# From *wanax* to βασιλεύς:
## A consideration of the development of the wielding of Greek power and authority from the Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age, 1400-800 BC

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# Contents:

## Abstract:

In the Late Bronze Age (LBA), the *wanax* was the central figure of Mycenaean society, around whom the palatial administration was organised. Archaeological and textual evidence of the LBA points towards a highly religious and social role of the *wanax*. However, after the palatial administration system collapsed at the end of the LH IIIB period, much of the Mycenaean social organisation and hierarchy disintegrated.

It has been proposed that during the Early Iron Age (EIA), the Greek βασιλείς, who were likely the LBA *qa-si-re-we,* who held minor a chieftain position within the Mycenaean polities, emerged as the prominent authority figures. Previous scholarship constructed the role of the βασιλεύς from the term's usage in the Homeric epics. However, more recent excavations suggest that this figure fulfilled a role which is perhaps explained as that of a 'big-man' system. The big-men of the EIA depended on their ability to attract followers by offering security and resources. The EIA was also a period of great population movements, which may also be explained by the nature of big-men societies.

It is the aim of this thesis to assess what the archaeological and literary evidence reveals of the different social constructs surrounding the maintenance of Greek authority in the LBA, LH IIIC, and EIA. In this way, this paper will hope to offer a clear analysis concerning the transition of power between 1400 and 900 BC.

# Signed statement:

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

(Signed)_____Smills_____     Date: ___11 / 10 / 19___

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gravitate closer to Greek language studies, though I am certain I will never share his love for cricket. For his support, I am eternally grateful.

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# 1. Introduction:

In the Late Bronze Age (LBA), the Mycenaean *wanaktes* (plural for *wanax*) ruled supreme over regional palatial societies such as Pylos, Tiryns, and Mycenae. He sat at the centre of the palatial society and held an important role in the social and religious sphere of Mycenaean civilisation. Around 1200 BC, the eastern Mediterranean went through a major systems collapse, which saw the disintegration of the Mycenaean palatial system. In the collapse, the office of the *wanax* was also lost. The next time we see any clear reference to authority figures is in the Homeric epics when they are first written ca. eighth century BC with the creation of the Greek alphabet. Consequently, much of the modern understanding of the development of authority in the historical periods has been based on how rulers were depicted in the epics. In recent decades, this view has come under scrutiny, and a new understanding is being created that is based on a combination of archaeological and textual evidence.

The past forty years of research have revealed much about the history of Greece. Early scholars studying Mycenaean Greece in the LBA were largely concerned with analysing Mycenaean culture through the lens of the Homeric epics.[1] Knowledge of the LBA, and the Mycenaean civilisation, has been developing since Schliemann started excavating Mycenae and Tiryns in 1876. However, Kilian pointed out that Schliemann, and other excavators of the time "were concerned to present the splendour of the palaces with a king as ruler in terms of the colourful picture given in the Homeric poems."[2]

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[1] For example, in Blegen & Rawson's (1966: 419) discussion of the character, date, and identification of the Pylos Palace, they immediately refer to the *Iliad* as a comparison. They state that the division of subject towns and places "vividly recalls the list of the nine towns tabulated in the Catalogue of Ships (*Iliad* II, 591-602) as ruled by King Nestor, and the group of seven towns situated along the Gulf of Messenia on the outermost border of Pylos which Agamemnon tendered to Achilles as a peace offering to settle their feud at Troy (*Iliad* IX, 149-153)." The fact that this type of reference is used in a book specifically dealing with the archaeological finds at Pylos, highlights the tendency of early scholarship to view archaeological material in light of Homer.

[2] Kilian (1988: 292).

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Many scholars began to draw connections between Linear B and the Greek language of the historical periods, while paying special attention to connections they could draw between Homer and the Linear B tablets. Eventually, the link between the Greek *basileus* (βασιλεύς) and a figure identified as *qa-si-re-u* in the Linear B tablets was identified, although Palaima highlighted that the *qa-si-re-u* was perhaps lacking the "lofty aristocratic associations of the term in the Homeric epics."[3] Palaima argued that the Mycenaean *qa-si-re-u* (g$^w$asileus = *basileus*) functioned at the village level of social, economic and political organisation.[4] In other words, the *qa-si-re-u* was a local chieftain who was "drawn into relations with the central palatial authority in specific circumstances (such as the bronze allotment texts of the Pylos Jn series)."[5] It is thought that as the office of the *wanax* disappears, except as it is fossilised in the Homeric texts, the *qa-si-re-we* survive as inheritors of the *wanaktes*, and further adopt certain features of the '*wanax* ideology' so that they may legitimise their claim to authority.[6]

Two important things were inferred from this: firstly, that the *qa-si-re-u* was the authority figure who survived the collapse and managed to retain his power at a regional level after the office of the *wanax* was lost;[7] secondly, that this phenomenon was a general characteristic throughout mainland Greece in the Early Iron Age (EIA).[8] These assumptions, particularly the second, created the belief that this was a uniform development after a period of instability and, in some regions, stagnancy, due to the abandonment of previously important palatial centres and depopulation in surrounding regions.[9]

Studies of the EIA were also largely impacted by the Homeric epics. Even in the 1970s, although archaeologists were becoming more concerned with the EIA and new approaches to the period,

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[3] Palaima (1995a: 124).
[4] Palaima (2006: 54).
[5] Palaima (2006: 68). Crielaard (2011: 84) argued that "The connection between *qa-si-re-u* and *basileus* is in essence an etymological relationship. There is a formal connection between the two terms that represents a survival of terminology, but this does not necessarily imply continuity of offices or social-political institutions."
[6] Palaima (2006: 69).
[7] Palaima (2006: 68-69) summarises this continuity of power.
[8] See Crielaard (2011) for a discussion of the '*wanax*-to-*basileus*' model.
[9] See Crielaard (2011).

Homeric studies remained important to their research.[10] Due to the lack of extant writing between these periods, the 500 year gap between the LBA and the Archaic period was originally coined the 'Dark Ages.' Because very little was known of the EIA before the 1970s, "scholars seem to have found it easy to treat the period as an interlude in which very little happened, or changed, before the expansion of the eighth century BC"[11] until Snodgrass argued against this in 1971, emphasising that the 'Dark Ages' were not lacking in developments.[12] For a long time, the Greek Iron Age was assumed to have lacked any societal developments because it was believed that the sparse archaeological material reflected this.[13] It was thought that, due to the existence of *basileis* in the Homeric and Hesiodic texts, which was commonly translated as 'kings', the basis of social organisation in the EIA was that of small centres ruled by a monarchy. However, Drews argued that we should be aware of the much wider meanings associated with *basileus*, rather than attaching our own modern concept to the term.[14]

Drews' research came at a time when scholars were still relying heavily on the Homeric epics in their studies, though they were becoming aware of the issues that came with this reliance. Scholars such as Dickinson expressed their dislike for this use of Homer.[15] He argued against the tendency of scholarship to romanticise the 'Mycenaean interpretation' of Homer because of the appearance in the epics of some material objects of Mycenaean heritage. Dickinson emphasised that while we may be able to observe features of the LBA,[16] and the EIA (such as the funerary rites surrounding the burial

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[10] Antonaccio (1994: 396).

[11] Dickinson (1986: 21).

[12] See Snodgrass (1971).

[13] For example, Coulson (1985: 29) introduced his report on the excavations in Laconia rather dramatically in the following way: "The term 'Dark Age' is particularly apt when applied to Laconia, and especially to Sparta, because of the lack of well-stratified material from this region and the general aura of gloom that pervades our knowledge of that period which runs from Late Mycenean times to the emergence of Sparta in the eighth century BC and the beginning of her conquest of surrounding territory."

[14] Drews (1983: 100).

[15] See Dickinson (1986; 2017).

[16] See Grethlein (2008) for a discussion of the LBA objects found in Homer and their implications of our understanding of what they meant to the audiences who were listening to the epics.

of Patroclus, which seems to find their archaeological parallels in the 'Heroön' at Lefkandi),[17] we would be wrong to suppose the Homeric epics to be "a realistic and comprehensive description of a society and age".[18] It is unclear whether Homer was referring to a 'king', or simply to leaders. Drews stated that regardless of how frequently the translation of βασιλεύς into English is rendered as 'king', the word itself did not yet mean 'king' in Homer.[19] Drews concluded that the Greek βασιλεύς should be more appropriately translated as 'leader' because he thought that Homer was directly referring to a monarch as he understood it.[20] It will be demonstrated that the application of 'king' to any EIA ruler is inappropriate. Rather, the authority figures of the EIA were likely big-men whose positions depended on their ability to attract followers and provide security.[21] This inevitably meant that populations would gravitate towards those areas where big-men presided.[22] Consequently, population fluctuations would leave scattered evidence which would suggest 'unstable' settlement patterns.

While some sites appear to exhibit characteristics of unstable settlement patterns after the LBA, this does not signify a breakdown of society. Rather, after the collapse of the palatial administration system, the 'unstable' nature of EIA Greece which featured mass population changes, could perhaps be explained by the 'big-man' system. In these systems, Binford stated that "competition is for persons and the result is the actual residential gravitation of people to the neighbourhoods of big-men."[23] This model will be shown to be highly applicable to certain regions, such as Lefkandi and regions in the Peloponnese during the EIA. Where one might argue for an 'unstable' political situation due to a site's lack of observable archaeological material, I would infer that such a pattern could be indicate that the site was under the influence of a big-man.

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[17] Dickinson (2017: 14-15).
[18] Dickinson (1986: 35).
[19] Drews (1983: 100).
[20] Drews (1983: 102). Schmidt (2006: 443-445) argued that ἄναξ was mostly employed as a title, usually referred to gods or to a 'master', and commonly implied clear emotional connotations.
[21] See Whitley (1991a) for a discussion of this. The big-man system is discussed throughout Section 4.
[22] Binford (1983: 219).
[23] Binford (1983: 219).

I aim to assess the development of authority from the LBA (specifically between LH IIIA-IIIB), the LH IIIC period (ca. twelfth century BC), and the EIA (ca. 1050-900 BC). Therefore, I will diachronically examine the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, tracing developments through the interpretation of textual and archaeological evidence. The *wanaktes* of Mycenaean Greece employed certain symbols to communicate and demonstrate their authority, and a primary element of their authority is the *wanax*-hearth ideology. This concept demonstrates the centrality of the *wanax* to the state, while simultaneously placing his authority in the core of religious activity.

The LH IIIC period exhibits some continuity of Mycenaean symbols and practices, though it does also point to the beginning of EIA society. Many of the Mycenaean citadels that were previously ruled by *wanaktes* were destroyed, and the central administration and organisation of the palatial system, and therefore the office of the *wanax*, was lost. The *wanaktes* were replaced perhaps by big-men in some locations and small groups of elites in others. The various peoples of EIA Greece reacted differently to the collapse of the LBA, so it is the intention of this thesis to demonstrate how various regions of Greece continued to maintain their societies in different social conditions. Rather than applying the term 'king' to the rulers of the EIA, it will be argued that the *basileis* were less comparable to 'kings' and more akin to big-men.[24]

I will assess the different methods employed by rulers of the LBA, LH IIIC, and EIA to legitimate their authority. Although the *wanax* was the central figure in Mycenaean economic administration,[25] the LBA chapter will focus primarily on the *wanax*'s role within a religious context. The religious association of the *wanax* has been chosen as the primary focus for this chapter because it offers an interesting contrast with the LH IIIC and EIA periods. The LH IIIC period is when we can observe the beginning of the separation of the religious context from rulership, and this is also the case in the

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[24] Antonaccio (2006: 388).
[25] Kilian (1988: 293).

EIA, although there is some evidence for cult within dwellings of supposed rulers (such as Nichoria). Ultimately, I will examine the different expressions of authority between 1400 and 800 BC, and how this power manifested within various social contexts.

