave although the pottery includes shapes which do not occur in the settlement. This is also the case at Ayios Kosmas but the pottery from the cemetery is of inferior quality, often unfired and evidently made for the funeral, whereas at Manika the finest pottery comes from the tombs.⁸⁶⁴

The complete absence of domestic utensils from graves may suggest that specific categories of objects were destined as grave offerings and since they often display signs of use (e.g. broken and mended figurines) they may have been personal belongings of the deceased rather than objects produced exclusively for funerary use (e.g. the *lekythoi* in classical times).⁸⁶⁵

The citations constitute statements on the character of grave goods, made in two survey volumes related to Early Helladic (Cavanagh and Mee) and Early Cycladic (Dumas) mortuary habits. They both illustrate the ambivalence in much discourse concerning the history of grave goods prior to their deposition, namely, an apparent opposition between grave gifts and possessions; that is, objects manufactured for funeral purposes and objects that had been in use and/or followed their owner for some time before being deposited. The two citations appear to be illustrating two different strands of thought: (1) that differences existed between settlements and cemeteries in terms of items used, and (2) that some items show signs of being used prior to deposition. Inherent in the first point, and stemming from the comparisons between settlement and grave assemblages of pottery and other paraphernalia, is also a third point (3), that there was a specific mortuary assemblage of pottery and objects. These would have been produced especially for grave use (as suggested by Mylonas)⁸⁶⁶, and, since it is not further discussed, the impression is that they were produced when the need arose, at the time of burial.

On a first reading of the citations, and without further qualification, the ambivalence and contradiction in the statements is obvious. Thus, even if the issue of grave gifts or possessions has been touched upon in earlier studies, I feel it needs to be further and, in particular, directly discussed. Clearly, the two (or three) points are not necessarily mutually exclusive or contradictory: grave goods may have been used before and they may have been primarily destined for deposition in a grave. This may represent two types of grave

⁸⁶³ Gifts or possessions? is a question asked and heading used by Michael Parker Pearson in *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, (1999, 85). In that short section, the focus is on the problems of common interpretation of grave goods as possessions rather the reverse as in the Aegean Early Bronze Age cases. In the end, however, the emphasis is on the problem of taking grave goods as straightforward reflections for the status of the deceased.

⁸⁶⁴ Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 19.

⁸⁶⁵ Dumas 1987, 18.

⁸⁶⁶ Mylonas 1959, 128.

goods, but the two types may also be present in the same object. In the latter case, if there were special funerary offerings, and if they were used, the implication is that they must have been acquired over a period of time for the final purpose of being deposited in the grave. The qualification lies in *when* we imagine the objects to have been produced. Grave goods may have been produced for immediate use (and for the Early Helladic period, the unfired cups from Aghios Kosmas seem to be such a case)⁸⁶⁷. As we have seen, however, most objects that are archaeologically recognisable needed some time to be prepared, as also did those that are no longer recognisable. Thus, if an object was acquired prior to deposition, used or not, *and* especially for grave use, we stand before two interdependent scenarios: (1) the person was buried with an assemblage planned—possibly a long time ahead—for their death, and (2) the objects buried may have been used and/or acquired during a long period of time, possibly a life-time.

These options are especially significant for lavishly furnished graves like the MH III/LH I shaft graves at Mycenae or some especially well furnished single burials from the EBA Cyclades.⁸⁶⁸ Monumental grave structures from later mainland periods and Early Helladic contemporaries in the Mediterranean show that at least the rulers or a minority elite planned for the life after this, for themselves and for a group around them (the Egyptian fourth dynasty pyramids at Giza may serve as the example *par excellence*). In a less grand circumstance the implications are the same. A grave meal may be prepared during a day or less, but a well-made pot, even if locally produced, cannot be acquired during a day (if not stocked for ‘sale’), especially if the pot was one especially for funeral use. Other objects may be available for acquisition on occasion, probably infrequent and varying, throughout the year, but not often on demand.⁸⁶⁹

For the details of preservation and use of the objects we are dependent on the detail of descriptions in excavation reports. Under some lucky circumstances a clearly mended grave item, such the two marble discs from Manika, at one time broken in two but arguably mended by way of two sets of holes on each side of the break, are strong indications that the grave was only the last place of use.⁸⁷⁰ Such items are illustrative of the value and perhaps symbolism of certain objects, which goes beyond them being once bro-

⁸⁶⁷ Mylonas 1959, from the area of Graves 2, 3, 5, 7, and 12. See further below, *this chapter*, section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

⁸⁶⁸ Shaft graves at Mycenae and other places: e.g. Graziadio 1991; well furnished graves in the Cyclades: Broodbank 2000, 262–267.

⁸⁶⁹ See Broodbank (2000, 287–291), for a discussion on the temporal and geographical modes of distribution of objects, and the possibility of cyclical trade routes around the Aegean. On the Mainland, in addition to coastal trade routes, we may include trade routes by land, itinerant potters (as suggested for hearths and pithoi, see e.g. Pullen 1985, 172) and other travelling merchants, as well as local and regional market places.

⁸⁷⁰ Sampson 1985, 199. Objects nos. 10 and 21, from the only, but very well furnished, grave excavated in the Frangou plot at Manika.

ken (this may even be a contributing factor, also negatively if the breakage, reducing its functionality, caused it to be deposited and ‘killed’). As we have seen above, however, these instances are not needed to argue for a prior circulation of the object that found its final deposition in the grave.

On a general level, I believe the conclusion must be that a proportion (possibly a large part) of the objects found also in the comparatively modestly furnished graves under consideration here, were possessions of the deceased or of an individual or group with a connection with the deceased, rather than specialised grave gifts destined for that particular burial. Furthermore, that they were possessions need not preclude the possibility that some objects acquired were deemed more suitable as grave goods than others, or more suitable as grave goods than for settlement use. This circumstance may very well have added to the value of that object, or have been part of the attraction of that object. Importantly, it is only when they *are* deposited that they come to the attention of archaeologists. The deposition was, in effect, the death of the object as well as of the person with whom it was buried, and after a similarly possibly eventful and long life above ground. This ‘life’ could have been one important factor that rendered it appropriate for burial within a grave and possibly with that specific person.⁸⁷¹ In the words of Richard Bradley: “Their main relevance to prehistoric archaeology concerns the ways in which such life histories cut across those of *particular human beings*”,⁸⁷² stressing that the relevance of ‘the cultural biographies of things’ to prehistoric archaeology is lessened without that human aspect.

Body modification and ornamentation

Connecting life-histories of objects and individuals, as well as preferential deposition, may play a part in some objects being more frequently found in mortuary contexts. Thus, the *lower* frequency of certain objects in settlements need not mean that they were not used or at least present there (since most items are in fact found in both contexts, and the basis for comparison between the contexts is limited), but only that they were not generally actively deposited there.⁸⁷³

The category of small finds in general is that which can be most easily interpreted as possessions and given a life before deposition—they can in one way or another be connected with the human body, and are the most outward display of individuality, and they have been used as grounds for gender dis-

⁸⁷¹ Bradley 2002, 54; Broodbank 2000, 262–264. The deliberate destruction of objects in connection with their deposition may be a further emphasis of the connection between the object and its owner/user (cf. Hamilakis 1998, 122f.).

⁸⁷² Bradley 2002, 51 (original emphasis).

⁸⁷³ Cf. Broodbank 2000, 262f.

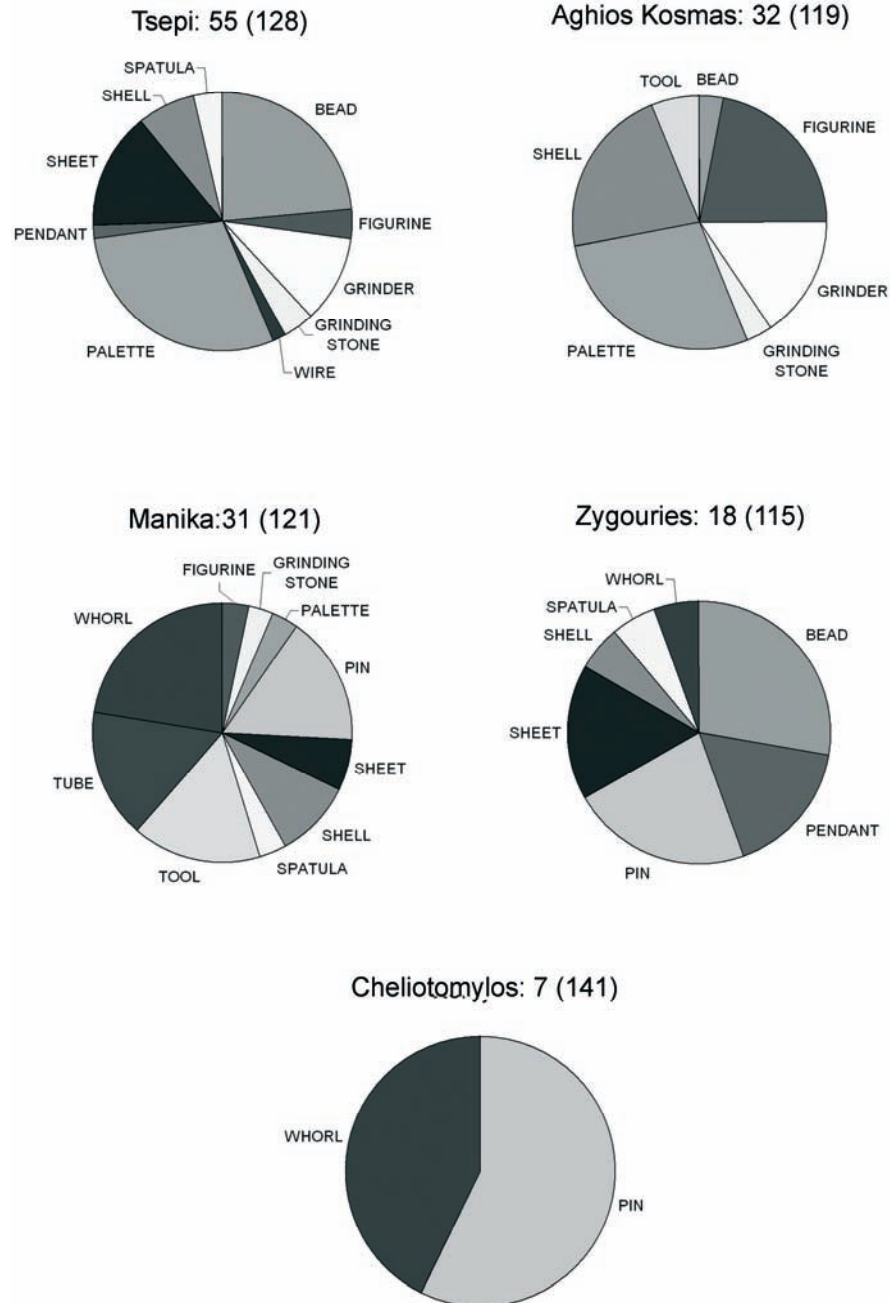


Figure 62. Relative popularity of small finds (total number of finds) from the graves.

cussion (something this study will not do).⁸⁷⁴ A comparison of the small finds within the sampled graves shows a variation in ornaments and objects of practical usage, many of them in connection with the human body. *Figure 62* shows the variation of small finds in the five contexts (of the original eight) where such finds were recognised. Obsidian has been excluded for the reasons discussed above, but will be included in the discussion below, and its relative popularity in the grave contexts is illustrated in *Figure 60* (see also *Table 8*, below).

Looking at the relative popularity of these objects, there is again a notable difference between the grave finds from Zygouries on the one hand, and Tsepi, Aghios Kosmas and Manika on the other. A large majority of the small finds from Zygouries can be put into a group of objects used for the ornamentation of the body. Beads are the most numerous in this assemblage, and together with the pendants and pins they make up some 65 percent of the whole. Adding the sheet material also (possibly for the same general use, as diadems or dress decoration), it only leaves some 15 percent for the single finds of whorl, spatula and shell. Looking at beads alone, they are also quite numerous at Tsepi, making up almost a quarter, which is the largest bead assemblage among the five cemeteries. In contrast, at Aghios Kosmas, one bead makes up the only ornament found in the cemetery, whereas no bead at all was recognised among the graves analysed from Manika. Pins have been found at Manika, Zygouries and Chelitomylos, but not at Tsepi or Aghios Kosmas, and a similar distribution can be seen for whorls.

Whorls are, in fact, one of the few categories of finds to be connected with a domestic function, such as, in this case, spinning. Other objects of practical usage are the grinding equipment: rubbers, pestles, *spatulae* and a few grinding stones. There is, for example, one andesite quern and grinder from Aghios Kosmas, of the common variety for the grinding of grain.⁸⁷⁵ The grinding stones from Tsepi, however, are smaller and made of finer and harder material and should rather be put in context with the palettes of Aghios Kosmas,⁸⁷⁶ as well as with the bone palettes of Tsepi (*Fig. 77*). The size and material of these, as well as of the variety of grinders, suggest that they belong to a category connected with the grinding of some lighter substance, as we will see below, of potential ritual importance. This substance may have been dried herbs or weeds, but what has been archaeologically detected is pigment (mainly azurite for blue, and iron oxide, red ochre and cinnabar for red).⁸⁷⁷ The palettes from Aghios Kosmas, most of them circu-

⁸⁷⁴ For gender discussions based on types of finds, see Sampson 1987, 22f.; 1988a, 58–62; Rambach 2000b, 93–98; summary in Alram-Stern 2004, 305–308.

⁸⁷⁵ Mylonas 1959, grave 12, pp. 92f.

⁸⁷⁶ The pinakio in Tsepi, grave 36 (no. 5) is very similar in shape and size to Aghios Kosmas palettes, although the Tsepi variant is made of limestone, and Pantelidou Gofa (2005, 316) refers also to the Aghios Kosmas palettes in terms of shape as well as use.

⁸⁷⁷ Hendrix 2003a; 2003b.

lar, were all made of marble. At the time of excavation, traces of paint were recognised on several of them, as well as on two pestles.⁸⁷⁸ In contrast, the palettes at Tsepi were, with one exception, fashioned from bone, but traces of pigment were noted here also, in three instances, as well as on one of the grinding stones.⁸⁷⁹ At both cemeteries, they appear on occasion together with pestles and *spatulae*, but their original relationships within the graves is generally difficult to ascertain.⁸⁸⁰

It is noteworthy that the palettes and grinding equipment at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas form a set of objects only rarely found at Manika, and not at all at Zygouries. However, although only one palette was found among the Manika graves considered here, others have been found.⁸⁸¹ Furthermore, the existence of bone tubes, as well as miniature vessels,⁸⁸² nevertheless suggests at least the keeping of pigment. As an interesting example of regional difference, no bone tubes were found at either Tsepi or Aghios Kosmas where, at least at Aghios Kosmas, the function of pigment containers instead seems to have been filled partly by miniature vessels.⁸⁸³

Broodbank has most recently noted the increasing appeal in the transitional EB I–II, and especially the EB II period, in the Cyclades of a “tattooed, groomed or bejewelled appearance”.⁸⁸⁴ The means for achieving this goal were appearance-altering objects such as jewellery (bracelets, necklaces, hair-rings, pins and diadems), both actual and depicted on vessels and figurines, as well as traces of painted designs on the faces of figurines, miniature vessels and bone tubes for pigments, copper needles (possible tattooing implements), tweezers, and probably obsidian blades as razors and/or implements for tattooing or scarification.⁸⁸⁵ If similarly interpreted, the small finds from the Early Helladic graves considered here seem to fall

⁸⁷⁸ Mylonas 1959: pestle 8 (of the spool type recently suggested to have been used as weights: Rahmsdorf 2003), p. 87; pestle 11 (blue colour), p. 99; palette 99, p. 90, palette 101, p. 93, palette 104, p. 103, palette 112, p. 112.

⁸⁷⁹ Pantelidou Gofa confirms the presence of red paint traces on this grinding stone (36.5). Of her bone palettes, traces of paint were found in three instances (3.2; 12.10; 16.3). The material used for the Tsepi palettes stands out in comparison with the rest of the material, and the best known parallels from the Cyclades. Other bone palettes are, however, not unknown, at least to the Cyclades. The use of bones, however, may be a confirmation of a partly earlier date of the Tsepi finds in comparison with e.g. Aghios Kosmas (Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 320f., 356), as a close parallel can be found from grave 25 at the Lakkoudhes cemetery on Naxos (EC I Grotta-Pelos group cemetery) (Rambach 2000a, pl. 94:21: “rinnenförmige Palette aus Bein”, length 20.1 centimetres).

⁸⁸⁰ One group of two palettes (no colour traces noted) and a pestle (no. 8, with red colour) was found outside grave 7 (Mylonas 1959, 85, 87).

⁸⁸¹ Could it also be that some stone bowls, small (7–9 cm diameter, e.g. from Graves 139, 145, 168) and shallow, should be designated as Manika palettes (one larger marble phiale, diameter 14.2 cm, from Grave 157 also has a hole ‘worn’(?) into the centre of the bottom)?

⁸⁸² E.g. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987, 251, grave 7 (i.e. Sampson 1988a, grave 81).

⁸⁸³ E.g. Mylonas 1959, no. 193, p. 86, with blue pigment; also Broodbank 2000, 248–250.

⁸⁸⁴ Broodbank 2000, 248–250, with references; also Carter 1999, 73, 152f.

⁸⁸⁵ Broodbank 2000, 248f.; Carter 1994.

within the same category. The presence of pigment on the palettes shows that they were indeed used as such and not copied for their 'exotic' parallels. Together with the bone tubes, the miniature pigment vessels and pestles, as well as the jewellery and the not yet considered tweezers (among the tools found at Aghios Kosmas and Manika), practices of body ornamentation and body alteration can also be confirmed on the Early Helladic mainland. The figurines themselves, in a Mainland context where human figurines remain rare,⁸⁸⁶ provide one further indication of an interest in body symbolism.

Human figurines in burials contexts are, however, as yet limited to Euboea and Attica. Other objects limited to these areas are those connected with pigments. Although obsidian blades were among the finds from Zygouries, obsidian blades for possible tattooing or grooming practices should probably also be added to the list. Jewellery, as we have seen, is most common (somewhat later) at Zygouries. Although Zygouries alone does not suffice as basis, future excavation and analysis may perhaps confirm a regional and/or possibly chronologically generally earlier focus on bodily *modification* in contrast to body *ornamentation*. The emphasis on bodily modification in the eastern regions (and at Tsepi also ornamentation) is only one further indication of a cultural film overlap, including Attica, Euboea as well as the Cycladic islands and also Crete at a distance, of which certain regions took a varying part in and/or made varying use.⁸⁸⁷ There are also many differences, in form perhaps rather than function, between the assemblages at Aghios Kosmas, Tsepi and Manika. The lack of detail for the grave clusters in Boeotia is unfortunate, because the cemeteries there appear to have been extensive and included both chamber and cist graves. It is unfortunate also since their location between the east and the south has, in other spheres, proven to position them as mediators, or at least with an open and welcoming view of different material trends, which would certainly nuance our understanding of mortuary variability over the larger area under consideration here, especially the input and output of ideas, as well as local specific variations. Nevertheless, although the Mainland practice of multiple burials does not support differentiation on an individual level, in terms of connecting an item with a specific buried individual, or even the level of small groups (not forgetting also the problem of preservational bias),⁸⁸⁸ and the material basis is uneven, the evidence *does* suggest regional, local as well as individual preferences

⁸⁸⁶ Figurines have also been found in graves not included in the analysis (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1991).

⁸⁸⁷ Broodbank 2000, 299–319, for Crete also Murphy 1998; Carter 1998. Cycladic and/or Attic and Saronic Gulf parallels are cited also for the grave at Kalamaki (Pullen 1985, 117, n. 13, pp. 154f.) and one of the graves of Perachora-Vouliagmeni (Hatzipoulou-Kalliri 1983, 373f.). In both cases the parallels are found within the pottery assemblages while small finds were missing.

⁸⁸⁸ Broodbank 2000, 249.

that may have been important in the interplay between people, and for the communication of social personae.

So, to return to our story: The death would have affected the people of the village in various ways, but a death in a community the size of most Early Helladic settlements is not likely to have passed anyone completely by. Some persons, perhaps relatives or a ritual specialist or both, were engaged in the preparations. Participants needed to be told. Some of these would perhaps have brought gifts of different kinds; others would have been arranged by those closest to the woman. The survey has shown that some of these activities needed time, and that it would have been a continuing activity not wholly directly connected with the time of death, even if the choice of what to bring was. The small items beside the woman in the narrative above, illustrate their presence before their deposition in the grave, whether or not they were in use by her or by someone else before they were chosen to accompany her in death. The small vessel containing scented oil (it could also have been pigment) will represent the durable grave goods, their composition, as we have seen, varying in many ways. The bundle of leaves and the scented oil represent the items that are potentially missing in the archaeological record. These may have been similarly difficult or time-consuming to acquire, and they may be similarly varying, the basis for acquisition and variation may, however, have been otherwise. The shell, not yet considered here but recorded from four out of five sites in *Figure 62*, may very well prove to be a link between the durable and the lost. Small shells may perhaps be equated with beads or other body ornamentation, and are gifts recognised for being durable and out of context in the grave, but often discarded for being common. Triton shells have been noted elsewhere in ritual contexts, and a couple of larger shells are also mentioned among the examples from Tsepi.⁸⁸⁹ ‘Sea-shell’, or ‘shell’, however, is represented in all grave contexts considered (excluding Cheliotomylos). The bundle of leaves, like the sea-shell, is the local and individually specific (although perhaps omnipresent and lacking regional definition), the missing part that would have helped to make every burial special.

The day is dawning; the village is already filled with activity. Many are gathering outside her house, they want to take part in the events before they continue with their day. Time is running by, the heat of the day is returning and soon it will also be difficult to place her body in the grave, it will be stiff and uncooperative. She is carried out of her house on the hides from her bedding. The journey starts towards the place where her body will be

⁸⁸⁹ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, Grave 12, no. 12.15 (*tomma galea*), between Graves 13 and 14, p.103 (triton shell).

placed. It is not far, but they have to walk down the slope, pass over a small brook and thereafter follow the well-used path, passing the twin stones and the old hollow tree. Although she was a small person, the burden of her body is heavy, they move slowly. The sun is rising. There is some disorder among the followers, her living presence is missed and the pattern of past times disrupted.

Establishing a timeframe

The extramural placement of the dead may have been parallel with a notion of the polluting effect of the dead when still in the settlement. That this was not always so, or that, on occasion, other factors gained an importance superseding this, is evident through the use of intramural burials. Nevertheless, it is likely that the time scale of events was circumscribed. They may have been more or less directed by the biological effects on the newly-dead body. These effects can be divided into two stages: firstly the more or less immediate onset of the post mortem stiffness of the limbs, *rigor mortis*, and secondly, the slower working decomposition of the body. The latter would have been of great relevance mainly for the post-burial rituals (although in a hot climate it can quickly become very noticeable),⁸⁹⁰ and will be discussed further below. The former, however, may have been of a more immediate concern for the time between death and the deposition of the deceased in a grave, or elsewhere.

The Early Helladic custom when placing the dead in a built grave, similar to many prehistoric Mediterranean cultures, was to place the dead on their side in a flexed position. The knees were bent, sometimes as far as to touch the front of the body, and the arms were moved towards the knees or bent towards the face (*Figs. 69, 73, 76*). The grave chambers were often very small, but as the degree of flexion varied, although not always with chamber size, it is likely that the position of the body was dictated both by custom and by the size of the grave (if either of the customs, position or size, preceded the other is impossible to say but interesting to consider). In cases of extreme flexion, in order to retain this degree of flexion, it is often assumed, stated or indicated, that the body was placed in the position before *rigor mortis* set in.⁸⁹¹ Milder flexion also seems to suggest that the body was placed in its position, either before full *rigor mortis* set in, or after it had faded. The process of *rigor mortis* is heavily dependent on the outer conditions in which the dead body is kept, as well as the condition and activity of the person before

⁸⁹⁰ Mant 1987, 66.

⁸⁹¹ Mylonas 1959, 120; Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355. Suggestions of restraints in the form of stones (Mylonas 1959, 83).

death, but a general approximation is that it sets in 2–6 hours after death, reaching a maximum at 12–24 hours, and can persist for 24–84 hours, at which time putrefaction, the biological breakdown of the body, sets in.⁸⁹² The larger muscles in the arms and legs are the last to be affected, as well as the muscles that retain their stiffness the longest. Can we decide a timeframe based on this general appreciation of *rigor mortis*? Perhaps we should not be too hasty to jump to conclusions.⁸⁹³ We cannot exclude the possibility of a scenario in which several days elapsed between death and primary ‘burial’, during which time the body may have been kept in the house or somewhere else. However, for the purpose of the present narrative, based on a combination of the position of the dead in some chambers and the climate of the Mediterranean (if similar to today: warm weather may delay *rigor mortis* but increase the speed of decomposition),⁸⁹⁴ I have decided for the shorter period as the most likely one.

In this case there would thus have been at most a 24-hour window of opportunity for the procedures following an Early Helladic death until the time of burial. Even in cases when the practices were not complicated, the rituals anything but grand, the body needed to be prepared (perhaps it was washed, dressed, rituals may have been performed on the body, wakes held), some paraphernalia assembled, ‘out of town’ individuals told, perhaps, and the grave prepared. An indication that the time was not always adequate, or that a custom existed that was not always in tune with the biological processes of death, comes from Manika. Osteological analyses have revealed the common presence of cut marks on the bones from the graves there. The suggestion is that these were made partly for the cutting of tendons and muscle to allow the crouched position even after *rigor mortis* had set in.⁸⁹⁵ The marks are varied, however, and also included bore holes as well as partially or completely cut through bone, suggesting that other, less straightforward reasons are also possible for the cuttings (such as fear of the dead).⁸⁹⁶ Detailed osteological reports, however, on Early Helladic bones from cemeteries and graves are few. We do not know whether the activities revealed on Manika bones were also practised elsewhere within the study area.⁸⁹⁷ The cutting of tendons is not the only, although perhaps the most ‘considerate’, way of

⁸⁹² Gill-King 1997, 98. Also see Nilsson Stutz (2003, 141–148) on the post mortem processes changes of the body: pp. 143f. *rigor mortis*, pp. 144–148 on the process of decomposition.

⁸⁹³ Liv Nilsson Stutz (2003, 144), in her taphonomic approach to the study of Scandinavian Late Mesolithic inhumation burials and mortuary ritual in general, calls for caution in making this conclusion based solely on the position of the skeleton.

⁸⁹⁴ Mant 1987; Gill-King 1997, 98; Nilsson Stutz 2003, 146.

⁸⁹⁵ Pullen 1994, 127. Osteological report: Fountoulakis 1985; 1987; Sampson 1987, 21f.

⁸⁹⁶ Sampson 1987, 21; Fountoulakis 1987.

⁸⁹⁷ Fountoulakis (1987, 30) referred to Neolithic Argissa, Late Minoan Knossos and Proto-geometric Chalkis, Lefkandi. The cuttings may be perhaps compared with deliberately cut and broken bones in Early Minoan contexts. These have been suggested to be traces of endocannibalism, ceremonial eating of parts of bodies during mortuary rituals (Hamilakis 1998, 123, with references); also Branigan 1987.

overcoming the *rigor mortis*. A combination of factors, nevertheless, suggests that the Early Helladic burial was limited in time.

Once the journey started, after a limited but nevertheless probably important and eventful period of time in the settlement after the death occurred, it would have proceeded along a familiar route—in this case towards a formal cemetery of extramural graves. The survey in *Chapter 8* has shown great variation but also some common denominators for the location of these cemeteries. “The body was brought to the family grave along the coast”⁸⁹⁸ at Aghios Kosmas, while at Lithares the body probably needed to be carried across a creek towards a cemetery invisible from at least large parts of the settlement. It is likely that the route itself figured in the local oral tradition, fixed perhaps by special characteristics it passed by, like the twin stones and the hollow tree in the story. The journey is likely to have been undertaken by a group of people, perhaps a small group, perhaps the whole community. To carry a body even a short distance is not an easy task, and even if one person could do it, more than one is more likely. The procession, or the walking of the route to the cemetery, may in itself have been symbolically important, marking the transition of the physical body and (hopefully perhaps) the soul and/or spirit of the deceased from the spaces of the living to the space reserved for the dead. As such, it may have been a hazardous journey and therefore ritualised to ensure the actual passing of the dead. It may have entailed apotropeic gestures and sounds, offerings, conscious detours to ‘confuse’ the soul and hinder it from finding its way back to the settlement and to neutralise potential ill-working forces.⁸⁹⁹

In the story this is a time, perhaps not the first and not the last, when an absence is felt, of the active social persona of the dead now carried to her grave. In a symbolical sense, as it may also have been regarded then, the journey illustrates the transition of the deceased from the status of the living to that of the dead, from individual to new dead.⁹⁰⁰ This is a transition that would not only have affected the deceased, but extended to many individuals in that society; how many would be depending on the position of the deceased in life. If our dead woman was the elder in her ‘family’, someone else would now need to move in to fill that position and take on whatever formal or informal roles and duties may come with it, and that change of role may have necessitated still others. Whatever the age and position of the deceased, she or he would have filled both formal and many informal roles in interacting with people in the closest kin group, in the community and possibly beyond. In small scale communities like the Early Helladic, every death may be equally felt in the organisation of things in the settlement or household.

⁸⁹⁸ Mylonas 1959, 120.

⁸⁹⁹ E.g. Jordan 2003.

⁹⁰⁰ Damm 1991, esp. 43.

These transitions, the social reconstruction that would be needed, may not have been always informal and natural; death can also be seen as an event, and a circumstance for social transformation and change; funerals may be events “where social roles are renewed, reclassified and reinforced, and where it is possible to negotiate and even manipulate the organisation of society”.⁹⁰¹ Aegean prehistory has recently seen a number of studies on the mortuary sphere as a potential arena for social constitution, manipulation and change, and for a dynamic interplay between people.⁹⁰² While the focus of earlier research has been on the mortuary sphere, and especially the grave and its contents, as a reflection of status and the social personae of the deceased, the focus has turned to the living and to the mortuary sphere as a party in *creating* rather than just displaying social roles and values.⁹⁰³

When they arrive at where they bury their dead, they set her down by the side of one of the many heaps of stones and earth visible, each one encircled by a single line of stones. This is the domain of the dead. Here, to this place, people of her family and others have carried their loved ones for a long time. Stories are told of the first time. A man, a woman, and their children, they say, came to stay here. After some time the woman went to sleep, never to wake up again. The man buried her under a flowering tree and let her look out from her grave towards the ocean. Which tree it was, and which grave it was no one knows anymore. Since then, new graves have been put beside old and the trees have become fewer. Since then, pits have been dug in the ground, the sides faced with stones and slabs on the inside, mounds of stone and earth built upon them. Stones, carefully chosen, have also been ordered in lines around them, so that the ancestors shall have their place, and the living will know it.

The first time and the next

Stories *were* surely told of the history of a community, and of events and actions of the past that in one way or another could explain or present a fuller picture of, or just embellish, the present state of things. And there *would* have been a first time. The oral history of the Early Helladic people is sadly unavailable to us, and our imagination is unfortunately insufficient to make it come fully alive. But everything needs a beginning, and this is worth

⁹⁰¹ Damm 1991, 44 (citation); Murphy 1998, 32f.; Chesson 1999.

⁹⁰² E.g. Branigan (ed.) 1998, esp. contributions by Voutsaki and Hamilakis and Murphy; Wright (ed.) 2004; and Keswani 2004, for Cyprus.

⁹⁰³ Voutsaki 1998, 44f.

some special consideration. Although our conclusions can never be more than fragmentary, I believe the discussion puts the establishment of a cemetery, a cluster of graves, and single graves in a perspective above the regional and the general, and above the consideration of the contexts as static and unchangeable.

Why do people bury their dead in graves? Or why do people bury their dead at all, and why do we tend to ritualise this event and circumscribe it with so many customs and rules? Not all people do, of course; they do not bury their dead in graves, or at all, or ritualise the proceedings; others do some part but not the other. The mortuary sphere is one sphere where there is clearly room for much variability, and that should not be overly generalised. The Early Helladic material also gives room for many possibilities.