# 2.The Late Bronze Age:

## 2.1 Introduction:

In the 1950s, Mycenaean archaeology witnessed a 'dramatic' revolution which "rewrote our understanding of what Mycenaean palaces were, and how they functioned within Mycenaean society."[26] The decipherment of the Linear B tablets enabled scholars to understand the Mycenaean period in a new light. From these tablets, the *wanax* was identified as the Mycenaean king. The *wanaktes* were the central figures in the Mycenaean palatial system, as both the economic administration and the religious system of belief was concentrated on the *wanaktes*.[27] Each major Mycenaean polity was centred around a monumental building (palace) which was organised around the megaron structure, containing a throne, and a central hearth surrounded by four columns.[28] The Linear B evidence suggests that the *wanax* was a highly religious official, but it is interesting that there is no ruler iconography to corroborate this.[29] However, it is possible to see evidence for the *wanax's* importance in Mycenaean society and religious practice by studying the layout of the palaces and iconographical evidence we can observe inside the palatial structures.

The *wanax*'s palatial authority can be identified most clearly in the LH IIIA-LH IIIB periods (fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BC), which postdates the destruction of Knossos and the centralising movement in Messenia whereby Pylos becomes the central authority in Messenia.[30] It is during this time that the transition from "transegalitarian" to more highly organised entities such as chiefdoms and states had already occurred,[31] and the palatial architecture became canonised.

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[26] Galaty & Parkinson (2007: 1).
[27] Kilian (1988: 293).
[28] Shelmerdine (2007: 40).
[29] Shelmerdine (2007: 40-41).
[30] Rehak (1995: 290); Kilian (1988: 296).
[31] Wright (2004a: 154).

Firstly, I examine how the *wanax*'s role was manifested in the archaeological evidence, including the architectural layout of the palaces, which finds its climax in the megaron structure,[32] and through the manipulation of mortuary context in the Grave Circles at Mycenae. Secondly, I consider the Linear B evidence which records the *wanax* participating in various social contexts to demonstrate the religious function of the *wanax*. Therefore, this chapter discusses the LH IIIA and LH IIIB periods in order to assess the ways in which the *wanax*'s role was exhibited, and how these expressions served to legitimise and maintain his authority.

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[32] Kilian (1988: 293).

# 2.2 Archaeological Evidence:

## 2.2.1 Introduction and background of *'wanax* ideology':

The role of the *wanax* in Mycenaean society is demonstrated both by archaeological and textual material. In this section it will be demonstrated that the *wanax*'s religious function is represented by the architectural features of the Mycenaean palatial centres of Pylos, Tiryns, and Mycenae; and by the iconographical evidence which comes mostly from Pylos.

The intimate connection between the *wanax* ideology and the representation of political power within the hierarchy of Mycenaean society is clearly illustrated by the architectural layout of the Mycenaean palaces.[33] The architectural climax of these structures is exemplified by the megaron structure, and the megaron clearly demonstrates that economic administration was "concentrated in the hands of the palace, ultimately in those of the *wanax* himself".[34] The megaron also functioned as the focal point of religion and the *wanax*'s authority, which is further supported by the arrangement of frescos at Pylos, the architecture at Tiryns and Mycenae, and the relationship between the cult centre and the great megaron at Mycenae.[35] Pylos is particularly important to this discussion, because this palace contains the best preserved images concerning feasting, and therefore the important social structures that were in place during the LH IIIA-B periods.

Megaron halls consisted of a large, ceremonial hearth in the centre of the room, which was surrounded by four columns. This room functioned as the final destination of ceremonial processions and religious acts, and the throne room for the *wanax*.[36] It is worth noting the positioning of the throne on the right side of the megaron. It is possible that the positioning of the throne was a feature that was borrowed

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[33] Eder (2019: 20), I would like to thank Birgitta Eder for graciously allowing me to access her forthcoming article, which I received through Dr. Susan Lupack. Eder's research has been vital to my understanding of this period of Greek history; Palaima (1995a: 130).
[34] Kilian (1988: 293).
[35] Kilian (1988: 293).
[36] Eder (2019: 19-20).

from the design of the Knossian throne room, as Rehak argued.[37] Rehak also claimed that Minoan

influence on Mycenaean throne room design is evidenced by a common floor design, in which the use

of gypsum slabs imported from Crete to "encircle" the Mycenae megaron indicated "a distinctive and

widespread use of this material in neopalatial architecture."[38] On the basis of this similarity, Rehak

thought that the mainland megara and the appearance or perhaps consolidation of *wanax* ideology,

emerged only after the destructions of Knossos in LM IB (LH IIIA on the mainland).[39]

Wright, who built his argument from Kilian's belief that *wanax* ideology found its' architectural

reflection in the great megara of the palaces, emphasised the intimate connection between the throne

and the hearth, and suggested that the hearth represented the centre of the state, and that the *wanax*

"may have been the guardian of the hearth".[40] Wright also argued that the specific orientation of the

throne to the hearth implies that the *wanax*, as the occupant of the throne, likely officiated over rituals

held in the throne room,[41] and this appears to be corroborated by the presence of a libation channel

and miniature votive vessels found on an offering table next to one of the columns in the Pylos

megaron.[42] Palaima developed Wright's idea and argued that because the throne faced the hearth, we

can assume that this association between the enthroned *wanax* and the sacred powers of the hearth,

together with the likely open roof of the megaron, connected this structure architecturally, ritually,

and symbolically to the sky and therefore to the sky-god.[43]

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[37] Rehak (1995: 99). But it is important to remember that the Knossos throne room was not a megaron structure.
[38] Rehak (1995: 100).
[39] Rehak (1995: 115). I think Rehak is perhaps simplifying the developments on the mainland as simply occurring as a consequence of the destruction of Knossos in the fifteenth century BC. It seems more reasonable to view the mainland developments as a transitional process which seem to be solidified in the *wanax* ideology at this time, during the beginning of the prosperous period of Mycenaean civilisation.
[40] Wright (1994: 57-58).
[41] Wright (1994: 57).
[42] Blegen & Rawson (1966: 88) described this channel as "a roughly circular basin-like hollow with a diameter of 0.32 m. and a depth of 0.06 m. From it, a narrow channel, 0.04 m. wide at the top and 0.04 m. deep, leads 2.01 m. northwestward in a slightly curving line, not far from the wall, to a similar shallow hollow at a somewhat lower level." Also, Rehak (1995: 111) emphasised that the presence of a painted jug that was restored to the wall dado adjacent to the throne emplacement suggests that the floor channel was indeed used for libations, meaning that we can observe a possible ritualistic function of the megaron hall.
[43] Palaima (2016: 146).

Despite these theories, it is possible to question why there is an absence of iconographical material which expresses the elevation of the *wanax* above elite individuals. Rather than assuming that the scarcity of kingly imagery in Mycenaean art, and the prevalence of a female deity in iconographical representations[44] indicates the absence of the male *wanax* in the throne room as Rehak has done,[45] the Mycenaean kingly imagery can be observed in other ways. The Mycenaeans were more subtle in the way they presented their authority linguistically, iconographically, and ceremonially. Concerning linguistic manifestations of authority, Palaima argued that *wanaks*, *thronos*, *megaron*, and *skeptron* "emphasised 'support,' 'stability,' ancestral legitimacy, central ritual largeness and loftiness, progenerative capacities and bountifulness, and linkage to higher powers in the divine sphere."[46] When these features are taken together ideologically, they offer "reassurance of continuing fertility and life",[47] thus the innate connection between the *wanax*, the throne and the megaron especially, were perceived as the pillars of Mycenaean society. Iconographical representation in Mycenaean culture did not monumentalise the ruler in the same way Egyptian iconography represented pharaohs. Rather, the Mycenaean *wanax* was portrayed in a more abstract manner by associating him with religious contexts. For example, Bennet argued that the *wanax* sitting on the Pylos throne, with the elaborate feasting fresco behind him would "complete" the composition, thus "forming a 'first-person' iconography of power" which was distinct from the 'third-person' representations of Egypt.[48] Further, the Lion Gate iconography at Mycenae and the Pylos feasting fresco demonstrate the *wanax*'s connection to religious iconography through the altar depicted in the Lion Gate, and the lion and winged griffin aside the throne in the Pylos feasting fresco. This religious context is further

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[44] This is actually a characteristically Minoan feature. See Marinatos (1995: 42-47) for a discussion of this.
[45] Rehak (1995: 113). argued that due to the lack of distinctive iconography of male authority figures, and the prominence of female figures which are often displayed as the larger, or sometimes central figure on iconographic material, there is no clear reason to suppose the existence of a male wanax in the MH-LH I periods.
[46] Palaima (2016: 151).
[47] Palaima (2016: 151).
[48] Bennet (2007a: 12-13).

exemplified by several Linear B tablets, such as the PY Fr series, which introduce the concept of an ancestral *wanax*, and the important of ceremony in the *wanax*'s role.

Therefore, we should not assume that because *wanaktes* did not monumentalise their kingly imagery in the same way the Egyptians did, where the imagery of the king as the divine ruler is extremely prevalent – kingship ideology was not yet developed. Rather, Mycenaean kingship ideology had a limited repertoire of elements in comparison with other high cultures that had a longer period of development.[49] The development from the MH ranked society to the stratified Mycenaean one, "probably with a royal family at its head", was completed by LH I, which is contemporary with Grave Γ of Grave Circle B, Mycenae.[50] Therefore, it is probable that by LH I, the office of the Mycenaean *wanaktes* was either established, or in its formative stages. And the presence of elites, who were possibly the early *wanaktes*, can be evidenced by the distribution of burials surrounding Pylos.[51] In the MH period, Messenia had smaller groupings of simple tombs in the immediate neighbourhood surrounding Pylos.[52] By LH I, the local diversity of chamber tombs occurring in areas such as Nichoria and in the Messenian plain, together with the fortifications of Pylos, "suggests an original pattern of many separate political units which developed local traditions, only slowly brought together in a larger unit".[53] These tholoi become more common in LH I-II, and a fortification wall was built around the highest point of the settlement, therefore "defining the area later to be occupied by the palatial structures."[54] In contrast, the Argolid region was considerably more advanced than other centres in

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[49] Palaima (2016: 150-151).
[50] Kilian (1988: 292). While Rehak (1995: 113) argued that the shaft graves from Grave Circles A and B at Mycenae, which indicate burials of elite men, women, and children, do not include the burial of any individuals that may be singled out as a 'king', Wright (2004b: 79) highlighted that leaders would often distinguish themselves from those of lower status by their grave goods.
[51] See Bennet (2007b).
[52] Dickinson (1982: 133-134).
[53] Dickinson (1982: 135).
[54] Bennet (2007b: 34).

the Peloponnese because it consisted of many larger units at sites such as Mycenae and Tiryns that developed much more quickly than those in Messenia (such as Pylos).[55]

Another development of the LH I period is the idea of 'centredness.' According to Wright, 'centredness' and the symbolic utilisation of space became more prevalent between LH I-LH IIB, the period roughly considered to be the transitional stage from chiefdom to state.[56] Therefore, it seems reasonable to posit that the lack of Mycenaean iconography before this time meant that the role of the male *wanax* on the mainland was not yet defined until "after Aegean iconography had essentially become set".[57] The palatial megaron structure became canonised as a result of the fusion of a mainland architectural form and its central hearth which borrowed elements from the configuration of the Knossos throne room.[58] It is reasonable to assume that the construction of the megara was intended for the expression of authority by the Mycenaean rulers, signifying "the transfer of religious-political power from Knossos to the mainland palaces."[59]

Eder suggested that the emergence of Mycenaean type figurines from LH IIB and IIIA-1 (ca. fifteenth to fourteenth centuries BC) indicate a palatial strategy to promote a designed religious ideology which exercised an ideological influence over larger parts of a population.[60] Later, by the LH IIIA-2 and LH IIIB periods, tholoi become increasingly restricted to palatial centres and palatial elites.[61] This may suggest that palatial control was beginning to be exercised in the fifteenth century. However, I would cautiously propose that the restriction of tholoi would present a more solid case for palatial control in

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[55] Dickinson (1982: 134-136).
[56] Wright (1994: 117).
[57] Rehak (1995: 117).
[58] Maran (2015: 280).
[59] Maran (2015: 280).
[60] Eder (2016: 177).
[61] Crielaard (2006: 277). See also Bennet (2007b) for further discussion of tholoi development representing the expansion of Pylos in the LH period.

the fifteenth century than Eder's suggestion. The restriction of certain burial rites seems a more appropriate way for an elite kin-group or authority figure to exert their authority.

Perhaps *wanaktes* simply did not need to propagandise personal achievements on the walls of megara, but rather linked themselves to higher powers in the divine spheres through their connection to the symbolically 'fertile' and 'life-sustaining' powers of the hearth.[62] Palaima has emphasised the connections between Mycenaean terminology for 'king' with that of the Hittite language.[63] The non-Indo-European root for the Mycenaean *wanax*, who was associated symbolically with the hearth, is reminiscent of the Hittite terms for 'king' and 'hearth', and both terms share the root meaning 'beget', which Palaima posits to be the likely meaning of the root of *wanax* – suggesting that it was the procreative force of the *wanax* that was important, particularly at the foundation of the role.[64]

Given the explicit connection which the *wanax* had with the megaron and hearth as a fertile, life-sustaining element through which security and stability could be demonstrated, the *wanax* ideology can be seen to be exercised in this manner, rather than the patently monumental 'third-person' form illustrated in Egyptian kingship ideology.[65] Wright referred to this connection between the *wanax*, the hearth, and the megaron structure as the 'hearth-*wanax* ideology' building upon Kilian's earlier '*wanax* ideology' framework by proposing that the hearth be viewed as the major cult installation of Mycenaean society.[66] Central to this concept is the use of significant architectural and spatial expression as a means of expressing the cult through the authority of the *wanax*.

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[62] Palaima (2016: 151-152). Marinatos (1995: 41) argued that the absence of distinct ruler ideology in Minoan Crete may be explained by the fact that "rulers and deities are interchangeable", but I believe this theory can also be applied to Mycenaean Greece.
[63] Palaima (1995a, 2006, 2016).
[64] Palaima (2016: 151).
[65] Bennet (2007a: 18). Bennet's discussion of the Pylos feasting fresco will be further discussed in Section 2.2.2.
[66] Wright (1994: 59).

Therefore, I believe that the role of the Mycenaean *wanax* can be determined on the basis of his connection to the hearth within the megaron, and this can be further corroborated by the Linear B evidence. The importance of feasting, for example, which is demonstrated by the feasting fresco preserved in the main megaron at Pylos, should be seen as an active force complementing the *wanax*'s importance within the social hierarchy.[67]

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[67] See Wright (2004a) & Palaima (2004). Feasting was a fundamentally important social construct in Mycenaean society. In the LH II-III periods, the Mycenaean palaces begin to become the primary means of organisation and administration on the Greek mainland. According to Wright (2004b: 76), the centralising, and indeed aggrandizing activities that occur in feasts and other ritual practices served to enhance the ruler's reputation "and imbue him, his family, kin, retinue, and his place of residence with special meaning that differentiates all of them from the rest of society.

## 2.2.2 Pylos:

The absence of direct imagery of the *wanax* has already been noted, but the iconographical evidence from the Pylos palace suggests how images of feasting and supernatural creatures were used by the *wanax* to convey his authority. Pylos underwent expansions beginning as early as LH I (ca. seventeenth century BC). By the end of LH II (ca. sixteenth century), it is likely that the palace had extended its control over most of the immediate surrounding area, as indicated by the presence of tholos tombs and the palace's large size.[68] As touched upon in the previous section, Bennet discussed the social structure of Pylos based on representations of power in the archaeological and iconographical evidence within the LH IIIB palatial system.[69] I focus on the main megaron at Pylos, Room 6, because it contains the fresco which reveals much about the importance of feasting and the *wanax*'s role within this social context.

In the centre of the right-hand wall of Pylos's main megaron, Blegen and Rawson observed the impression of a base on which a throne most likely stood, but as the throne is missing, they concluded that it was made of perishable materials, such as wood.[70] To the left of this base is a depiction of a lion and a winged griffin. Although there is no evidence of a matching pair to the right of the throne base,[71] this scene is strikingly similar to the heraldic arrangement in the Knossos throne room, and the 'Lion Gate' at Mycenae, and so can be safely restored.[72]

Bennet argued that it "is not difficult to imagine that these powerful animals – one of them supernatural – were considered to protect whatever figure occupied the seat that originally rested on the base."[73] The centrality, and indeed the supernatural nature of the figures, suggests that this

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[68] Bennet (2007b: 39).
[69] Bennet (2007a: 11). Wright (2004a: 137) stated that while an iconography of feasting in the palaces may have developed by LH IIIA, it was only fully developed in the LH IIIB frescoes of the main building at Pylos.
[70] Blegen & Rawson (1966: 87).
[71] Rehak (1995: 109).
[72] Bennet (2007a: 12); Rehak (1995: 109).
[73] Bennet (2007a: 12); Bennet (1997: 529).

depiction served as a 'focalising device' for the physical presence of the *wanax* sitting beside the creatures.[74] In this position, directly facing the hearth in the centre of the megaron, the *wanax* would therefore be elevated above individuals in the room. In the megaron, the *wanax* would have received foreign emissaries, peers, religious or political dignitaries, palatial and provincial officials, members of the regional nobility, and individuals known as 'collectors.'[75] Therefore, the megaron enabled *wanaktes* to make "reassuring public displays of their power and authority", while also communicating the primary ideology of the rulership and regional security.[76] Perhaps one of the purposes of the megaron, and the positioning of the *wanax* in Room 6, was to ensure that individuals and potential rivals would feel "sufficiently rewarded with prestige" and public recognition,[77] which could be best communicated by the powerful iconography in Room 6.

It has already been shown that the *wanax* had an intimate connection with the hearth. Palaima recently argued that the *wanax* symbolically associated himself with the hearth, "the source of light and fire and the cultural advances that fire provides."[78] In doing so, the *wanax* firmly grounded himself within an important religious concept: the smoke from burnt offerings in the hearth which would reach through the open roof of the megaron towards the sky god was conveyed at the directive of the *wanax*, as the intermediary between the gods and his own people. This emphasis of the close connection between the enthroned *wanax* and the sacred powers of the hearth demonstrates the importance of the megaron and central hearth to Mycenaean society as a "ritual locus of power and fertility."[79] I believe Wright was correct to infer that the hearth symbolised the centre of the state, and that the *wanax* was likely perceived to be "in this sense its father and chief."[80] Given the clear attention to detail in the

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[74] Bennet (2007a: 12).
[75] Palaima (2012: 346).
[76] Palaima (2012: 346).
[77] Palaima (2012: 352-353).
[78] Palaima (2016: 151).
[79] Palaima (2016: 146).
[80] Wright (1994: 58).

architectural design of Pylos, and also at Tiryns and Mycenae, it can be argued on the basis of Wright's speculation that the *wanax*-hearth relationship was "a cult institution of power and authority that reinforces the stability of the state".[81] This institution demonstrates the precedence of religion personified in the architectural organisation of the seat of power.

On the wall to the right of the entrance to Room 6 is a scene containing two groups of figures seated at tables, possibly raising drinking vessels.[82] A long-robed harpist sits on an elevated rock, holding his lyre, while a white bird flies towards the throne.[83] The inclusion of this banqueting scene demonstrates the importance of the main megaron to the *wanax*'s social and religious function. The figures in the banquet scene, who are wearing diagonally banded robes,[84] are attending a banquet hosted by the *wanax* whose intentions were probably to garner or maintain favour through feasting carried out within the centre of the palace, further emphasising royal authority.[85] Rehak claimed that these figures wearing the banded robes must be middle-administrators.[86] In contrast, Bendall conjectured that because of the limited space available for feasting in the megaron, it seems that a hierarchy of feasting was in place at Bronze Age Pylos.[87] She reasoned that it is more likely the individuals feasting with the *wanax* would have been of a higher status, while others were outdoors in court 63/88 – where they could easily access the pottery stores in Room 60 and those alongside Room 6 in room 18-22 – and also in front of the main palatial complex in court 58.[88] Feasting was an important social construct in Mycenaean society because while it effectively encompassed individuals

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[81] Wright (1994: 58).
[82] Bennet (2007a: 13).
[83] Rehak (1995: 110) argued that because of the unique colouring on its chest, the bird must be a baby griffin. I think this is too great an assumption, especially considering the lack of evidence Rehak based this assumption on. It is also worth mentioning that only the top part of the animal is preserved, while the rest has been reconstructed.
[84] Rehak (1995: 111).
[85] See Nakassis (2012) for a discussion of this. Nakassis' article uses evidence for feasting as provided by the Linear B texts. This will be considered in the Section 2.3.
[86] Rehak (1995: 111).
[87] Bendall (2008: 78-79). See also Bendall (2004: 123-124).
[88] Bendall (2004: 123-124). Wright (2004a: 170) cites the Macedonian situation as a parallel, where the organisation of feasts reflected the society's social organisation, and many participants were seated in outer halls and courtyards. According to Wright, it is likely that this type of arrangement occurred in the Mycenaean palaces.

of varying social groups, it still reserved "special places" for the subgroups (especially elites) to differentiate themselves.[89] The storerooms alongside the megaron contained thousands of kylikes, and miniature examples of these cups were also found in Room 6.[90] Due to the presence of the kylikes in multiple locations and within close proximity to the megaron hall, Rehak argued that a major function of the megaron was communal drinking.[91] While communal feasting and drinking certainly occurred in the megaron, I think the function of the megaron played a more important role: it was likely used by the *wanax* as an important social strategy to garner favour and goodwill among his people, rather than simply for communal drinking.

It could also be argued that there was some kind of relationship between the deity and ruler occurring in the megaron. For example, Maran and Stavrianopoulou suggested that the *wanax*, or perhaps the queen, could have been responsible for enacting the epiphany in ritual.[92] Maran and Stavrianopoulou further propose that Evans may have been correct in his assumption of the 'Priest king' at Knossos, though they do not favour the use of the term.[93] They argued that the influx of Minoan religious ideas at the beginning of the Mycenaean palatial period, such as the appearance of the bull leaping frescoes which appear in Mycenaean palaces, and architectural resemblances (i.e., the megaron design which is similar to the throne room design at Knossos) may help to explain the 'invisibility' of the Mycenaean rulers: they were borrowing the 'Knossos idea' and founding a 'New Knossos' in different

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[89] Wright (2004a: 136).
[90] Rehak (1995: 110).
[91] Rehak (1995: 111-112).
[92] Maran & Stavrianopoulou (2007: 289). Because of the lack of evidence, I think this is a difficult statement to corroborate. Kingship is not well represented in Minoan times either, so I do not see any reason to assume that the throne was meant to be occupied by a female deity. Rather, because a female deity was clearly still an important figure, as she was for the Minoans, I think the female iconography may simply be a continuation of Minoan symbols in the Mycenaean palaces, rather than an indication that a female deity oversaw the events in the megaron hall. The *wanax*, as will be shown especially in Section 2.3, very clearly held an important religious function.
[93] Maran & Stavrianopoulou (2007: 290).

regions in Greece.[94] In this way, the Mycenaean *wanaktes* may have adapted these Minoan symbols for their own kingship ideology "by adding autochthonous religious elements."[95]

We cannot deny the obvious religious importance of the megaron. The program of frescoes which link the vestibule and the inner room of the megaron clearly serve to enhance the ritualistic nature of Room 6. This is important because these frescoes provide a more detailed view than other palaces, where frescoes were poorly preserved.[96] But the feasting scene is indicative of an essential engagement within Mycenaean society, one that was an entirely centralising and aggrandising activity that enhanced the *wanax*'s reputation, and imbued him and his place of residence with "special meaning that differentiates all of them from the rest of society."[97] Shelmerdine pointed out that although the presence of this fresco is clearly an important feature, it does not necessarily indicate that the ceremony depicted took place in this room.[98] However, the presence of the miniature kylikes, the offering table near the hearth, and the libation channel beside the throne indicates that the Pylos megaron was a "locus of ritual activity", over which the *wanax* presided, and this is further supported by the textual evidence, discussed in Section 2.3.[99]

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[94] Maran & Stavrianopoulou (2007: 290-291).
[95] Maran & Stavrianopoulou (2007: 290).
[96] Wright (1994: 56). At Mycenae, the fragments of frescoes which have been preserved show that battle scenes decorated the walls at Mycenae. See Chapin (2014: 45).
[97] Wright (1994: 76).
[98] Shelmerdine (2007: 42).
[99] Shelmerdine (2007: 42).