Fear of the dead may be one reason for separating the living and the dead. Fear, respect or eschatological reasons may be behind the choice of type of grave. Pollution has been mentioned above as one reason that has often been found to be the cause for a separation between settlement and cemetery. It can be an actual physical pollution, but should perhaps be better explained as the effect of something being out of place, an interpretation that should be close to the 'moral pollution' proposed by Voutsaki, with reference to Mary Douglas.⁹⁰⁴ A similar concept of pollution would be very context specific and would help to explain the varieties in the Early Helladic societies, when the dead are not always strictly separated from the living. It would also help to explain instances where there are other traditions, such as the customs of close relationships between houses and tombs as were common in, for example, Middle Helladic Greece with many intramural graves.⁹⁰⁵

Voutsaki seems to regard pollution as the prime stimulus for the dead being ritually and geographically cut off from life in the settlements, and heightened feelings of pollution as the cause for the intensification of mortuary display during the transitional (MH III–LH I) Shaft Grave Period on mainland Greece.⁹⁰⁶ But if pollution was the initial *incentive* for separation, notions of pollution must have been there at the beginning, before the very first placement of the very first grave, rather than being after the fact explanations. This, of course, it may have been, but where did it come from and why did it result at one point in time in the establishment of formal burial grounds as the one we know from Early Helladic Greece? *One* reason should, I believe, not be sought.

I have already, as a conclusion to *Chapter 8*, posed the question of how we visualise the establishment of a cemetery. It may have been part of a general plan when a new settlement was established, or it may have been

⁹⁰⁴ Douglas 1986; Voutsaki 1998, 46; Wells 1990.

⁹⁰⁵ See also Milka, forthcoming, and discussions above on the contextuality of burials as well as the problems with concepts such as intramural and extramural.

⁹⁰⁶ Voutsaki 1998, 46f.

that importance of a place for the dead outweighed that of one for the living. In an even more hypothetical scenario, death may have been the motive for settling. Perhaps more generally, the location for future graves was the well-considered choice of a group once the need arose; or, the spur of the moment choice of one individual in the same situation. Although we will never know which of the alternatives, or whether perhaps all of them, belong in Early Helladic contexts, I believe it is probable that whoever stood behind the choice, made the choice on the basis of earlier experiences of how things were done in other similar contexts. If a cemetery was thereby established it means that other people, when the need arose, followed the first choice and placed the new dead by the side of the first. Tradition is a very powerful thing. Tradition is surely one of the prime motivators in 'day-to-day' practices, including where we place our dead. But tradition is also subject to constant reconstruction, being meaningfully constituted in relation to individual choices that may fall outside the 'tradition', social change, internal changes in the pre-existing conditions, or external stimulus. This was what happened in Shaft Grave Period Greece and it happened also in the Early Helladic period.

After the choice of locale for the new grave, tradition may in the first place have guided the choice of interment below or above ground (or perhaps at sea). Subsequent choices would have been concerned with the exact location of the tomb, the type of grave used, specifics of technique for the construction, and the ritual to accompany it all. In either case, there would have been room for elaboration/variation on that tradition. Concerning the general location of the grave, for the Early Helladic period we do not have firm evidence of anything but burials below ground (although our basis for conclusion is likely to be biased). For these choices, different traditions clearly existed and, as we shall see, elaborations were made.

It should be emphasised that this book is not concerned with origins, in this case for the different types of graves that existed in the areas under consideration here. If we are not discussing a confirmed case of immigration, colonisation on virgin soil, the concept of 'origin' is too crippling for the discussion in general as well as for the freedom of action of the prehistoric peoples.⁹⁰⁷ That there *were* differences in the types of graves used during the Early Bronze Age on mainland Greece is enough to preclude generalisations and confirm that different traditions existed for how a tomb should (and perhaps could) be built. That there is no cemetery that is quite similar to another, and that there were also variations within cemeteries, shows that local level analyses are needed to recover the ways of adhering to and reconstructing 'tradition'.

⁹⁰⁷ For discussions on origin: e.g. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 256–264.

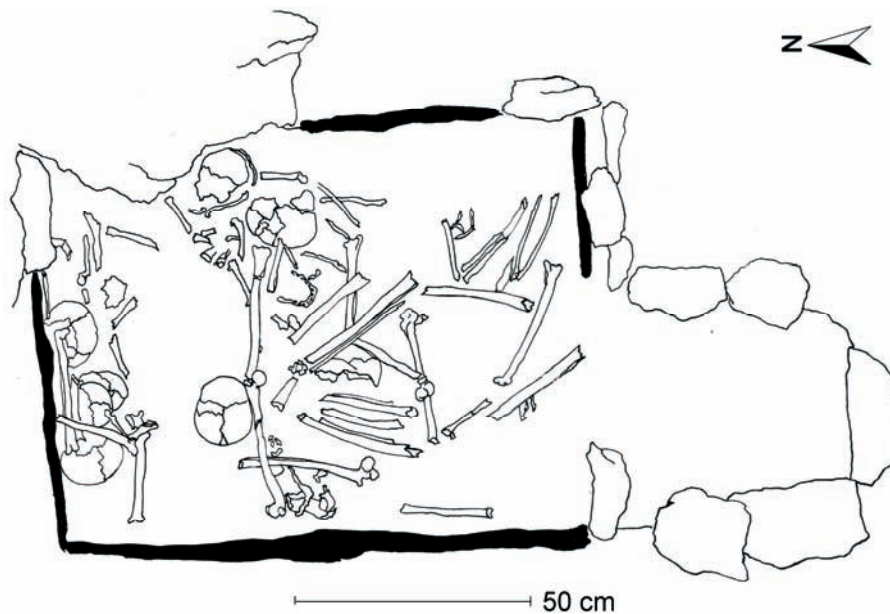


Figure 63. Aghios Kosmas. Grave 4 with the second layer of bones deposited after the addition of the prothyron.

Fragments of continuous negotiations can be seen at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas, where in each case the excavators have both noted changes in the grave techniques through time. The tripartite scheme of passage, doorway and chamber or cist has in both instances been argued by the respective excavators to be a later development. Mylonas noted the way in which a (sometimes false) doorway in some graves was fashioned during later remodelling, by breaking one of the corner slabs of the existing tomb, and also suggested further variation on the 'normative' cist tomb to be later elaborations of the type, in the wake of a growing popularity of the built variety of tombs.⁹⁰⁸ In one instance (Grave 4, *Fig. 63*) it was possible to reconstruct three stages in the construction. In its original set up, the grave was a canonical cist grave with its four sides made up of large, unbroken slabs. In the second stage, one of the slabs was broken to form a doorway and, in the final stage, the doorway was further elaborated and a prothyron was built in front of it. At the time of each stage it seems that a new floor level was constructed, on which the new burials were deposited. Three levels of bones could thus be identified, comprising the burials of at least four (lowest), seven (middle), and five (upper layer) individuals.⁹⁰⁹ That the use of the grave continued through these phases of remodelling shows that the importance of the keeping of the grave surpassed that of new construction (due to the symbolic importance of

⁹⁰⁸ Mylonas 1959, 65, 116, 123.

⁹⁰⁹ Mylonas 1959, 78f.

the specific grave, of the burials already in the grave, the location of the grave, the larger expenditure of new construction, or a combination of these and other factors).

For Tsepi, a two stage development of the cist graves has been suggested, where, in the first, the dead were put into the grave from the top, while later an antechamber was built and a doorway, which were then used as a new entryway.⁹¹⁰ Another interesting development at Tsepi is that the cist tombs, with their interior walls faced with upright schist slabs, were originally constructed from stone other than the local limestone. The schist slabs used instead needed to be transported from the Agriliki mountain, across the plain, some two kilometres away. Other grave cists, arguably later, were faced instead with smaller local stones, including the use of water worn stones from a stream that appears to have once passed through the area.⁹¹¹ This circumstance is potentially significant in many ways; two in particular for the present discussion. That the schist slabs needed to be brought from relatively far away, and that they were nevertheless used, suggests that the building material was important, and that the construction of a tomb was something that was important enough to merit the considerable effort that must have been involved in transporting the slabs. It suggests also that the constructors of the tomb were working after a mental model, a tradition if you will, of which the upright schist slabs were an important part.⁹¹² A similar tradition is found at Aghios Kosmas, where Mylonas found that the walls and roof of the tombs were “without exception” constructed from sandstone, while the closing slab for the door was “invariably” made from limestone.⁹¹³ In this case, both stones, it appears, were of local origin,⁹¹⁴ but the importance of the choice of building material is apparent. Possibly developed somewhat later, but surely used simultaneously were tombs of the built variety with facing constructed from smaller unworked stones, alone or in combination with smaller slabs of sandstone.⁹¹⁵ Does the smaller number of slabs at the two sites signal a difference in the ability to procure the needed stones, or a difference in the willingness to do it? If we are looking at a chronological change it is evident that no community remains static, and as time passes the likelihood of people being present in that community, carrying with them

⁹¹⁰ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355, also for specifics, tombs 3, 16 and 19.

⁹¹¹ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355f., referring also to two EH I tombs recently found by tumulus 2 at Vrana, of which one was lined with layers of schist slabs.

⁹¹² Pantelidou Gofa (2005, 355) emphasised in her conclusion the composite structure, but refers to the problem of having only some poorly preserved graves as parallels in Attica (she considers the Tsepi graves as EH I and therefore (mostly) earlier than Aghios Kosmas). I think it is notable, however, that the development from simple cist grave to the inclusion of doorway and prothyron took place at both sites. Is this a sign of contemporaneity?

⁹¹³ Mylonas 1959, 65.

⁹¹⁴ Mylonas (1959, 65) noted for the sandstone slabs that “apparently these slabs were quarried in the neighborhood and along the coast farther west from the area of the cemetery.”

⁹¹⁵ Mylonas 1959, e.g. 64.

varying traditions, grows larger. One person may in this scenario have far reaching consequences for the appearance, and for the variability and change within that community, and within its graves.

Aspects of monumentality and durability

It has been noted how the architecture of the Early Helladic graves resembled that of the contemporaneous houses.⁹¹⁶ Mylonas mentioned “for example, the corner doorways, the threshold raised over the floor level, the curvature of the walls”,⁹¹⁷ for his argument of a connection between the excavated cemetery and the nearby settlement. The fact that at Aghios Kosmas many of the doorways and passages were false, or the doorways too small to have ever been used, suggests nevertheless that the features were meaningful and worth the extra effort of their construction, even in graves originally otherwise constructed. But what should we think of this fact and the resemblances?

I do not dismiss the possibility that the graves of the Early Helladic period were in some sense regarded as houses of the dead, and the cemeteries as settlements of the dead. Graves as houses of the dead is not an uncommon phenomenon. In a contemporaneous Aegean context, the house tombs of northern EBA Crete were, in building technique as well as form, very similar to the domestic housing of the same period,⁹¹⁸ indicating perhaps a symbolic connection. However, I think we must nevertheless ask ourselves if the resemblances in the Early Helladic material were there on a conscious level, as purportedly houses for the dead, or if their constructors, upon the introduction of the custom of doors and passageways, just built the graves within an architectural framework to which they were used.⁹¹⁹ The architecture should not be decisive for our interpretation of the tombs as houses of the dead. If the graves were thought of as houses of the dead, these thoughts may have been present earlier. If a symbolic connection were made for the construction as a whole, it is likely, as we have seen, to have been a later development, judging from the rearranged graves, such as Grave 4 at Aghios Kosmas. It was also a variation that was not adopted fully throughout the cemeteries; some were built directly with doorway, others had one added, which

⁹¹⁶ Pullen 1985, 143, referring to that common observation by researchers into EBA graves. Also Mylonas 1959, 66, referring to Tsountas who made this suggestion based on the corbelled grave type at the site of Chalandriani on Syros.

⁹¹⁷ Mylonas 1959, 117.

⁹¹⁸ Soles 1992, 202–225.

⁹¹⁹ Both Sampson (1987, 19f.) and Pantelidou Gofa (2005, 357) sees specialist workmen (Sampson: “master-builders”; Pantelidou Gofa: “specialised workmen equipped with the appropriate stonemasonry tools”) behind the actual construction of the tombs.

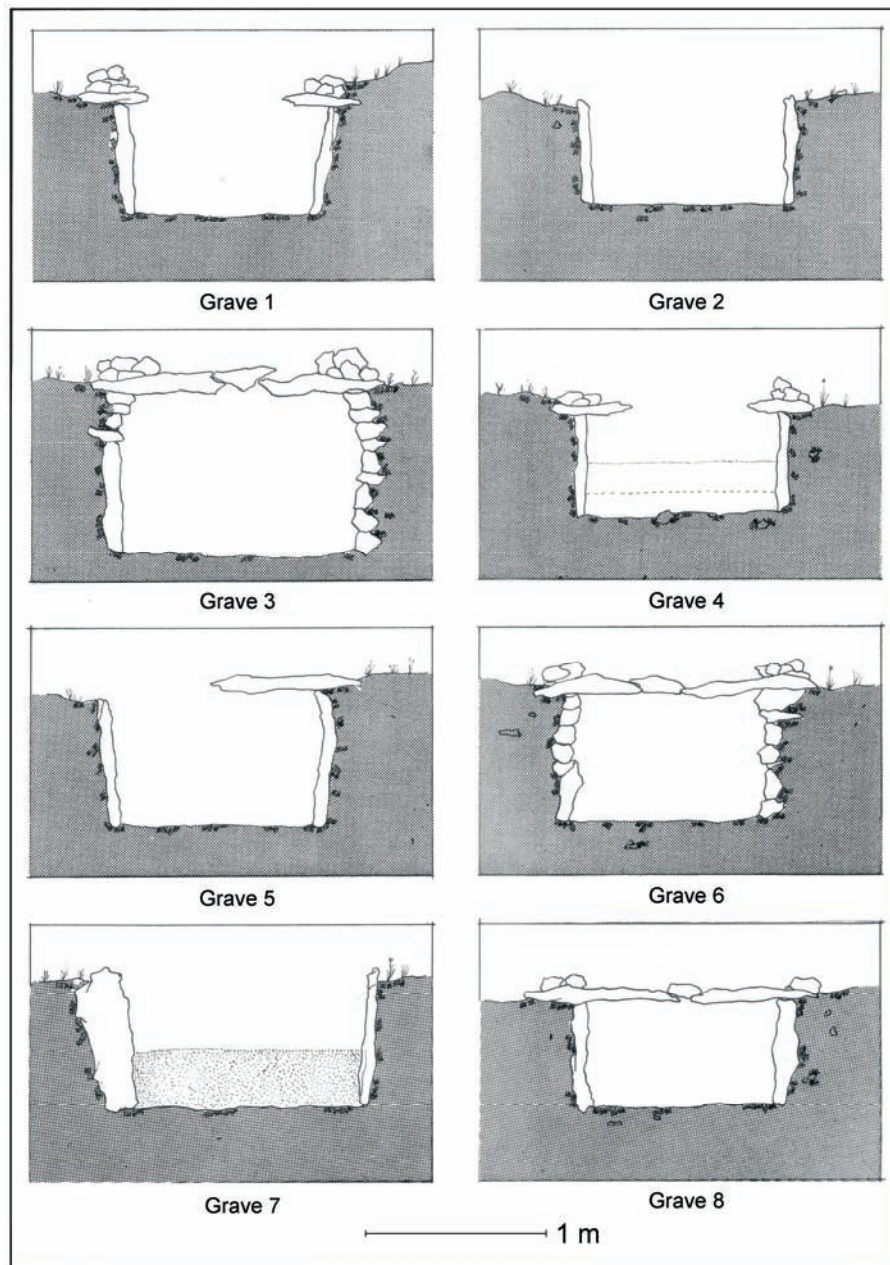


Figure 64. Aghios Kosmas. A selection of cist tombs (after Mylonas, 1959, fig. 18).

may or may not be a chronological criterion.⁹²⁰ There is also a practical side to the placement of the doorways in rearranged cists. One of the interior wall slabs needed to be broken to furnish the grave with an opening and one break would seem to be more easily accomplished than two. Whatever the incentive was to move from a simple cist to an arrangement with dromos and stomion, this need not be the basis for an interpretation of the graves as houses of the dead.

I think it is worth noting in relation to this, however, that the elaboration of the tomb type to include doorway and passage resulted in the cist tombs more closely resembling the dromos–stomion–chamber arrangement of the chamber tombs. It is suggestive, although far from conclusive, to connect the change partly with contact with people using the chamber tomb type (chamber tombs at Manika appear to go back to the final EH I, like the graves at Tsepi, which are possibly also earlier, and Aghios Kosmas).⁹²¹ If the reasons for the appearance and change in tomb architecture were ever be revealed, it would surely prove to be varied and complex, including ritual and social considerations also. The tombs were clearly constructions that followed models (models that were elaborated upon through time) for their construction. They were built not with the monumentality of the Mesara tholos tombs, but they were nevertheless built, it must be argued, for a certain permanency or at least durability.

As argued in *Chapter 8* (section on *Modern detection*), in the case of the cist and built tombs, their method of construction is the main reason for our ability to find these graves, although such extended durability was not intended by their Early Helladic constructors. The cist and built graves were built of stone.⁹²² A pit was dug into the ground; walls were constructed on its interior, either from upright slabs (cist tomb, *Fig. 65a–b*) or walled by smaller stones (built tomb), and combinations were not uncommon (*Fig. 64*).⁹²³ One or a number of large slabs functioned as closing stones at the top. Furthermore, this use of slabs, especially for the roof, continued throughout the period of construction for both cist and built tombs, although the original large single slab was in some cases exchanged for a small number of less massive slabs. Stone walls were also sometimes used to face the sides of the passage from the ground level to the doorway, and at Tsepi, large *orthostates* sometimes marked the upper end of these walls and thereby the location of and entrance into the grave (*Fig. 80*). After each interment the graves were filled in with small stones and earth, above the top closing slab, and in the passage if one existed. Even if structurally unstable and sometimes loosely

⁹²⁰ Cf. Pantelidou Gofa 2005, Graves 3, 16, 19 were remodelled and are suggested as being among the older graves of the cemetery (p. 355).

⁹²¹ A similar development was also noted for the Cycladic cist tombs (Doulas 1977).

⁹²² For presentations of construction techniques of cist graves, see Mylonas 1959, 64–66; Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 353f.

⁹²³ Also Mylonas 1959, e.g. Graves 13, p. 93, and 21, p. 98.

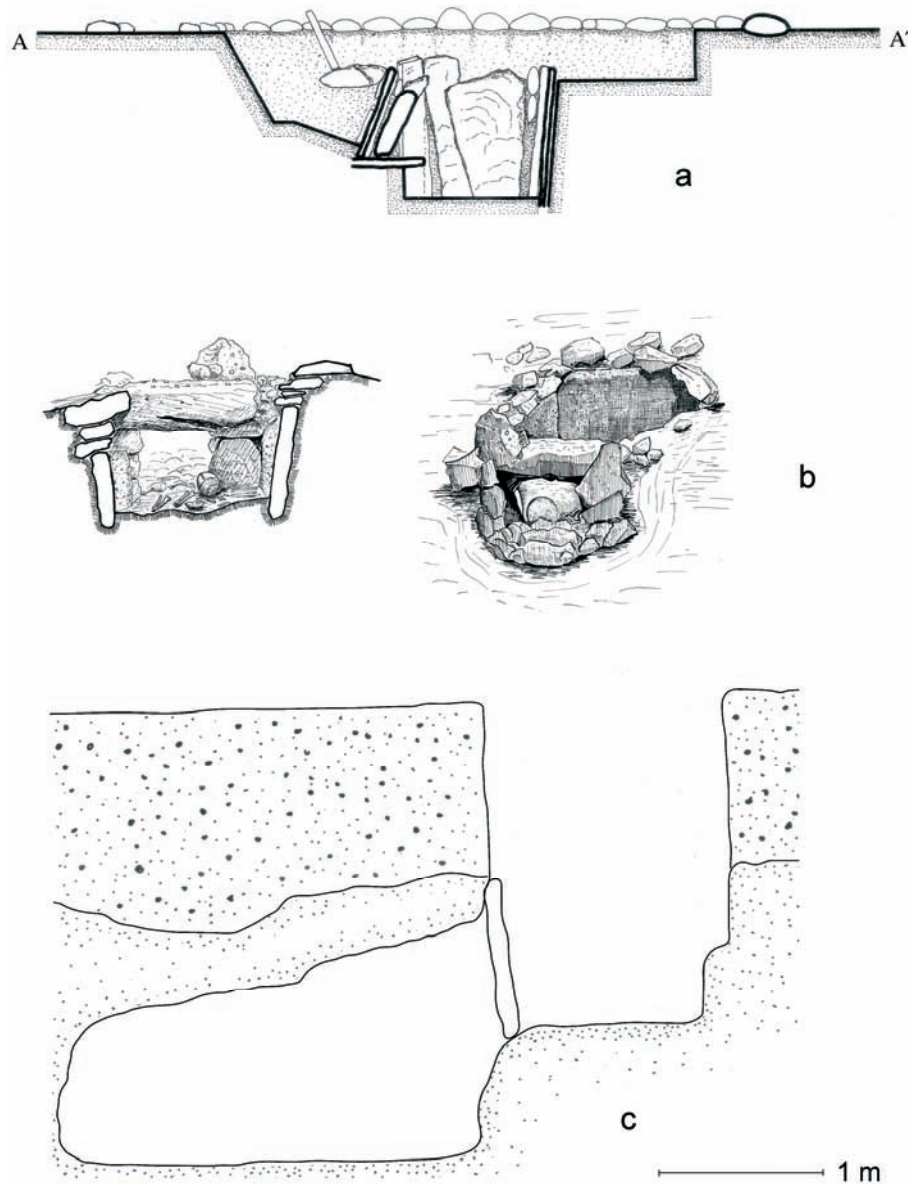


Figure 65. Sections of cist tombs from (a) Tsepi, Grave 3, (b) Aghios Kosmas, Grave 22, and (c) a chamber tomb from Manika, Grave MXIX (after Pantelidou Gofa 2005, fig. 26, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens; Mylonas 1959, figs. 34, 38; Sampson 1985, fig. 49).

constructed,⁹²⁴ they were built for the future (multiple tombs), and the dead were, in some sense, buried for the future. This method of construction, including the use of slabs of sometimes enormous size, set the graves fully apart from the architecture of houses. Variations in both custom and motives differentiated the two.

As an illustration of the measurements and efforts included in tomb construction: the roof slab of Grave 14 at Aghios Kosmas would, when complete, have measured 2 x 1.60 metres, and many other wall or roof slabs measured around 1.50 m in length and 0.70 m in width (average thickness 0.15–0.20 metres).⁹²⁵ The effort of collecting and putting in place such slabs used in the cist graves, whether local or not, must have been considerable. It is significant for the planning of the process as well as of the symbolism inherent in this type of construction. The question is how the elaboration of existing models should be interpreted, and especially the move from use of slabs to use of small stones, and the likelihood of many traditions within the same cemetery.

In contrast, for the chamber tomb, the only stones used were the slabs or stones used for closing the chamber (*Fig. 65c*).⁹²⁶ The chamber tomb type, however, was cut into the rock itself. In size the chamber tomb tended to be larger than the cist and built tombs. Although larger, however, they were generally used for a smaller number of burials. In comparison with the elaborate stone constructions to secure the sides of the pit in cist graves, the plain walls may seem less stable. The smaller number of burials per grave can perhaps be seen as confirmation of correspondingly less emphasis on the need for durability. Some examples from the chamber tombs at Manika, however, were used in both recognised phases of the EH II settlement,⁹²⁷ in comparison with the shorter duration of use for the Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi tombs (in neither case, however, need it be a question of uninterrupted continuity of use). Although little material needed to be procured for the construction of the completely subterranean chamber, the efforts involved would have been similar. Sampson estimated that it may have taken two workers fifteen days to construct a medium sized tomb of the Manika type, given the hardness of bedrock (limestone with an especially hard upper crust of *c.* one metre).⁹²⁸ Also, the subterranean aspect would have kept the dead out of harm's way from different external threats that may have befallen the

⁹²⁴ Mylonas 1959, 65, 91, commenting on the inadequacy of the counterweights for the roof slabs, and the loose construction.

⁹²⁵ Mylonas 1959, 93, see also for example Graves 5 and 7. Pantelidou Gofa 2005, e.g. 46f.: the five slabs of Grave 4 measured: 1.90 x 0.85–0.50 x 0.20 metres, 0.95 x 0.35, 0.85 x 0.40, 0.75 x 0.50, 0.58 x 0.35 metres; 37: the largest slab from Grave 3 measured 1.55 x 1.07 metres with an average thickness of 0.12 metres.

⁹²⁶ See Sampson (1985, 384), for a general presentation of the construction techniques for the Manika graves.

⁹²⁷ Sampson 1988a, e.g. Graves 61 and 71, fig. 14, p. 60.

⁹²⁸ Sampson 1988a, 124.

cist and built graves with a partly ground level construction (it may also have kept the living out of harm's way from the dead).

In sum, all known tomb types would have been similarly appropriate for withstanding the passing of time; the choice of building technique in these graves seems to firmly support a desire for an emphasis on durability (the cist tombs possibly to a greater extent than the chamber tombs). This feature of the graves stands in contrast to the houses of the period. While mudbrick is only very rarely known to have been used in an Early Helladic grave,⁹²⁹ houses were commonly built of mudbrick on a stone foundation. Mudbrick, or sun-dried brick, although more easily procured in large numbers, is a material that is easily corrupted by the forces of nature if not cared for properly. Weather and wind would have created stress on the construction, which would have needed constant repairs or maintenance. As we recall the discussion in *Chapter 4* above, the settlements would at any one time probably have consisted of a number of houses in different stages of use, disuse and decay. The same would be true for the cemeteries; all graves were probably not in simultaneous use, but the time line would have been much more extended. The life of a house probably only in exceptional cases outlasted a generation of its owners. The life expectancy of a *grave*, most likely, spanned the generations.

Of course the tombs were of a size that made an all-stone construction feasible. The conclusion must nevertheless be, all aspects considered, that not only is there a symbolic aspect of the architectural differences in house and tomb construction; the grave in itself made special measures meaningful, no efforts were spared in their construction. The graves were built for the future—for the dead buried within them, as well as for the living above ground.

Marking the spot

The formal cemeteries at least, are likely to have been somehow symbolically and/or physically demarcated from the surrounding landscape. The multiple, although variable, use of the graves, the close clustering of graves in combination with few, if any, overlaps between densely cut graves suggest that the graves themselves were also individually marked. This has been confirmed for the cist and built grave cemeteries at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi, but no markers in durable material have yet been recognised for the chamber tomb cemetery at Manika.⁹³⁰ Sampson noted for Manika that many graves were interconnected, sometimes because of crumbling walls, but he also suggested that the connection may have been intentional, creating

⁹²⁹ Aghios Kosmas, Graves 11 and 15 (Mylonas 1959, 91, 94).

⁹³⁰ Sampson 1987, 20.

groupings among the graves.⁹³¹ Surveying the general plan of the cemetery layout at Manika (Fig. 66), I think it is significant that when graves meet it is mostly in the chamber part of the structure. I propose that this means that the entrances were indeed marked, and most collisions result from the problems of the precise below-ground extent of the chambers at construction. This circumstance, however, does not necessarily counter the fact that the grouping of some graves was intentional and meaningful.

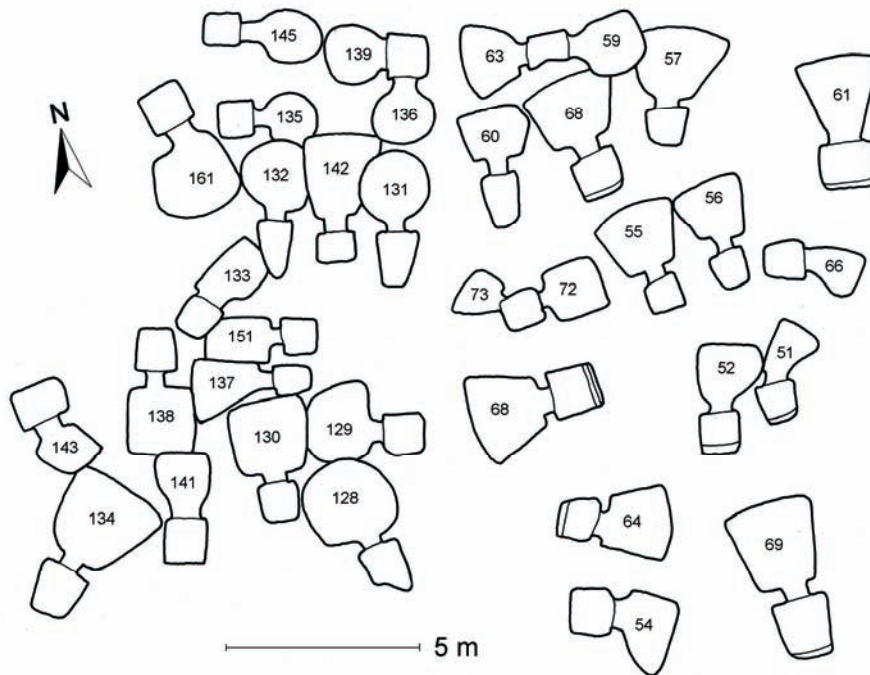


Figure 66. Manika. Spatial layout of chamber tombs in the east-central part of the Beligianni plot (after Sampson 1988aa, fig. 35).

Marking the graves served the purpose of pin-pointing the location of the grave. This was done at Tsepi by the *orthostates* marking the ends of the walls facing the passage and thereby marking the entrance to their respective graves. At Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas, some kind of structures were built over the roof slabs (with one suggested function as counter-weights for the heavy slabs),⁹³² and, visible above ground, they would have made visible the limits of the cist itself. With the presence of these markers, I believe that the borders marking the larger area around each grave may rather be seen as marking this area as special and chosen (compare the discussion in *Chapter*

⁹³¹ Sampson 1987, 19; 1988a, 124.

⁹³² Mylonas 1959, 64f. The earlier suggestion that a small tumulus/mound was erected over each grave is rejected by Pantelidou Gofa (2005, 354).

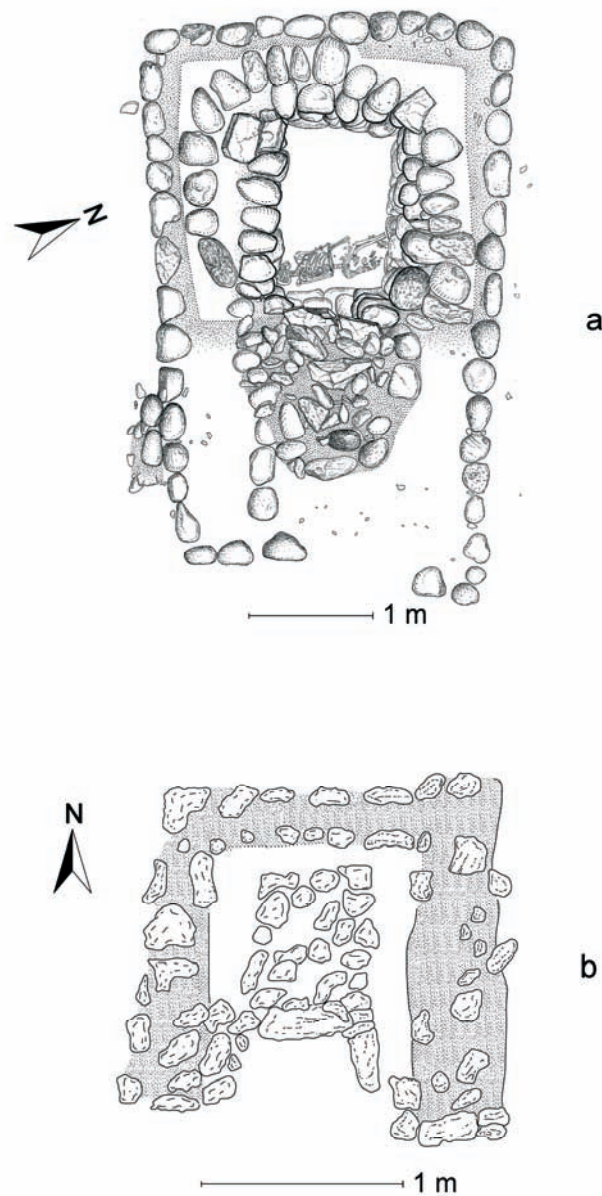


Figure 67. Markers of tombs at (a) Tsepi, Grave 20 and Aghios Kosmas, Grave 16 (after Panteliodou Gofa 2005, fig. 142, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens; Mylonas 1959, plan 1).

5, above). As incorporated into the story, at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi the frames consisted of a single (and sometimes double) line of smaller stones put one after the other at some distance from the cist itself (*Fig. 67*). As noted by Mylonas “[e]ach grave seems to have had some ground reserved to it”.⁹³³ The graves at Tsepi display a remarkable formality in these grave demarcations (*Fig. 68*), and the situation may have been similar at Aghios Kosmas, although with poorer conditions for their preservation (suggested by the appearance of Grave 16, *Fig. 67*). These reserved areas may have been important for the display of kinship rights. As argued above,⁹³⁴ however, I would like to emphasise again that the key to the translation of their meanings would have lain mainly on an intra-settlement level. That they were significant for the people using them, however, is suggested by a number of instances from Tsepi as well as from Aghios Kosmas. As we shall see, these examples will also suggest answers to the questions of when and why new graves were built.