## 2.2.3 Tiryns:

Tiryns provides a different perspective on the representation of ideological authority. It does not have the iconographical evidence that Pylos does, and the its mortuary evidence is not as substantial as Mycenae's.[100] However, the architectural design of Tiryns provides a clue to understanding how architectural elements were implemented and specifically designed to express the authority and importance of the *wanax*.

Voutsaki suggested that because the Cyclopean masonry and architectural design at Tiryns share similar elements with that of Mycenae, it is possible that these palatial centres were allies, rather than enemies, as they underwent parallel architectural developments between the LH IIIA and LH IIIB periods.[101] The alliance between these centres could be further assumed on the basis of the location of Tiryns. The position of Tiryns close to the shore on the eastern side of the Argive plain would have been an important access point to maritime and land trade routes, and other fertile areas.[102]

Wright argued that the magnitude of the fortification walls at Mycenae is "clearly more concerned with making a statement of power than with practical defence."[103] The same inference can be applied to Tiryns. The elaborate design of this site, particularly in the Upper Citadel, seems to convey the same message of power. The Great Megaron is situated at the centre of the site, and entry appears to have been quite restricted: it could only be reached after an elaborate series of gateways, sharp turns, and courtyards.[104]

The religious importance of this architectural layout is emphasised by the twists and turns before reaching specific zones leading to the megaron, such as the monolithic thresholds or doorways,

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[100] Voutsaki (2010: 100).
[101] Voutsaki (2010: 100).
[102] Voutsaki (2010: 103). Bettelli (2015: 124) argued that Tiryns may have been the second residence of the king of Mycenae, that is, if Mycenae was indeed the capital city of the Argolid.
[103] Wright (1994: 51).
[104] Maran (2006c: 81-84).

together with the alternation of open and roofed spaces.[105] According to Bettelli, Tiryns may have been the second residence of the king at Mycenae.[106] This can perhaps shed some light on the territorial expansions of Mycenae.[107] Maran argued that by the LH II period, Tiryns was either under the leadership of the ruling *wanax* at Mycenae, or allied with it, and then systematically developed by Mycenae to become a major port and a second centre.[108] Maran has argued that the Mycenaean citadels functioned as 'performative spaces' in which the megaron was the central focus.[109] It is highly likely that the function of the narrow passages leading to Tiryns' megaron would have been linked to the performance of centripetal processions leading to the seat of the *wanax*.[110] The Mycenaean citadels, such as Tiryns, were intended to be centres for social activities which further showcased the hierarchical, centralised, and exploitative scheme of palatial society in the region.[111]

In the LH IIIA period, Tiryns was at the peak of its political and economic power, and this is contemporaneous with the final expansions of Mycenae.[112] An important concept to consider when dealing with the lack of ruler-iconography in Mycenaean Greece is how we may understand architecture as being intimately connected to 'social practice'. Maran argued two important points:

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[105] See Maran (2012a). Maran also states that the function of these narrow areas was likely linked to the performance of centripetal processions leading to the megaron. These symbolic practices were further emphasised by frescoes which decorated these particular areas of the palace, and often represented processions (2012a: 154-158).

[106] Bettelli (2015: 124).

[107] This issue has been hotly debated. Dickinson (1977: 108, 110) argued in favour of Mycenae's overcoming of all rivals in the northeastern Peloponnese, and this idea was also picked up by Cherry & Davis (2001: 156). However, scholars such as Morgan (1999: 352-353) argued contrary to this, claiming that it was unlikely Mycenae's power reached beyond the southwestern region of the Corinthia. Rather, Pullen & Tartaron (2007) insisted that the northern Corinthia was neither controlled by Mycenae, nor developed a palatial centre. This lack of a palatial centre, according to Pullen and Tartaron, was likely due to the fact that the Corinthia was located within a political periphery between Mycenae and Aiginetan Kolonna. Pullen and Tartaron (2007: 157-158) highlighted that it would have been difficult for Mycenae to control the northern Corinthia via overland connections alone; although the Argolid offered a 'back door' connection beyond the maritime reach of Kolonna. Arena (2015: 37) emphasised that we must recognise that the relationship between those Mycenaean polities which were on the peripheries of major palatial sites, non-palatial areas, and major palaces, is still unclear. However, Arena concluded that it is indeed unlikely "that strong territorial control was exerted by a faraway palatial administration and, thus, no actual, formal, 'political' subjection of the areas outside the immediate hinterland of the palaces can be inferred" (2015: 37).

[108] Maran (2015: 279).

[109] Maran (2006c, 2012a, 2012b)

[110] Bettelli (2015: 125).

[111] Bettelli (2015: 125).

[112] Zangger (1994: 192).

first, that "the layout of architectural settings and furnishings guides the movement and arrangement of people, and thus imposes certain patterns of meaning on the structure of interaction"; second, that "the meaning of the built environment forms not only the background, but also the product of social practice…"[113] Architecture, in this case, should be seen as a medium which fosters social relations while also functioning as active forces through which these relations are created, reproduced, and altered.[114]

The outer appearance of the fortifications, and the visibility of the part of the acropolis on which the palace stood (which could be seen as a landmark from the sea) is particularly striking at Tiryns. However, any actions that would have taken place inside the palatial courts were impossible to see, due to its being surrounded by buildings.[115] This is an important factor. The architectural design indicates the exclusive nature of the processions within the palatial courts and megaron, and the size of the court further suggests that access was restricted to small numbers of select individuals.[116] After an individual walked up the ramp which connects to the main entrance and turns right, they would come across the "extreme width" of the Cyclopean wall before entering a narrow passage and turning to the left, where one would be confronted with the main gate which sealed off the ascending gateway, and recalls the Lion Gate at Mycenae.[117] The passage widens slightly after the main gate before one comes to a second gate, and after that, one would reach the outer hall of the great propylon on the right side.[118] After passing through this hall one would come to the outer forecourt whereby an individual could move into the great court and the porch of the great megaron.

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[113] Maran (2006b: 11).
[114] Maran (2006b: 11).
[115] Maran (2006c: 79).
[116] Maran (2006c: 80).
[117] Maran (2006c: 81). Maran highlights that this is the first architectural reference to Mycenae which we can observe.
[118] Maran (2006c: 81-82).

According to Maran, when an individual stands at the propylon leading to the Great Court, from this position, the axis of the Great Megaron appears to be shifted slightly to the east, meaning that "in order to enter the megaron centrally one again had to change direction."[119] This architectural design strongly suggests that the intention was to "preconfigure the bodily movement and to symbolically 'charge' the ascent to the palace" by use of architectural cues.[120] Wright emphasised that most MH and LH houses were organised along a linear axis with the directed movement as a progression from outer vestibule to inner rooms.[121] This certainly seems to be the case with the use of architectural cues at Tiryns, all of which had the intention of controlling movement to the inner rooms, which would culminate in the Great Megaron.[122] The axiality of the megaron is given further importance by its orientation to a circular stone-built altar in the Great Court.[123] While the hearth of the megaron remains the centre of attention, the axial connection between the Great Megaron and this circular altar in the Great Court may have signified the importance of the megaron and the *wanax* to a larger audience in the Great Court – to those not permitted access to the megaron hall.

On the basis of the architectural elements at Tiryns, we can assume that the *wanax*'s religious and social functions were of great importance. The specific design of the Upper Citadel enhances the exclusivity and therefore social and religious importance of the authority figure occupying the throne in the Great Megaron. In doing so, the layout of Tiryns suggests that it was a conscious intention to elevate the *wanax* above others, and this was most effectively communicated through the architectural design, which combined the Cyclopean masonry with architectural cues, as a means to control movement into the centre of the Upper Citadel.

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[119] Maran (2006c: 82).
[120] Maran (2006c: 82).
[121] Wright (1994: 47).
[122] Wright (1994: 47).
[123] Wright (1994: 56).

## 2.2.4 Mycenae:

Mycenae was the primary palatial centre in the Argolid during the Mycenaean period. The site is more informative than Pylos and Tiryns in regards to architectural and mortuary practices, which provide further evidence for the fundamental characteristics that constituted the *wanax*'s primary roles. The religious importance of the *wanax*'s role is conveyed quite clearly at Mycenae. The architectural design and grandiose portrayal of this message is first communicated at the entrance to Mycenae through the Lion Gate. This gate immediately communicates the importance of the site as the centre from which the *wanax* presided over the state's matters, and the authority which the *wanax* commanded from this position.

The crowning limestone relief that adorns the Lion Gate expresses "a triple message of natural power (the flanking lions) guarding the palace (represented by the column) and based on religion (the altars)."[124] But this also served a different purpose, one which appears to be an inherent feature of Mycenaean religion. These symbols signified the transition into an area of special ritual significance – the ritual importance of the megaron is such that it encircles the very core of the palace: the hearth.[125] Equally significant to this unmistakable expression of authority conveyed by the flanking lions is the fact that these are Minoan in origin, and are therefore part of the iconography of power in Neopalatial Crete.[126] This feature is inherently important with respect to legitimation of authority, because the usage of Minoan symbols by Mycenaean rulers was a means of differentiating their own lineage from local elites and from the ruler of other local polities. In doing so, the *wanax* was effectively removing

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[124] Wright (1994: 51). Bennet (2007a: 17) says that it has even been suggested that these flanking lions were actually griffins, because of the frequency with which the griffin appears in association with the *wanax*'s seat at Pylos (in Rooms 6 and 46), and on a gold cushion seal found in Tholos IV, which was aligned on with the early Mycenaean gateway into the Pylos acropolis.
[125] Wright (1994: 54-56).
[126] Wright (1994: 51-54).

himself "from the common beliefs and authority structure of Helladic custom" in order to elevate himself above others.[127]

As noted above, there is no direct human representation of power in Mycenaean Greece, but we can assume that this relief conveyed the *wanax*'s religious authority. Wright argued that the column depicted in the tripartite design of the Lion Gate was the generic symbol representing the supernatural force that supports the human authority.[128] This is supported by the clear architectural importance of the columns within the megaron. Because of the intimate association of the throne with the hearth, we can also argue that the columns which surround the hearth are symbolically linked to the greater religious function of the megaron. The columns are important architectural structures which contain the hearth and allow the smoke and fire from the hearth to escape to the heavens. In this way, the columns may be seen as functioning to connect the heavens with the hearth at the centre of the Mycenaean cosmos.[129]