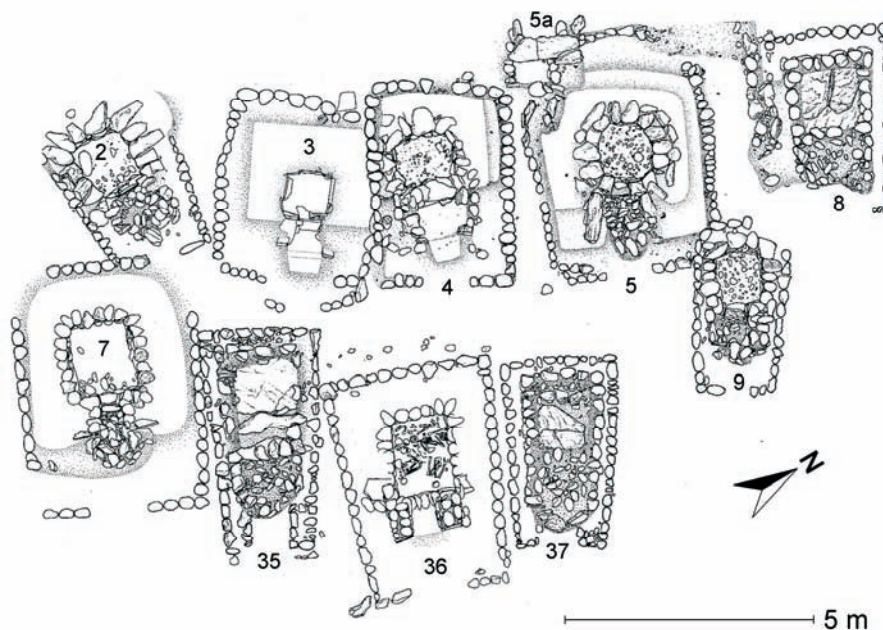


Figure 68. Tsepi. The northwestern part of the cemetery illustrating the formality of the grave enclosures (after Pantelidou Gofa 2005, general plan, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens).

⁹³³ Mylonas 1959, 66.

⁹³⁴ Chapter 8, section on *Past knowledge*.

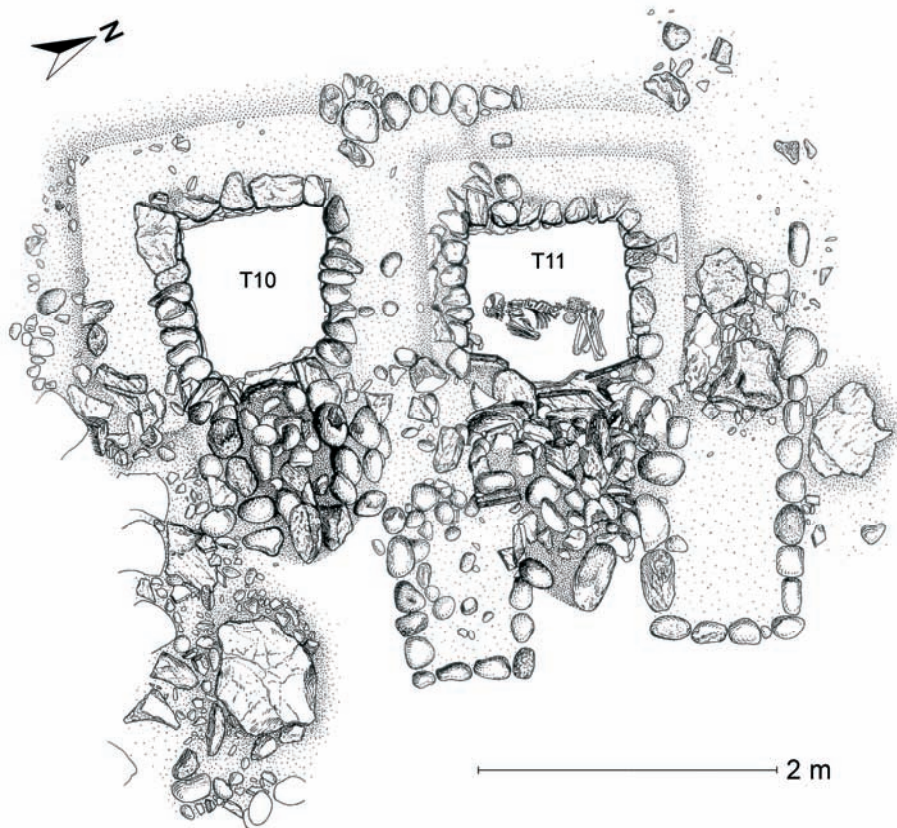


Figure 69. Tsepi. Graves 10 and 11 with their common frame (after Pantelidou Gofa 2005, fig. 67, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens).

At Tsepi, Graves 10 and 11 were found to be enclosed together by the same line of stones (*Fig. 69*).⁹³⁵ How may this be interpreted? Were they in simultaneous use or did one precede the other in use? Grave 10 contained as many as 22 crania and Grave 11, in comparison, no more than seven crania.⁹³⁶ I believe that these numbers make it possible that new space was in fact needed, and that Grave 10 at least partly chronologically preceded Grave 11. Grave 11 had one well preserved, complete skeleton from the last burial in that grave,⁹³⁷ while in Grave 10, two skeletons placed after each other in the middle of the grave are identified as the penultimate and final burials in that grave.⁹³⁸ Nevertheless, the presence of last burials, and the fact that the skeletons in Grave 10 were found towards the middle and back of the grave in

⁹³⁵ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 76. The western course of the main border had been disturbed since the original excavation.

⁹³⁶ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 82, 90.

⁹³⁷ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 90, figs. 67, 76, 78, 82.

⁹³⁸ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 81, fig. 74.

relation to the entrance, seems to suggest that the grave had room for further burials, and perhaps also that Graves 10 and 11 were still in use simultaneously. This appears not to have been the case for Graves 8 and 9 at Aghios Kosmas, two graves that were also framed together. Grave 9 was a cist grave constructed from a small number of large sandstone slabs.⁹³⁹ Just five centimetres below the cover slab, the excavators found a layer of neatly stacked bones, including fragments of at least twelve different skulls and a number of long bones (*femora*, *humeri* and *tibiae*). Below the first layer, a second layer of bones was found; the layer was described as badly decomposed, and no bone, or rather skull, count was given. One side of the tomb, the south side (where the opening would have been if one existed), was destroyed, and that slab or slabs missing. That side instead was open towards another tomb, Grave 8 (*Fig. 70*).

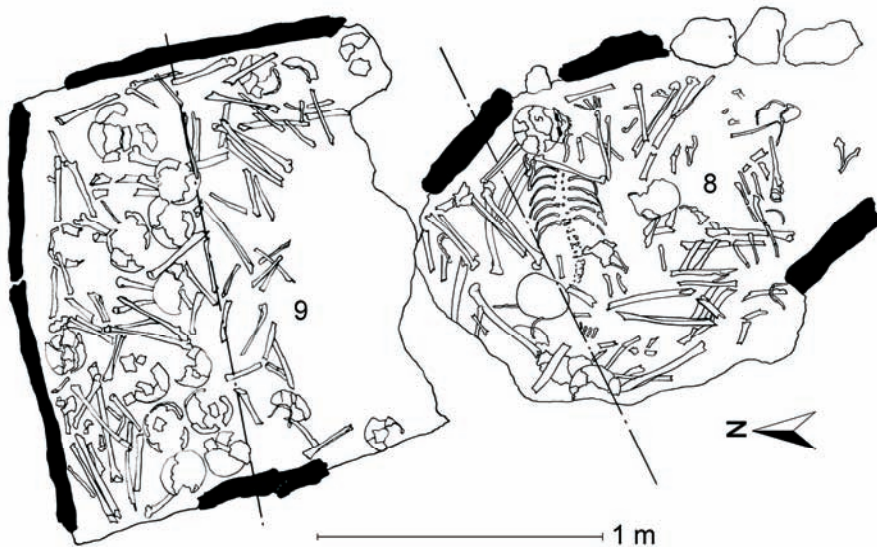


Figure 70. Aghios Kosmas. Graves 8 (upper layer of bones) and 9 (after Mylonas 1959, figs. 25–26).

Grave 8,⁹⁴⁰ in turn, was a built tomb, its walls constructed from horizontal courses of small slabs and stones. The skeletons in the grave were noted as coming from at least six individuals, consisting of one single layer of bones piled inside the doorway and, beyond that, away from the door, an almost complete skeleton of “a middle-aged woman” (Mylonas noted as well that this arrangement must mean that the last skeleton was lowered from

⁹³⁹ Mylonas 1959, 89.

⁹⁴⁰ Mylonas 1959, 78–89.

above).⁹⁴¹ As Mylonas also concluded, I believe that the two graves belonged together and that “Grave 9 was earlier; that Grave 8 contains the last burial”. Furthermore, I agree with Mylonas’ conclusion “that at some time Grave 9 was transformed into an ossuary where the bones of earlier burials were packed and then Grave 8 was constructed to take care of the later burials.”⁹⁴² Like Graves 10 and 11 at Tsepi, Graves 8 and 9 were also found to be encircled by a “boundary wall” (within that boundary wall was also included a small child grave).⁹⁴³ It appears that, in these two sets of graves, we have instances when pressure for space, or for something else, called for the construction of a new tomb beside an older one. It is implied that the boundary line at the time of the construction of the new grave at both Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas was enlarged to include the new addition. This seems definitely to have also been the case with Graves 26 and 27 at Tsepi, in which case both additions in Grave 27 were child burials.⁹⁴⁴

If spatial requirements were the reason for the construction of new tombs alongside old, it suggests that these tombs at least were used for an extended period of time. It also indicates that the location was important. This may have been especially important for the reason of establishing or confirming some sort of connection between the people buried in the two tombs (vertical kinship or other). Instances like these, when a border encircled more than one tomb, are rare, but this should not exclude the possibility that the placement of singly framed tombs close to each other was also for the same reason. Nor should it exclude the likely possibility that there were many reasons for construction of a new tomb, and that it does not necessarily mean that the tomb beside it went out of use or that there was a connection at all. A new, connected tomb may perhaps mean that two people died with too short an interval between them (although tombs are known to have held more than one complete skeleton, articulated and placed as if simultaneously interred).⁹⁴⁵ A new, unconnected tomb may also mean a new group formation was present in the mortuary sphere. The possibility of some tombs being used as ossuaries will be further discussed below, and remains an option for parallel use and for different traditions being present within one cemetery.

They put her down by the place where some summers ago they buried her brother, and it is the grave by whose side she herself, not long ago, saw to the burial of her son's young son in a small, shallow grave, within the line of stones. This time, however, her son has made an early visit to the grave and removed the rubble and soil that has filled the opening since the last burial.

⁹⁴¹ Mylonas 1959, 87f.

⁹⁴² Mylonas 1959, 89.

⁹⁴³ Mylonas 1959, 89f., Grave 9a.

⁹⁴⁴ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 176.

⁹⁴⁵ E.g. Mylonas 1959: grave 50; Sampson 1985: Beligianni tomb 19, and Georgiou tomb 2.

Visible now is the flat stone that closes the opening into the chamber. One of the people present goes down on their knees and carefully removes the already cleared stone. A thick, close smell seeps out and strikes those standing closest to it. There is crying and sounds of mourning among the onlookers.

The overseer of the next step gets down on all fours and descends down towards the opening and into the grave. With him he carries a torch to light up the dark cramped space of the chamber. He has to be careful. At other times the space in front of the opening would already be ready. This time he has the task of shifting the bones of the last burial towards the back of the limited area, where there is still some free space. Along the sides of the chamber the bare skulls and long bones of past dead are already stacked. Scattered over the floor are smaller bones and some items that once followed the dead into the chamber; a blade of that shiny black stone from across the sea; a still recognisable leather pouch. Whatever it held, it is now gone.

The nearest and dearest?

The present and final part of this book is called *Connecting the living and their dead*. It is a theme that itself could fill many pages of a book on the subject. How were the affiliations of the dead experienced, and, furthermore, did they shift over time? A direct linear recollection along family or kinship lines of specific individuals among the dead may only have been active a few generations back. Beyond that point, anthropological studies suggest that the dead were merged into the large group of ancestors to be called upon by anyone in search of legitimacy for one reason or another.⁹⁴⁶

In the story, the woman is buried in the grave where earlier her brother, as well as her son's young son, was buried. This arrangement does not directly follow anthropological standards of lineages and descent,⁹⁴⁷ and it was deliberately chosen as such to mark our low level of knowledge of this aspect of Early Helladic practices. We must ask ourselves who were really buried in the graves we are studying. Although DNA analyses would have the potential of going some way towards answering the question of kinship between the individuals interred, few analyses are carried out, and the preservation of the material must meet many criteria required in order to produce a result.⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴⁶ Whitley 2002, for an analysis of the term 'ancestor' and caution on how to use it. See, further, introduction to *Part Three*, above.

⁹⁴⁷ For a general reference, see Stone 2000.

⁹⁴⁸ For initiated DNA analyses on Aegean Bronze Age materials, see Tzedakis & Martlew 1999, 259–261; Bouwman, Brown & Prag, forthcoming. Indications of the possibility of twins being buried in the same grave have been recorded, based on osteological criteria, for

Kinship is also only one alternative basis for the burial groups during the Early Helladic period, or any period, as many anthropological and historical sources suggest. The basis may be horizontal (one-generational), vertical (multi-generational) or preferential.⁹⁴⁹

A combination of many aspects of the Early Helladic mortuary context strongly suggests that, on whatever basis the groupings were made, they were meaningful and worth the extra effort of upholding. The custom of multiple burials in itself is indicative, but not more, of meaningful groupings in the Early Helladic society, as the possibility remains that the reuse of graves was a matter of pure convenience. Considering also, however, the instances of borders encompassing more than one grave, the burial of dead in the passage into a grave of which the roof slabs had collapsed, precluding burial in the chamber itself,⁹⁵⁰ the instances of new construction beside the old, when the pressure for space perhaps grew to large in the latter, and the construction of less elaborate side burials in connection with the principal grave,⁹⁵¹ the case grows even stronger. The less elaborate side burials can often be connected with children and, in combination with the full spectrum of men, women and children found in the main chambers, I believe we can conclude that the presence of some vertical aspect plays a part in the groupings.

Keswani has most recently, for prehistoric Cyprus, argued against the general emphasis on inheritance in relation to rights to land in discussions of the significance of corporate groups.⁹⁵² The existence of corporate groups, their importance in relation to 'critical resources', and the possibility of studying them in the mortuary context is not doubted (either by Keswani, or generally in the debate); the qualification lies in the variation possible in the definition of the critical resources. With respect to this important qualification, I believe that we are nevertheless right to assume that some kind of 'kinship' was active in relation to these corporate groups that we may identify in the continuously used grave or in the existence of formal cemeteries. However, a suggestion of linear descent groups (of which linear direction we know nothing, e.g. matrilineality, patrilineality) should not exclude the presence and importance of a more figurative sense of the concept of kinship, and vice versa.

The EH I and early EH II periods were surely times of change with many and varying stimuli, and possibilities for actual contacts between people over short and long distances. In a similar environment, with the dispersal of sites

both extramural (Pandelidou Gofa 2005, 82, for Grave 10 at Tsepi) and intramural contexts (Kanz & Großschmidt, forthcoming, for EH I Kolonna).

⁹⁴⁹ Keswani (2004, 17) presents a number of anthropological case studies to prove this point.

⁹⁵⁰ Pandelidou Gofa 2005, 356, Graves 14 and 33.

⁹⁵¹ Chapter 7, section on *Children in extramural contexts*.

⁹⁵² Keswani 2004, 11f., with references to the continuing debate on the question of the significance of the groupings found in mortuary contexts.

in the landscape moving towards and reaching its maximum for the Early Helladic period, groupings among individuals are likely to evolve. The cemeteries that multiply in the same period, through their communality of grave cluster and ‘individuality’ of the single grave, may have been the new arena for negotiation of these positions—between individuals or smaller groups, within a settlement as well as between them. I propose that we may hypothesise one grave to show the affinity of a farmstead (or any small grouping) and several to show the unity within a larger community towards external factors, as well as the differentiation between communities. That the content and definition of these groupings may have been subject for constant negotiation and also manipulation should be understood.

Handling of the dead and their bones

Just as the son in the story had been in advance to prepare the grave for re-opening, every interment of a dead person in the chamber of a built grave would have required the initial work of opening the grave that had been closed since the last time the grave was visited. At Manika, or wherever a chamber tomb was the grave of choice, that would have meant the clearing of the earth and stone that filled the short *dromos* leading to the doorway. In these cases there was no other choice unless the roof of the grave was to be penetrated. In the case of cist and built tombs there would appear to be two options: the participants in this phase of the ritual could remove the roof slab and any construction that rested above it, and lower the dead into the grave from above. The second alternative is the practice of the chamber tombs: removing the fill from the passage and entering the grave through the doorway.⁹⁵³

Mylonas noted how the last burial in Grave 6 at Aghios Kosmas, a complete skeleton, was positioned away from the doorway, and the bones of older skeletons were stacked against the door slab, thus between the last skeleton and the doorway.⁹⁵⁴ In other instances at Aghios Kosmas, the doorway and/or prothyron were clearly ‘false’; in some cases the doorway opened up onto the unhewn rock.⁹⁵⁵ He also noted that in some cases the doorway was simply too small for anyone to pass, no matter their size (children’s graves with doorways *c.* 10 cm wide—nevertheless showing the importance of the doorway in the architecture),⁹⁵⁶ and that the doorways were also generally very small (0.35–0.68 in width, and 0.30–0.46 in height),⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵³ It is unclear whether the passages into the tombs at Aghios Kosmas were ever filled, as the Tsepi graves apparently were (Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 354).

⁹⁵⁴ Mylonas 1959, 82f.

⁹⁵⁵ Mylonas 1959, e.g. Grave 7, p. 84.

⁹⁵⁶ Mylonas 1959, 66, Graves 9A, 17, 18.

⁹⁵⁷ Mylonas 1959, 65.

which would make it “rather difficult, if not impossible, to introduce a body” (Grave 16 was actually investigated through its 0.40 x 0.30 doorway).⁹⁵⁸ His conclusion was that at Aghios Kosmas the bodies were not placed into the graves through their doorways, where those existed, but lowered into them through the roof.⁹⁵⁹

In contrast, for the cist graves at Tsepi, Pantelidou Gofa argues that they were in fact entered through their doorways (averaging 0.40 x 0.50 metres).⁹⁶⁰ One need not imagine anyone entering fully into the chamber thereafter, but Pantelidou Gofa argues that the stacking of bones cannot have been accomplished by means only of some hypothesised long tool; the distance from the opening to the back of the tomb indicates that a person must have entered at least as far as the middle of the tomb (to the waist perhaps) to be able to arrange the bones for a new burial.⁹⁶¹

Two so different interpretations for the same grave type at first seem suspicious as regards their validity. Indicative of an actual difference in practice, however, is perhaps that while most final burials in the Tsepi graves were placed just inside the door, at Aghios Kosmas there appears to be no such general preference. In one case, the skeleton was placed partly in the prothyron, but the passage in this case was clearly symbolical since the unhewn rock precluded a practical function.⁹⁶² Otherwise, at Aghios Kosmas, the tendency among the few more-or-less fully preserved skeletons is for a position towards the middle and even away from the doorway. Another indication is the size of the graves. At Tsepi the average grave is about one cubic metre or a little less, with a height of *c.* 0.80–0.90 m and a length of *c.* 1 m.⁹⁶³ At Aghios Kosmas, the average depth is *c.* 0.60 metres, and the length averages 1.30 metres (Grave 20 was even 2.20 metres long), with a width of some 20 centimetres less.⁹⁶⁴ The volume of these graves would equal those of Tsepi, but any handling of the bones through the doorway would be greatly hampered by the longer, shallower construction. In addition to this, the elaborate and substantial superstructure of the Tsepi graves (doubling the full height of the grave construction), which would be laborious to take down and rebuild for every burial, presents a picture of significant local differences surpassing the common ‘model’ for the construction of the graves. The significance, nevertheless, of this general model or ‘tradition’ is especially evident at Aghios Kosmas, as the model apparently did not fit the actual ritual of the burial.

⁹⁵⁸ Mylonas 1959, 67, 95f.

⁹⁵⁹ Mylonas 1959, 65f.

⁹⁶⁰ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 354f.

⁹⁶¹ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 329, pl. 243.

⁹⁶² Mylonas 1959, grave 7.

⁹⁶³ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 353.

⁹⁶⁴ Mylonas 1959. Excluding the graves for children, the ranges for the graves are: L: 1.0–2.20, W: 1.0–1.55, D: 0.30–0.85.

Both the doorway and the size of the grave are significantly larger in the Manika chamber tombs. The largest chambers reach a size of 2.50 x 2 metres, with a height of well over one metre and doorway sizes of 0.70 x 0.70 m or more.⁹⁶⁵ As a comparison, it can be noted that the size of the dromoi at Manika is similar to the chambers at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas, the dromoi, however, being more deeply cut (averaging one metre in depth). In graves of this size it would not be difficult for a person to enter, nor to move around in the grave or even stand more or less upright. The evidence from these chamber tombs seems to support the less functional aspect of the smaller doorways of the graves at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas, even questioning the likelihood of entrance by way of the passage and doorway at Tsepi. Another early chamber tomb cemetery, however, displays dimensions more in line with these cist graves. Beyond the regions studied here, at Kalamaki in Kato Achaia, in the northwestern Peloponnese, south of Patras, a cemetery of chamber tombs has been excavated and dated to EH I (beginning of use suggested to be early in this phase).⁹⁶⁶ The graves, although very similar in construction to the Manika graves, were smaller, with the doorway only 0.50 x 0.50 metres or less, the height of the chamber about one metre, and an average chamber size of 1.5–2.0 x 1.5 metres.⁹⁶⁷ The excavator expressed puzzlement over how the people of the period could have entered into the chambers, both to cut them and to place their dead.⁹⁶⁸ As the only entrance was through the shaft and doorway, similar in size to Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas, we can conclude that the space, however small, was nevertheless considered adequate for the performance of the rituals for one and in cases even several burials.⁹⁶⁹

The effort required for each re-entry would in certain instances have been quite taxing (especially if large roof slabs needed to be removed). A stone, with one end rounded and smooth, and the other rough and pointed, found in the prothyron of Grave 33 at Tsepi may be an example of the digging in-

⁹⁶⁵ The measurements of 21 tombs excavated in the Beligianni plot (Sampson 1985, 200, fig. 19) can be summarised as within the following ranges: length: 1.50–2.40, width: 1.30–2.60, height: 0.85–1.60, doorway: 42–93 x 35–75.

⁹⁶⁶ Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, dating: esp. 379; also summary in Alram-Stern 2004, 680, pls. 40–41.

⁹⁶⁷ Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, 368, n. 7. The graves are divided into three categories (A–C), and the category A tombs are most similar to the Manika tombs, with pronounced doorway. Measurements are given for three tombs (length x width x height, in metres): tomb 7: 2 x 1.85 x 1.30, tomb 50: 1.55 x 1.75 x 0.80, tomb 76: 1.60 x 1.45 x 1.00. Entrances: tomb 8: 0.42 x 0.32, tomb 10: 0.60 x 0.30.

⁹⁶⁸ Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, 368.

⁹⁶⁹ The skeletal material from the graves was in poor condition but indicated that the smallest, round graves held only one burial while most larger, rectangular graves held several, the varying numbers were also indicated by the number of grave goods in the chambers (Vasilogambrou 1996–1997, 374).

struments used.⁹⁷⁰ As an indication of the effort of modern grave clearing, Mylonas commented: “Lifting the heavy roof slabs was a difficult undertaking, but the clearing of the grave proved even more taxing. Crushed and badly decayed bones filled its area”.⁹⁷¹ It may have been that the largest roof slabs were not removed each time, in instances where they did not cover the whole cist,⁹⁷² but the sight that met those people opening the grave would have been similar to the one presented by Mylonas. If the grave had been used for one or many earlier burials, the smell that emanated from the first gap in the sealed tomb would have been one of death and decay.⁹⁷³ We should not pretend to understand the response in the Early Helladic period to the sight of a grave full of bones in different stages of decay. Presumably it differed between individuals, and possibly there were individuals responsible for the special task of readying the grave for burial. It is clear, however, that there were no inhibitions against disturbing old burials in the graves, this was rather a part of the ritual (and may have called for the presence of special individuals). As is still the case in modern Greece and in many other modern and past societies,⁹⁷⁴ the primary burial was not the final act involving the remains of that dead individual.

Proposing a secondary burial ritual

The poor preservation of many bones, the lack of osteological analyses and documentation of early excavations, and other factors ensure that we will never be able to fully reconstruct the rituals of death, their variation, even within one cluster of graves. It seems clear, however, that we stand before a complex picture of many different practices and/or stages of ritual active at any one time, in any one cemetery. One point that has received some attention, but that may be deliberated upon further, is the question of one- or two stage rituals.

The question of a two stage mortuary ritual in an Early Helladic context was raised by Mylonas after the excavation at Aghios Kosmas of an extended skeleton, in a cemetery of contracted skeletons, in a shallow, unfaced and uncovered trench, in a cemetery of carefully built graves. Furthermore, by Graves 3 and 14, outside the chamber, immediately below the surface, he found the disturbed bones of in each case one individual.⁹⁷⁵ Based also on the

⁹⁷⁰ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 192, fig. 195. Two skeletons were found in that very prothyron, in addition to the eight found within the grave chamber itself.

⁹⁷¹ Mylonas 1959, 84f.

⁹⁷² Mylonas 1959, e.g. grave 7, p. 84.

⁹⁷³ Cf. Hamilakis 2002, 128.

⁹⁷⁴ For an anthropological presentation and photographic illustration of the death rituals in a rural northern Greek village in the 1970's, see Danforth & Tsiaras 1982.

⁹⁷⁵ Mylonas 1959, 118, 107 (Area of the extended skeleton), 94 (grave 14), 75 (Grave 3, two instances of bones: Area A and B).

discovery of clearly primary burials (undisturbed, complete skeletons) in some of the graves, and only few bones in some graves, he concluded that two methods of burial/interment were used in parallel at the cemetery of Aghios Kosmas: primary burial in a grave; and primary burial in a pit with only secondary placement in the grave, which would thereby be functioning as a ossuary.⁹⁷⁶

Pullen instead favoured primary burial in the grave chamber as the norm, thus a one stage ritual, and refers the examples above to the odd instances of differential treatment (a reflection of ranking within the mortuary sphere and the Early Helladic society).⁹⁷⁷ Mylonas' allowance for more than one method in use at the same time seems, however, attractive—I think we are surely wrong to apply one rule to fit all burials. The presence or absence of a distinction between a primary burial and a secondary burial at different locations does not, however, exhaust the possibilities inherent in the concept of a two stage mortuary ritual and it does not cover the complex pattern of the Aghios Kosmas graves.

Based on the available Early Helladic grave material, I would like to make a number of points. First of all, primary burials in graves are, in Early Helladic contexts, almost always connected with a certain number of loose bones. This fact is always noted in the scholarly discourse. Secondly, it is often commented that these bones of old interments appear displaced to make room for the new burial; 'brushed', 'swept', 'pushed indiscriminately',⁹⁷⁸ or the like, are phrases and words often used. Thirdly, (discussions of these subjects give the impression, although it is never clearly stated that) unless there are grounds to believe that the preservation is not very good, it is generally understood that the absence of an *in situ* complete skeleton means that there never was one (hence the interpretation as ossuary, *see below*).

Thus, combining these points, I would like to put forward the possibility of another form of two stage mortuary ritual also. Namely, one that is hinted at in the narrative above, of a ritual separate from the burial in which the tomb is opened up again, after a certain regulated amount of time has passed since the original burial, with the purpose of cleaning and piling the bones. Apart from the possibility of a two stage mortuary ritual taking place partly outside the graves, I believe we also have the possibility of a two stage ritual acted out within many chambers. This scenario certainly seems to be indicated by the context of Grave 33 at Tsepi. In this case, Pantelidou Gofa noted that the grave appeared to have been put in order for a new burial; the bones of older burials were rearranged at the back of the tomb. At one time, however, it seems that the roof slab broke, *before a new burial could be in-*

⁹⁷⁶ Mylonas 1959, 118f.

⁹⁷⁷ Pullen 1985, 124; 1994, 125.

⁹⁷⁸ Mylonas 1959, 118; Pullen 1994, 123.

troduced, and a body was instead interred in the prothyron.⁹⁷⁹ This second stage of the handling of bones could of course have been necessitated if a new death happened within the group using the grave and new floor space was needed,⁹⁸⁰ but it may also have meant that the graves were opened *between* burials.

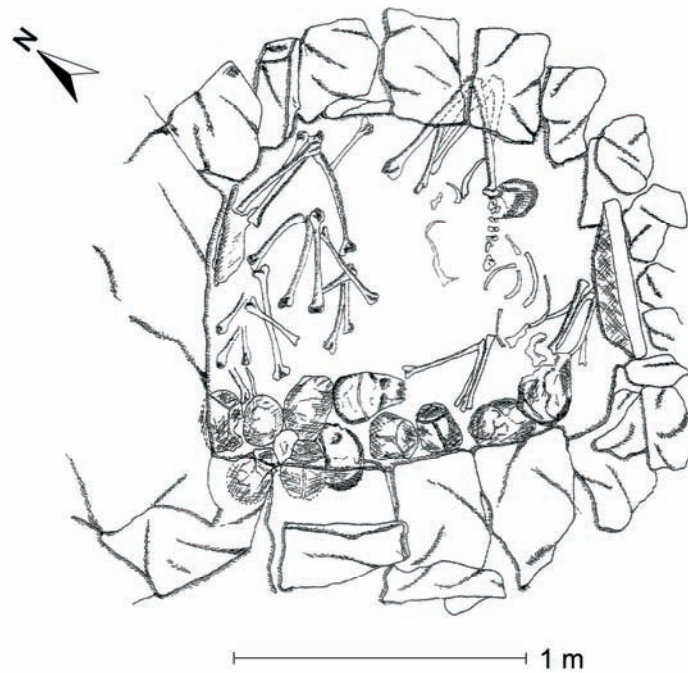


Figure 71. Tsepi. Grave 2 with the stacking of skulls towards the southern chamber wall (after Pantelidou Gofa 2005, fig. 13, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

I therefore propose that we should consider the arrangement of the bones a deliberate and separate act, not immediately connected with the need for space. I suggest that the rearrangement of the bones should be seen as a secondary mortuary ritual in its own right and not a necessary and unceremonious part of the primary burial of a new individual. Even if we could judge the degree of care behind the rearrangement of old bones, the appearance of the piling or stacking then loses relevance. The clear stacking of bones noted in some graves at different locales (at Tsepi: *Fig. 71*, Aghios Kosmas: *Figs.*

⁹⁷⁹ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 190–201; Alram-Stern 2004, 551f.

⁹⁸⁰ Mylonas and the osteologist, Koumares, involved in the excavation noted that in some instances parts of the “brushed aside or piles of” skeletons kept their internal position, suggesting that the rearrangement was made “before the flesh and tendons were completely dissolved” (Mylonas 1959, 118).

70 and 75 and Perachora-Vouliagmeni cave)⁹⁸¹ may instead be only the more visible part of the proposed act. Worth noting in this context, also, is that not only are skulls and long bones (the bones noted for neat stacking) the emphasised part of the skeleton in many reports of grave material, but also the parts which are most easily sorted out, and most apt for stacking. I believe that we should consider also a *pars pro toto* act, perhaps, rather than necessarily a special reverence for the skull. The apparent paradox of the sweeping aside of the decomposed bodies in contrast to the careful laying out of the new dead should, I suggest, not be made too much of.⁹⁸² Neither should we make too much of an opposite scenario, but the fact that we can see no order in the skeletal material of some tombs should not automatically lead to the conclusion that there was no plan, care and/or emotion involved (at least at an early stage, which, with a large number of bones in a limited space, may have been later disrupted). Pantelidou Gofa noted, for example, how the bones of each skeleton appear to be kept together in each pit,⁹⁸³ although the skulls were sometimes placed separately.⁹⁸⁴ Finally, it can also be noted that the moving of the bones is not the only alternative for creating new space. Thus, in some graves the bones appear not to have been moved, with new space being created by the making of a new floor of sand and pebbles.⁹⁸⁵ We have seen how this was done in connection with the reconstruction of the tomb (Grave 4 at Aghios Kosmas, above, section on *The first time and the next*), but in most cases it was a ‘cleaning’ act performed at differing intervals, possibly for different purposes, and should, I believe, be interpreted in the same way, as a ritual in its own right.