Maran's analysis of the use of Mycenaean citadels as performative space is particularly relevant to this discussion.[130] In this context we must also consider the message that the Lion Gate conveyed to visitors who looked upon Mycenae from outside of its Cyclopean walls. The symbolic messages one is confronted with are "hardness, inapproachability and unlimited power."[131] Though the fortification walls likely served as a significant defensive structure, it is clear that they also functioned to communicate the authority which the *wanax* occupying the throne used to maintain his influence over other sites in the Argolid. The importance of architectural planning is perhaps demonstrated more clearly at Tiryns, discussed above, where the planning of the site is more rigid than at Mycenae. However, while the palatial courts of Tiryns were rather obstructed from the view of outside

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[127] Wright (1994: 54).
[128] Wright (1994: 59).
[129] Wright (1994: 59); Palaima (2016: 151).
[130] See Maran (2006c).
[131] Maran (2006c: 79).

spectators, and the architectural design was constructed in such a way as to maintain control of movement into the inner courts, Mycenae is presented quite differently. The position of the megaron, the court, and the Grand Staircase on the edge of a high rock functioned as an "architectural staging in which not so much the view to the outside, but rather from the outside played the decisive role."[132] This view is further supported by the fact that the lower slopes of the surrounding hills were likely to have been used as an 'open-air theatre' for spectators in order to see processions leading to the megaron, or to the cult centre.[133]

According to Wright, Mycenae is the only Mycenaean palace site that shows in its architectural layout that there was a relationship between the religious hierarchy and the palace.[134] Wright suggested that, due to the design of the elaborate rampway with a monumental gate leading from the cult centre to a masonry-built stairway that ascends the citadel, it is possible there was a 'sacred way' for processions leading from the cult centre to the Grand Staircase.[135] It is interesting that the cult centre appears to be 'tucked behind' Grave Circle A.[136] I have already noted the apparent visibility of the megaron, court, and Grand Staircase, so it is possible to reason that the cult centre was perhaps a more private area, or simply that the lack of visibility of the cult centre served to emphasise the importance of the religious processions to and from the cult centre.

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[132] Maran (2006c: 81).
[133] Maran (2006c: 81).
[134] Wright (1994: 62).
[135] Wright (1994: 62).
[136] Wright (1994: 62).

## 2.2.4.1 The Grave Circles:

The Grave Circles came into use at Mycenae during MH III (ca. 1800-1700 BC)[137] and were designed to be highly conspicuous, as shown by the circular enclosures and sculpted grave markers.[138] The Grave Circles "signal the emergence of a social elite and the dramatic ascent of Mycenae in the political landscape",[139] and therefore, the contents of these tombs, and their use of spatial expression affirms the prominence of the elite individuals of Mycenae. The Grave Circles demonstrate a unique shift in mortuary practice, because they were constructed as larger, deeper tombs with more elaborate structures, intended for reuse. Further, they reveal a conscious move to create more complex rituals that involved the deposition of an unprecedented amount of wealth with the dead all of which was motivated by the desire to express the importance of the deceased.[140]

There is one feature found in these graves that is pertinent to the study of Mycenaean authority and how it was expressed in Late Helladic culture. Gold appears to have been used as the primary material for adornment in Grave Circle A, usually in the form of necklaces, armbands, and earrings, but also as gold foil ornaments that appear in large quantities.[141] However, Voutsaki emphasised that gold was a rare material in the earlier phases of the MH period.[142] Grave Circle B contained larger numbers of ceramic drinking vessels, while Grave Circle A contained many bronze, silver, and gold drinking vessels and fewer ceramic vessels.[143] Even by the MH III-LH I periods, when richer graves began to appear across the southern mainland, the shaft graves of Mycenae exhibit much larger quantities and

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[137] It is important to mention the Kolonna shaft grave, which dates to the Middle Helladic period and is roughly contemporary, though slightly earlier, than Grave Circle B. According to Rutter (1993: 776), the site of Kolonna contains the earliest known Aegean shaft grave, and this grave may have held the earliest royal burial attested within Helladic culture. Rutter further emphasised the distinctiveness of Kolonna: he argued that Kolonna is one of the largest MH mainland sites to emerge "without peer on the Greek mainland", boasting "the most impressive fortifications in the Aegean world after those of Troy" (1993: 776-780).
[138] Voutsaki (2012: 166, 169).
[139] Voutsaki (2012: 166).
[140] Voutsaki (2012: 166).
[141] Voutsaki (2012: 172).
[142] Voutsaki (2012: 172).
[143] Wright (2004a: 145).

diversity of gold ornaments than other regions.[144] On the basis of this evidence, we can suggest that by the LH I period, Mycenae was indeed a major palatial centre in the southern mainland.[145] As a primary centre, Mycenae would have had better access to exotic goods and valuables through trading networks, and therefore would have had more control over the influx and distribution of these goods.

The quantity of wealth and the highly skilled level of craftsmanship exhibited by the grave goods from Grave Circle A indicate that the elites at Mycenae had control of vast riches in the LH I-II periods.[146] Grave IV is possibly the richest amongst the burials from Grave Circle A, containing finds such as: three gold masks, two gold crowns, eight gold diadems, twenty-seven swords, five daggers, sixteen knives, one large silver shield, five gold vases, two gold and three silver rhyta, two engraved gold rings, three gold armbands, one gold necklace, one gold and one ivory comb, and other finds.[147] Graves Iota and Gamma of Grave Circle B also contained some important finds, such as: one sword, one knife, and four gold ornaments in Grave Iota; and four bronze swords, three daggers, three knives, one spearhead, two gold cups, three gold bands, two necklaces made of various semiprecious materials, and one ivory comb in Grave Gamma.[148] These finds are significant for several reasons. Firstly, they clearly exhibit the richness, and certainly the diversity, of the Grave Circles at Mycenae. Secondly, the presence of unique and exotic offerings, such as the ivory combs, found in Grave Gamma (Circle B) and Grave IV (Circle A), suggest that Mycenae was certainly interacting with the greater Mediterranean, perhaps in the context of gift exchange. Lastly, the appearance of several weapons in all graves suggests that status (that is, male status) was linked to a warrior identity.[149]

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[144] Voutsaki (2012: 172).
[145] Gauss (2010: 746) states that by the Mycenaean period, while we see the growth of Mycenaean centres in the Argolid and Attica, a decline in Kolonna's importance can be observed. However, Gauss highlights that although the site continued to be important in the LBA, it was clearly not a palatial centre.
[146] French (2002: 37).
[147] Voutsaki (2012: 183-184).
[148] Voutsaki (2012: 183).
[149] Harrell (2014: 4) highlighted that the sheer quantity of sword deposited in Graves IV and V in Grave Circle A suggest "that the idea of personal ownership had evolved by the time that Graves IV and V were composed; conspicuous consumption was itself becoming a cultural value." This seems to indicate the formation of a cultural value which

The introduction of shaft graves in the Grave Circles indicates that the elites who were buried in these graves were concerned with creating boundaries and restricting access, which the increased depth of the tombs and the demarcation of the Grave Circles promoted.[150] We can see that with the introduction of the shaft graves in the Grave Circles, the MH IIII period demonstrates a change in attitude towards the dead and ancestors.[151] The conspicuous consumption of exotic and valuable goods in the mortuary sphere was a social strategy of display and ostentation "in a last effort to counter the disintegration of identity and the loss of memory during the very process that dissolves the newly dead and members of one's own family and community to distant ancestors."[152] This, to my mind, illustrates the obvious care taken to ensure that one's lineage remained intact in society's social memory may have led to ancestor worship becoming an important component of Mycenaean society and culture.

The expression of cult through architectural and spatial expression is conveyed patently at Mycenae through the reorganisation and monumental display of the burials in Grave Circle A,[153] and the prominence of social memory as a way of connecting to ancestors is shown by the refurbishment of Grave Circle A in the LH IIIB period. While the area around Grave Circle B was reused in LH II for the construction of a tholos, thereby destroying some of Grave Circle B's tombs, Grave Circle A was

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allowed elite individuals to express their status, and indeed to demonstrate a warrior identity. In Grave Circle B, many of the swords deposited in graves were laid out alongside the corpse, which appears to suggest an intimate connection between the artefacts and the deceased (Harrell, 2014: 4). This 'warrior identity' in graves seems to become more pronounced in the LH IIIC period. The 'warrior burials' of the LH IIIC period are discussed by Deger-Jalkotzy (2006). The abundance of these burials across LH IIIC Greece led Deger-Jalkotzy (2006: 174-176) to believe that social ranking was perhaps largely defined by military prowess, and that these tombs may have functioned as funerary monuments of individuals "who either held, or were entitled to hold the title of *basileus* and to obtain the position of a political leader, if not a petty king or prince…" Deger-Jalkotzy (2006: 176) concludes that these warrior tombs "may well be viewed as a step along the line of development from Mycenaean *qa-si-re-we* to the Homeric *basileis*." However, it will be argued in Section 4 that these rulers were more akin to big-men, rather than 'kings'.

[150] Wright (2004a: 146) describes the variety of bronze vessels deposited in Grave Circle B, Grave ε; Grave Circle A, graves I, III, IV, V. A large quantity of these vessels included kettles, pitchers, hydrias, pans, and kraters, all showing signs of "wear and repair". According to Wright, these items demonstrate the significance of feasting to the burying group, and that this dramatic increase in feasting equipment at the beginning of the late Middle Bronze Age shows a clear focus on a small group of high-status burials.

[151] Voutsaki (2012: 170).

[152] Voutsaki (2012: 184).

[153] Wright (1994: 59).

not built over for more than 300 years, and instead became a highly venerated cemetery in LH IIIB.[154] The LH IIIB rearrangement and monumentalisation of this enclosure, the re-erection of the stelae, and further evidence implying animal sacrifice and possible altars, suggests that Grave Circle A became an important locus for mortuary ritual and cult.[155] Although the earlier burials were thrust to one side when newer burials were interred (which was the common practice in the LH period), the fact that these graves were not disturbed during the palatial period is significant.[156]

Grave Circle A's proximity to the Lion Gate, and that fact that it was incorporated into "a special monument" which would be the immediate focus of attention upon entering through the Lion Gate signifies that Grave Circle A was an important focal point. This suggests that the *wanax* ruling in the LH IIIB period saw it advantageous to honour those buried in Grave Circle A, possibly his ancestral *wanaktes* who ruled before him. It is also interesting that a sherd dating to the Classical period was found in the area of Grave Circle A, bearing the inscription 'To the hero', although there does not seem to have been any buildings constructed over the Grave Circle.[157] Grave Circle A presents evidence that is strongly indicative of an ancestor cult prevalent in the LH IIIB period, and this can be further substantiated by the Fr series, discussed in Section 2.3.3.

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[154] Voutsaki (2012: 169).
[155] Dabney & Wright (1990); Voutsaki (2012: 169); Lupack (2014).
[156] French (2002: 40).
[157] French (2002: 40).

# 2.3 Textual evidence:

## 2.3.1 Introduction:

It was previously assumed that due to the strongly economic nature of the Linear B tablets, the *wanax*'s role was highly obscure outside of the economic sphere.[158] The last twenty years of research have proven quite the opposite. There are strong indications that the *wanax* held a highly important religious role in Mycenaean society. This role has already been addressed in the archaeological section above, but we can further substantiate the religious associations of the *wanax* through these tablets.

This section refers to two groupings of Linear B tablets: firstly, tablets PY Er 312, Er 880, and Un 718; secondly, the PY Fr series. Most textual evidence which reveals information about the *wanax*'s role in Mycenaean society comes from the Pylos tablets. Other tablets that reference the *wanax* in specific social settings are also discussed so that we may draw conclusions as to the larger role which the *wanax* held in Mycenaean society.

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[158] Bennet (1997); Kilian (1988).