I think we also need to take care not to apply too much of our own ideas of the sanctity of the bones of our dead, *or* the polluting aspect of decay of the same, onto the Early Helladic or any prehistoric material. A two stage ritual as the one proposed here may, nevertheless, provide an alternative explanation for the lack of complete skeletons in some graves.

Considering the articulate and the incomplete

The two stage burial ritual I have proposed here is based on the presence of articulated skeletons as well as disarticulated ones. It is a scenario where the bones of the dead were handled within the grave. Thus, the grave is the scene for both the primary and secondary burial ritual and it is the primary as

⁹⁸¹ E.g. Mylonas 1959, Graves 3 (74, pl. 55, fig. 21) and 9 at Aghios Kosmas (89, pl. 68, fig. 26); Perachora-Vouliagmeni cave: Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 226, fig. 3.

⁹⁸² *Contra* Murphy 1998, 35, suggesting on this paradox that “the Prepalatial communities believed in gradation of respect” relative to the decomposition of the body.

⁹⁸³ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 356.

⁹⁸⁴ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355.

⁹⁸⁵ E.g. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 246.

well as secondary burial location. The suggestion made by Mylonas, on the other hand, is based on the interpretation that the grave is the secondary burial location resulting from a secondary handling of the bones. If not also combined with primary burials, the graves would then be a place for bones, not for bodies, thus they would be ossuaries. Regarding this term, however, I have found that a clarification and a grouping are needed for the quite variable use of the term during the last century or so. In order to clarify matters regarding the concept of ossuaries, and to see what we can then learn about Early Helladic mortuary behaviour, I believe it may be fruitful to re-examine some contexts discussed in relation to the term ‘ossuary’, to see how these relate to the actual handling practices of the bones. Prior use of the term seems to indicate two ways of handling the dead and their bones:

- *The body was placed in an (unknown) primary burial location and moved to a grave structure as part of a secondary burial ritual.*

This scenario includes the one suggested by Mylonas, who based his conclusion mainly on the finds of what he determined to be primary burials outside the common grave structures. A more common basis for suggesting a mostly unknown primary burial location is the presence of a large number of bones in the grave, but no articulated skeleton. To this group we may assign the two published mortuary contexts from the area of Lake Vouliagmeni by Perachora. Similarly, Blegen called the graves at Zygouries ossuaries, referring to the deposition of the bones “in the disordered heaps in which we found them”.⁹⁸⁶ There have, however, been different readings of his interpretation of these graves, and it is not altogether clear what he actually meant by the term ossuary.⁹⁸⁷ In these graves, but primarily in the Early Helladic graves at Perachora-Vouliagmeni, their interpretation as ossuaries seems to depend largely on the fact that the bones were laid without order, more or less filling the area, and they are good examples of instances where no apparent sorting of the bones has taken place.⁹⁸⁸ Thus, one grave was found by the south-west corner of the lake and around three hundred metres from the contemporary settlement. It measured 1.80 (N-S) x 0.90 (E-W) x 0.80 (depth) metres and contained the remains of around ten skeletons “[...] disturbed, scattered in utmost confusion”, badly preserved and crumbling upon

⁹⁸⁶ Blegen 1928, 54.

⁹⁸⁷ Pullen (1985, 197) noted that Blegen did not suggest anything other than that the burials in the graves were primary burials. However, although he dismisses it in the next sentence, Blegen does make the suggestion that the bones in the graves derive from cleared out cist tombs in the vicinity, reused during the Roman period. After listing a number of objections to this theory, his conclusion is, in the end, that “the ossuaries must therefore be regarded as purely Early Helladic phenomena” (p. 54), thus dismissing the possibility that the reburial of the bones is *Roman* not Early Helladic.

⁹⁸⁸ “...scattered helter skelter, skulls, arm-bones, femurs, vertebrae, all mingled in utmost confusion” was one description given by Blegen (1928, e.g. 45, tomb VII).

removal.⁹⁸⁹ In the publication, Hatzipouliou-Kalliri referred to the graves at Zygyouries for the closest parallel, emphasising the lack of order that may be found within the graves at, for example, Tsepi. Her interpretation of the term ‘ossuary’ was a place “[...] where remains of previous burials were deposited so as to be preserved.”⁹⁹⁰ She commented also on the fragmentary state of the pottery, for which the breaks do not seem recent, thus concluding that the grave was apparently “an ossuary rather than a real tomb.”⁹⁹¹ Although it was not directly stated, the interpretation seems to be that the primary burial location lay somewhere outside the excavated tomb.

In the other published context, at Perachora-Vouliagmeni, the bones appeared to have been at least partly sorted. This context, extraordinary in many ways, consisted of a natural cave that was excavated in 1992. The cave was located 50 metres above sea level and about three hundred metres west of the excavated parts of the Early Helladic settlement. In the lowest half of the cave the excavation revealed layers of mixed bones partly covering a number of skulls, separately stacked against a wall. Fourteen skulls were collected in total. Koumouzelis noted that the arrangement of the bones must be mostly due to water (and possibly human agency) moving the bones and sherds from higher ground, but also that special care had been given to deposit the skulls towards the back wall of the cave.⁹⁹² She noted, furthermore, that the disordered state of the bones should also preclude even the suspicion of there ever having been a complete skeleton in the grave.⁹⁹³ Her conclusion was that the cave was used during an extended period of time (judging from the pottery), and that the burials in the caves were secondary, with the primary burial at another location within the settlement area, and the cave therefore to be classified as an ossuary.⁹⁹⁴

- *The body was primarily buried in a grave structure; the bones thereafter removed to a special purpose context adjacent, to give room for new burials in the primary context.*

In this second scenario, the connection between primary and secondary burial location seems to be ascertained. The displacement of bones was made over a much shorter distance than that which may have been the case in the first instance. These contexts make up a second type of finds that have at one time or another been called ossuaries. Thus there are the interconnected Graves 8 and 9 at Aghios Kosmas already mentioned above. The upper layer of neatly stacked bones, up to 5 centimetres short of the roof slab in Grave 9,

⁹⁸⁹ Hatzipouliou-Kalliri 1983, 369.

⁹⁹⁰ Hatzipouliou-Kalliri 1983, 373.

⁹⁹¹ Hatzipouliou-Kalliri 1983, 369, 374.

⁹⁹² Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 226f.

⁹⁹³ Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 226.

⁹⁹⁴ Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 227f.

suggests that Mylonas was right in interpreting this grave as an ossuary in a second stage of its use life, as a recipient of bones from the later burials in Grave 8 (*Fig. 70*).⁹⁹⁵ Furthermore, at Manika, fifteen pits excavated by the side of the graves in the Beligianni plot were suggested to have functioned as pit-ossuaries, in this case, that is to say, as recipients of bones cleared out from nearby graves (*Fig. 72*).⁹⁹⁶ In one case the pit-ossuary was connected with the dromos of one of the chamber tombs (Grave 3 and Pit-ossuary 9), the opening towards the dromos blocked by a built wall.⁹⁹⁷ In these cases, the bones are suggested to have been removed from their primary context within the grave proper to a nearby pit or a disused older tomb specially designated for the purpose (by extension this would multiply the number of burials at separate times deposited in the grave). As discussed above (section on *Marking the spot*), spatial considerations appear to have at least played a part in the motive for the practices.

In both scenarios we seem to have situations characterised by a multitude of bones arranged without order. In the second scenario the interpretations are also founded on a physical connection between primary and secondary contexts. It recalls the interpretation of the considerably larger and architecturally more complex Mesara tholoi and the house tombs of northern Crete, where side chambers are interpreted as ossuaries to which bones from time to time were relocated to create new space in the main chamber.⁹⁹⁸ In this scenario, as in the alternative type of two stage mortuary practice suggested above, the cemetery (or the grave) remains the context for all handling of the bones. In the first scenario, however, the primary context is unknown and the grave (or cluster of graves, if including Zygouries) to be found today is given only a secondary status in relation to the handling of the bones. I believe that this is a possibly central point to consider and include in our interpretations of cemeteries or graves as important social arenas for the living. The type of practice is of potentially great significance.

In order to approach this issue we need to give further consideration to at least two questions:

- Is the grave/cemetery the primary or secondary burial context?
- How do we judge if a find is a primary or secondary burial?

In order to address the main first question, we must begin by considering the second. Thus, a good indication of a primary burial would be an articulated skeleton, undisturbed and with all bones in their correct places. If partially disturbed, the presence of the smaller bones of the skeleton, such as finger

⁹⁹⁵ Mylonas 1959, 87–89.

⁹⁹⁶ Sampson 1985, 219, fig. 51, p. 182.; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 247f.; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 18; Pullen 1985, 138, 141f.; Alram-Stern 2004, 300.

⁹⁹⁷ Sampson 1985, 158.

⁹⁹⁸ Branigan 1987; Soles 1992, 243–251.

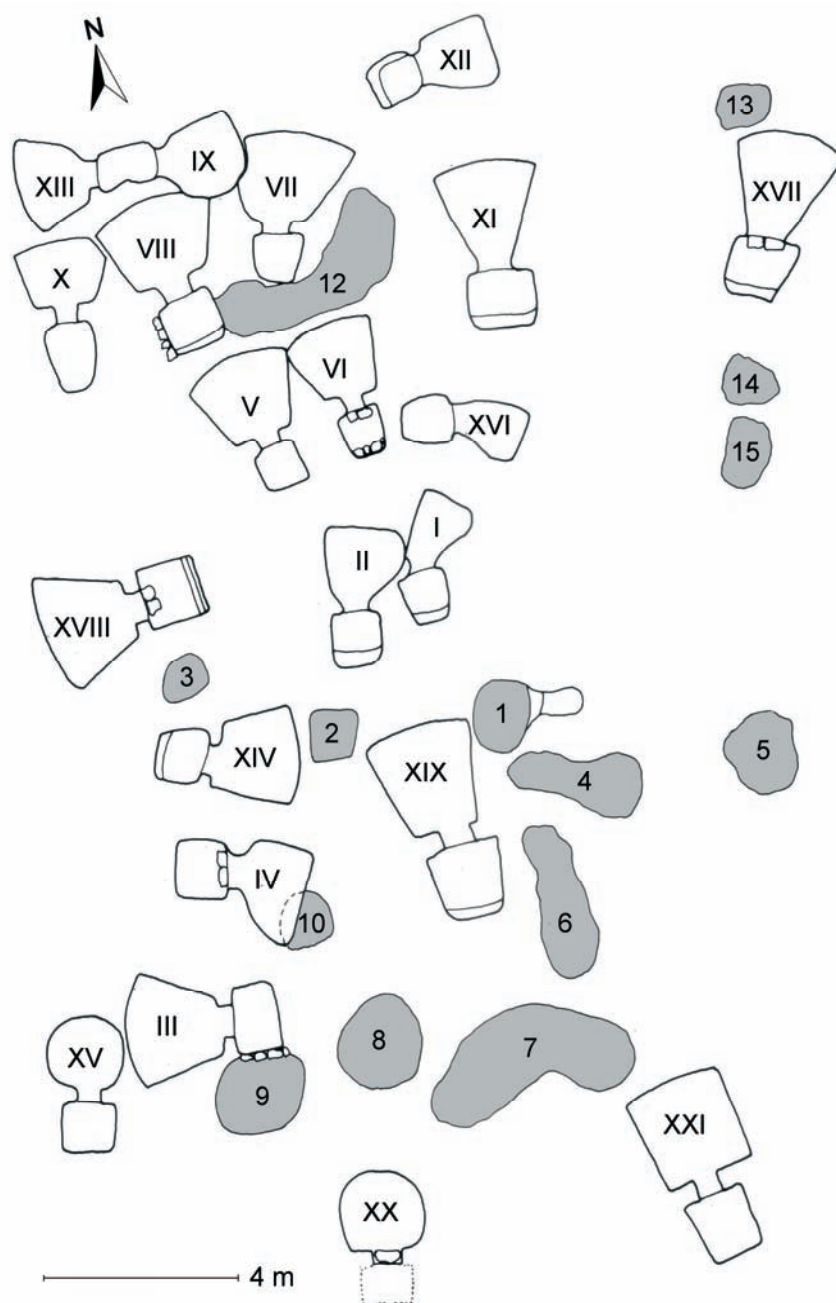


Figure 72. Manika. Beligianni plot with Early Helladic graves (I-XXI) and pit-ossuaries (1-15) (after Sampson 1985, fig. 51).

bones, etc. would also be a good indication of a primary burial, based on the supposition that these small bones would have been lost if the skeleton had been moved from another position to the one in which it was found. This second point has to do with the completeness of the skeleton, and this is one main point of concern when studying the osteological records published for most Early Helladic burial contexts.

The problem of deficient excavation reports is evident in this case. The Corinth grave excavated by Heermance and Lord at the very end of the 19th century, may serve as one example, which also gives evidence of a deceptive choice of words. Heermance and Lord gave a body count of three, while simultaneously commenting on the few fragments of bone remaining in the graves, making it impossible to conclude on “how they were disposed”.⁹⁹⁹ Thus, although the term ‘bodies’ is used, these do not seem to have been recognised as bodies, but gathered from fragments of bones found in the many vessels in the grave and possibly loose bones on the chamber floor (although only skulls are specifically mentioned). Another example is the Cheliotomylos well discussed above (*Chapter 7*), where the interpretation of the contexts rests on reading between the lines of a publication mainly concerned with the skulls in order to secure the number of burials, but less concerned with the rest of the bones and thus the condition of the human remains at the time of deposition.¹⁰⁰⁰

This is also a problem when considering the contexts from the first scenario above. I do not regard their designations as ossuaries as established from the available publications. In all three cases, I believe it to be more likely that primary burials did once exist, burials that have been disturbed during subsequent years. If, as suggested by Koumouzelis for the cave ossuary by Lake Vouliagmeni, water was responsible for the formation of the deposit, forcing the bones from the area of the entrance to lower ground; a body could have been similarly positioned by the cave entrance, later to be completely disarticulated by the same forces. A skeleton is easily disturbed (and no closing slab or the like is noted). Generally, these disturbances may be natural (including the intervention of various animals), *or* they may also be human and deliberate. Both seem to have played a part in the process in the cave at Perachora-Vouliagmeni, and a human presence and manipulation of the bones is clearly indicated. No order was discernable in the second Perachora-Vouliagmeni mortuary context, but again, natural and/or other factors may have been the cause for this. At Zygouries, I think it is likely that erosion on the sloping ground as well as later activity at the site played large parts in the lack of roofing over the graves, leaving the innermost part

⁹⁹⁹ Heermance & Lord 1897, 315f.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Waage 1949.

of the chambers covered by a ledge in only one case.¹⁰⁰¹ If there was a special entrance into the graves it is likely to have been down slope (in the manner of Mycenaean chamber tombs), and if a body was placed there it would have been easily disturbed. Furthermore, it is in cases like these, for example, that I believe a two stage ritual within the burial chamber would apply in parallel to similar contexts when an articulated skeleton is also present.

Often, however, although it is difficult to ascertain due to the fragmentary documentation and the extra emphasis on skulls,¹⁰⁰² there appears to be a discrepancy in the number of bones found and the number of individuals that can nevertheless be gathered from the osteological material. This was noted by Sampson for Manika, and partly explained by the pits mentioned above, but he also suggested occasional dismemberment or exposure, something that Sapouna-Sakellarakis thoroughly dismissed for the same site, arguing instead for natural causes.¹⁰⁰³ The natural preservation of human remains, or lack thereof, is certainly one very important aspect which should rightly not be underestimated, and which should have an accepted place in any consideration of burial records. The conditions for preservation are a complex sum of many individual factors, such as the type of soil or bedrock, the effect of water and animals, the type of grave, etc., the impact of which can be better evaluated when considered in relation to the actual osteological remains. As they may inform us of what we can expect, these conditions for preservation are also potentially very important for our understanding of the Early Hellenic mortuary context as a whole.

Keeping the potential effects of these factors in mind, the discrepancy in the number of bones in some chambers opens up some new possibilities for the handling of bones, practices that perhaps can be summarised as *preferential treatment* of some part of the skeleton, or of some bones. This is often considered to be the reason for stacking especially the skulls, and sometimes the long bones, within the grave chambers. The scenarios I will consider here, however, relate to practices of deliberate bone removal. In the above cases we have, although at either end of the time scale, well filled deposits of human bone. In this third case, the point of departure for interpretation is *the paucity of bones* found in the graves, and the practices for creation of these assemblages may be generalised into two scenarios:

- *The body was placed in a (unknown) primary burial location and moved as skeletal parts to secondary burial locations.*

¹⁰⁰¹ Due to the soft bedrock of the Ambelakia hill, Blegen does not rule out the possibility that all graves were partially covered by ledges, and that in two cases (VII and XVI) these had crumbled away (Blegen 1928, 54, n. 1).

¹⁰⁰² The extra emphasis on skulls is present in publications from Heermance & Lord's publication of the grave at Corinth (1897) to Pantelidou Gofa's publication of Tsepi (2005).

¹⁰⁰³ Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 18; Sampson 1985, 218f.; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987, 247f.

- *The body was primarily buried in a grave structure from which parts were later removed for secondary handling at other locations.*

Graves 10, 11, 12, 16 and 29 at Aghios Kosmas contained apparently grouped (often in the corners) but very few bones, possibly each group originally belonging to a single body, but, according to Mylonas, hardly making up a complete skeleton.¹⁰⁰⁴ The term ‘complete’ should not necessarily be interpreted as meaning ‘all bones of the body accounted for’, as Mylonas also used the term to refer to *articulated* skeletons, but from his description it would seem, nevertheless, that only parts of the skeleton were present and fragmented. Mylonas was puzzled by this paucity of bones and found that these contexts supported his conclusion of primary burial outside the grave and only secondary committal to the grave chamber at a time when the bones were already in skeletal form, the grave serving merely as an ossuary.¹⁰⁰⁵

If the bones piled in the corner formed more or less complete skeletons, they may thus be ossuaries of the type suggested by Mylonas and belong to the first type above, or the lack of articulated skeleton may mean an intraburial ritual had taken place. If actually fragmentary, we need to look for the location of the bones that are *not* in the chamber. There is always the possibility that bones may have naturally decomposed. Accidental loss of some bones may also be easily visualised for skeletons moved from one location to another, as may very well be the case for removal to nearby ossuaries, resulting in some bones of the removed skeletons still being randomly strewn over the primary burial chamber. However, if we are looking at clearly fragmentary skeletons, but nevertheless neatly clustered, which may be the case for the Aghios Kosmas examples, spatial considerations for the practice seem less likely.

Here, the understanding of the grave structure as either the primary or secondary burial location is crucial for continued interpretation. In both cases, however, a secondary mortuary ritual is clearly indicated, marking the end of the period for the decomposition of the body and the beginning of a secondary ‘use’ somewhere other than the primary burial location. If the grave was the primary burial location, we need to look for loose bones circulating inside as well as outside the mortuary area.¹⁰⁰⁶ On the other hand, if the grave is interpreted as the secondary burial location, we need to consider the whereabouts of the primary burial.

One possible secondary context for the use of bones would be the settlements. It is uncertain to what degree single pieces of human bone would be

¹⁰⁰⁴ Mylonas 1959, 90–93, 95f., 105.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Mylonas 1959, 118f.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See e.g. Branigan (1987; 1998, 25), for discussions of bone removal in Early Minoan contexts.

especially noted, or even at all, if found within the area of a settlement, in contrast to the ones found in a known cemetery area. Bones within settlements are of course frequently noted, but often in the form of ‘burials’, i.e. concentrations of a larger number of the bones of a skeleton. Burials of partial disarticulated skeletons, in parallel with burial of complete articulated skeletons, have been recorded for Neolithic Bulgaria.¹⁰⁰⁷ Single bones may of course be, and surely often are, the remains of disturbed graves. During an extended period of occupation and continuous building activity this will happen. In these cases the bones will not be further cared for, their initial meaning lost, and they will be found without context. I cannot but wonder, however, if the odd number of bones found stacked, but unharmed, by a pithos in House B, at Early Helladic Berbati, ever comprised a full skeleton in the context it was found.¹⁰⁰⁸

Exposure was suggested by Sampson to explain the discrepancies he found in the number of bones in some graves at Manika, and this is certainly a possibility for a primary context that would produce fragmentary bone assemblages in a secondary context. The missing bones may have been lost through the activities of animals on the less protected body, or the secondary deposition may have been considered merely symbolical. The extended skeleton in a shallow pit at Aghios Kosmas, as well as the single disturbed skeletons by Graves 3 and 14, are instances of practices that would have left no traces in the archaeological record under less fortunate circumstances.

Variations in tradition—variation as differentiation?

There are grounds for arguing for considerable variation within the Early Helladic mortuary sphere. Nor do any of the practices considered in this last section take into account the individuals for whom no bones ever find their way into archaeologically recognisable mortuary contexts (see *Chapter 8*). The Early Helladic mortuary record is open to many interpretations. One important contributory cause for this is the lack of careful osteological reporting. I would like to see more discussions regarding the formation processes of each grave context, with the aim of reaching a better understanding of the Early Helladic mortuary context, and of society as a whole. Only careful osteological analyses will, however, give us the basis we need to further these discussions.¹⁰⁰⁹ Especially important would be a better understanding of the completeness (not articulation, although this in itself is also interesting for the handling of bones within each grave) of the skeletons found in the graves, and to what degree any inconsistencies may be due to natural causes

¹⁰⁰⁷ Chapman 1994, 59–61.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Säflund 1965, 109, fig. 89, 110f., 123f.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Cf. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987, 247.

or human intervention. If the bones often proved to have been deliberately manipulated, we also would need to reanalyse our understanding of primary and secondary contexts for bones, as well as the position of the grave goods in relation to their respective context.

Nevertheless, although much still needs to remain on the hypothetical level, I believe it is important to consider the variation within the Early Helladic mortuary sphere a little further. Consideration is needed of the meaning this variation may have had for the Early Helladic people, and what role it could have played within their communities. These grounds for variation lie both in the mortuary contexts we do not have at our disposal, and in what can be gathered from the mortuary contexts we do have available. I have called, above, for more awareness in the use of the term ossuary, based on the practices that are suggested by each individual context, and emphasising these practices. I have also suggested a way in which the rearrangement of the bones in a grave prior to a new burial can be separated in time, but most importantly in intent, from that of the new burial. In this proposed scenario the rearrangement of bones receives a status of its own, instead of being a neutral and carelessly performed act necessitated by the need for free space. Whether performed fully or only partly within the mortuary sphere as we recognise it today, the possibility of secondary burial rituals brings an extra dimension to the study of mortuary behaviour and its societal roles.

First of all, if we are to consider secondary burial locations and secondary mortuary rituals, we need to take into account the time required for the decomposition of the flesh. This may be a very slow process in which the bare bones could not be handled until after a considerably extended time. Complete skeletonisation may not have been necessary for the practices to be enacted, but, even so, several years should be allowed for the intermediate time period. As a comparison, five to seven years was customary in a modern Greek case-study for the time between burial and exhumation, even if the time was sometimes shortened to three years. At this time, the skeleton of the deceased was removed from its grave and cleaned, after which the remains were transferred to a communal ossuary or reburied in the same grave.¹⁰¹⁰ Many factors will affect the rate of decomposition, such as the temperature and humidity in the grave atmosphere, type of grave structure, and the presence of containers and wrappings.¹⁰¹¹ For the Early Helladic examples, there is no evidence of any containers used for the body, and the graves were relatively shallow. The graves at Aghios Kosmas, at least, lay close to water, and a high humidity may very well have affected the speed of decomposition. Nevertheless, we should allow for at least a couple of years, even in these built grave structures.

¹⁰¹⁰ Danforth & Tsiaras 1982, 57.

¹⁰¹¹ Mant 1987; Nilsson Stutz 2003, 144–147.

Furthermore, that a two stage ritual was practised within some cemeteries or within some graves does not mean that it was a ritual embraced by all. Nor must ossuaries be the only alternative. The Early Helladic burial data is complex and has room for many and varying traditions within and between contexts. The survey above does not pretend to exhaust the possibilities of ways of handling the bones, nor the degree of variation in which they were used and where.¹⁰¹² One example from Aghios Kosmas serves especially well to demonstrate this point: within Grave 1, two skeletons were found, apparently primary burials, articulated enough to conclude that they were positioned back to back (one facing north to the back of the tomb; the other facing south towards the entrance). In the SE corner of the grave, remains of three more skulls were found, but as Mylonas in this case explicitly states “no other bones were found”.¹⁰¹³ Thus, the grave gave evidence of two primary burials and three probably secondarily deposited skulls (it could also be a matter of bone removal, but that would more likely have resulted in the presence of more bones than just the skulls). This goes to show that we cannot even be sure that different ways of ‘handling’ were not practised within one discrete grave, let alone within one cemetery, as Mylonas also suggested.

Meredith Chesson has argued interestingly for the potential that rests in both primary and secondary mortuary ritual to “reweave the texture of everyday life which has been interrupted by death”.¹⁰¹⁴ In her case-study of the charnel houses (i.e. ossuaries) of Early Bronze Age Jordan, she emphasised in particular the secondary mortuary rituals as being practices with a greater potential of reaching a greater number of people, and thus being a more forceful context for the negotiation of social values. In relation to the primary mortuary rituals closely connected in time with the death, the secondary mortuary rituals had the benefit of dissociation in time as well as initial emotion. Time would allow the planning needed to fully realise the potential of secondary mortuary rituals for re-establishing the bonds among the individuals using each charnel house. Time would also allow the focus to shift from more immediate grief to the social aspects of the funerary ritual.¹⁰¹⁵ The charnel houses were secondary mortuary contexts, used during extended periods of time and containing a lot of bones, probably once arranged on wooden shelves along the walls of the house.¹⁰¹⁶ Chesson interpreted the

¹⁰¹² Cf. the discussion by Branigan (1987) for the varying treatments, interferences and manipulation, of bones suggested by the material in the Mesara tholoi: clearance of buried remains to dumps, fumigation of bones or entire tomb contents, selected grouping of bones, selected removal of bones, the breaking or chopping of selected bones (illustrated in Branigan 1987, table 1).

¹⁰¹³ Mylonas 1959, 72. An osteologist identified the articulated skeletons as an approximately 14 year old boy, and a woman.

¹⁰¹⁴ Chesson 1998, 137 (citation).

¹⁰¹⁵ Chesson 1998, 142, 153f.

¹⁰¹⁶ Chesson 1998, 150–153, fig. 5.

houses as kinship based,¹⁰¹⁷ and emphasised the possibility of the order and content symbolising both social cohesion and differentiation within and between individual houses.¹⁰¹⁸ The EB II–III charnel houses of Bab edh-Dhra' are interpreted as body libraries that find their place and grounding in the urban lifestyle that characterises this period and differentiates it from those before and after, both in terms of social organisation and type of tomb structures.¹⁰¹⁹

In tomb type, the charnel houses have more in common with, for example, the House tombs and tholoi of Early Minoan Crete, being relatively large and located above ground. In both these latter cases, however, it appears that the structures were both primary and secondary burial contexts,¹⁰²⁰ as many of the Early Helladic cases clearly were also. Nevertheless, in all cases the number of bones indicates some kind of affinity among a group of people utilising each grave over a more or less extended time period. Therefore, the potential of the secondary mortuary ritual would be same or similar in all contexts. The secondary ritual may have been the occasion at which the bones of the dead were actually first introduced into the mortuary sphere of the cemeteries as we know them. In this connection, there is the division of the mortuary ritual, commonly cited since Arthur van Gennep, into an initial, liminal and final state, their separation marked by rites of separation, transition and incorporation.¹⁰²¹ In the Early Helladic context, as in many other cultures and times, these ritual stages may have been connected with the time between death and primary burial, the time of the decomposition of the human body, and subsequent handling of the bones. The presence of secondary mortuary ritual widens and enhances the potential for a visual display of differentiation within a society, as it multiplies the opportunities for it.

The differentiation need not be one related to social status following a hierarchical model based on social status, but instead, as I like to see it, be regarded as an opportunity to visualise the structure of a community or settlement. Hierarchical considerations may play one part. The rituals may also be seen as displays of an individuality of the deceased or the smaller group around the deceased, just as they can be seen as displays of communality. The choice of the type of ritual may reflect gender, age, occupation, origin, or personal preferences among many things. The choice may or may not be grounded in community based traditions, and may therefore reflect affinity or dissociation. The potential lies in the choice of ritual, the timing of the ritual, the place for the ritual and the elaboration of the ritual.

¹⁰¹⁷ Chesson 1998, 155.

¹⁰¹⁸ Chesson 1998, esp. 155–159.

¹⁰¹⁹ Chesson 1998, see pp. 161f. for a summary of the argument.

¹⁰²⁰ E.g. Soles 1992, 244; Murphy 1998, 34f. The whereabouts of the primary burial contexts in the case of Bab edh-Dhra' is not considered by Chesson.

¹⁰²¹ van Gennep 1960; Danforth & Tsiras 1982, 35–56; Murphy 1998, 32–35.

We have seen it in the odd instances of intramural burials in a society where most burials were located outside the settled areas, we have seen it in the varying treatment of children in burial contexts, and it is indicated by the many possibilities for secondary burial rituals that still lie unconfirmed in the Early Helladic osteological record.

In *Chapter 8*, I considered that the inclusion of individual burials in the sphere of formal cemeteries and clusters of graves, could in itself be an act of differentiation. Also considered was that the complete dominance of built graves below ground may only be a matter of preservation, other practices, perhaps above ground, would have left few traces. Another type of differentiation is provided by the instances when a multiply-used grave was not opened for the interment of a new body. Graves 3 and 14 at Aghios Kosmas seem to be evidence of that, as are the children's graves by the side of the principal grave. Could it also be that these burials were not at a later time destined for the reburial within a grave chamber suggested by Mylonas, but instead represent the odd preservation of a less durable practice, namely burial above ground?¹⁰²² Another instance is the probable secondary interment of two children found in an amphora by the head of an adult (female) skeleton in Grave 134 at Manika (*Fig. 73*).¹⁰²³ This specific case illustrates not only the presence of special rituals for children, but also a possibly meaningful connection between the children and the female (with importance for the vertical aspect of kinship).

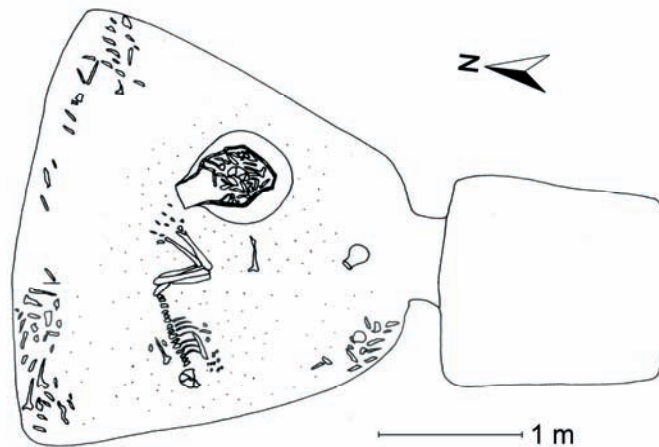


Figure 73. Manika. Grave 134 with the adult primary burial and two probably secondary burials in the hydria (after Sampson 1988a, fig. 39)

¹⁰²² In reference to an interpretive proposition presented by Broodbank (2000, 225–230, for an above ground type of grave: esp. 229) for the so called ‘Sacred deposit’ at Daskaleio-Kavos, in favour of it being a cemetery and not, as it has been also interpreted, as a pan-Cycladic sanctuary.

¹⁰²³ Sampson 1988a, 28, fig. 39; Alram-Stern 2004, 710.

The example sheds further light on post-burial practices of the handling of bones, presenting the possibility that these children were originally buried or kept at another location (within the grave, in the settlement, in another grave, somewhere completely different, above or below ground).

In the ways in which the bodies of the new dead and the bones of older dead were handled lay the potential for statements to be made, feelings to be shown, ideals that could be presented, and traditions to be followed or broken with. As the grave was opened, bits and pieces of these past thoughts and practices would still have been visible. In this also lies a potentially powerful reminder of the passage of time. The individuality of one past dead could also have been identified in the still recognisable leather pouch, and the rituals preceding the burial perhaps in the piece of obsidian. As we now return to the story after a particularly long consideration of the possibilities regarding the handling of the bones, the focus will be on those rituals, the practices in the cemetery, at the time of the initial burial when the recently living body of the woman is still very much present, and a vital part of the proceedings. After a view of the inside of the grave we continue with what happened:

At the same time, outside the grave, another person takes out a small piece of reworked sheep bone. From a pouch around her neck she takes out a small reddish lump and grinds it into a powder on the bone tablet with a piece of stone. She then pours the powder into a bowl with water and stirs. With her coloured fingers she marks the faces of the onlookers, and then the dead, on the forehead, the cheeks and the hands, while she sings. Thereafter, they carry the body the last steps to the narrow opening, and into the waiting arms of the person inside the chamber. Carefully, he places her on her side, facing the opening, still on the hides, on the cleared pebble floor. She is placed in a crouching position, as the cramped space makes necessary and her stiffening body permits. Her hands are moved against her face, and her head is placed on a headrest of stone. She looks like she is sleeping. By her side they place the small jar and the leaf bundle. In the grave they also place the red coloured bone piece and the pestle. On her body they place a slender branch from a nearby tree, some flowers and straws of grain.