## 2.3.2 PY Er 312, PY Er 880, PY Un 718:

It is necessary to group these three tablets together due to their complementary nature. When studied together, these tablets provide an opportunity to understand the relationship between feasting and the reproduction of political authority and social rank in Mycenaean society.[159] They have been considered more effectively in recent years by scholars such as Lupack, Nakassis, and Palaima.[160] Therefore, this study draws primarily upon their work, because I believe they have produced the most convincing arguments concerning the *wanax*'s role in the religious sector of Mycenaean society.

PY Er 312 and Er 880 record landholdings in *sa-re-pe-da*, and PY Un 718 records donations of provisions for a large feast in the same region in honour of Poseidon.[161] Nakassis believes that the individual named *e-ke-ra₂-wo* (*Ekhelawon*), referred to in PY Er 880 and Un 718, was in fact the Pylian *wanax* being referenced by his personal name.[162] He convincingly argued that this distinctive recording of the *wanax*'s personal name reflected a social strategy of the king employing a legitimising tactic.[163]

The centrality of feasting according to archaeological material (particularly at Pylos) has already been established.[164] But the importance of these texts is such that they suggest the *wanax* was a principal figure both in his official role, and as an elite individual. This last personification is exemplified clearly in Un 718. In Er 312 and Un 718, both written by the same scribal hand (Hand 24), "landholdings (Er 312) and contributions (*do-so-mo*) to a commensal ceremony (Un 718) for the four principal components of the overall society are listed."[165] The elevated status of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is demonstrated by the hierarchical method the scribe used to record the contributors on Un 718. The

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[159] Nakassis (2012: 2-3).
[160] Lupack (2014), Nakassis (2012), Palaima (1995a, 2006, 2016).
[161] Nakassis (2012: 2); Palaima (2006: 62). Nakassis (2012: 14) also refers to PY Un 853, which also records *e-ke-ra₂-wo* entirely provisioning a feast in Poseidon's honour with an amount of food roughly comparable to Un 718.
[162] Nakassis (2012: 2).
[163] Nakassis (2012: 21).
[164] See Section 2.2.2.
[165] Palaima (2006: 62).

first benefactor listed is *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, who provides almost half of the total contributions and the only bull.[166] The donation of the bull for the feast is a significant point; *e-ke-ra₂-wo* provides the most important element of the feast, the sacrificial bull, and he is listed by his personal name, rather than by his official title as *wanax*. This indeed suggests that a social strategy is being employed by the *wanax*. By providing such a substantial and important donation to the communal feast, *e-ke-ra₂-wo* both demonstrates his elevated status as an elite individual within the socio-political hierarchy,[167] and also legitimises his royal authority through a "conspicuous display of royal generosity within an important communal ritual context."[168] There are three other figures recorded on Un 718 – the *damos*, the regional corporate body mostly associated with supervision of landholdings and agricultural activities; the *lawagetas*, the second most important officer of palatial administration; and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, a collective body who were either associated with landholding, or were a religious group.[169]

The structure of Un 718 has been highlighted by Nikoloudis, who points out that the configuration is such that the first two contributors are linked with the last two. *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *lawagetas* are listed first and third, both as subjects in clauses with a future verb (*do-se*) and its direct object (*to-so do-so-mo*).[170] The 'corporate bodies', the *damos* and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, are listed second and fourth, and are preceded by the word *o-da-a₂* ('and similarly').[171] So, the grouping of *e-ke-ra₂-wo* and the *damos* together suggests a relationship between the *wanax* and the *damos* which is analogous to the *lawagetas* and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*. On the basis of this, Nikoloudis reasoned that *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was the symbolic head of the *damos*, while the *lawagetas* was the symbolic head of the *wo-*

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[166] Nakassis (2012: 4); Wright (2004a: 151).
[167] Palaima (2006: 68).
[168] Nakassis (2012: 21).
[169] Nakassis (2012: 4).
[170] Nikoloudis (2008); Nakassis (2012: 4-5).
[171] Nakassis (2012: 4).

*ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*.[172] She argued that this can be further substantiated by the syntax; in lines 7 and 11, "the adverbial *o-da-a₂* 'and thus' links each of the groups to the individual mentioned before them", while the -δε of *to-so-de* in line 9 "effectively separates two sets of information."[173] In agreement with Nikoloudis and Palaima, it seems reasonable to posit that this suggests an underlying societal division between 'the ruler' and 'the ruled'.[174] It is clear that Un 718 demonstrates the *wanax*'s elevated status above those listed in the tablet, but what does this text reveal about the *wanax*'s role in the religious sector?

The donation of the only bull for the feast also indicates the *wanax*'s distinguished position as the prime representative of the people to the realm of the gods. We can surmise this because in feasting, the sacrificial bull is the most important component of the contributions of the animals that will be sacrificed to the gods as part of the religious festival. In Er 312, which records landholdings of the *wanax*, *lawagetas*, *te-re-ta* (*telestai*), and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo*, the importance of the *wanax* and *lawagetas* is clearly shown by the structure of the text: they are listed first in a separate section; they each possess a temenos, and they are the only individuals in the Linear B corpus known to possess such a distinctive land holding; and the *wanax* is further distinguished by "the binary-contrastive suffixation of the adjectival form *wa-na-ka-te-ro* which marks out the *wa-na-ka* in contradistinction to all other members of Pylian society."[175] The size of landholdings recorded on Er 312 corresponds proportionally to both the quantity and value of the prospective contributions on Un 718, which were calculated on the basis of landholdings listed on Er 312.[176] The table below shows the equivalences between Er 312 and Un 718 originally proposed by Ventris and Chadwick.[177]

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[172] Nikoloudis (2008: 589).
[173] Nikoloudis (2008: 589).
[174] Nikoloudis (2008: 589); Palaima (1995a: 132).
[175] Palaima (2006: 62).
[176] Palaima (2006: 62).
[177] Nakassis (2012: 6-7) argued that the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo* and *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* should be viewed as the same entity on the basis of two factors: firstly, the adjective *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo* only appears in these two texts; secondly, in both texts, the nouns modified by this adjective both refer to land. He also argued that there is good reason to believe

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| Er 312 | Un 718 |
|---|---|
| *wanax* | *e-ke-ra₂-wo* |
| *lawagetas* | *lawagetas* |
| *telestai* | *damos* |
| *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo e-re-mo* | *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* |

The above table illustrates the positioning of the *wanax*/*e-ke-ra₂-wo* and *lawagetas* as the two most important individuals on PY Er 312 and Un 718. Therefore, we can safely argue that both Un 718 and Er 312 demonstrate the prominence of the *wanax* and the *lawagetas* within Mycenaean socio-political hierarchy.

Er 880 presents a more challenging case, due to the highly fragmentary state of the tablet. However, it is generally agreed that Er 880 describes two plots of land, one with a fig orchard, and another with a vineyard, both belonging to *e-ke-ra₂-wo* in the region *sa-re-pe-da*.[178] Er 880 is clearly linked to Er 312. While Er 312 records the 2,880 litres of wheat belonging to the *wa-na-ka-te-ro te-me-no*, Er 880 provides a description of the total foodstuffs on the temenos of the *wanax* (*e-ke-ra₂-wo* is listed on Er 880, rather than the *wa-na-ka*). Er 880, then, presents a fuller description of the *wanax*'s total landholdings. The tablet was also composed by the same hand that wrote Un 718 and Er 312, who composed a series of four documents, all relating to affairs of the *wanax*.[179]

The location in which these tablets were found further strengthens this argument. Un 718 was found in an 'unusual' find spot, in Room 7, disassociated from full page-shaped tablets of storage Room 8, and from the smaller number of tablets in Room 7.[180] But Un 718 was found in the same context as

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the *telestai* and *damos* were closely associated, and that the *damos* on Un 718 should be connected to the *telestai* on Er 312. See also Lupack (2008: 67-71).

[178] Nakassis (2012: 8-9).
[179] Nakassis (2012: 8); Palaima (2006: 62).
[180] Palaima (1995a: 134).

the Ta series, a collection of tablets composed by Hand 2, comprising "the inventory of precious vessels and furniture on the occasion when the *wanax*, so designated, either appointed or buried an official."[181] The fact that these tablets were found disassociated from other texts is explained by their detailing affairs concerning the *wanax*. Er 312 and Er 880 were found together in Room 8 associated with the important religious offering text, Tn 316.[182] Therefore, Palaima argued that the "nexus of associations is such as to make it clear that Hand 24 was in charge of compiling texts that made it possible to calculate the contributions due for religious functions from the *wanax* in his capacity as *wanax* and from *Ekhelawon* in his private status."[183] The appearance of the *wanax*, both with his official title and his personal name in these texts strongly indicates the prevalence of religion in his role. According to Nakassis, the feast documented on Un 718 could have served to link *e-ke-ra₂-wo* to the regional population with ties of reciprocity, "instead of the more impersonal obligations demanded by the palace and the *wanax*."[184]

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[181] Palaima (1995a: 134). Palaima (2004: 235-236) states that the number of tables (11), thrones (6) and stools (16), which were all made of "costly wood or stone and exquisitely constructed in combination with precious inlay materials and figural decorations", may reflect the distinguished persons mentioned in Un 718 – a throne for the *wanax*, one for the *ra-wa-ke-ta*, three for the three *telestai* representing the *da-mo*, and one for the representative of the *worgioneion ka-ma*. This provides further reason to suppose the importance of the fact that Un 718 was indeed found in the same context as the Ta series.

[182] Palaima (1995a: 135). It is interesting to note that according to Palaima (1995b: 623), Tn 316 has been theorised to represent a last desperate attempt "to enlist the benevolence and support of the chief gods of the community through precious offerings, including possibly human sacrifice" to save Pylos from an imminent crisis. Baumbach (1983: 33) argued that due to the "untidy execution" and its "unfinished state", the tablet was recorded in a hurry and that "the writer was probably prevented from finishing it, or at least making a fair copy of it, by the disaster which befell Pylos." However, Palaima contends Baumbach's argument, and claims that it is unlikely Tn 316 was written in the final days of the Pylos palace. Palaima (1995b: 625) further argued that 'State-of-Emergency' theorists have one solid piece of evidence to base their theories on: that the Pylos palace was destroyed "and we assume that some tablets must have been written sometime relatively close to the actual destruction", but this evidence is ambiguous. In regards to the tablet being "untidy" and "unfinished", Palaima thinks that: (1), the untidiness is "a good example of clever and persistent experimentation" which is common in the work of scribes; and (2), that Baumbach is mistaken in thinking the tablet is unfinished because even though Poseidon is missing as one of the offering recipients, this can be explained by chronology (1995b: 627-629). Palaima (1995b: 629) argued that the primary offerings festival of Poseidon took place separately and subsequent to the offerings made to other divinities listed on Tn 316. Therefore, some time would have elapsed between the composition of Tn 316 and other tablets relating to Poseidon (such as Un 718).

[183] Palaima (1995a: 135).

[184] Nakassis (2012: 22).

The importance of feasting as a social construct has already been addressed,[185] but it is nevertheless important to reiterate its social importance: feasts can operate "as mechanisms to create and reinforce social and economic inequalities", and the fact that feasting is recorded in the Linear B tablets in relation to the *wanax*, and that there is a fresco depicting feasting in the main megaron at Pylos, implies an innate connection between feasting and the exercise of royal authority.[186] Due to the religious objects and installations that were found in the megaron structure, we can assume there were strong religious overtones in the *wanax*'s function. However, with respect to the Linear B tablets, this dominance of religion in the role of the *wanax* is perhaps even more clearly demonstrated by the PY Fr series.

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[185] See section 2.2.2.
[186] Nakassis (2012: 23).

## 2.3.3 PY Fr series:

The Fr series consists of 51 tablets, all concerned with the management of oil; some in contexts pertaining to religious offerings, others concerning different types of transactions involving the palace's supply of treated and perfumed olive oil.[187] For the purpose of this paper, only tablets which deal with the *wanax* are discussed.