Burials as sensory experiences

In this part of the story we return to ‘real time’ after a visit above that also included practices that would have taken place several years after the initial burial, wherever this primary resting place was. In ‘real time’, all stages of

the mortuary ritual would have been complemented, and the experience of them enhanced, by the smells, the tastes, and the sights. We may think of them as familiar but at the same time special, as the practices were familiar but at the same time set apart, both spatially and temporally (allowing for a special ritual time), from daily routine.¹⁰²⁴

In the story, a woman sings while preparing the pigment, as a brief reminder of the practices of which we have no traces, but may have been a vital part in many stages of the Early Helladic burial ritual. Were the participants singing, dancing or playing instruments? They may have been. There is the famous Early Minoan terracotta group figurine from the Kamilari tholos tomb in southern Crete where four figures are joined in a ring dance. We have also the even more famous EC marble harpists, and the likenesses of harps depicted on a seal found at Lerna.¹⁰²⁵ Large triton shells may have been used as instruments.¹⁰²⁶ A triton shell was recovered from the old floor between Graves 13 and 14 at Tsepi, one sea shell (conch) from a child grave, Grave 15, and a conch shell (*tonna galea*) from the chamber of Grave 12 of the same cemetery.¹⁰²⁷ No information, however, is given regarding possible human alteration of them. We may also hypothesise percussion instruments and rattles, comprised, for example, of stones and sticks, as well as clapping and shouting to make up other parts of the sound effects of the rituals. Were there many outwards signs of mourning and perhaps special mourning gestures?¹⁰²⁸ Perhaps. It is likely, at least, that these Early Helladic burial rituals were far from the solemn and formal affairs of the kind I myself have attended. The sensory experience of participants of the burial rituals should not be underestimated, ranging from the smell at the opening of the grave, and lingering perhaps through the ritual, the scent of burning incense,¹⁰²⁹ the movement and voices of the participants, singing, dancing, the stories told, laughter, crying, the touch of the pigment-smeared fingers, the feel of the body as it is carried to the grave, the taste and smell of the food and drink.

Experiences like these, of the body and of the mind, would have been crucial for forming not only the scene of ritual, but also for the memories of this act, and of the person for whom it was enacted.¹⁰³⁰ The performing of the act will not only shape future memories; it will also conjure up the memory of past acts and position the present act in a series of past acts and the new

¹⁰²⁴ See Hamilakis 1998, 118f., for the concepts of a special temporality and spatial consideration in relation to cemeteries, with references to Foucault's writings (including the concepts of heterochronies and heterotopias).

¹⁰²⁵ Heath 1958, seal design S56; Younger 1998.

¹⁰²⁶ E.g. Renfrew 1985, 327; Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004, 146.

¹⁰²⁷ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 96f. (no. 12.5), 103f., 110f.

¹⁰²⁸ Cf. Cavanagh 1998, 105f.

¹⁰²⁹ Mylonas (1959, 120) suggested incense burning as an explanation for what was interpreted as patches of smoke commonly noted on the inside as well as outside of vessels from Aghios Kosmas.

¹⁰³⁰ Hamilakis 1998; 2004, esp. 145f.

dead in a series with past dead. Consequently, any part of the practices related to the death of an individual in a society has the potential of being meaningful for the constitution of its present, and to be a reminder also of things past, whether it was the life of an individual or the history of the greater group. To what degree, if at all, these questions were reflected upon or made use of is likely to have shifted. Throughout the rituals, however, the newly dead, the reason for the rituals, would have been lingering at the edge, or more often at the very centre of attention.

At the actual time of burial, the newly dead herself, in this case the 35 year old woman, would have been distinctly present, with her presence also directing the practices. I believe it is even possible that she was considered an active participant in the rituals, not merely the recipient of them. I have already considered the potential of graves with views, and I will propose here that the potential of a view from the grave, the potential of the dead looking out from the grave, may have been meaningfully incorporated into the burial ritual. As I have reconstructed the sequence of this specific burial in the story, it is divided into two parts: (1) a first part when the body of the woman is still outside the grave, concluding with the placement of the dead in the chamber; and (2) a second part comprising the practices outside the still open grave after the body of the woman has been placed in the chamber. In the first, the woman would still be at the centre of attention, in the second she may be considered more of an observer, but possibly also a participant.

The active dead?

The position of the body in the grave was clearly a practice with a basis in local custom. Of the 38 graves (including six side-burials) at Aghios Kosmas North Cemetery, the placement of the body could be recorded in seven cases, and the result is that five were placed on their left side and two on their right (in case of Grave 1, two bodies were placed back to back and the first placement could have influenced the second).¹⁰³¹ No clear preference can be gathered from these data, but a placement on the left side is nevertheless predominant. At Tsepi, on the other hand, the preference is very distinctly for a placement of the body, in a contracted position, on its right side, in front of the entrance, and usually facing it.¹⁰³² Whether this has a wider significance or not will be a matter for the future, and for a wider basis of reference, but for the mortuary ritual it may have been significant.¹⁰³³ The

¹⁰³¹ Mylonas 1959, 72 (grave 1), 83 (grave 6), 85 (grave 7), 87f. (grave 8), 94 (grave 15), 100 (grave 22). Five of the skeletons (Graves 1, 7, 8, 15, 22) appear to have been facing the doorway/entrance side of the grave.

¹⁰³² Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 355.

¹⁰³³ Cf. Broodbank 2000, 319: a preference for a burial on the left side in the northern Cyclades, within the corbelled graves of Syros, and on the right side in the southern Cyclades.

position of the body may, as discussed above, be partly due to the circumstances surrounding the deposition of the body in the grave. So, at Tsepi, where the graves appear to have been accessed through the narrow passage, the new dead were placed just inside the doorway, while at Aghios Kosmas the pattern is rather for a placement away from the doorway, and the bodies were most likely lowered through the roof. At Manika also, many bodies were deposited towards the back of the tomb, either facing the wall or the entrance.¹⁰³⁴ In this case there would have been some more room for moving around in the grave, and the placement in these graves may be a reflection of this fact.

But, even if the doorways were not used at Aghios Kosmas, it seems to be indicated that, when applicable, the prothyra and doorways were nevertheless cleared (if they were filled in), and the slabs of the doorway removed to leave it open. That slabs were used for sealing the doorway, even in the smallest graves with minute openings, is suggestive in itself of a ritual importance of the doorway as a part of the burial ritual. It is not conclusive, however, since the closing slab could have been put in place only in keeping with the model of chamber–doorway–prothyron that was evidently followed, and remained so through its use phase; any ‘use’ may have been merely symbolical. A single-handled cup, placed, upside-down, below the lintel of the doorway (in this case reasonably sized, 0.54 x 0.38 m) of Grave 5,¹⁰³⁵ however, may be brought up as a positive indication of an actual opening of the doorway during burial. This single-handled cup is the *only* instance of a cup of this kind (1 of 30), found within the graves at Aghios Kosmas.¹⁰³⁶

Quite in contrast with the custom at Tsepi and Manika, and prehistoric Aegean contexts in general, the large majority of the objects found in the contexts of the graves at Aghios Kosmas were found *outside* the grave.¹⁰³⁷ I think the placement of pottery and other objects close to the edge of the graves at Aghios Kosmas,¹⁰³⁸ should be regarded as an illustration of a wish for communication with the new dead in the arguably still open grave. Mylonas also suggested that the careful arrangement of *in situ* vessels found by Grave 3 (*Fig. 75*), and in the special area north of Graves 25 and 30, *Fig.*

For a preference of placing the women on their left side and the men on their right, see Rupenstein, forthcoming.

¹⁰³⁴ From the illustrations of the Beligianni graves (Sampson 1985), the preferred position was clearly towards the back of the tomb, and usually facing the entrance (M4, M11, M12, M13, M16, M17, M19 with two skeletons, and M20), with one example instead facing the wall (M5). Of the three articulated skeletons among the Georgiou plot graves, however, all appear to be facing the back wall (G2, two skeletons, and G7).

¹⁰³⁵ Mylonas 1959, 81.

¹⁰³⁶ See further below, *this chapter*, section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

¹⁰³⁷ Mylonas 1959, 119f. for a discussion on the placement of finds.

¹⁰³⁸ Mylonas 1959, e.g. gr. 3, pp. 74f.; gr. 5, p. 81; gr. 8, p. 88.

79), were not “isolated phenomena but rather lucky survivals which illustrate a prevalent practice”.¹⁰³⁹

“A great quantity” of sherds was also found in the area of the graves, in the vicinity of most graves, apart from the more or less complete or restorable vessels listed in the catalogue of the publication.¹⁰⁴⁰ This special practice, however, is only suggested by the material from Aghios Kosmas, while at Tsepi and Manika, the great majority of objects have been found within the tomb.¹⁰⁴¹ It may thus be that the preference for placement of goods outside the grave was a local preference, one of a series of variations that can be attributed to this particular site. As we shall see later, however, neither at Manika nor at Tsepi are the areas outside the graves completely devoid of finds, and there is evidence for ‘outdoor’ practices in these two cemeteries also.

In the Early Helladic period there are no indications of the shaft or *dromos* being used for ritual purposes as is often the case in Mycenaean chamber and tholos tombs.¹⁰⁴² I would like to propose, however, that the *dromos*, prothyron and/or shaft, whether used or not, may nevertheless have been regarded as a liminal area between the outside world of the living, and the chamber as the resting place of the bodies (at least) of the dead.¹⁰⁴³ Furthermore, I believe that a practice of having the grave open throughout the burial rituals could have been a measure to uphold a still active connection between the inside and the outside of the grave, between the newly interred dead (and perhaps the collective old dead) and the activities on the outside. The closing of the door slab and/or the repositioning of the roof slabs would represent the severance of that connection and the natural conclusion of the rituals.

The favoured placement at Tsepi of the bodies just inside the doorway *and* facing it, in connection with a deposition practice that called for the actual use of the passage and doorway, seems to act as a confirmation of this bond (at this particular site). At Aghios Kosmas, the majority of the few articulated skeletons were facing the doorway, although from a ‘distance’, but the fact that the passages and doorways *were* there although not used, seems to indicate their symbolical importance in combination with the open shaft of the chamber itself. Finally, at Manika the articulated burials are very few in relation to the excavated number of graves at this site. As at Tsepi, however, the use of the prothyron for introducing the newly dead into the chamber would call for it to remain open throughout the ritual. Remains of

¹⁰³⁹ Mylonas 1959, 119.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Mylonas 1959, e.g. 67, 113, 119. Mylonas noted also (67, 119) the shallow soil protection at the site and the likelihood that what was found was only a fraction of what was at one time deposited in the area of the cemetery.

¹⁰⁴¹ See further below, *this chapter*, section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

¹⁰⁴² E.g. the suggested smashing of drinking vessels by the entrances to tombs, as a final act of regional importance for the mortuary ritual, see e.g. Cavanagh 1998, 106f.; or as a Late Helladic rite of passage before entering the chamber, see Hamilakis 1998, 122, with references.

¹⁰⁴³ Voutsaki 1998, 45.

small animals and traces of fire outside a grave in the Beligianni plot, has been put forward as perhaps indicating a grave meal outside the grave.¹⁰⁴⁴ None of these instances from the best known cemeteries can conclusively confirm an Early Helladic custom (whether local or general) of the newly dead as active participants in the burial ritual, nor can they confirm a belief in the dromos, prothyron or shaft as a channel as between two ‘worlds’, but they certainly leave the question open to further discussion.¹⁰⁴⁵

Finally, it should also be noted that the rituals around the burials should not be seen as static. It seems that the rituals connected with the use of the grave are as likely to change and develop during time, as we have seen that the grave construction did, at least at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas. In fact, the changes we can see in the development of doorway and prothyron, may very well be the visible traces of a development in ritual that instigated these changes. If the evidence should be read in this way, the developed tomb construction that moved the tombs closer to the chamber tomb type, may signify an elaboration and heightened visibility of the graves and rituals, especially as the second step at Tsepi included both the *orthostate* markers and the substantial superstructures that will be considered further below (section on *The individual and the group*).

Read(y)ing the body

Rituals directed at the final appearance of the newly dead body may have taken place both at the very point of death (washing, clothing, etc.), but could also have been extended to the cemetery at the time of burial. Furthermore, in contrast to the suggestion for the Early Minoan tholos tombs of a hierarchical and regulated access to different parts of the ritual, allowing only a select group access to the tholos chamber itself,¹⁰⁴⁶ I propose that all rituals in connection with the small Early Helladic tombs must have taken place in full view, *outside* the tombs. That does not, by extension, mean that the rituals were open to all, but it means that if we consider a readying of the dead in the mortuary context, it will have to have been carried out before the dead was placed in the grave, and this, in turn, would support a two part division of the rituals as illustrated in the story.

In the consideration above of the relative popularity of grave goods, no qualification was made as to their role in the burial, i.e. if they were somehow used in the ceremonies in connection with their deposition. Here, and below, therefore, suggestions will be made as to their possible roles in dif-

¹⁰⁴⁴ Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 248; Alram-Stern 2004, 305.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Wells 1990, 133, discussing the tomb construction as meaningful in the Mycenaean period.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Murphy 1998, 37.

ferent stages of the funeral ritual. As we have seen above, *pigments*, or rather objects connected with the grinding of pigments, are generally found in the graves of Attica and Euboea. In some cases both palettes and pestles have been recognised as still showing traces of red or blue pigment on their surfaces. The heightened interest for body ornamentation and modification, and, for example, tattooing in the early EBA, including, as argued above, Attica and Euboea also, may very well have been extended to the burial ritual and also to the body after death.¹⁰⁴⁷ In this case, I have suggested that we should imagine the application of facial paint, perhaps in the manner of the traces of paint still recognisable on some Cycladic figurines (*Fig. 74*),¹⁰⁴⁸ on the living participants but, also, and perhaps most importantly, on the dead for whom the burial rituals were enacted. There are many anthropological parallels for the visual presentation of grief by use of colorants, but the application of paint in the present scenario does not need to include the visual display of grief, or at least not primarily, but could rather perhaps be a way of readying all participants for the transitional rituals of the burial.¹⁰⁴⁹

Certainly this group of objects does not appear in all tombs, which may seem to counter their use in the burial ritual in the way it is visualised in the story, even though the story does not suggest a general practice.¹⁰⁵⁰ The few bone tubes and other pigment containers, as well as the marble palettes, may have been ‘prestige’ objects not available to all, and instead, as Sampson has suggested, illustrate the use of pigments among a limited group of people in the settlements. That they were used in the settlements, however, does not preclude their use in the mortuary context as well. Apart from the common inclusion of this equipment among the grave goods, the traces of colour still detectable at excavation at both Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi may perhaps indicate that the items were used shortly prior to their deposition. Especially noteworthy, however, are the traces of red colour found at Aghios Kosmas in two single-handled cups, a shape not normally connected with pigments. The cups were among the 47 vessels (46 single-handled cups and one phiale) excavated in the so-called Area V at Aghios Kosmas. The vessels were found closely packed and held together by pebbles laid among the vessels as wedges.¹⁰⁵¹

¹⁰⁴⁷ Cf. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987, 251; Early Cycladic period: Carter 1999, e.g. 158; Early Minoan period: Murphy 1998, 33.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Faint traces of red paint were also detected on the face of figurine no. 4 at Aghios Kosmas (Mylonas 1959, 84).

¹⁰⁴⁹ Contra Murphy (1998) who envisaged that the “pigment may have been applied to the mourners to reflect their inner turmoil and distress” (p. 33).

¹⁰⁵⁰ Sampson 1987, 23.

¹⁰⁵¹ Mylonas 1959, 106–111. See further, *this chapter*, section on *Eating and drinking by the graves*.

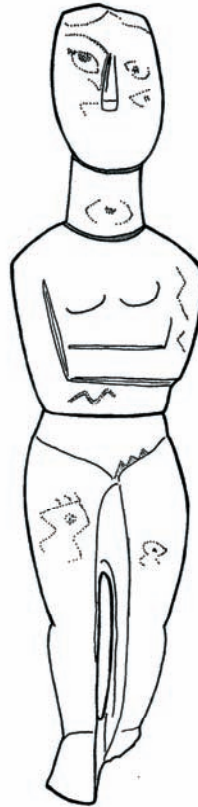


Figure 74. Painted patterns on an Early Cycladic figurine (height 54.5 cm) from Keros, Kavos (Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora 4691) (after Hendrix 2003a, fig. 1, courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

If we accept the use of red and blue pigment in mortuary contexts, we may also imagine the use of other pigments and other tools for their use (such as the two single-handled cups), which may not have left as many traces in the archaeological record. Apart from the special purpose tools for the grinding of pigment, we can envisage leather pouches for the keeping of the pigments, and also other non-specific objects for the preparation of the pigment, in durable or perishable material, which could suggest a wider use of pigment than the single bone tube, incised miniature jar or stone palette would seem to indicate. The Tsepi bone palettes may be an example of this, manufactured in a material much more easily worked and procured than the marble and stone palettes more often used in the contemporary EBA Cyclades. Another possible material is of course wood, which would have left no traces in the Aegean climate. If all the vessels from Area V at Aghios Kosmas were deposited at one time, we can reconstruct a large gathering of people, drinking and/or eating from the cups and using two of them for the preparation of

the colour for ceremonial body painting and tattooing in relation to a burial ritual.

Obsidian use in mortuary contexts

Obsidian blades, as we have seen, have recently been connected with the group of implements used for bodily adornment, and the use of obsidian may hint at practices possibly at home in the context of readying the body. It is a material that is ubiquitous in most contexts considered in this book, domestic, mortuary and survey data. This common appearance has probably caused the blades to be generally excluded from the consideration of ‘Cycladica’ in mortuary contexts, where Carter would like to see them included in the future.¹⁰⁵² In the context of a long history of obsidian handling in the present study area, however, categorising them as exotica does not seem to be enough to explain their common presence.

Table 8. *Obsidian in the graves of the eight cemeteries included in Table 7.*¹⁰⁵³

OBSIDIAN	Tsepi	Aghios Kosmas	Manika	Perachora-Vouliagmeni	Kalamaki	Zygouries	Corinth	Cheliotomylos
core	-	7+	3	-	-	-	-	-
blade	14	124+	41	-	-	1	-	13
flake/chips	5	421+	16	-	-	-	-	-
obsidian	-	-	31	-	-	2	-	1
tool	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 8 lists the finds of obsidian in relation to the graves also analysed above (for the relative popularity of this material, see *Fig. 60*). In most Early Helladic mortuary contexts, the obsidian pieces are decidedly fewer than the number of internees, if taken over the cemetery as a whole. At Aghios Kosmas, however: “Obsidian chips and blades were found around every grave, wherever the original fill had been preserved.”¹⁰⁵⁴ The number of blades, cores and chips amount to 124, 7, and 421 respectively, and that includes only the counted pieces from ten graves. In a two-square-metre area by Grave 3, 94 blades and 200 chips were counted, and an incised pyxis among the many vases found in this area was filled with an uncounted number of them. The obsidian pieces were found around the vases as well as in the thin layer of earth covering them.¹⁰⁵⁵ Seven cores found more generally in the

¹⁰⁵² Carter 1998, 61, 63; 1999.

¹⁰⁵³ The presence of obsidian in the graves was noted in the publication of the Lithares graves, but no numbers were given and they were not put in context with the masses of obsidian found in the settlement (Spyropoulos 1969a, 41). The excavation of the settlement was also only just beginning at the time of this publication.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Mylonas 1959, 119.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Mylonas 1959, 78.

cemetery are also especially noteworthy in relation to the three cores that were found in the nearby settlement.¹⁰⁵⁶ In addition, a number of obsidian objects were connected with the extended skeleton found in the shallow pit north of Graves 25 and 30. This exceptional skeleton was equipped with a broken obsidian core wedged under the right elbow, a blade resting against the upper part of the right thigh bone, and ten blades and chips were found by the left ankle.¹⁰⁵⁷ Furthermore, in Area O, the excavation revealed an obsidian core surrounded by a total of some 89 blades and chips, some of which could be refitted to the core.¹⁰⁵⁸

How should we explain this special case of mortuary handling of obsidian? Tristan Carter has written extensively on obsidian within Aegean societies, and has also studied the specifics of obsidian objects found in mortuary contexts.¹⁰⁵⁹ He has argued especially for the significance of the ‘necrolithic’, in relation to burial ritual—a craft specific to the production and consumption of fine obsidian blades, extra long and especially fine blades within the mortuary sphere, originating in the EB I Cyclades and spreading to Attica, Euboea, northern Crete and Caria, Western Anatolia by late EB I.¹⁰⁶⁰ Unused pressure-flaked blades also dominated the limited amount of obsidian found in Mesara tholoi contexts, although in length they could not compete with their Cycladic counterparts. Carter concluded for the Early Minoan tholoi contexts that the blades were most likely imported as such from northern Crete (as very few cores and chips were found, and surveys have shown little distribution of obsidian in the Mesara area) by people aware of the Cycladic mortuary habits in connection with these blades, but not their “necrotaphic-specific technology” for manufacturing extra long blades (Carter suggests instead a obsidian technological *koine* covering domestic and funerary contexts of EBA central and southern Crete).¹⁰⁶¹

Analysing the obsidian from Manika, Carter noted a frequency of unused blades that were considerably longer than the blades from the settlement, a situation that better fitted the custom in the Cyclades of over-long pressure-flaked blades in mortuary contexts than that of the Mesara. Simultaneously there was a deposition of a large number of obsidian flakes, which, he argued, could have been (unknowingly) deposited during the building or filling in of the graves.¹⁰⁶² I believe Carter makes a very good point in emphasising the varying values that obsidian may have had in the EBA Aegean contexts.

¹⁰⁵⁶ The only cores from this settlement come from an early bothros (three examples, dating to Aghios Kosmas A, or earlier) (Mylonas 1959, 17f.).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Mylonas 1959, 107.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Mylonas 1959, 106, 112.

¹⁰⁵⁹ E.g. Carter 1998; Carter 1999, esp. ch. 7, pp. 152–185. The term ‘necrotaphic’ is used in the 1998 article, while ‘necrolithic’ is exclusively used in the 1999 dissertation.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Carter 1998, 61f.

¹⁰⁶¹ Carter 1998, esp. 71–74; also Carter 1999, 201–213.

¹⁰⁶² Sampson 1985, e.g. 166, Beligianni tomb 7, in whose dromos many flakes and blades of obsidian were found; Carter 1999, 261–288.

In addition, however, I do not think that an explanation for the many flakes found in the Manika cemetery need necessarily stop with their practical use, but could also illustrate the possibility of their actual production in this context.

Carter argues interestingly for a scenario where not only the extra long blades themselves, but also the actual practice of knapping them, are a prestigious part of primarily the Cycladic mortuary ritual.¹⁰⁶³ He presents the technique needed to create the special blades as a much more visual act, and a potential performance to a greater degree than the knapping technique needed for more normal sized blades. Secrecy and exclusivity is emphasised as the basis for the development of pressure-flaking as a special technique at the end of the Final Neolithic in the Cyclades.¹⁰⁶⁴ Although many of the blades studied do not display any traces of use, many do, and Carter also argues for an actual use of the blades in the funerary ritual,¹⁰⁶⁵ with recorded use wear “compatible with slicing through a soft to medium-soft substance, probably an organic material such as hair, flesh or cloth.”¹⁰⁶⁶ One scenario encompassing all aspects of obsidian use in mortuary contexts would include: the employment of a necrolithic knapper from a probably small number of specialists sought after for the funerary performance of knapping; a possibly frequently used core whose known history adds to the appreciation of the ritual and the blades thus produced; symbolical and actual use of the blades within the realm of bodily modification;¹⁰⁶⁷ and the ultimate deposition of some blades and sometimes a core within the grave, while some blades were possibly also given to the participants.¹⁰⁶⁸ The special standing of the cores is suggested by the fact that a good core could give many more blades than were used for one ceremony, and could thereby carry with it the history of its owners and prior use. The deposition and thus ‘killing’ of a core could have carried extra symbolical weight.¹⁰⁶⁹ Cores have also been found with pigment traces, suggesting their use as pestles.¹⁰⁷⁰

There is, however, no known Cycladic context to corroborate this assumption. Throughout the area studied by Carter, the only actual production context is the one from Aghios Kosmas.¹⁰⁷¹ The blades from this cemetery had an average length of nine centimetres, which would put them at the lower end of the scale as regards the Cycladic preference for extra long

¹⁰⁶³ Carter 1999.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Carter 1999, 148f.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Carter 1999, e.g. 153–159.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Carter 1999, e.g. 155: a blade from Tomb 5 of the Ayioi Anargyroi cemetery on Naxos.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Carter 1999, esp. 173–178.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Carter 1999, 169–173.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Carter 1999, 90f., 172f., on the extra value of cores.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Pigment traces on cores: e.g. from a core found in Tomb 56 of the cemetery of Panagia on southwest Paros, under a marble bowl with the interior stained by a red colorant (Carter 1999, 153f.).

¹⁰⁷¹ Carter 1999, 163f.

blades, but clearly above the length of, for example, the Mesara tholos blades.¹⁰⁷² At Aghios Kosmas at least, the sheer numbers and commonplace distribution suggest, I propose, that not only were the obsidian pieces knowingly deposited in the context of the cemetery, they seem to have played a significant role in the rituals in this area, very much like their Cycladic counterparts.¹⁰⁷³ This use may very well find its explanation in the social values connected with implements for bodily modification in late EB I and early EB II, in combination with other pieces to be connected with body modification (Fig. 62). Thus, obsidian knapping may have taken on a social role in the context of the burial rituals *set apart from its use in settlement daily life*. Perhaps it is in this context that we should see Grave 3, with its extraordinary collection of blades and chips—an instance of conspicuous consumption, reflecting the social value and not only the functional uses of obsidian.¹⁰⁷⁴ Although obsidian appears to have been found all over the cemetery, the special concentrations may signify intra-cemetery differences, mirroring varying preferences, possibilities and/or positions in the society. Thus, the graves with the largest number of (counted) obsidian pieces all belong to the northernmost group of the excavated graves (the group farthest from the settlement), somewhat separated from the rest (Graves 1–7).¹⁰⁷⁵ Most notable, in an overview of the cemetery as a whole, is also that, without exception, the obsidian from Aghios Kosmas was found outside the graves. Like many other finds it was all found in the area between the graves, and although the publication gives no clue to the wear pattern of the blades, on-site knapping was certainly practised at Aghios Kosmas, judging from the large quantity of chips and the remarkable find of an *in situ* knapping context.¹⁰⁷⁶

If explained within the context of bodily modification, the placement of obsidian on a ritual timeline, whether or not the tools themselves took on an actual or symbolical function,¹⁰⁷⁷ would put it in a context along with that of pigments, arguably in the readying of the body for burial. Murphy places the

¹⁰⁷² Mylonas 1959, 106, 112. Maximum length of a blade found at the site was 12 centimetres, and of a core, 13 centimetres (Mylonas 1959, 144). Carter (1998, table 4.4, Cycladic blades clustering between 10–11 centimetres but with instances of much longer (21 cm at EC IIA Aplomata, Naxos) and much shorter blades (6 cm at EC I Pelos). The blades from the four Mesara tholos cemeteries included in the table range between 6.70 and 7.45 centimetres.

¹⁰⁷³ Based on some differences in form between the cores from Aghios Kosmas and Early Cycladic mortuary contexts, but nevertheless similarities in technique, Carter (1999, 164), concludes “a fusion of cultural traditions and technological mechanisms.”

¹⁰⁷⁴ Carter (1999, 141–142) argues for a possible connection between pyxides (and to some extent collared jars) with obsidian, mentioning a cylindrical and decorated example in the Apeiranthos museum containing a mass of blades and flakes from a robbed Pelos-Lakkoudes cemetery of east/south Naxos (exact location unknown).

¹⁰⁷⁵ Mylonas 1959, fig. 48.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The obsidian from Aghios Kosmas has not been personally analysed by Carter (1999, 182).

¹⁰⁷⁷ Carter 1998, 73f., commenting on the lack of use wear on most blades from mortuary contexts in EC and EM burial assemblages. For Aghios Kosmas we lack this information, but since we have on-site production, at least some of the blades would have been unused.

obsidian in the context of Early Minoan tholos tombs in connection with post-liminal rituals of bone manipulation.¹⁰⁷⁸ This may very well be a parallel for use also on the Mainland, which may include both actual production and use as burial ritual, followed by deposition, in connection with or set apart from other types of grave goods. However, their often unused nature (as at Manika), as well as their connection with primary burials (e.g. extended skeleton at Aghios Kosmas), suggests that their use was at least partly symbolic, and to be referred (partly or mainly) to rituals in relation to primary burials.

In the same context, if pigments and obsidian played an actual and/or symbolic role in the rituals, an active role to nuance their passive position as grave goods, what about other items of grave goods? The functional side of open vessels will be dealt with shortly, and the possible contents of closed vessels have been already touched upon above. In the context of readying the body, we may include different ointments and incense to complement the role played by pigments and obsidian. Also, even if not actually ‘used’, vessels and their contents—their deposition, as well as their connection with the deceased—may have been ritualised; the ‘use,’ if one was intended, perhaps referred to the dead herself and to the liminal period to come.

Under these circumstances we may imagine the body placed outside the tomb for a while before it is lowered into the chamber, out of plain view. The specifics of the placement of the dead in the grave seem to be the one custom with the least variation within the study area. The dead were, as we have seen, laid down on their side in the manner of a person sleeping. The legs are contracted. The position often seems to be directed by the limited space in the chamber, and less contracted skeletons can be noted where space permitted. In other cases the body seems nevertheless to have been placed in an extremely contracted position, even if the context did not demand it. Mylonas noted the very cramped position of the skeleton in Grave 6 and suggested that the stones found close to the body had been used to secure it in this very position.¹⁰⁷⁹ The functional aspects of space may thus not be the full story.

The woman in the story is buried on the hides of her bedding, wearing her favourite clothes. We do not know how the Early Helladic people were dressed when placed in their graves. Some wrapping could have been used, for the whole body or for securing the contracted position of the newly interred body. The hides and clothing are another part of the puzzle that we miss out on, but that would have singled out the individuality of this newly dead in relation to other deaths and other rituals, and that may illustrate the concepts and views of death that existed in the Early Helladic society (views of pollution, for example, that may have demanded the burial of material

¹⁰⁷⁸ Murphy 1998, 34: suggesting cleaning, scraping and cutting of the bones.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Mylonas 1959, 83.

goods with the dead).¹⁰⁸⁰ In only a few cases can we safely single out the individual grave goods in the contexts of the multiple burials of the Early Helladic society. At Aghios Kosmas there are, for example, two instances of single burials of children accompanied by a single item each. In Grave 24A, this item was a well-used marble phiale (a hole in its bottom suggests frequent rubbing, and the phiale may have been used as a grinder, like the palettes); in Grave 21A, the child burial was also accompanied by a phiale, this time it was a very small vessel of imperfectly fired clay with incised decoration on the rim.¹⁰⁸¹ From the Apollo Maleatas site, by Epidauros, early evidence for a burial, probably from within a contemporary settlement, is recorded. The grave, dated to EH I, was used once and was cut for a woman, 20–30 years old, with an obsidian blade in front of her face, a clay whorl by her chest, a pebble grinder/crusher in her right hand and some sherds. Interestingly, the recent excavation also revealed a few small pieces of charcoal and traces of organic material in the grave.¹⁰⁸² What perishable offerings are represented by these faint traces? Finally to be noted is a single milk tooth found by the chest of a body in a Tsepi grave—as a provoking hint, perhaps (if actually isolated and *in situ*), of an amulet carried by that person in a string around his (or her) neck.¹⁰⁸³

When she is finally placed in the grave, the onlookers gather around the still open grave. They pick up the small bowls or cups they have brought with them. The beer jar is passed around, and the stew. Someone places a portion also for the dead where she now rests, while the survivors tell stories of her life, where she came from, and what she did. What has been and what will be. As they talk, they start to come to terms with her death as well as the place which she held in life. Her place must be filled. The world is changing a little.

Finally they stand up to leave. Some bowls and cups are picked up, others are left; some traces of the meal will be visible for some time. As a final act,

¹⁰⁸⁰ One skeleton from Manika was noted for marks on the bones, marks that were interpreted as impressions of cloth, suggested to have come from the body being dressed or rolled up in cloth (Sampson 1987, 21, grave 84). I believe that this is a highly improbable suggestion. In the unlikely event of cloth creating and impression on bone, it would in this case seem less unlikely to have originated from bare bones wrapped in cloth and not through decomposing flesh. Remains of blankets (as well as red ochre) have, however, been noted in barrow burials ('kurgans') of contemporary Late Copper Age (3200–2400 cal BC) Eastern Hungary (Chapman 1994, 68). See also Nilsson Stutz (2003, 295–304) for a discussion of the indications of wrappings and other soft containers in relation to Scandinavian Mesolithic inhumation burials.

¹⁰⁸¹ Mylonas 1959, grave 21A: p. 99, grave 24A: p. 102f.

¹⁰⁸² Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1171f.

¹⁰⁸³ Pantelidou Gofa 2005: grave 7. Other grave goods connected to this burial was probably sea shell and two pieces of obsidian. Cf. Doumas 1977, 61: teeth as pendants from tomb 20 at Agioi Anargyroi.

they put the closing slab back in place and the passage is again filled with stones and earth—for the time being.

Eating and drinking by the graves

Within the concept of consumption in the mortuary sphere should be included everything that is deposited in a burial context and thus put out of circulation. In terms of actual practices, the term should include the use of pigments and obsidian, a consumption and display of social values connected with the visual appearance of the human body, if interpreted as above. Everything deposited, thus consumed, within the context of a burial is potentially significant in the interplay between the people involved. I have argued above for the actual use of pigments and obsidian in the context of readying the body for the funeral. In this section I will put emphasis on pottery vessels as containers, and argue for a consumption of food and drink in relation to the suggested function of vessels found in the mortuary sphere of the eight graves and grave clusters already visited several times above. I will argue for local and regional differences as well as similarities, and I will argue for a conceptual difference in what is placed in the tomb and what is left outside it—that is to say that there were some things that were more often put inside the grave, and other things that generally were not.

Consumption in the mortuary domain has been an element of Mycenaean studies for a long time, especially the consumption of liquids through drinking and libation. Recently, the discussion of consumption has moved from describing these events to interpreting them in the context of social competition, societal renewal and reconstruction, within the transitional/liminal framework that the mortuary rituals following a death in a community provided. In recent studies, the concept of feasting, also including the consumption of food, has become fashionable and a focus for study.¹⁰⁸⁴ In 1998, Hamilakis presented a diachronic selection of Aegean mortuary contexts from which eating and drinking ceremonies could be inferred, instances of “animal and plant remains, food and drink serving vessels, and suitably arranged delimited spaces around the tombs”, to be set in the new context of ‘feasting discourse’.¹⁰⁸⁵ Early Helladic material is absent from this selection, not, I would say, because it is a survey with no ambitions of being exhaustive, but because the Early Helladic material has not been discussed within these frameworks—neither in descriptive terms as vessels and other material as remnants of mortuary meals, nor in the interpretative terms of recent discourse, where feasting is regarded as an incorporated practice important for

¹⁰⁸⁴ E.g. the colloquium volume *The Mycenaean feast* (Wright (ed.) 2004).

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hamilakis 1998, 119f., 128 (citation).

the reproduction of social values. As a case in point, neither Pullen, nor Cavanagh and Mee, dealt with grave goods as containers or tools for rituals, apart from the fact they were found in the cemeteries and should be considered as grave goods.¹⁰⁸⁶

Clearly, aspects of consumption would have been rewarding for the common emphasis on the manifestation of social inequalities and statements of social roles and lineal descent in the Early Helladic mortuary sphere, but whereas, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the mortuary domain of the Mycenaean period, and the whole Cretan Bronze Age, has been surveyed for eating and drinking rituals, the Early Helladic (and Cycladic) graves and cemeteries have been excluded from consideration.¹⁰⁸⁷ As a partial explanation for this, it should perhaps be noted that the graves from Tsepi have only very recently been finally published, and one deposit from this cemetery that may prove important in the context of consumption still awaits its final publication.¹⁰⁸⁸ Aghios Kosmas, however, has since Mylonas' publication in 1959 provided a large pottery assemblage with a conspicuous number of drinking vessels. To my knowledge, this context has only very recently been related to the actual use of these cups for drinking as a part of the ceremonies connected with burials,¹⁰⁸⁹ and its full significance remains unexplored. The fact that all these cups, and actually most of the grave goods, were found outside the grave has been commonly noted, but not as more than an anomaly.¹⁰⁹⁰ As an anomaly, this circumstance has not been interpreted in any other way than that the small size of grave could not hold a great number of internees along with their grave goods.¹⁰⁹¹

Before I continue my argument on this point, I will make some initial points in reference to *Table 9*. The table is the basis for the discussion in this section, and for the argument of eating and drinking by the graves in Early Helladic contexts, and illustrates the variation in the shapes of vessels in different mortuary contexts. As in the charts above (*Figs. 60–62*), the actual numbers of vessels have been suppressed (apart from the total numbers of vessels and graves in which they were found) in favour of a four-fold division based on the vessels' relative popularity in their respective contexts. The vessels have been arranged in categories according to general form, in order to sidestep the varying terms and languages used in the different publications that have served as basis for the comparison (as well as the degree

¹⁰⁸⁶ Pullen 1985; 1994; Cavanagh & Mee 1998.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Indicative is that in the meticulous compilation by Alram-Stern (2004) the section 'e) Rückschlüsse auf Begräbnisrituale anhand archäologischer Hinterlassenschaften' amounts to only half a page, with less than half of this concerning Early Helladic material (pp. 304f.).

¹⁰⁸⁸ Gofa 2005, in which pit 39 was only briefly described and is instead preliminarily published in short articles, see further *below*.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Nilsson 2004, 161.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Pullen 1985, 124f.; Pullen 1994, 124.

¹⁰⁹¹ Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 19.

Table 9. *Popularity of vessels according to general form: Rare (0–9%); Common (10–29%); Plentiful (30–49%); Abundant (50%–) (* marks shapes present but uncatalogued).*

No. of finds/graves with finds	Tsepi 71/28	A. Kosmas 78/25	Manika 79/33	Perachora-V. 51/2	Kalamaki 21/1 (+?)	Zygouries 97/3	Corinth 19/1 (2 ch.)	Cheliotomylos 132/1 (well)
Bowl/saucer	common	common	common	plentiful	plentiful	plentiful	common	abundant
Bowl/sauceboat	-	-	-	-	-	common	-	-
Sauceboat	-	*	rare	rare	common	plentiful	-	plentiful
Cup	rare	plentiful	common	rare	-	-	rare	rare
Dish	rare	-	-	rare	-	-	-	-
Frying-pan	rare	common	common	-	-	-	-	-
Jar	plentiful	common	common	-	rare	rare	common	rare
Jug	rare	*	common	plentiful	rare	-	plentiful	rare
Lid	rare	-	rare	rare	-	-	-	-
Askos	-	-	-	-	-	rare	common	rare
Pyxis	rare	rare	common	rare	-	rare	common	-
Miniature vessel	common	rare	common	-	-	rare	-	-
Other	rare	rare	rare	-	rare	rare	-	-

of preservation and my own lack of specialist knowledge of the fine distinctions regarding Early Helladic pottery classification). For various reasons I have not been able to visually study all items and, as in any general grouping, there are bound to be border zones between shapes.¹⁰⁹²

One initial result of the survey is the visual illustration of the geographically limited popularity of frying-pans and sauceboats in the graves. As already stated many times, frying-pans are a part of the ‘Cycladising’ aspect of the graves in Attica and Euboea, which can also be extended to Boeotia but not (yet, at least) southwards to Corinthia, and probably not to the Argolid, where the sauceboat instead makes up a regular and frequent component not commonly found in the former regions. In this context it can also be noted that the frying-pan variety of vessels were not unknown in the southern regions,¹⁰⁹³ but they clearly did not belong to the set of vessels deposited in graves. The same is true for the sauceboats in the eastern regions. Some differences between contexts may be chronologically based. I propose, nevertheless, that the variations in types of vessels deposited should primarily be seen as representing varying preferences or customs for what were the appropriate grave goods, and also as hints of a possible variation in ritual practices. In this way, the vessels are given an active role in forming these rituals, and are not merely being passively deposited.

Continuing in this vein, it can be noted that jugs are plentiful only at Perachora-Vouliagmeni and Corinth. At Manika, where the jugs are classified as common, it is at the very lowest end of the range, and three-quarters of the sample is of the Anatolian type beaked jug, which suggests that the rise in popularity of jugs in the material should be referred to the second use phase, and thus late EH II. With this qualification, and although the basis for the popularity of jugs is only one grave each, the samples belong to a rather

¹⁰⁹² See Broodbank 2000, tables 8 and 9 for the use of general popularity indexes instead of percentages; and Cavanagh (1998, fig. 7.1–2) and Hamilakis (1998, fig. 8.3) for a functional grouping of shapes. In the table, all unnumbered sherds have been excluded. The different and variously named shapes have been grouped as follows (translated into English when necessary): Bowl/saucer: bowl, large bowl, footed bowl, small deep bowl, bowl, shallow bowl, spouted bowl, incurving wall bowl, small bowl, carinated bowl, hemispherical bowl, bowl with incurved rim on pedestalled foot, bowl on stand, large deep bowl, shallow bowl/saucer, goblet, basin, large basin, large, cylindrical vessel, saucer/basin, phiale, skyphos, saucer; Bowl/Sauceboat: bowl/sauceboat; Cup: one-handled tankard, two-handled tankard, one-handled cup, spouted cup on pedestalled foot, cup, two-handled cup Anatolian style, one-handled tankard Anatolian style; Dish: dish, plate; Jar: jar, biconical jar, jar with suspension lugs, jar without handle, wide mouthed jar, large jar, straight-necked jar, handleless necked jar, necked jar, small handleless jar, pyxoid jar, no handle, high-necked jar, rounded vessel/jar, spherical vessel/jar, bowl/jar (semiclosed); Jug: spouted jug, miniature squat jug/pyxis, juglet, squat jug, jug, pitcher, beaked jug Anatolian style, jug Anatolian style; Lid: lid, “κάλυμμα” (incised lid), lid/stand; Miniature vessel: miniature bowl, miniature phiale, miniature jar, zoomorphic miniature vessel; Other: closed vessel, small vessel shaped like the bowl of a pipe, large jar/basin, “bottle”, unknown; Pyxis: pyxis, globular pyxis, biconical pyxis, double pyxis, pyxis/handleless askos.

¹⁰⁹³ Coleman 1985, fig. 1; Wiencke 2000, 574–578, concentration of the impressed type to Lerna III, phase B (p. 577).

restricted area around the Corinthian gulf, and both are perhaps to be put in the second half of the EH II period (although the use phase of the Perachora-Vouliagmeni grave stretches through the whole of EH II).¹⁰⁹⁴ Perhaps the taste for jugs should be added to the regional differences within the study area, and possibly given a chronological element;¹⁰⁹⁵ two suggestions that can only be confirmed by additional excavations in the area. However, apart from the jugs at Perachora-Vouliagmeni and Corinth, and the apparent ‘high’ popularity of a range of vessel shapes at Corinth (which, to a large degree, is a result of the limited number of vessels), the Corinthian contexts display a very clear preference for open vessels, and most notably the bowl/saucer and sauceboats, to the detriment of other shapes, which remain ‘rare’. Illustrative of this point, also, are the 247 sherds collected from the cave by Perachora-Vouliagmeni, of which a majority came from saucers, with many fewer examples of sauceboats and plates, and of closed shapes only sherds of pyxides are mentioned.¹⁰⁹⁶

Looking at the three remaining contexts, from Attica and Euboea, the finds are much more varied and no regional consistency is apparent. At Manika, a large variety of shapes are classified as ‘common’ and no single shape stands out in the material. In contrast, at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi, one shape at each site is characterised as ‘plentiful’—the cup at Aghios Kosmas and the closed jar at Tsepi. On the basis of this latter fact, there seems to be a decisive difference between the two contexts, possibly reflecting different customs. As I return to the comparison of these two mortuary contexts below, however, it will become evident that further factors need to be included if these contexts are to be better understood.

The relationship between open and closed vessels is potentially important in a survey of eating and drinking habits in the mortuary sphere. Thus, while closed vessels are shapes for storing, transport and pouring, open vessels are to a greater degree connected with the actual acts of eating and drinking. Koumouzelis commented on how the dominance of saucers is in line with what should be expected from sherds coming from burials, and that they should be related to the established ceremonies at the time of burial, noting also that sauceboats and plates are vessels for food and drink.¹⁰⁹⁷ In contrast to her passing note, I would like to emphasise this particular aspect of the shapes dominating the burial assemblages of Corinthia, and suggest an important role played by drinking and eating ceremonies in the context of bur-

¹⁰⁹⁴ Hatzipoulou-Kalliri 1983, 374f.

¹⁰⁹⁵ For Lerna, Wiencke (2000, 570) concluded that the jugs were never very common, although the shape existed in small number throughout Lerna III (EH II).

¹⁰⁹⁶ Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 231–236. This context is not included in *Table 46*, since no numbers are given for the distribution of the sherds over the shapes within the total of 247 sherds.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 231f. She commented also on the impossible task of restoring one single vessel completely and how this is also a common occurrence with pottery from burials where breaking vessels was part of the ritual (Koumouzelis 1989–1991, 232).

als during the Early Helladic period. Thus, I would argue that the survey suggests not only consumption of vessels but also of foodstuffs once contained in the vessels and consumed during the burial ritual. It is not surprising, perhaps, that a majority of the material can be assigned to fine open vessels in grave contexts also, since the same can also be said for the composite material of Early Helladic settlements. It is, however, not so much the high number of these open vessels, but the low number of closed vessels that is particularly noteworthy and not fully comparable with settlement data, where different kinds of closed vessels make up a larger percentage.¹⁰⁹⁸ The exception of jugs is well in line with the emphasis on drinking and eating suggested by the open vessels, since jugs are also the only certain pouring vessel in the material.

The data from Zygouries include, and are primarily made up of, the pottery sherds from the fill of the tombs, not included in Blegen's listings of grave goods, but examined by Pullen in 1981–1982. The tombs proper held only little pottery along with the small finds discussed above, which called for an expression of disappointment on the part of the excavator.¹⁰⁹⁹ The pottery vessels found in Grave 7 were a sauceboat, a shallow bowl, an unpainted jar, a small vessel shaped like the bowl of a pipe, and fragments of a small pyxis. Grave 20 contained a shallow bowl, a patera or miniature bowl, and a few Early Helladic potsherds. Finally, Grave 16 held three large potsherds (possibly from sauceboats).¹¹⁰⁰ These few examples fall well within the types recognised in the fill of the graves, and there are no grounds for suggesting that what was put in the graves was in any way different to the types of shapes that ended up in the fill. It is noteworthy, however, that in the fill, in contrast to the grave goods listed by Blegen (mainly small finds from the interior of the tomb, see *Fig. 62*), Pullen noted only two pieces of obsidian and one piece of chert, but no other small finds.

The basic proposition of this present section is that pottery found within mortuary contexts had a significance beyond being 'grave gifts'—that the pots had contents, and that they were actually used in the very context in which they were found. On the basis of the composition of the finds, and also the context of the finds, I therefore propose that, at both Cheliotomylos and Zygouries, the finds can be seen as largely made up of one or several mortuary meals. In the case of Zygouries, this counters Pullen's suggestion of the sherds in the fill representing old grave gifts displaced at the time of

¹⁰⁹⁸ In a compilation by Weisshaar (1983, 333, figs. 1–2) of the composition of pottery during the Early Helladic phases of the Unterburg, coarse kitchen ware made up 20–30% in EH II, painted and unpainted domestic vessels, 25.3–51.1%, increasing in number with the Early Helladic development (comprising: plain, 8.5–20.8%; 'mit Überzug', 1.6–10.6%; 'mit Firmis', 11.1–18.0%), and fine ware 'mit Firmis' (i.e. Urfirmis ware and mostly open shapes), 16.3–23.9%, with only small numbers of so called Fayence ware, Neolithic pottery and indeterminate sherds.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Blegen 1928, 54f.

¹¹⁰⁰ Following the classification of Pullen 1985, 107, 153f., notes 8–9.

new burials.¹¹⁰¹ On the fragmentary state of the vessels (or rather sherds, since their presentation suggests that few, if any, could be even partially restored) in the Zygouries fill, I suggest that several meals could be reconstructed, the remains of which ended up in the fill. The probable fragmentary state seems to suggest that the original vessels had been exposed for some time, increasing the probability, at least, that there was more than one meal during this time. In contrast, at Cheliotomylos, a large percentage of the vessels could be fully or partially restored, the sherds were found concentrated 13.00–13.70 metres below the top of the well shaft,¹¹⁰² and the inference is that this composition is more likely to have been the result of a single funerary meal, arguably in connection with the secondary interment of the skeletons in the well shaft.

Open or closed: deposition customs at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi

Were it not for the equally common jars, the material from Aghios Kosmas as presented in *Table 9*, with cups plentiful and bowls/saucers common, would fit perfectly into the pattern suggested for Corinthia. The material from Tsepi, on the other hand, with a shape distribution including only one common open shape (bowl/saucer), while jars are plentiful, seems far from suggesting that any drinking or eating took place within the cemetery. The numbers in the table, however, tell only half the story, and to be able to comprehensively evaluate them we need to consider in further detail the contexts of the different finds.

Considering the problematic preconditions for preservation of the remains, the water infested character of the site, the advancing shoreline, the shallow soil cover, illicit diggers, the fact that the area was turned into a German garrison during the Second World War, and the extensive modern activities,¹¹⁰³ the amount of material that has been preserved from the site of Aghios Kosmas is astounding. That so much can be read from it is in large part due to the meticulousness of excavation and documentation, and the keen eye of the excavators. It should also be ascribed, however, to the special rituals of the Early Helladic inhabitants and users of the cemetery, and to their apparent flair for mortuary display (or at least the lack of a desire to clean away the traces of ritual)—to a large extent, things seem to have been left as they were used. For Aghios Kosmas, there appears to be a difference between what was found within the grave and what was found outside it. Listing the few finds that were actually found in the grave, together with their fraction of the total of that shape, my basis for this suggestion will be

¹¹⁰¹ Pullen 1985, 108–110.

¹¹⁰² Waage 1949, 416. Also above, *Fig. 46*: the well at Cheliotomylos.

¹¹⁰³ Mylonas 1959, e.g. vii–viii, 7–13.

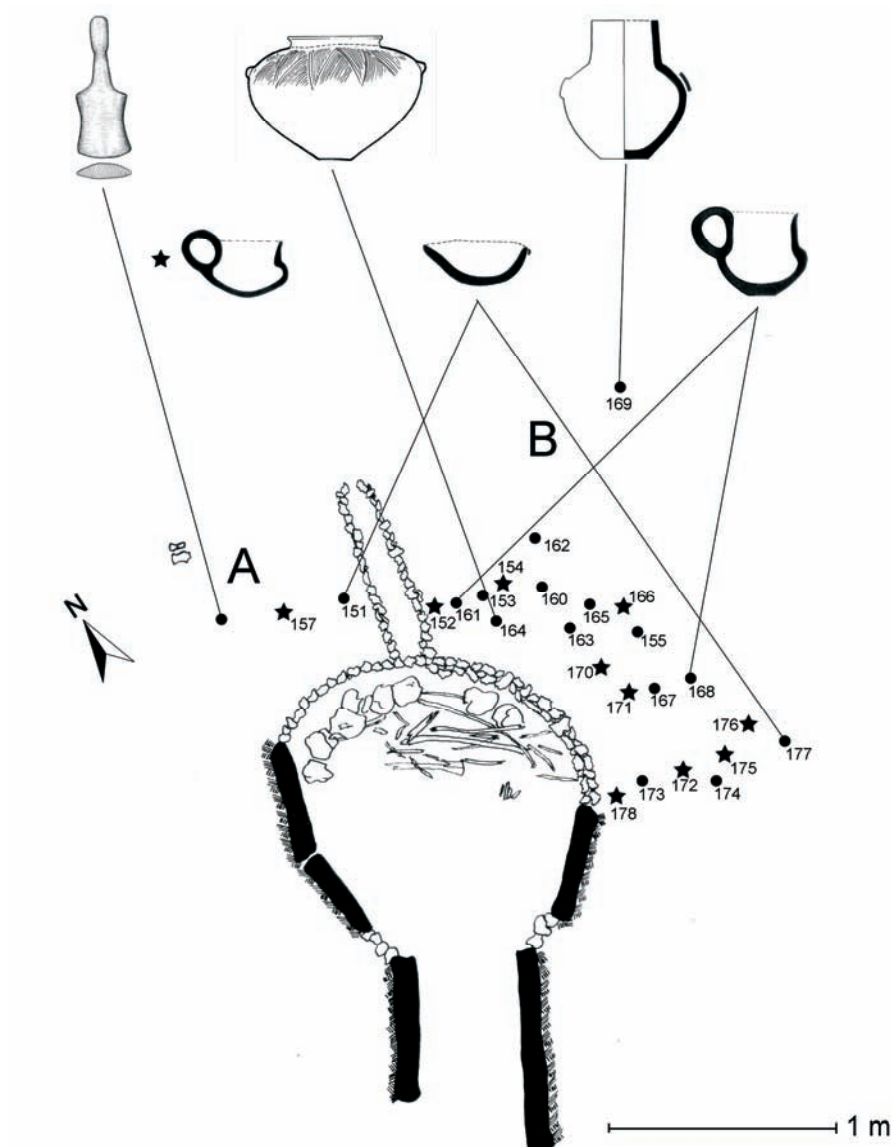


Figure 75. Grave 3 at Aghios Kosmas with selected find categories found outside the grave illustrated: one marble figurine, single-handled cups (marked with stars), incised pyxis (no. 164, holding a large quantity of obsidian), spouted skyphos (nos. 151, 177), jar with suspension lugs (no. 169), single-handled tankard (nos. 161, 168) (after Mylonas 1959, figs. 21, 57–60, 62, 64).

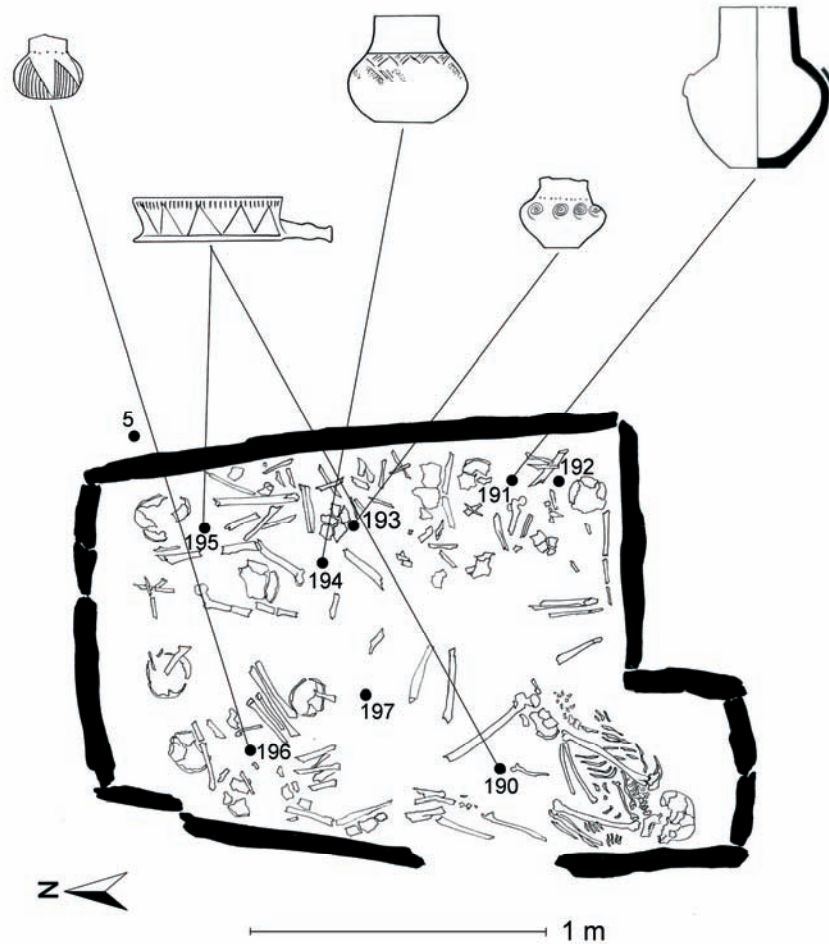


Figure 76. Grave 7 at Aghios Kosmas with selected find categories found inside the grave illustrated: miniature, incised jars (nos. 193, 196), incised jar without handles (no. 194), frying-pans (nos. 190, 195), jar with suspension lugs (no. 191) (after Mylonas 1959, figs. 24, 59–61).

demonstrated. Thus, vessels found in the grave were one phiale (C-2, 100%)¹¹⁰⁴, one small deep bowl (C-3, 100%), three frying-pans (C-9, 33%), three biconical jars (C-24, 75%), two jars with suspension lugs (C-25, 50%), two jars without handles (C-26, 100%), two handleless jars (no type, 100%), one double pyxis (no type, 100%), one miniature jar (no type, 100%), two

¹¹⁰⁴ C-2 stands for Cemetery shape no. 2 and is the shape designation used by Mylonas (1959, 68–71) and contrasted with Settlement shape S-2 (pp. 22–26). ‘100%’ is used here to refer to the percentage of the catalogued examples of this shape type found inside the grave.

bowls (no type, 67%), and one single-handled cup (C-13, 3%).¹¹⁰⁵ Although Mylonas kept to a series of type shapes, he did not refer all vessels to a type. Hence, for example, the two types of jars without handles. Combining all 'jars', we find that of thirteen catalogued jars from the area of the graves, ten (77%) of them, came from deposits within graves. In contrast, only one single-handled cup came from the inside of a grave, and that was the one placed below the lintel of Grave 3. As a case in point, *Figures 75–76* illustrates the types of vessels found outside Grave 3 and inside Grave 7.

In contrast to Zygouries and Cheliotomylos, the main inference that can be made from the single-handled cups is that of a drinking ceremony. The cups are small and rather narrow. Their height was on average 5–6 centimetres, with a rim diameter about the same or a little less, depending on the specific shape. The tankard shape is somewhat larger, but their one or two 'cup handles' point to as use as drinking vessels. Drinking rituals are further indicated by the excavated deposit containing no less than 46 single-handled cups (two containing traces of red colour as noted above) and one phiale. This deposit was also excavated in the area north of Graves 25 and 30.¹¹⁰⁶ From the context it appears that the cups were a one time deposit (or the cups were deposited continuously over a rather short period of time), the cups tightly packed and wedged together by pebbles. Many other types of open vessels, mostly with a rim diameter less than 10 centimetres, were also found at Aghios Kosmas, most of them assigned to a type, and most of them found in the areas outside the graves. The skyphos (shape C-1) is said to be "[a] favorite shape";¹¹⁰⁷ only one, however, was catalogued (outside Grave 3, no. 173), and it must be concluded that the shape was common in the sherd material collected in the area between graves. It should be further noted that the sauceboat was apparently represented by "a good many fragments", but only one catalogued specimen is recorded (from the area of the extended skeleton and not included in *Table 9*).¹¹⁰⁸ In all instances, the sherds of this shape stand out in comparison with other materials as being more carefully made and better fired.¹¹⁰⁹ In contrast, many of the vessels from the cemetery were noted as having been insufficiently fired. This was true for the single-handled cups especially, as many were found unfired and in a leather-hard condition.¹¹¹⁰ The single-handled cups were rarely found in the settlement,¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁵ Mylonas 1959, 71–113; see also a compilation in Pullen 1985, fig. 19.

¹¹⁰⁶ Mylonas 1959, 106.

¹¹⁰⁷ Mylonas 1959, 68. The skyphos shape at Aghios Kosmas is comparable with the saucer shape at Lerna (Wiencke 2000, 592–601).

¹¹⁰⁸ Sherds of sauceboats were also found in relation to Grave 51 of the South Cemetery (Mylonas 1959, 115).

¹¹⁰⁹ Mylonas 1959, 69, shape C-12.

¹¹¹⁰ Three small vessels found outside grave 7 (nos. 198–200, p. 87), a single-handled cup from grave 12 (no. 202, p. 92), an unbaked single-handled cup in grave 2 (p. 73), two unbaked single-handled cups by grave 5 (nos. 182, 184, p. 81). Fragments and five examples of single-handled cups found outside grave 3 in a leather-hard condition (p. 77). Others by the same

and should therefore perhaps be seen as a shape especially adapted to drinking rituals within the mortuary sphere. The presence of these unbaked cups also hints at the original existence of further unbaked cups and perhaps other vessels that were not preserved. Furthermore, they hint at the possible existence of other cups of perishable, organic material, such as wooden, carved examples—at Aghios Kosmas, as well as elsewhere.

At first glance, Tsepi presents a quite different picture to that of Aghios Kosmas. Here grave goods were only rarely found outside the grave. Evidence of outside activities at Tsepi seem to be the result of isolated instances: an amphoriskos, a biconical handleless jar, a globular jar, a saucer (skyphos), and a triton shell were found on the Early Helladic surface level between Graves 13 and 14; a small necked jar was found above the cover slab of Grave 40 (for typical Tsepian shapes, see *Fig. 77*).¹¹¹² As at Aghios Kosmas, the bowl/saucer category was ‘common’, but no shape like the cup was commonly found, and the majority of the finds belong to the closed variety of shapes (*Table 9*). Thus, in a comparison, the closed shapes outnumber the open ones at Tsepi, while the opposite is true at Aghios Kosmas, *but* in both instances it can be said that closed shapes dominated the assemblages on the inside of the tombs. Also, both cemeteries have produced contexts that suggest partly different practices related to the vessels found inside the tombs and to those found outside it. So, at Tsepi the larger variety of basin/bowl making up the ‘other’ category, two skyphoi, and one bowl (or pieces of them) were found in a special deposit, a pit, dug close to Grave 19 (numbered 19a).¹¹¹³

It is significant that the pottery in the pit was classified as EH I/II instead of EC I, which is the classification usually given to the pottery within the grave chambers proper. Pantelidou Gofa also comments on the circumstance of only domestic pottery from Tsepi coming from this pit, and from the large pit deposit 39.¹¹¹⁴ The sides of the large pit (2.60 x 3.00 metres, and 1.10 metres deep)¹¹¹⁵ were partly faced with stone walls and, in an upper layer, it was found to hold a deposit of human bones. These bones, however, must represent a later and secondary use of the area, as no other bones were found in the lower layers of the pit, which was otherwise filled with a large amount of broken pottery.¹¹¹⁶ Pantelidou Gofa concluded in her preliminary report

grave were found insufficiently fired, crumbling partly at excavation, precluding the possibility of mending.

¹¹¹¹ The shape was given the number S-13, as the equivalent to the C-13 cemetery shape, with the comment that “Only one almost complete example was found in the settlement but there were many fragments” (Mylonas 1959, 25).

¹¹¹² Pantelidou Gofa 2005, Graves 13, and 40.

¹¹¹³ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 137–139, 141; Pantelidou Gofa 1998, 42–46.

¹¹¹⁴ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 139.

¹¹¹⁵ Pantelidou Gofa 2000b, 33.

¹¹¹⁶ Pantelidou Gofa 1999a, 27f.; 1999b, 38–41; 2000a, 25–34; 2001, 22; with summary in Alram-Stern 2004, 552.