Lupack postulates that the *wanax*, who appears as a recipient in several cases in the Fr series, is not referring to the mortal, ruling *wanax*, but rather the ancestral *wanax* "who was thought to have founded the institution of the *wanaktes* and who was probably considered the forefather of the *wanax* governing Pylos when the palace was destroyed."[188]

According to Lupack, in each example where the word *wanax* appears in the series, it is found in association with one of three groups of terms.[189] They are summarised in the table below:

| *wa-na-se-wi-jo* | *wa-na-so-i* | *di-pi-si-jo-i* |
|---|---|---|
| Fr 12.15.1 | Fr 1235.1; 1235.2 | Fr 1220.2 |
| Fr 1221 (variant: *wa-ne-se-wi-**ja***) | Fr 1227 | Fr 1231.1 |
| | Fr 1219.2 (variant: *wa-**no**-so-i*) | Fr 1232.1 |
| | Fr 1222 | Fr 1240.2 (variant, possibly scribal error: *di-pi-si-jo*) |
| | Fr 1228 | Fr 1338. 2 |
| | Fr 1251 | Fr 1218.2 (variant: *di-pi-si-**je-wi-jo***) |

In each case, it is clear that these terms are being used in a religious context. This is outlined effectively by Lupack:

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[187] Lupack (2014: 164).
[188] Lupack (2014: 170).
[189] Lupack (2014: 167).

"Tablet Fr 1210.2 records the deity Poseidon as the recipient of the oil, while the offerings on Fr 1235.2 and 1231.1 are being sent to the deity Potnia. On Fr 1222, the religious festival *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* is recorded as the occasion upon which the oil is being disbursed. Because the first element of the word, *to-no*, has been interpreted as representing *\*thórnos* (*thronos*), or throne, as it is taken in the Ta series, this festival can be rendered as the 'Festival of the Throne.'"[190]

The *wanax* is the only personage to be allotted offerings of perfumed oil alongside the deities Poseidon and Potnia, and it is interesting that, on Fr 1235, the *wanax* is listed before Potnia.[191] The Linear B tablets make it clear that Poseidon and Potnia were the primary male and female deities in Bronze Age Messenia as "patron divinities of the kingdom of Pylos", but Palaima has interpreted tablets such as Fr 1235 as indicating that the *wanax*, in this religious context, served as the mortal intermediary between the divinities and his people.[192] While Palaima argued that the Fr tablets do indeed refer to the Pylian *wanax* occupying the throne, Lupack, in contrast, argues that the tablets point towards an ancestral *wanax*, and this especially seems to be a probable theory when we consider the evidence presented for the 'Festival of the Throne.' I would speculate that Lupack's conclusions are more appropriate in the context of Mycenaean society, because, as I have shown, there is an apparent lack of representation when it comes to the ruling *wanaktes*. We can therefore argue that perhaps it was more important to recognise the ancestral *wanax* as the forefather of the Pylian *wanax* ruling at the time of the composition of these tablets. Additionally, when we consider the actions of the *wanax* ruling at Mycenae in the LH IIIB period, during which time there is a conscious decision made to incorporate the Grave Circles into the walls of the citadel,[193] we may further suppose that this *wanax*

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[190] Lupack (2014: 168).
[191] Palaima (1995a: 134).
[192] Palaima (1995a: 134).
[193] Dabney & Wright (1990) and also Voutsaki (2012: 169), for example, argue that the rearrangement and monumentalisation of Grave Circle A in this period suggests that this Grave Circle became an important locus for mortuary ritual and cult. This, to my mind, implies that there was indeed a conscious move to honouring the dead as

was trying to link his claim to the authority of his forefathers. By encircling the Grave Circles with the citadel walls, this likely was a social strategy intended to honour and recognise the ancestral *wanaktes* who had ruled before him.

This idea has been expressed elsewhere. Kilian surmised over thirty years ago that archaeological evidence clearly documented the presence of an ancestor cult which was linked "with state-controlled rituals at Mycenae and the apparently set arrangement of the palace buildings themselves".[194] By the early LH II period, contemporary with a series of destructions on Crete, Mycenaean society becomes dominant,[195] though many iconographical elements were adopted by the Mycenaeans in order to establish their leader, the *wanax*, as the paramount figure in Mycenaean society.[196] It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Mycenaean rulers wanted to establish themselves as the ruling authorities on the mainland, and perhaps it was beneficial for them to claim their authority by means of an ancestor cult. The LH period is characterised by a shift in thinking in the material culture that is particularly well expressed in the Grave Circles at Mycenae, as discussed above.[197]

Concerning the ancestor cult as reflected in the textual evidence, we have two cases in which a deity named *ti-ri-se-ro-e*, or the 'Thrice Hero', is referenced. This figure is found on PY Fr 1204 and PY Tn 316.4, and his presence provides evidence "for the idea that ancestors were heroised and worshipped by the Mycenaeans".[198] On Tn 316, *ti-ri-se-ro-e* is recorded as a recipient of a gold vessel, the same offering other individual gods received, at a ceremony held at the sanctuary *pa-ki-ja-ne*,

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ancestors, and this seems to have been an important social strategy employed by the ruling *wanax* at the time to reconnect with his ancestors and therefore legitimise (and secure) his own position as ruler.

[194] Kilian (1988: 294).
[195] Shelton (2010: 143).
[196] Palaima (1995a: 137).
[197] See section 2.2.4.1.
[198] Lupack (2014: 170). I find the 'Thrice Hero' to be an intriguing concept. Though I do not currently have any grounds to argue this, I wonder whether the 'Thrice Hero' has any linkage to the iconography depicted in the Lion Gate at Mycenae. This Lion Gate has three important features, discussed in section 2.2.4. I wonder whether it is possible that the Thrice Hero was the ancestral embodiment of this idea: an old and natural authority guarding the palace, whose authority is re-enacted and legitimised through ritualistic symbolism. This is entirely speculative, but I do think it presents an interesting concept.

while on Fr 1204, he receives a small quantity of rose-scented oil.[199] Antonaccio claims that this figure survives into the historical period, receiving cult in Attica, and appears to represent the collective notion of familial ancestors or the generative power of family clan.[200] The celebration of the 'Festival of the Throne' documented on PY Fr 1222 links the *wanax* with the *to-no* ('throne'). Though translations of the verbal *e-ke* of *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* have produced different theories as to what was being done to the throne in this festival, nevertheless, we know that the throne was the centrepiece of the event.[201] Lupack highlighted that "we can imagine that the throne was used during the ceremony as a symbol to represent the power of the personage who sat on it."[202] Although it is possible that the figure on the throne could have been a deity such as Zeus or Poseidon, we must remember that the throne itself was an important symbol of power used by the *wanax* to emphasise his "singular position in the megaron and, thereby, in the state."[203] The case for ancestor cult then, appears to be clear in the textual evidence, and further corroborated by the archaeological evidence. The offerings made to the *wanax* on the Fr series are certainly suggestive of a cult which was devoted to an ancestral *wanax*, and it is possible that this cult was employed by the ruling *wanax* at the time to support and further validate his authority.[204]

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[199] Antonaccio (2006: 384).
[200] Antonaccio (2006: 384).
[201] Lupack (2014: 170).
[202] Lupack (2014: 170).
[203] Lupack (2014: 170).
[204] Lupack (2014: 174).

## 2.3.4 Further comments concerning the *wanax*'s role on the tablets:

There is some evidence of the *wanax* having a role in the military sphere, though it is minimal. The dominant military figure appears to be the *lawagetas*,[205] though both figures are of high status and are contextually associated with each other in tablets which record: their temene (PY Er 312), their contributions of ceremonial banquet items to Poseidon (PY Un 718), and absent rowers in their charge (PY An 724).[206] While it is assumed that the *lawagetas* (*ra-wa-ke-ta*) is firmly connected with warfare and defence, it is interesting that, according to Nikoloudis, he does not appear in "the most militaristic texts from Pylos, namely the *o-ka* tablets", which list contingents of men patrolling the coast.[207] Nikoloudis states that this absence could be explained simply by the fact that his physical presence was not required, although it is also possible that the *lawagetas* was not directly responsible for all military-type activities.[208]

Other references to the Messenian *wanax* in the military sphere refer to him by his personal name, *e-ke-ra$_2$-wo*, whose name, according to Palaima, means "he who holds (preserves?) the *laos* [fighting force] (in check?)".[209] *e-ke-ra$_2$-wo* is recorded on two long multiple-entry tablets, PY An 724 and An 610, with large numbers that likely deal with a regular system for recruitment of rowers for the palatial fleet.[210] However, Palaima claimed that this occurrence is not secure enough evidence to assume the *wanax* had control of, or any critical responsibilities, for the management of military affairs. Although we have further evidence for potential militaristic responsibilities of the *wanax* – tablets Vc 73 and Vd 136 from the Room of the Chariot tablets at Knossos, which associate the title *wa-na-ka* with a

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[205] Palaima (1995a: 129).
[206] Palaima (1995a: 129).
[207] Nikoloudis (2008: 590).
[208] Nikoloudis (2008: 590) also argued that there may have been much more to the *lawagetas*' role than "simply leading the army". She points out that "he is often mentioned with individuals and groups of moderate to low status, in outlying districts, removed from the palace's immediate sphere of activity and control." She further emphasised that the textual evidence which mentions the *lawagetas* in many different social contexts could suggest that he "served as a liaison between the privileged (i.e. palatial elite and local landowners) and the less privileged 'others', viewed as the \**ra-wo*" (2008: 591). See Nikoloudis (2006) for a more detailed analysis of the role of the *lawagetas*.
[209] Palaima (1995a: 129).
[210] Palaima (1995a: 130).

single chariot of unknown type, and Wr 1480 from a surface find at Pylos, which has the abbreviation 'WA' for *wanakteros*, and the words *do-ka-ma* ('handful[s]' or 'handle[s]') and *pa-to-jo* ('javelin' or 'javelins') – Palaima thinks that none of these texts provide sufficient evidence that the *wanax* had a significant role in military affairs, "nor that warfare was the semantic sphere of the root of the title."[211] The wanax also appears to have had his own armourer, as indicated by PY En 609.5, which refers to a man named *a-tu-ko*, who is identified as an *e-te-do-mo wa-na-ka-te-ro*.[212] Ultimately, I think that we have no sufficient reason to assume that the *wanax* did not have an important role in the military sphere.

The occurrences of the *wanax* on the Linear B tablets has been summarised recently by Palaima:

> "… 18 references, out of about 1,000 sizeable texts, to the *wanax* at Pylos (eight occurrences of which are the adjectival form *wanakteros*); six (three of which are adjectival) at Knossos, out of well over 2,000 sizeable texts; two (one of which might be adjectival) at Thebes, out of at least 150 sizeable texts; one now in the new tablets from the major Laconian palatial centre being uncovered at Hagios Vasileios in Laconia; plus single case inscriptions from Tiryns, Thebes, Eleusis, and Chania with the adjectival form or the single-syllable abbreviation *wa*."[213]

Therefore, while we cannot deny the relatively small number of occurrences within the entire Linear B corpus, it must be stressed that no other title appears in so many diverse and important contexts.[214] The *wanax* clearly appears several times in contexts where he is being elevated above others in his personal status under the name *e-ke-ra₂-wo*. Nakassis lists three other texts from Pylos: An 610, which deals with the military recruitment of rowers, where *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is personally responsible for

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[211] Palaima (2016: 141).
[212] Palaima (1995a: 129).
[213] Palaima (2016: 135).
[214] Palaima (1995a: 133).

furnishing forty men; Un 853, where *e-ke-ra₂-wo* entirely provisions a feast in Poseidon's honour with an amount of food roughly comparable to Un 718; and Un 219, where *e-ke-ra₂-wo* is the recipient of aromatic substances (with other named individuals, religious officials, and deities) and of two animal hides in the Qa series.[215] *e-ke-ra₂-wo* also appears in contexts which parallel those the *wanax* appears in, but both are seen primarily in religious records.[216] I believe that the use of both *wanax* and *e-ke-ra₂-wo* was indeed a social strategy employed by the king. However, I cautiously propose that the use of the *wanax*'s personal name, *e-ke-ra₂-wo*, in important feasting texts served to clearly identify the ruling *wanax* at the time, in order to exhibit his own generosity and conspicuous authority in this position, as separate from his position as *wanax*. In doing so, I believe he may have been attempting to elevate himself simply as an elite individual without employing his official title to do so.