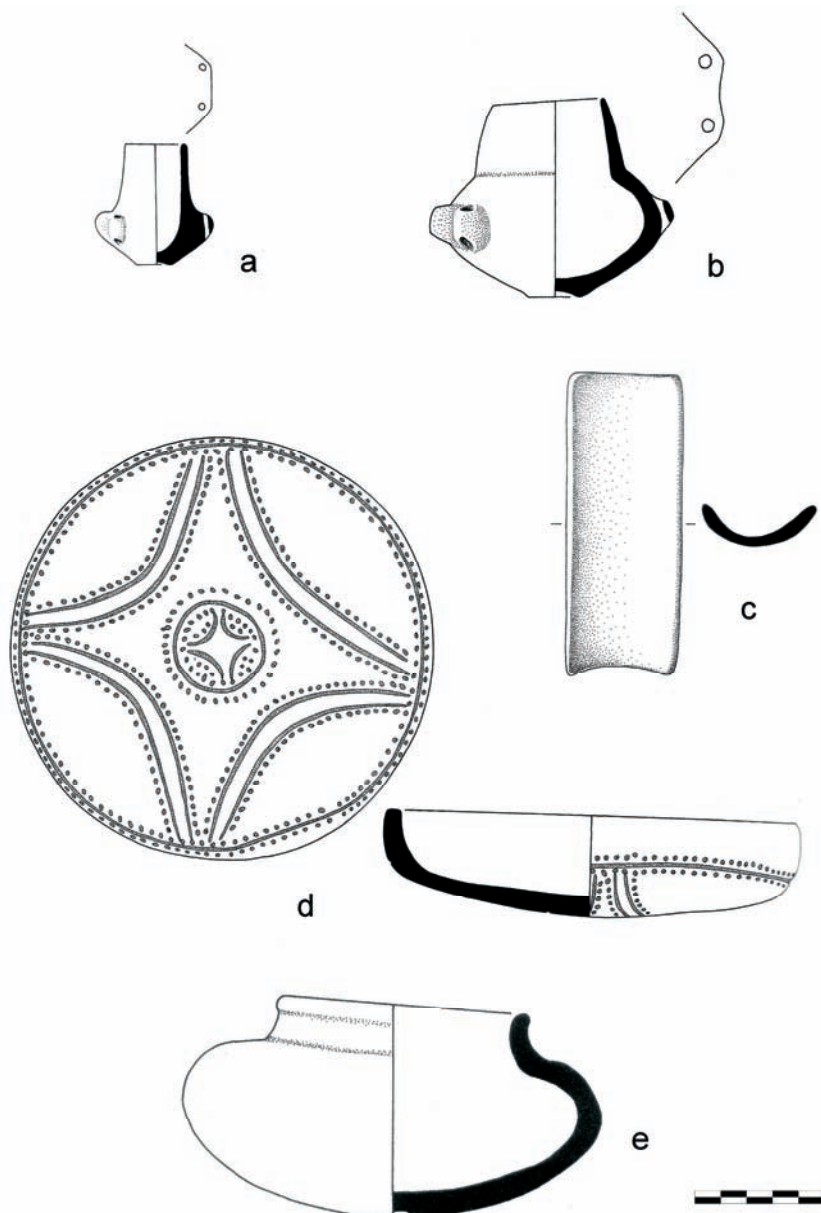


Figure 77. Tsepi. Selection of vessel shapes from the cemetery: (a) straight-necked miniature jar (no. 7.1) from Grave 7, (b) straight-necked jar (no. 3.1) from Grave 3, (c) bone palette (no. 2.1) from Grave 2, (d) lid (no. 6.2) from Grave 6 and (e) pyxoid jar (no. 24.1) from Grave 24 (after Pandelidou Gofa 2005, plates 2, 3, 6, 8, 2, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens).

that the vessels must have been primary deposits of the pit (and not cleaned out goods from the graves, as no human bones were found other than the one skeleton just mentioned), that the vessels were probably deposited whole and smashed by the many pebbles apparently also thrown into the pit, and that the pit was probably continuously used during a lengthy period of time (as no apparent breaks could be noted in the pottery sequence).¹¹¹⁷

Especially notable among the material in the pit were the many bright red painted and burnished vessels, the characteristic surface treatment of the early Early *Helladic* period. The common shapes in this variety were large vessels of domestic use, skyphoi and various closed vessels. A particularly frequent shape was also the fruitstand, a shallow, pedestalled bowl, which could be easily distinguished by its cylindrical stand. Parallel to these types were many Cycladic-type small or medium sized jars with conical neck, frequently decorated in EC I style.¹¹¹⁸ The necked jar is a common variety in the graves also, but the bowl and saucers in large numbers appear to reflect a practice not at home in the interior of the graves. The fruitstand in particular, not represented at all in the graves, stands out as a possibly specialised serving vessel of some kind.¹¹¹⁹ On the present evidence from Tsepi, I believe a practice is indicated that is in effect very similar to that of Aghios Kosmas, a practice in which open vessels were, as a rule, deposited outside the grave chambers. There is a difference, however, in the deposition of these vessels. At Aghios Kosmas, the vessels appear to have been left on the ground, arguably where used, and only on occasion deposited (the area of the larger vases that perhaps has a parallel in pit 19a at Tsepi)¹¹²⁰, while at Tsepi the vessels were deposited, arguably after their use for food and drink, in a ready-made, formal pit, in continuous use for this purpose. In both instances, the fact that the vessels were thrown into and smashed in Pit 39, or simply left or buried at Aghios Kosmas, indicates that the vessels had at that point outlived their lives and final purposes. In these instances, at least, it appears that what entered the mortuary sphere, remained there.

With regard to the contexts of the finds at Aghios Kosmas, and to a lesser degree also at Tsepi, a qualification is in order, regarding chronology as well as the differences between what has been found within the graves and what has been found outside. Rambach noted that the finds from within the graves at Aghios Kosmas can all find parallels in the Kampos group pottery of the late Early Cycladic I period (and nothing need be dated to the later EH/EC II

¹¹¹⁷ Pantelidou Gofa, 1999a, 27f.; 1999b, 40; 2000a, 28.

¹¹¹⁸ Pantelidou Gofa, 1999b, 40.

¹¹¹⁹ An almost completely restored vessel is illustrated in pl. 27b (Pantelidou Gofa 1999b).

¹¹²⁰ There are of course functional reasons for putting the larger vessels outside and not inside the grave. The graves were in general very small. It is also possible, however, to argue that the larger domestic vessels did not conform to the criteria for grave goods. Furthermore, that they were nevertheless found in the cemetery suggests that they were used there, and not, then, primarily as grave goods.

period), while outside the graves, this type of pottery, or pottery and objects, of Renfrew's more general EC I Grotta-Pelos assemblage, are found together with finds with parallels in the later EC II Keros-Syros assemblage—as illustration Rambach refers to the finds around Grave 3.¹¹²¹ This would mean that the finds from inside the graves were older than the finds from outside. Thus, Rambach concludes that the finds by Grave 3 (which were all found outside the grave) cannot have been a one time deposition, but must result from deposition over a long period of time, possibly coupled with finds that had been cleared from graves, either graves robbed out (during prehistoric times) or grave finds cleared out to make room for new burials.¹¹²²

I believe that two points in particular need to be clarified in relation to this argument. Firstly, based on Rambach's findings, there seem also to be chronological differences between internal and external deposition, and to this should also be added Rambach's note of the lack of Urfirnis in the cemetery (none within the graves and only a few pieces outside), and the common appearance of this surface treatment and decoration in the settlement (both phase A and B).¹¹²³ Secondly, as the graves were used for multiple burials, the finds from the inside and outside of the graves should not be seen as one time depositions; they must have resulted from continuous deposition.

In terms of chronological considerations, Rambach failed to consider the wider implications of his own conclusions (it was not within the scope of his study). Thus, following Rambach's argument, all tombs and their finds are earlier than most activities outside them. Furthermore, if all the tombs were EH/EC I they predate phase B *as well as* largely predating phase A habitation in the nearby settlement, and we must assume that the habitation layers contemporary with the graves have not yet been found.¹¹²⁴ This seems to me, however, unlikely. Instead, to explain the mix of pottery outside the graves (pottery of the Grotta-Pelos and Keros-Syros group types), we need to consider some other possibilities: (1) Mylonas was right in his supposition that grave goods were manufactured after traditional ideals;¹¹²⁵ (2) the Kampos group pottery also partly overlaps with the early EH II;¹¹²⁶ (3) *all* grave goods in a later phase of the use of the cemetery were deposited outside the grave, indicating a change in mortuary practice (maybe we should look for a

¹¹²¹ Rambach 2000b, 255.

¹¹²² Rambach 2000b, 252.

¹¹²³ Mylonas 1959, 14, on the presence of Urfirnis in both A and B settlements; Rambach 2000b, 255.

¹¹²⁴ The presence of Urfirnis sauceboats indicates an EH II date, but other elements suggest that the time span of the phase would also include EH I (Maran 1998, 81f).

¹¹²⁵ Mylonas 1959, 142.

¹¹²⁶ The chronology of the Kampos group has been debated, and Rambach (2000b, 229–264, 417–424, fig. 26) makes a stand for an EC I date. Broodbank (2000, e.g. 221) considers the Kampos group horizon as transitional EB I–II with a relatively short duration of at most a century or two.

pit 39 at Aghios Kosmas as well?). All these suggestions are interesting possibilities, and I cannot conclude which one or more of them represent the actual circumstances, or whether further alternatives may also have been involved. At Tsepi, although not yet fully published, the bright red polish of the vessels in pit 39 seems to find parallels in EH I ware¹¹²⁷ and, following Rambach, many of the finds from the graves find parallels in the early EC I Panayia assemblage.¹¹²⁸ The presence, however, of sauceboats and saucers in Aghios Kosmas cemeteries clearly suggest EH II activity, even though Urfirnis is largely missing (at least among the catalogued finds).

Significance of finds and content of ritual

In relation to these chronological considerations, it should be noted that in my analysis, I have otherwise been mainly concerned with the relative popularity of vessels in the cemeteries or graves as a whole. In doing so I have largely left out considerations of the history behind the presence of the objects in the context in which they were found, a history that may be more complex than them actually having been deposited where they lay. Thus, at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi, and I believe also at Zygouries, but in probable contrast to Cheliotomylos, if drinking and eating ceremonies are accepted as the reason for the presence of the cups and saucers, and for their location outside the graves, we should probably see several instances of such ceremonies, performed at various times during the use period of the graves. The large number of sherds in the area between the graves at Aghios Kosmas seems to confirm this. The same sherds confirm continuous activity in the area of the cemetery, since, according to Rambach, sherds of both EB I and II date can be found. Nor must all sherds necessarily result from activities in connection with a burial. The more or less complete preservation of the catalogued finds by the graves suggests limited handling of these objects. At Aghios Kosmas (as well as at Tsepi), however, neither the complete set of finds outside each grave, *nor* the finds within them, should be seen as one time depositions without consideration of their unique contexts.

I believe that the emphasis on the practical usage of items found within the mortuary sphere has great potential for the widening of our understanding of the rituals related to it. I believe also that the evidence from Aghios Kosmas, Tsepi, Zygouries and Cheliotomylos favours an interpretation of rituals of eating and drinking within the mortuary area, in relation to burials and possibly also at other times. When the other four contexts from *Table 9* are also considered, the available material is not as extensive but nevertheless indicative of similar practices. The material from the grave or graves at

¹¹²⁷ E.g. Weisshaar 1990, 1f.

¹¹²⁸ Rambach 2000b, 258, 263. Other parallels are to be found within the Kampos group and more generally the Grotta-Pelos group.

Kalamaki presents a miniature version of Cheliotomylos and Zygouries, with a variety of bowls of saucer type and similar, as well as some sauceboats, but only rare instances of closed vessels (*Table 9*). In this instance, all vessels appear to have come from within the chamber (although the context was disturbed by the road construction that led to its discovery). At Perachora-Vouliagmeni the vessels were definitely deposited in the grave, and the complete specimens in a niche that was cut into the western end of it. This may be a regional difference in ritual practices in comparison with the find contexts at Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi. The plentiful jugs and the equally plentiful bowls and saucers correspond, as in the two Attic cases, however, to a ceremony including at least a liquid component, but also likely food of some sort, and also find a parallel in the saucers from the nearby cave. It should be emphasised, however, that the graves outside Attica and Euboea are mostly single/isolated instances. Therefore, if a separation was made between that which ultimately ended up in the grave and that which did not, any outside deposits have not been preserved or found. If my reinterpretation of the shaft fills at Zygouries is accepted, however, it is possible that this material was originally deposited or left outside and in the close vicinity of the graves, and, by way of erosion, ended up in the shafts after the graves had lost their covers.¹¹²⁹ In this scenario there is no way of deciding whether the fill in which the material was found was actually in the grave by which it was used, whether it belonged to other graves (the excavated graves at Zygouries are rather widely distributed), or whether, perhaps, it should be seen as traces of a more general practice within the cemetery.

By comparison with Aghios Kosmas and Tsepi, the picture of the Manika cemetery is still fragmentary, even though many graves have been excavated and numerous preliminary and some final publications presented. The material as presented in *Table 9* presents a very even picture that is difficult to interpret further. For this context, the indications of eating and drinking are given by the excavators themselves. In terms of traces from outside the tombs, Sapouna-Sakellarakis noted that “remains of small animals” had been found in some tombs, and proposed that traces of burnt bone and earth in some tombs may be remains of funeral pyres and meals by the tomb entrance.¹¹³⁰ She also suggested that frying pans, “dishes for offering food to a divinity or to the dead”, were introduced into the graves carrying food, since animal bones were found in them.¹¹³¹ However, in this latter case at least, the indication is rather that the food in the frying-pans was intended for the de-

¹¹²⁹ A small number of post-EH sherds are included among the sherds analysed by Pullen (1985, 108f.).

¹¹³⁰ Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 248; Alram-Stern 2004, 305.

¹¹³¹ Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1987a, 240, 264. Seven frying pans in grave 7 were noted as containing bones. That the bones were animal bones was not actually stated but must be inferred from her interpretation of them. Also, Davis 2001, 38, n. 69.

ceased, but perhaps nevertheless as the deceased's share of a larger meal taking place outside the grave, as in the story.

A parallel for this may be the find from a context not included in *Table 9*. Traces of what is likely to be a grave meal were found by the EH I burial of a woman mentioned above from the Apollo Maleatas site.¹¹³² Large fragments of ceramic vessels, a large bowl with mending holes, and more than two closed coarse-ware pots were found close to, but outside the pit, by the head of the dead woman. In the pots were found traces of decomposed organic material and burning, with bones of lamb on one of the large sherds (could the sherd have been used as plate?). An andesite grinder and millstone, as well as a small crusher, were found above the pottery.¹¹³³ For Tsepi, two finds from the lower layers of the pit provide one final hint at the fact that animals were somehow included in the rituals. One pedestal of a broken fruitstand was found to contain some bones, and standing in the lowest level of the pit was a large wide bowl. The bowl held a sherd of a large vessel, and above it a large animal bone, a small globular bowl and a pebble. Beside the bowl lay the articulated skull and jaw bone of a large animal (which was thus likely placed whole in the pit).¹¹³⁴

Apart from these references to animal bone, however, it must be said that evidence for drinking outweighs the evidence for eating in all these Early Helladic contexts. At least, in contrast to the contexts used in the 'feasting discourse' of recent years,¹¹³⁵ animal bones are never abundant in Early Helladic mortuary contexts. In the concept of 'feasting' it is more or less understood that the people involved were eating and not only drinking. This is one aspect where recent discourse differs from earlier studies involving mainly drinking ceremonies. In studies that emphasise the embodied experience of funeral rituals, the consumption of food and drink is equated with being consumed into the society, and paralleled with humans also being consumed, at the end of their life, by death. As eating and drinking can be said to *make* people socially (not only biologically), through the experiences of the human body, death can be said to *unmake* people in both senses.¹¹³⁶ The funeral rituals is an arena for both: the dead person is disentangled from their social position in the society, while other social personae are formed and developed. The emphasis has been on this latter part, on conspicuous consumption of lavish meals from whole animals, cattle and pig, becoming a tool in the forging and upholding of social hierarchies and social relationships in gen-

¹¹³² Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004.

¹¹³³ Theodorou-Mavrommatidi 2004, 1172.

¹¹³⁴ Pantelidou Gofa 2000b, 34, pls. 15b, 16a–b; Pantelidou Gofa 2000a, 31, pl. 20. It can also be noted that although the soil in pit 39 was dark in colour, there was no ash nor traces of burning (Pantelidou Gofa 2000b, 34).

¹¹³⁵ Cf. Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004, for the Mycenaean sanctuary at Agios Konstantinos, Methana; also Wright (ed.) 2004.

¹¹³⁶ E.g. Hamilakis 1998, 115–119.

eral. A parallel can be seen here with the Greek historical age with large animal offerings to the gods and the appended meals for the participants.

Fragments like these, although geographically and chronologically set apart, are the only evidence of the type of food consumed during burial rituals in the Early Helladic period. That food and not only drink was nevertheless included is indicated also by some circumstantial evidence. In terms of the possible uses of the most common shapes, the sauceboats, saucers and bowls of different kinds would be appropriate for both eating and drinking. However, if we should visualise not only serving from the pot alone, or directly from a roasting lamb, we find ourselves short of serving vessels, both for liquids and for solid food. These would most likely be larger open bowls, basins or jars. Potential serving vessels, however, are not missing, just outnumbered, as should be expected, by the smaller vessels. One example is the jugs from Perachora-Vouliagmeni already discussed above. Pieces of large open bowls and large basins are mentioned from Cheliotomylos, apart from the very few vessels of this sort that were specifically numbered and included in the general ‘bowl/saucer’ category in *Table 9*. It is not clear, however, from the compilation of the sherds from the fill of the graves at Zygories, if any of the jars or bowls, or any of the body sherds (not included in the table) came from vessels of a larger type.

If larger vessels were in use and left at the site, they are likely to be more easily broken, especially outside the graves, and to be counted among the sherds rather than the catalogued vessels (as was the case at Cheliotomylos). Turning to Attica, this seems to be the case at Aghios Kosmas, for example, where one vessel shape that is said to have been represented by “very many fragments”, but with only one occurrence in the catalogue, is the biconical necked jar of “considerable size”. The catalogued example measured 0.243 m in height and had a circumference of 0.73 metres (corresponding to a diameter of about 25 centimetres; the diameter of the opening, however, was only 11 centimetres).¹¹³⁷ That this type of vessel was defined as being of considerable size goes to show that the majority of the vessels from the cemetery at Aghios Kosmas, both open and closed, were much smaller.¹¹³⁸ The only catalogued large vessels were found in a special deposit in the area north of Graves 25 and 30 (‘Area of larger vases’). The excavation there revealed eight vessels. Four were open vessels, bowls, with a height range of

¹¹³⁷ Mylonas 1959, 71 (shape C-28), no. 239, p. 110.

¹¹³⁸ A survey of all vessels, open and closed, from the inside and outside the graves at Aghios Kosmas, reveals that only a very small number have a height (especially closed vessels) and/or width (especially open vessels) over ten centimetres. Most, in fact, range between five and nine centimetres, and the vessels that were classified as miniature by Mylonas were all minute, with a height (as they are all jars) range of 3–4 centimetres (Mylonas 1959, 86, nos. 193, 196, 98, no. 211, 105, no. 219). Thus, the single miniature vessel giving the classification ‘rare’ in *Table 9* from this cemetery results only from the fact that this was the only very small vessel that was not defined within the usual shapes, instead being labelled with the generic term ‘miniature jar’ (Mylonas 1959, 105, Grave 29, no. 219).

0.09–0.29 metres, and a width of opening, 0.21–0.328 metres.¹¹³⁹ Another two vessels were closed: one of the necked jar variety (C-28), already mentioned above and of similar size, and one handleless jar of the type also found within the graves (C-26).¹¹⁴⁰ Finally, also in the deposit were one bowl with flat base and of much smaller size, and a fragment of another, with an upright band handle attached to the rim giving it the “appearance of a ladle or a scoop”.¹¹⁴¹ The assemblage gives the impression of a set of serving vessels deposited after a finished meal. Mylonas commented frequently on the water-damaged and friable state of the vessels in general. In the case of these larger vessels “moisture had almost dissolved them; yet we were able to recover and piece them together”.¹¹⁴² It seems certain that the deposition in this case saved the vessels from being absolutely dissolved or utterly mixed up and possibly spread out over a large area.

Finally, I would like to consider a find context from outside the studied regions, a context that is not mortuary but is nevertheless to be put within a ritual sphere with possible parallels to burial rituals. In fact, the composition of pottery shapes from Zygouries and Cheliotomylos find a close and very interesting parallel in this find context recently published from the ‘ritual tumulus’ at the Altis at Olympia.¹¹⁴³ In trench P20 by the eastern border of the mound (*Fig. 38*), including a part of the mound’s cover of stones, the stone border and an area beyond it, a number of sherds were collected. The sherds were all generally small but could be fitted to larger wall profiles. A third of the feature sherds could be assigned to sauceboats (24–27 individual sauceboats), two to askoi and two to jars, three to small closed vessels, and the rest were identified as coming from small bowls/saucers, saucers on a ring base, and to conical, straight-sided bowls (Näpfe). A relatively low percentage of the sherds came from vessels of medium coarse and coarse fabric. A large number of obsidian blades, in contrast to contemporary EH II assemblages in the area, were also found in connection with the sherds (the obsidian blades were short, only around three centimetres).¹¹⁴⁴ In addition, trench P 20 also contained a large number of mussels (mostly *Cardium*-mussels) and land snails (Weinberg snails: *Helix figulina* Rossmässler or *Helix cincta* Müller).¹¹⁴⁵ Combining the different parts of the assemblage, Rambach proposed the likelihood of ritual, possibly seasonal feasting by the tumulus in the EH II period, including the offering and consumption of the snails and mussels. The land snails are above ground only during short peri-

¹¹³⁹ Mylonas 1959, nos. 229–230, 238, 272. Vessel no. 272 was given a height of 0.029 in the catalogue, but *fig. 158* makes clear the error of an added decimal.

¹¹⁴⁰ Mylonas 1959, 110, nos. 239, 273.

¹¹⁴¹ Mylonas 1959, 110f., nos. 274–275. See also Nilsson (2004, 161) for a note on the possible use of this shape.

¹¹⁴² Mylonas 1959, 106.

¹¹⁴³ For more on the Olympia tumulus, see above, *Chapter 5*.

¹¹⁴⁴ Rambach 2003, 243f., n. 80 (obsidian).

¹¹⁴⁵ Rambach 2003, 245, n. 86.

ods in the spring and autumn, which would give a possible timeframe for the events, as well as a possible meaning as a fertility ritual connected with the renewal of life.¹¹⁴⁶

This find context does not only comprise a good parallel for the composition of finds presented in relation to eating and drinking by the graves, but acts also as a reminder to widen the frameworks for our explorations into an Early Helladic ritual sphere, regarding contexts as well as contents of these rituals. If eating and drinking was a part of Early Helladic mortuary practices in the vicinity of the graves, and the evidence presented above strongly suggests that they were, it seemingly did not include the display and preparation of whole or large chunks of animals on the site. At least it has left no traces. It is quite possible that the symbolic value of cattle, pigs, sheep and goats was not expended within the mortuary sphere.¹¹⁴⁷ Instead, then, in the story, to allow eating by the graves, cooked food in the form of a stew is included on the menu, a meal that would have left few or no traces in the archaeological record.

Some years have passed now since she passed from the living. She still lives on, through her children, through the memory of others, through the places where she lived. Many times since then has the path been walked to the place where the people of the past lie. At one time, the stone and rubble was again removed and the chamber aired. That time, her bones and the bones behind her, were cleaned and moved to the sides of the chamber. That evening there was a feast in the village, lambs were roasted over an open fire, dances were danced and songs were sung.

Another time, another grave was opened. This time, some bones, the skull and the long bones, were removed and put with others in a place made especially for this purpose. At these times perhaps, and others, someone will have stopped by her grave, placed a fig, a spring flower or a pebble, and thought of what was once and what is now. Visits will have followed upon visits, there, where we place our dead.

What comes afterwards?

The order of events presented in the narrative is the order I devised for the workings of the story. It is, however, an order that finds support in the archaeological material at hand, and has many anthropological parallels. The

¹¹⁴⁶ Rambach 2003, 245f.; also Rambach 2002, 192.

¹¹⁴⁷ For examples to the contrary for a contemporaneous but geographically distant context, see Grant 1991.

structure of the story is in line with the ritual structure laid out by van Gennep,¹¹⁴⁸ and idealised sequences of mortuary behaviour as the one presented below.

Although the particular sequence in *Figure 78* was not before me when devising the story, all of the stages in this idealised sequence are included in it in some way. This goes to show that different stages are familiar to me as a person, from personal experience or from practices read of and heard of from different places and times. It is, however, not an obligating sequence; obviously different historic and prehistoric communities would have had practices following a death that more or less conformed to this idealised sequence, utilising only some steps or emphasising some over others.¹¹⁴⁹ The practices are also likely to vary within the communities, depending on the context and the individuals involved. With the story and the discussion above I do not attempt to force the Early Helladic communities into this model, or to merge the different graves and cemeteries into a static unity. Instead I have emphasised variation, and the stages of the story should first and foremost be seen as avenues towards a greater and fuller understanding of the workings of Early Helladic mortuary practices (as we know them from the archaeological material), and their meaning for the communities as wholes. Some stages find better support in the archaeological material than do others.

When we come to the question of what happened afterwards, what happened after the ceremonies at the time of burial were concluded, the archaeological material for the graves and cemeteries considered is initially silent. The contexts of finds by graves and in cemeteries do not allow a definite separation from the time of a burial, although all finds outside the graves (at least) may theoretically have been deposited in a post-burial context. The post-burial handling of the bones, however, tells us that the sequence of practices upon an Early Helladic death did not end with the figurative ‘sealing of the grave’. Whether this meant rearrangement of the bones within the chamber of the grave, the moving of the bones from a primary burial somewhere else, or the removal of whole or parts of skeletons from the burial chamber for deposition somewhere else, it was an act that must have taken place a considerable period of time after the death of that individual.

¹¹⁴⁸ van Gennep 1960.

¹¹⁴⁹ Cf. Chapman 1994, 42.

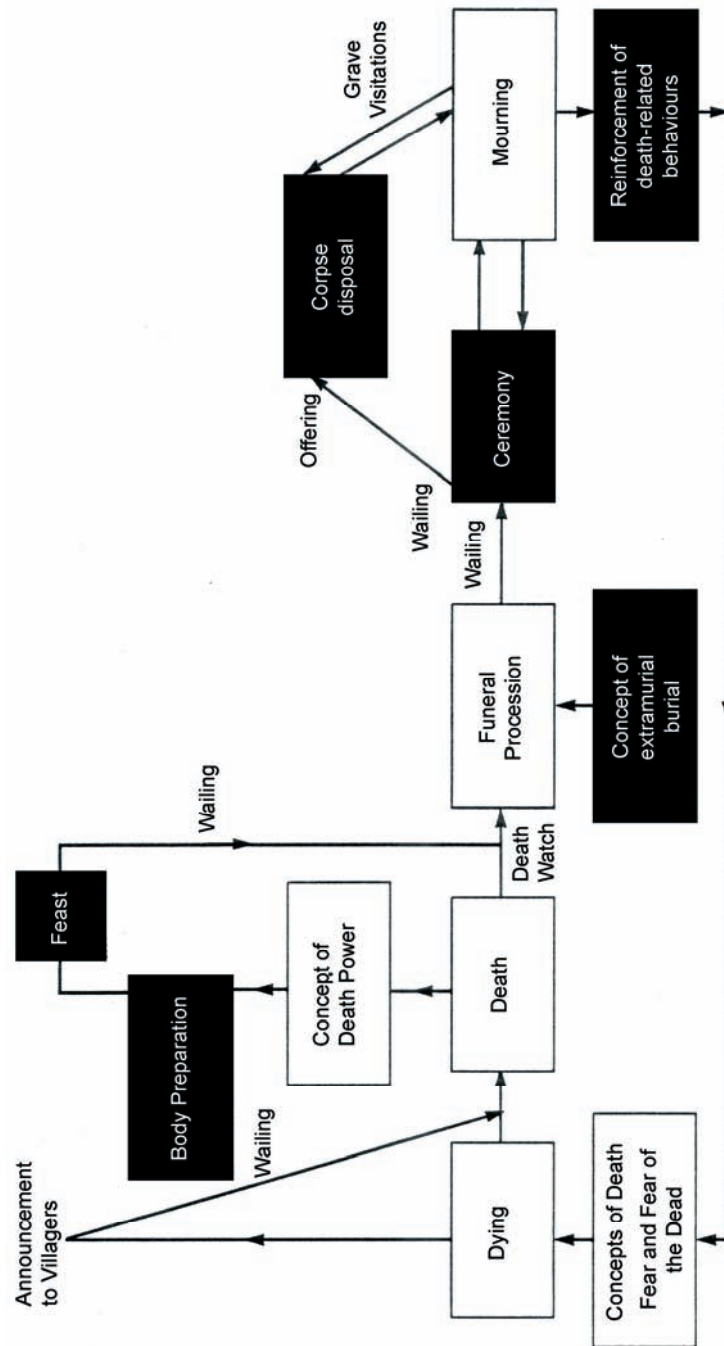


Figure 78. Idealised sequence of mortuary behaviour. Black boxes indicate areas of potential archaeological visibility (after Chapman 1994, fig. 1).

As the very first stages of the mortuary ritual would have been dependent on the increasing stiffness of the limbs, any handling of the bones would have been dependent on the decomposition of the flesh of the bones. The first practices had a window of opportunity of some 12–24 hours, while these final practices needed several years before they could be completed. The factors influencing the rate of decomposition are so many and varied that a general estimate is very seldom given. Factors such as health at the time of death, interval and climate before burial, and type and climate of the grave will all influence the speed of decomposition to various degrees, as also will whether or not the dead were buried in clothes, in a coffin, lying on something (straw, for example, is known to considerably accelerate the process).¹¹⁵⁰

If handling of the bones were a part of the ritual, I would like to see it treated in the first place as a practice in its own right, whether it entailed the movement of bones within or between areas. As a ritual that took place after a considerable period of time had passed, it may be seen as a closing ritual that started with the burial of the newly dead body and ended with the storing away of its bones. The decomposition of the body may be equated also with the unmaking of the dead as a social persona.¹¹⁵¹ The clean bones may be seen as the confirmation of the final passing of the dead from the living, the end of the mourning cycle, and the end of the individual by incorporation, along with the bones, into the sphere of past dead. These rituals may or may not have included ‘airing’ the bones; they may have been performed by and for a limited number of people or may have been communal. In either case, the arena may have been the individual grave or a communal space. As a separate act, it may also have included specific acts and separate depositions of objects as part of the ritual. It may even have been a practice that outweighed the primary burial in importance. In relation to a ritual cleaning of the bones, we may perhaps imagine different ointments and incenses. Instead of routinely attributing anything found in the area of the grave to the primary burials, we should allow for some of the vessels and objects to have been deposited at a much later point in time.

Although there is no archaeological support for visits to the graves at other points after burial, if a ritual of caring for the bones took place after a certain number of years, or when a new death deemed it necessary, it can be hypothesised that other (lesser?) rituals, and other visits, were part of the process between death and exhumation. It is also possible that communal collective rituals took place within the space of the graves or cemetery, rituals that were not directed at one particular individual. The vessels thrown into pit 39 at Tsepi, for example, need not all have been deposited at the time of a burial in the cemetery.

¹¹⁵⁰ Mant 1987; Nilsson Stutz 2003, 145–148.

¹¹⁵¹ Murphy 1998, 34f.; Hamilakis 1998, 116.

The time line for these hypothesised rituals cannot of course be ascertained, nor even that they ever existed. A case study from a rural village of inland Greece as documented in the 1970s will serve to present some possibilities, as well as the time line of events in an area at least not geographically far distanced from the graves and cemeteries visited above (*Table 10*).

Table 10. *Ritual sequence after a death in the village of Potamia in northern Thessaly, in the Greek countryside in the 1970s (based on information from Danforth & Tsiraras 1982, esp. 35–69).*

<i>Time after death</i>	<i>Type of ceremony</i>	<i>Men/ women</i>
12–24 hours	Burial	M, W
3 days	First visit to the grave after funeral	W
9 days	Visit to the grave	W
40 days	End of primary mourning period; sepulchre finished.	W
6 months	Visit to the grave	W
1 year	Visit to the grave	W
5 years	Exhumation	W
<i>Also:</i>	Close relative: - Daily visits to the grave until exhumation - Occasional visits to ossuary After exhumation, the deceased are honoured through collective rituals	
----- 40 days– exhumation -----	----- Variation in mourning period: depending on sex and relationship to the deceased -----	----- -----
<i>Local variation in time:</i>	Exhumation after: 3, 5, 7 years, or no specified period of time.	
<i>and space:</i>	1. Communal ossuary 2. Reburial in same grave after a short period out in the air 3. Remains exhumed at the time of the death of a close relative and immediately reburied by the feet of or beneath that newly dead. 4. No exhumation	

There are many possible parallels between 1970s Potamia and the Early Helladic graves under consideration. They are of course only parallels, and in no way should the later example be made to explain the so much earlier. As a point of comparison with the ritual and timescale as proposed above,

the timeframe up to the funeral and the varying period of time that was allowed to elapse before exhumation of the bones can nevertheless be noted. In the Greek Orthodox Christian village of Potamia, the condition of the bones at exhumation could tell how the deceased had led his or her life, inadequately decomposed bones hinted at sins not yet forgiven (or bad natural conditions).¹¹⁵² It is worth emphasising also the variation that existed within the burial rituals in terms of how the bones were handled after exhumation, or in cases left after first burial without further ‘handling’. It is a variation that is also suggested by the Early Helladic material, and future analyses of bones in context may prove that all four alternatives were practised also in the Early Helladic period.

The case study of Potamia also includes practices that we will never be able to confirm for an Early Helladic context, such as the presence of women only in all practices after the initial burial, and variations in mourning period depending on sex and relationship to the deceased. Another point is the small and larger ceremonies conducted at varying points in time after the burial, and what they may have held. A common ritual at all visits to the grave was the lighting of candles, at some ceremonies a ritual specialist, a priest, was present, at others not, and bereaved mothers could spend many hours and days by the tombs of their children or husbands.¹¹⁵³ All communal eating in relation to death rituals was also believed to find its way to the deceased, and many of the stipulated visits to the grave included the handing out of food at the village square or in front of the church.¹¹⁵⁴

Within the Early Helladic material considered above there is evidence to suggest both the smaller and larger gathering arenas around each grave that may be connected with communal gatherings.

The individual and the group

Broodbank has noted how in comparison with Cretan house and tholos tombs, “the Cycladic cemeteries make less permanent statements about a community’s place in the islandscape, but lay more emphasis on the continuing visibility of the individual.”¹¹⁵⁵ With the predominance of multiply-used graves on the EBA Mainland, however, a reversed statement could be made to fit the material considered above. Similar to their Cycladic contemporaries, the Early Helladic cemeteries were not visual monuments in their localities as were the above ground constructions on Minoan Crete. I think it is difficult to get past the notion, however, that the clustering of graves was a

¹¹⁵² Danforth & Tsiaras 1982, 48–50.

¹¹⁵³ Danforth & Tsiaras 1982, e.g. 10–14.

¹¹⁵⁴ Danforth & Tsiaras 1982, e.g. 44, 47.

¹¹⁵⁵ Broodbank 2000, 171.

strong statement of communality. The choice of placing a grave by others in a group must be seen as a statement in relation to those who did not, of a certain affinity among the graves in one cluster, while at the same time similar manifestations could have been active within the cluster.

I think that the Early Helladic mortuary sphere could be comprised of several levels of visibility, and I am not ready to give one precedence over the others. Thus, on the level of the cemetery we have the outward display of unity. Communal areas can in instances also be identified within the cemeteries of the EBA Aegean. So, for Crete there is evidence of paved and firmly trampled areas outside Mesara tholoi, suggestive of rituals including more people than would fit into the more limited chambers.¹¹⁵⁶ For the EBA Cyclades, Doumas identified large stone paved platforms in connection with some cemeteries.¹¹⁵⁷ These platforms have been regarded as arenas for the performance of communal rituals complementing the individuality of single burials.¹¹⁵⁸ If something similar once existed at Manika it has not yet been found. The tendency, however, of the graves to be clustered in smaller groups would suggest that larger expanses of unused space may exist between the groups,¹¹⁵⁹ spaces which may very well have been used for larger gatherings. At Tsepi, a type of communality may perhaps be inferred from the continuously used pit 39 at the edge of the cemetery (as it is presently known from excavation). For Aghios Kosmas, the already frequently mentioned area north of Graves 25 and 30 requires some special consideration. This area produced a variety of unique deposits, each indicative of acts of display and performance at this very spot (*Fig. 79*).

At the centre of this part of the cemetery was Area A, a rectangular area measuring 1.70 x 1.40 metres.¹¹⁶⁰ It was found irregularly paved with small stones and pebbles, and it was covered with many widely scattered fragments of bones (human presumably, although this is not stated). Mylonas interpreted the find as disturbed bones from nearby graves. Connected with this area was Area V, where the 46 single-handled cups were found, and which Mylonas interpreted as belonging to the same graves as the bones in Area A. Also found in the same area was the deposit containing a lesser number of larger vessels, and Area O with its 'newly' knapped blades and a layer of blades below it. In an artificial fill, one further area, Area B, was found strewn with sherds including two restorable vases (a sauceboat, the only restorable example from the cemetery, and a single-handled cup). Close to this area was found the shallow trench with the extended skeleton. "A

¹¹⁵⁶ Murphy 1998, 37.

¹¹⁵⁷ Doumas 1977, 35f., 64. Cemeteries where these platforms have been identified are Lakkoudhes, Lakkoudhes A, and Agioi Anargyroi, all on Naxos.

¹¹⁵⁸ Broodbank 2000, 171.

¹¹⁵⁹ Cf. Sampson 1987, 19.

¹¹⁶⁰ The whole area north of grave 25 and 30 was presented in less than two pages (Mylonas 1959, 105–107), with an appended catalogue of finds (pp. 107–112).

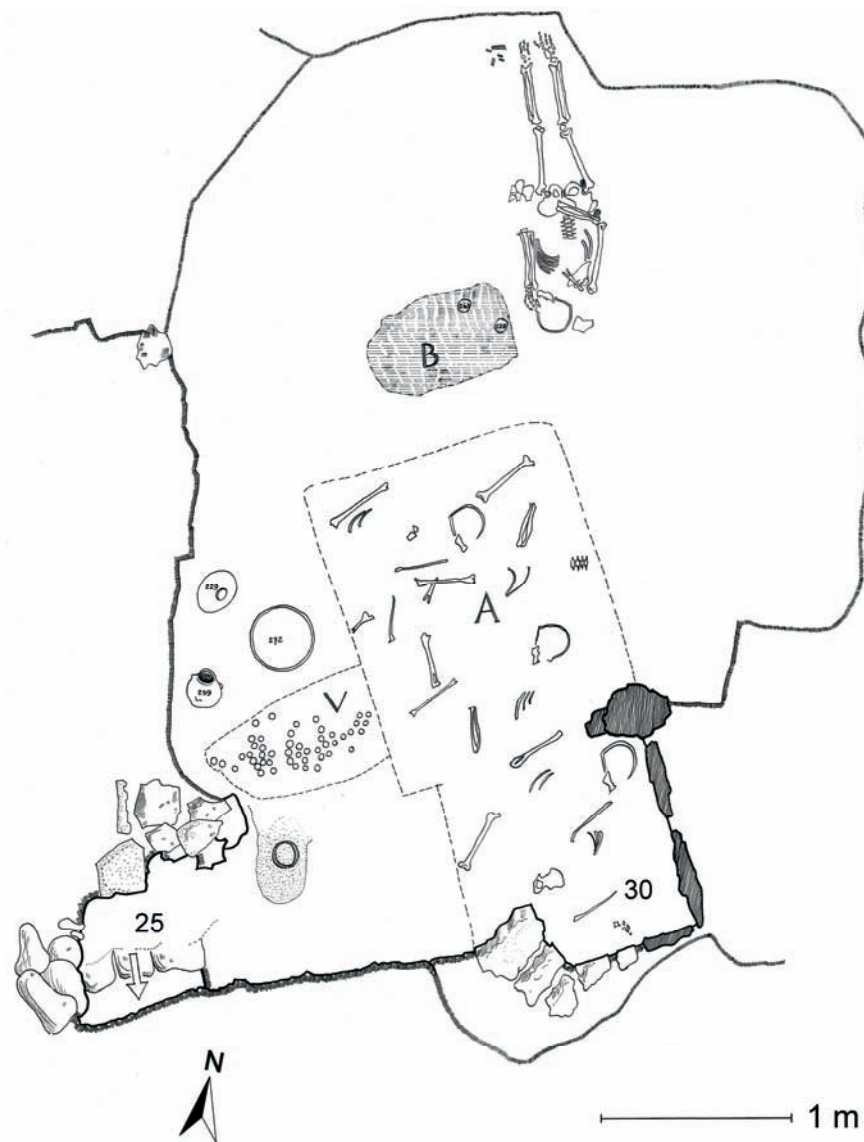


Figure 79. Aghios Kosmas. Area north of Graves 25 and 30 (after Mylonas 1959, fig. 49)

good many pebbles and small stones were wedged around the body” and it was covered with sand.¹¹⁶¹

It is impossible to get a clear picture of the stratigraphic relationships between these finds. It is noteworthy, however, that Areas A, B, and V were all covered with the similar irregular paving of pebbles and small stones, on which the bones and vases were found. Is it possible that all these pebbled areas belong to the same pavement, irregularly spread out and perhaps renewed several times? All finds, except perhaps the bones strewn over area A, certainly appear to be *in situ*, and it can be argued that they all belong to a context of practices centred on Area A. The fact that the obsidian appears to have been found stratified in two layers may be a sign of something other than a one time occurrence. The single-handled cups in Area V, also, need not all have been deposited at one time (although their deposition is not likely to be greatly extended in time). On a general level, the plentiful cups are strangely reminiscent of the hat-like vases found in large numbers in connection with the platform (but never in the graves) at the Agioi Anargyroi cemetery on Naxos.¹¹⁶² Finally, instead of being disturbed bones from a nearby grave as Mylonas suggested, the bones in Area A may be *in situ* and tell of continuous handling of bones in this area,¹¹⁶³ as may (as suggested already by Mylonas) the extended skeleton.

I believe that the way to understand these different deposits and the area in which they were found may be to regard them as parts of a whole, and perhaps also to interpret them as traces of practices set apart from the acts by the individual graves (in location and significance but not necessarily in content). If thus interpreted, the area may be seen as connected with a number of the nearby graves; a lucky survival of deposits that at one time existed at other locations in the cemetery also,¹¹⁶⁴ or to the cemetery as a whole, as miniature parallel to the platforms of some Cycladic cemeteries.

In parallel with these areas for suggested common use, there is the context of each grave, translatable to the group of people sharing in the use of one specific grave. The stone boundaries around some graves at Aghios Kosmas and all at Tsepi have already been discussed, along with the fact that most grave gifts at the former site were found outside the graves but within the limits of these boundaries. It has also been mentioned that at both sites some kind of structures existed above the cists. At Tsepi, these superstructures were especially elaborate (*Fig. 80*). The roof slabs were covered by earth, and above this earth, at and rising above the level of the ancient ground level, a frame was built over the cist, and this frame was probably filled with

¹¹⁶¹ Mylonas 1959, 107.

¹¹⁶² Doulas 1977, 63f., 103. Their shape, however, seems to preclude their use as cups; Doulas suggested a use as braziers or incense burners.

¹¹⁶³ Cf. Nilsson (2004, 159) for the connection of Area A with secondary burial rituals.

¹¹⁶⁴ One possible location would be the sandy areas, apparently not used for graves, between Graves 2 and 23.

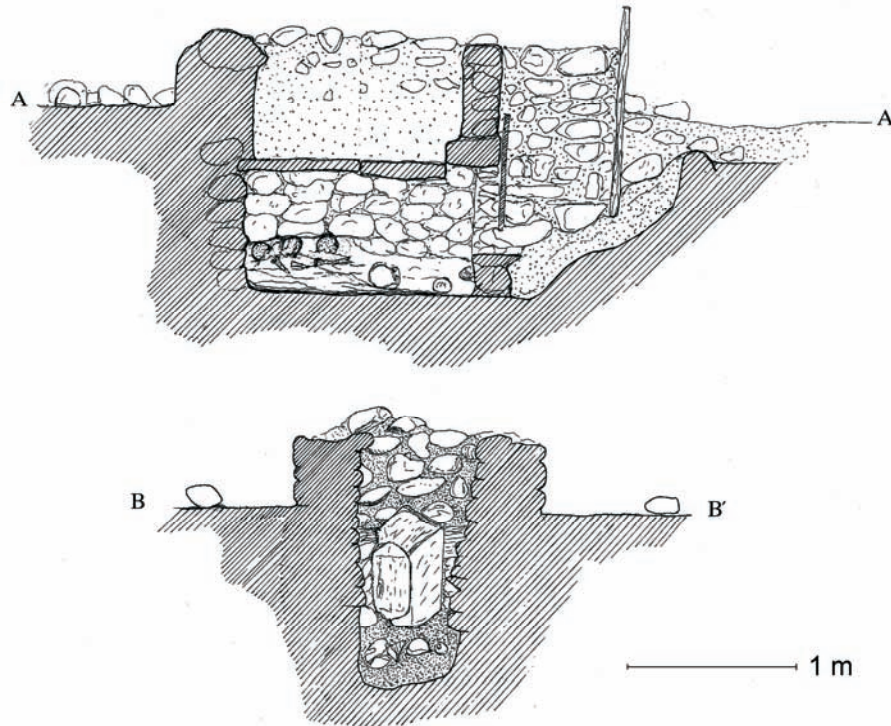


Figure 80. Tsepi. Tomb architecture illustrating the superstructure (after Pantelidou Gofa 2005, figs. 222–223, courtesy of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

earth. A continuation of the “platform” thus formed could be seen in the walls facing the sides of the filled in prothyron.¹¹⁶⁵ In well-preserved graves at Aghios Kosmas, the superstructures seem similar to those at Tsepi, with walls built over the grave and the area between them filled with stones.¹¹⁶⁶ At this site, however, they were placed directly on the roof slabs and, following Mylonas, served as counter-weights to stabilise the large roof slabs commonly laid along the length of the tomb, one from each short side, to meet over the middle of the cist.¹¹⁶⁷ This interpretation cannot be applied to Tsepi graves, since the slabs were first covered with earth, and its use would seem to be more of a marker of the grave. That the superstructure at Aghios Kosmas also had some purpose above the suggested functional one is suggested

¹¹⁶⁵ Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 354.

¹¹⁶⁶ Mylonas 1959, e.g. grave 16, p. 95.

¹¹⁶⁷ It is not certain that at Aghios Kosmas the space between the walls was filled with earth as at Tsepi, but the graves had mostly collapsed and in Grave 16, one of the best preserved tombs, the roof slab was in place, as well as the walls (on the north, east and west sides), and between them and over the roof slabs “a good number of stones were found” (Mylonas 1959, 95), and Mylonas suggests the piling of earth and stone on top of the roof slabs (Mylonas 1959, 120). At Tsepi also, the earth fill of the frame was only preserved in some instances (Pantelidou Gofa 2005, 354, e.g. figs. 189, 212, 222).

by Grave 20, where ‘counter-weight’ walls were in place although the roof slabs in this case were unusually placed from long side to long side, resting firmly on both sides.¹¹⁶⁸ Similar stone arrangements were found above each grave at some EC cemeteries (Lakkoudhes, Akrotiri, Agioi Anargyroi), and were interpreted by Doulas both as markers of the grave as well as “for the practice of specific rites upon it by the dead’s relatives”.¹¹⁶⁹ The function at Tsepi and Aghios Kosmas may indeed have been similar, and be placed within the rituals performed by the individual graves. No grave goods have, to my knowledge, however, been found in the constructions (although poorly preserved), and it may be hypothesised that these rituals included offerings of perishable kind: liquids, flowers, grain, some foodstuffs or perhaps a pebble.

The small sizes of the graves on the EBA Mainland, as well as in the Cyclades, suggest that the rituals must all have taken place in the open, for all to see. Although the different levels of visibility of communal areas and each grave structure may translate into two different ritual locations that may also mean different ritual foci, the number of participants may very well have been the same. A small or a large number of participants may have been present at both. Variation may instead be due to the occasion: the place of the specific act in the ritual sequence (within one coherent but composite ritual) or ‘calendar’ (between completed rituals), and to the person or persons involved, both living and dead.

Finally, at the level of the Early Helladic individual, we may hypothesise visits by individuals to the cemeteries and to the place of specific graves. The practices at this point have left no traces that can be singled out from any other material collected by Early Helladic graves. I cannot help but make the suggestion, however, that pebbles, perhaps together with a flower or some foodstuff, may have been part of it. Pebbles were surely ubiquitous, but they keep popping up in many different contexts: pebbles stacked the 46 cups together in Aghios Kosmas Area V, pebbles were possibly deposited on top of roof structures, pebbles were used for smashing vessels in pit 39 at Tsepi, and pebbles were often used to pave the floors of graves. Perhaps a pebble was the equivalent of the candle that is often lit today in cemeteries and at specific graves.

In relation to the bodies in the Early Helladic graves, individuality can only in a few instances be plainly visible when viewing the contents of a grave. From an archaeological point of view of Early Helladic mortuary contexts, individuality is circumscribed by the multiple use of the graves and, when applicable, of the formality of the cemeteries. From an Early Helladic point of view, this need not have been the case. *The individual acts performed in the cemetery would have made (or had the potential to make)*

¹¹⁶⁸ Mylonas 1959, 97.

¹¹⁶⁹ Doulas 1977, 63.

the individual visible. The visibility of the Early Helladic dead, therefore, would have been most pronounced at the moment of burial, through the different stages of the ritual that have been considered above, and at the time of any follow up rituals that may have been conducted before the decomposed skeletons were incorporated into the more anonymous body of past dead.

It is in this light, I think, that we should see the vessels arranged around the graves at Aghios Kosmas, the possibility of rituals by the grave before the body was placed in the chamber, the interest for body symbolism, ornamentation and manipulation, and a rich variety in funeral gifts, assembled through life by individuals, and a use and possibly display of these before they were deposited in the chamber with the body or outside the grave. In parallel and in conjunction with the function that the mortuary acts had for the continuous life of the living, all stages of the burial practices would have helped to form the memory of this individual moment, and of the memory of the person to whom the moment was primarily dedicated, even though it was a moment in a long line of similar moments, similar burial rituals.

10. Coming to an end

The major aim of this study has been to people the Early Helladic period. Although I have considered several general patterns, the focus has primarily been on regional and local circumstances, with contextually specific analyses of material culture and its significance for the lives of individuals and groups. I hope to have painted a picture of the Early Helladic people living their lives, moving through and experiencing their settlements and their surroundings, being actively engaged in the appearance and workings of these surroundings.

What new knowledge, then, has my study brought? Initially, I think that it has become clear that methodologically there is much to be gained by concentrating on the small scale and on the context specific. Variation has been a key word, and for me the Early Helladic world has grown increasingly varied and regional during the course of my studies. In this last chapter, it is time to sum up the results of both positive and negative kinds, and thus the potentials and problems that lie in the questions considered in this book.

One point of departure was the view of material culture as both structuring and structured by human practice. Thus, the significance of material culture is something very relative and context specific, as is the significance of space. In *Chapters 2* and *3*, I set out to examine the private and public, and to highlight the interactions within the built landscape, of architecture and people, considering the perceptions of bounded space. As a main case-study in the first chapter, I chose the House of the Tiles as Lerna. The motivation for this choice was double: I wanted to attempt to consider this epitome of Early Helladic architecture as any one building, and I wanted to position it within the specific architectural framework of late EH II Lerna. Furthermore, through the multi-roomed complexity of the structure, the character of the building promised a multifaceted result from any attempted analysis. As I have argued, the corridor houses in general appear to get some of their definition from their locations. The use of the local topography seems highly deliberate and would, in parallel with their monumentality, have endowed them with prominent roles within their respective settlements. The perception of the House of the Tiles appears to have been very much a product of its local architectural context. In a detailed spatial analysis of the interior and exterior of the building I attempted to illustrate the relative significance of space, which moves beyond any concepts of the public and private. In my alternative view of the building, the use of and movement around

and within the building is presented as a sum of the exterior and the interior working with the surrounding architecture. The result is a more dynamic view of architecture which could well be applied to other Early Helladic contexts and buildings.

An embodied view of the house was also the goal of the next chapter. By highlighting the Early Helladic house as a meaningful scene for daily life rather than a neutral container of material culture, I ventured to propose structural as well as day-to-day biographies of houses. The result was biographies with many gaps, emphasising the problems involved as well as the questions that need to be considered. However, I believe that the exercise also offers a tool for understanding life within and in relation to the houses, as well as to the history of the settlements in general. Day-to-day biographies may be a helpful tool for evaluating our views of indoor and outdoor activities, as well as of activities set within households in relation to the contexts where we seem to have locations for more specialised activities. Central to these issues is the reliability of the archaeological record and the values we give to compositions of objects found within a certain context, thus considering the circumstances for its formation. For the Early Helladic period it is possible to identify some actual snapshots of activities, as well as larger contexts where the activities appear to have been arrested in time. Based on these contexts in particular, we may take a further step in picturing the day-to-day. In considering the circumstances behind find contexts we also cross over to the structural biographies of houses, considering the final days in the use of a house. These more expanded biographies, however, may be divided into at least three parts, each connected with the choices and preferences of people related to the house in different ways. On a structural level, the biographies put emphasis also on the histories of relationships between houses, contemporary and through time.

These histories, and the historicity of settlements and life within them, were directly targeted in *Chapters 4* and *5*. It was considered how the passing of time may have been perceived and valued, and how daily life supplied a forum for the meeting of the past and present, and, furthermore, how Early Helladic individuals may have acted on this meeting. The case-studies of Lerna and Tiryns Unterburg showed that while there was a continuous development of the spatial and architectural settings in the settlements, change was coupled with continuity. The comparison between the two case-studies made it clear that the ways of living where others have lived before could vary greatly between, and probably within, settlements. I believe that this variation could be partly and meaningfully understood in the light of the type of practices that characterised the different areas. If residential or public, for example, the place-value may be seen as similarly specific or general, individualised or communal. The result could be different developments of the kind represented at Lerna and Tiryns, with a horizontal or vertical focus, building on incorporating and/or substituting practices. Analyses of archaeo-

logical stratigraphies can be given added significance by consideration also of the possible meanings of the intersecting layers. We must thus question the ‘why’ and ‘why not’ of developments, and we need to deconstruct and people the important transitions between architectural horizons, to try to see the individual developments on the house level, and the possible choices of the people who created them.

The transitions came into focus also when considering the so-called ‘ritual tumuli’, and the potential of mounds as markers, in the following chapter. In that discussion, the moment and circumstances of the formation of the mounds were sought, and considered also in the light of what led up to their formation, and how the mounds may have been perceived in the years following their formation. I suggested that the uniqueness of the tumuli lay rather in their individual and specific biographies and less in their form. The validity of the ‘ritual tumuli’ as a group is therefore questioned. If seen as markers, the tumuli instead join a series of practices both within and beyond the Early Helladic sphere, in which a specific context or place is singled out and emphasised as special in some way. This act most probably did lead to specialised attitudes in relation to the mound for some time, manifested in specific practices and a symbolic standing within their respective communities, in relation to the mound itself, to the memory of the act of formation, and/or related to what may lie below it. Thus, I have argued that the mounds should be seen as parts of unique and contextually specific series of events—with individual histories to be interpreted.

The potential of contextual analyses has been emphasised throughout the book. In *Chapters 6–8*, I took the opportunity to combine the regional and the local. I proposed that there is much to be gained from only a rough chronological review of Early Helladic mortuary contexts. On the regional level, there are aspects that appear to be both regionally and chronologically specific. I have proposed that the variation between and within the studied regions can be interpreted in the light of other developments, on a social and political level, in the settlements during the Early Helladic period.

Central to this proposition are the discursive perceptions of the extramural and the intramural placing of the Early Helladic dead. The relationship may have worked through time and on the basis of its varying significance for the Early Helladic individuals and groups. For both practices, intramural and extramural, representativeness was found to be a major concern. The burials we have found represent only a small percentage of the deaths within the period. My analysis showed that although this may be an issue of general concern, the disagreements in the numbers remain when we do have knowledge of cemeteries with many graves in relation to contemporary settlements. How are we to view these discrepancies? I believe it is important to acknowledge the problems involved and the many possibilities that lie unanswered, even if much needs to remain on a theoretical level. We do not know if all or even most Early Helladic individuals were buried in graves of the

types that are archaeologically detectable. Only few burials have been found within the settlements, and the intramural burials can therefore with confidence be interpreted as the exceptions that prove the rule of extramural deposition. The latter, however, has yet to be found to coexist with the intramural in the form of formalised cemeteries of graves below ground. The rule in itself, therefore, need be nothing but a general rule of an extramural location, not to be immediately applied to the extramural burials that we do know of.

I believe that intramural graves found part of their significance in their relation to the rule of extramural placement, but primarily through the variation within their limited group—being varied, individual and extra-ordinary. In relation, the extramural practice may be characterised to a greater degree by tradition, solidarity and multiplicity. This, however, is a characterisation based on our knowledge of the formalised settlements best represented by contexts from Attica and Euboea. Here, also, there are gaps in our knowledge. I have proposed that in the choice of how and where to place the dead in the Early Helladic period, lies a great potential for variation based on personal preferences, abilities, approvals, traditions and special circumstances. I do not believe that the cemeteries as we know them are fully representative of extramural locations of Early Helladic dead. This placement was most probably a choice in itself, whether or not a majority choice or prerogative, and valued in the Early Helladic period in relation to other types of placements. At least, I believe it is necessary to acknowledge that, in the unaccounted deaths, there is potential for greater variation than the known cemeteries allow for. Questions that need to be considered concern the problems of detection and preservation of different types of mortuary practices, for insights into which are preserved and where.

The location may also have a great significance in itself, if we consider how the spatial separation of death was accomplished. Here again, I found variation to be of possibly central importance. We do not do the Early Helladic people justice if we insist on forming rules over large distances and times. The picture I have promoted in this book is one where the location of the extramural burials we know of was very much a utilisation of the potentials for spatial differentiation inherent in the local landscape around a settlement. The ways in which the cemeteries were incorporated into the daily practices of the settlements may have varied with the landscape, relating to distance and topographical features. Wherever specifically located, however, as far as we can judge today, daily movement and practices within the immediate surroundings of the settlements are likely to have included the burial grounds in one way or another. Once a location was chosen and the first dead placed there, the characteristics of the place, and the experiences of the practices in relation to them, are likely to have been associated. They would have acted to single out that particular locale as special in some way, and to emphasise the differentiation and the locale as geographically as well as

conceptually set apart from everyday life. The presence of formal cemeteries in itself suggests that there was a need, and a wider meaning of this differentiation. This significance may have been important for the community as a whole, or for groups within it, a significance of having a specialised burial ground, related also to specific mortuary practices.

Early Helladic knowledge and experiences in relation to the mortuary context are likely to have been individually learned and lived from early in life, and may thus be considered to be both individual as well as communal. I believe that the sphere of the dead had a role to play within the sphere of the living in many different ways. My argument is based on practices recorded in mortuary contexts, and on the cemeteries as social arenas. I have argued for the symbolic and practical significances of these practices for the society as a whole as well as for the individual members of that society. Thus, in *Chapter 9*, I have let my narrative of an Early Helladic death lead the discussion. It largely follows a real-time series of events, but the practices involved relate both backwards and forwards in time along a line of similar and related practices. I will not attempt here to further summarise this narrative of death (and life). In it, however, an attempt was made to incorporate the four points of emphasis listed in *Chapter 1*. There, they were presented as areas I felt were underexplored in previous research on the period, areas which I thought had the potential of widening our understanding of Early Helladic life in general, and everyday lives in particular. I hope that my study has begun to fill these grey areas, by visualising and emphasising regional and local contextuality, by considering material culture and practices in their own right, and by focusing on their roles in relation to the lives of Early Helladic individuals, experiencing and living these practices.

Throughout the book I have considered variation and the relative nature of practices and material culture. So, one may ask oneself, if everything is varied and relative, how can we continue studying prehistoric worlds, where no texts can guide us in the ‘right’ direction? Well, to me that is the challenge and enticement of prehistoric archaeology, it is a continuous task with many and varied possibilities.

Picturing daily life in an Early Helladic settlement

As the study is necessarily conducted from my modern viewpoint, it follows that the arguments and experiences are more mine than those of the Early Helladic individuals, but the discussions have also brought forward the potential of many and varied interpretations. Have I then found a way to people prehistory, and the Early Helladic period in particular? Coming to the end of the book, what is my view of daily life within the Early Helladic settlements?

Writing this final chapter, I still find my self hesitating when it comes to answering this question. There is certainly great potential in close-up studies of material culture and practices. I believe that an approach focusing on the sensuous Early Helladic subjects engaged in their surroundings, and thereby shaping a socially meaningful landscape, has been successful in instilling life into the Early Helladic settlements. I am not sure, however, that we are wise to present only one view of daily life. I will end this concluding chapter, nevertheless, with a consideration of three points of general concern that encompass much of what has been discussed in this book and summarised in the previous pages. They address the settings rather than the particulars of everyday life:

- Life and death

It is obvious to me that life and death, or past and present, cannot be fully understood if not seen in relation to each other, as well as in union with each other. For the Early Helladic people, this relationship may have manifested itself on a number of levels. Firstly, life expectancy was lower and child mortality higher than today. Death may not have been more natural, but it was probably more present. The communities were small and, whether or not death took place within the closest group, within one household perhaps, the event is likely to have affected most members of the community in one way or another. Similarly, new life would have been equally more present. Every new life and every death would probably have caused some restructuring of the social fabric, to a greater or lesser degree, roles changed as well as the conditions for daily life.

Life in general in a small and probably close-knit community/settlement, like those of the Early Helladic, is likely to have been crisscrossed by attachments, detachments, and interconnections, shaping meaningful social relationships of significance on the everyday level. These are likely to have existed between the living as well as beyond. Genealogies may have been formed, statements made, stories told and myths developed, all of which shaped, and continually reshaped, the settings for life and death. The burial grounds formalised early in the Early Helladic period, the practices within them, just as the relations with and creation of architectural pasts, were probably expressions by which these associations and settings were made visible and also actively manipulated.

- Time and time again

The notion of time would have been of some importance. Again, exactly how it was perceived we cannot say today. Some possibilities were considered in the introduction to *Part Three*, and time was also the central issue when discussing house biographies in the preceding *Chapter 3*. Life-

histories, whether of houses, things or people, may have affected positions and roles within the society. Associations between things and people may have added to the value of the former, or possibly devalued it, rendering it appropriate for funerary use, for example. Some objects may have been desirable for the histories with which they were connected; they may have carried with them the story of a journey across the seas, over large distances, from a locale of special significance, or for the uses for which they were intended. Individuals may have found their roles and positions within their communities based on the knowledge they had acquired, possibly the things they possessed or had control over, a control, knowledge and position achieved through time.

Time and the passing of time would have been there to be reflected upon in the replacement of houses within the settlements, in the contemporary configurations of houses built at various times. Similarly, it would have been there in the cemeteries, between and within graves, and in the stories connected with them. For houses and settlements in general, I have argued the significance of place-value, which would have involved an appreciation of linear time made especially perceptible at times when change was an immediate option. This would have been when the life-history of a house came to an end, by necessity, by accident, or by choice. Continued habitation is likely to have added to the place-value and increased the number of associations, in and through time. Knowledge of being in the world is acquired through time, and is structured by both linear and cyclical time. On a personal level, there is the acknowledgement of the differing ages of living beings; biological age working in relation to what may be called social age and position within a community. In parallel with linear time reckoning we have the cyclical, based on observations of the natural world: days and nights, seasons. Hidden in the economy of a society is also the possibility of many different ways of experiencing the passing of time, through, for example, the caring for or hunting of animals, and agricultural activities.

- The individual and the collective

By allowing for and emphasising variation within archaeological materials, I believe we make choices visibly, even if we cannot pinpoint the individuals making the choices that eventually formed the archaeological record. Ultimately, in most if not all cases, the traditions and choices of others are also relevant for the choices actually made on an individual level. By allowing for several levels of interaction between people, and levels of communality, at one end of the scale we come close to the individual working in relation to the group.

The Early Helladic graves and mortuary practices allow for many of these levels of individuality. The multiple and successive use of the graves emphasises the collective, as does the cemetery as a whole, where graves are put by

the sides of others. The choice or sanction to use the cemetery or a grave, however, need not have been all-inclusive. I have considered the odd intramural examples, as well as the instances when communal graves within the formal burial grounds were not opened, for children in the most instances but also for adults. In both cases, the singularity of these graves stand in contrast to the multiplicity of most other graves. Similarly, the consideration of the grave goods presented a varied picture. In most cases the individual objects can not be definitely connected with any one skeleton, but both the infrequent grave goods, suggestive of special actions for procurement, as well as those frequent and easily accessible, still hint at the individual actions behind the compositions of the finds. These actions should probably not be seen as directly connected with the time of death, rather reflecting actions within the settlements over some period of time before. This is when bonds between people and objects may have been formed, adding to the individuality and histories of both. Something similar may be seen in the connection between people and houses, in the interlinked histories, in the added room, in the individual work places and in the compositions of finds at special locations.

Individuals were active within the cemeteries and within the settlements, and although the settings were communal and collective, the individual must be seen as inherent in each practice, act or event, each composition and variation. To my mind, the individual and the collective, as well as the local and the regional, work only in relation to each other, and this relationship provides grounds for interesting and potentially significant interrelationships. I think, therefore, that on the basis of analyses of the kind presented in this book, we can and should try to visualise the individual. On two occasions in this book, I have presented fictional narratives to complement the discussions. They are grounded very much in how I am as a person, and on what I have suggested regarding life in the Early Helladic period. These narratives, and others that have not reached written form, have provided a way for me to make use of my studies of the Early Helladic period, to put them into practice, and the narratives, in turn, have been a way to continue.

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