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[215] Nakassis (2012: 15).
[216] Nakassis (2012: 16).

## 2.4 Conclusions:

Evidence from archaeological material and the Linear B tablets strongly indicates that one of the *wanax*'s primary roles was within the religious sphere of Mycenaean society.

The feasting fresco in the megaron at Pylos seems to corroborate the information provided by the Pylos tablets discussed above, demonstrating that the *wanax*, as both an authority figure and as an individual (when referred to by his personal name, *e-ke-ra₂-wo*) played an important role in the ritual feasting (Un 718) and ceremonial contexts (for example, Fr 1235).

The architectural layout of Pylos, Tiryns, and Mycenae express the importance of the megaron and the throne, and the Cyclopean fortifications and elaborate system of twists and turns further communicate the exclusive nature of the rituals performed in the court and megaron by the *wanax*, and thereby, the importance of the *wanax* as a ruler and intermediary between the gods. Additionally, the incorporation of the Grave Circles at Mycenae in the LH IIIB period demonstrates the importance of the ancestors to the ruling *wanax*.

Concerning the textual evidence, the *wanax* appears on texts recording religious offerings, such as the PY Un series and the Fr series, and in texts which deal with important intensive industries, such as PY En 609.5, which reveals the *wanax* may have had his own personal armorer.[217] The *wanax* appears in specialised texts which other individuals such as the *lawagetas* do not appear in, such as: PY Ta 711.1, where the *wanax* is making an appointment (or burials, though the former seems more likely) of an official; and PY Un 2.1, where he either undergoes or presides over an initiation in the religious district of *pa-ki-ja-ne*, whose name means 'place of slaughter'.[218] Perhaps the strongest indication of the *wanax*'s primarily religious association is that he is the only official to receive offerings of

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[217] Palaima (1995a: 129).
[218] Palaima (1995a: 131); Palaima (2004: 229).

perfumed oil along with Poseidon and Potnia, as shown by PY Fr 1235.[219] This seems a very significant point, because it emphasises the religious connotation of the association between the *wanax* and the deities, regardless of whether it is indicative of an ancestor cult or not. Therefore, we can suppose that the *wanax* held a largely religious and sacred position as the ruling authority, which is accentuated both by archaeological and textual evidence. The *wanax*'s ability to sponsor a feast by contributing important foodstuffs demonstrates his ability to bring together large groups, mobilise labour, and command surplus and further distribute it; this both demonstrates his prestige and further advances his family, lineage, and allies.[220]

After the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial system, the office of the *wanax* disintegrates, and is replaced by a different system of social hierarchy, one that is no longer centred upon a central administration.

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[219] Palaima (1995a: 134).
[220] Wright (2004a: 171).

# 3. The LH IIIC period:

## 3.1 Introduction:

The LH IIIC period is a highly important era during which there is a clear change in social organisation after the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial system. While some sites such as Pylos do not show signs of continued occupation but rather of virtual abandonment, other Mycenaean citadels, such as Tiryns, provide strong evidence for a newly emerging elite and social organisation. This is an important issue to consider, because the LH IIIC period exemplifies many social changes which solidified sometime during the Early Iron Age.

The only evidence pertaining to this period is archaeological material. This is not to say that it is impossible to reconstruct the social and cultural developments in the LH IIIC period. Rather, the previous forty years of research and excavations have demonstrated the complex situations throughout mainland Greece on the basis of archaeological material. There is evidence in many regions of Greece for social reorganisation and elite presence, and this is suggested by the scattering of 'warrior tombs'.[221] However, the limitations of this thesis does not permit adequate discussion of these warrior tombs. Rather, I will focus on LH IIIC Tiryns, because it is a former Mycenaean citadel which exhibits clear reactions to the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial administrations system.

Tiryns demonstrates the strongest evidence for social re-organisation in the LH IIIC period than other sites during the same period.[222] It is not the purpose of this paper to assume that the abundance of archaeological evidence for Tiryns and the Argolid reflects the situation of the LH IIIC period across Greece. Bettelli and Crielaard have demonstrated why it is futile to presume a uniform response to the

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[221] See Deger-Jalkotzy (2006) for a detailed discussion of LH IIIC warrior tombs.
[222] Maran (2006a: 123).

collapse of the palatial administration.[223] However, this chapter focusses on Tiryns because it provides the most evidence for social reorganisation and inhabitation in the LH IIIC period.[224]

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[223] Bettelli (2015); Crielaard (2006, 2011).
[224] See Bettelli (2015) and Arena (2015) for a discussion of other regions on the Greek mainland in the LBA-LH IIIC-EIA transition.

## 3.2 Archaeological evidence at Tiryns:

As society and culture of the Greek mainland shifted from the LH IIIB to the LH IIIC period, some of the most important architectural features of the palatial period at Tiryns were reconstructed and revived in the early phase of LH IIIC.[225] After the destructions of ca. 1200 BC, there were mass migrations, and Tiryns may have experienced an influx of refugees, who settled on the site and built a substantial settlement around the Lower Citadel.[226]

According to Eder, Tiryns came to supersede Mycenae in terms of importance in the LH IIIC period, "if the large-scale architectural planning in the Lower Town and the selective reoccupation of the Great Megaron on the Upper Citadel of Tiryns are taken as relevant criteria."[227]

The Lower and Upper Citadels both underwent extensive changes during this period, and it is possible to observe continuity of Mycenaean social practices which were adapted in this period to suit the different social conditions.

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[225] Maran (2006a: 123).
[226] Stockhammer (2011: 215).
[227] Eder (2019: 24-25).

## 3.2.1 The Upper Citadel:

The Great Megaron was replaced by Building T, the Great Court was cleared of debris from the previous destruction, and the round altar was transformed into a platform-like structure.[228] Despite some differences between the structures of the palatial and postpalatial period, the construction projects carried out within the Upper Citadel clearly indicate architectural continuity. The conscious decision to re-use and reconstruct these buildings, which were important architectural features in palatial Tiryns,[229] demonstrates that the new rulers were attempting to reconnect with their immediate past, but were adapting what were previously palatial symbols to suit the changed social conditions. The conspicuous renewal of "the highest ranking architectural symbols of the Palatial period" strongly suggests that there was a revitalisation of the previous central political authority.[230]

The redesign of the Upper Citadel presents an interesting development in LH IIIC Tiryns. It seems that, because there was no longer a palatial system centred around a single authority figure, the LH IIIC elite believed the architecture of the Upper Citadel should reflect the new social situation. Eder argues that the isolated nature of Building T and lack of enclosing walls around the structure suggests that the building should be perceived "as a hall for gatherings of the chiefs of Postpalatial Tiryns with religious feasts and communal meals", rather than the residential quarters of a ruling family.[231] The importance of Building T was recently summarised by Maran as follows:

> "While the processions of the Palatial period had been directed by architectural means towards the Great Megaron and its court, where rituals were carried out, screened by high walls in utmost secrecy, the Post-Palatial reorganisation of the Upper Citadel seemingly did not employ architectural means to guide movement centripetally… The main focus seems to have been on

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[228] Maran (2006a: 123).
[229] See section 2.2.3.
[230] Maran (2012b: 122).
[231] Eder (2019: 25); Stockhammer (2011: 215).

the practices carried out in Building T and the Great Court, which were now not meant to be kept secret from the general population."[232]

The walls of the former palace were also carefully dismantled in order to ensure a wide visibility of Building T and the surrounding area.[233] Because these palatial symbols are indeed reused and adapted in the LH IIIC period, we can postulate that the intention of the LH IIIC elites was to connect their present to the palatial period. In this way, Building T may have become "the reference point for a reorientation of society."[234] That Building T was built over such a "symbolically charged plot as the ruin of the Great Megaron was a monument in which the post-palatial elite assembled on certain occasions to gain legitimacy by referring to the glories of the past."[235] I consider this idea of cultural memory as a reference point to the past to be an important feature of the LH IIIC period. The maintenance of culturally significant symbols, such as the Great Megaron, was fundamental to the LH IIIC society at Tiryns, because it allowed the emerging social elite to establish their connections to the past through the acquisition of important material goods, thus enabling them to legitimise their claims to authority. Reference to the past became integral to the system of values held by the postpalatial elite, and this memory was also used by these individuals in their struggle for power, even in the Early Iron Age.

It is worth mentioning the transformation of the circular stone-built altar in the Great Court into a square platform. Here as well we can observe further adaptations of palatial architecture, whereby previously important religious and political symbols, in this case the altar, are being used within a more inclusive social context, rather than a private and enclosed area. The transformation of the altar into a larger, square platform "exemplifies the continuity of the execution of rituals under the sky."[236]

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[232] Maran (2015: 284).
[233] Maran (2015: 284); Maran (2011: 173).
[234] Maran (2015: 284).
[235] Maran (2011: 173).
[236] Maran (2011: 173).

This is an important development in postpalatial Tiryns, because the exclusivity of the religious practices that were carried out within the palace in the Mycenaean period is now replaced. Rather, it was now at "the very centre of the post-palatial Upper Citadel were the social practices carried out in Building T and the Great Court with its altar, of which those inside the court were not hidden anymore from the eyes of the general population."[237]

Therefore, in the Upper Citadel, we can clearly observe that the LH IIIC elites were utilising the important architectural features of the Palatial period in a way that reflected the new social conditions; one which was no longer based on the central authority of a palatial administration system. Furthermore, we can observe the beginnings of the separation of the religious from that of ruling authority, a feature which would later become more firmly established by the eighth century BC.[238]

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[237] Maran (2011: 173).
[238] See Eder (2019: 30).

## 3.2.2 The Lower Citadel:

In contrast to the Upper Citadel, the Lower Citadel (post-destruction) shows no revival of structural principles of palatial occupation, nor or architectural forms, but rather demonstrates a change to 'village-like occupation', suggesting a conscious shift by the families of the new upper class to claim areas in the regions of the Lower Citadel for themselves.[239]

Stockhammer highlighted the importance of the excavations of the Lower Citadel, especially in the north-eastern section, which was left undeveloped in early LH IIIB because it was located in an area subject to flooding.[240] However, in late LH IIIB, a large dam-and-channel system was constructed, with the purpose of rerouting the river.[241] Maran recently argued that the 'visionary' building projects that were being conceived in the thirteenth century BC "suggest that on the eve of the destruction, the political dignitaries did not feel they were living in the shadow of a crisis."[242] Accordingly, the costs of these building programmes and continuous warfare in the LH IIIB period likely affected their ability to react to disaster once it struck: this, Maran argued, could have been the "main ingredient" in the disaster which unfolded in the late thirteenth century BC.[243]

The large-scale architectural planning in the Lower Citadel during the LH IIIC period, which includes the creation of new living quarters built atop the dried-out sediments, seems to suggest that the inhabitants of postpalatial Tiryns were the "true beneficiaries of the costly project involving the redirection of the stream.[244] Maran argued that the people who were responsible for this systematic development must have been aware of the 'master plan' of the final decades of the palatial period, and

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[239] Maran (2006a: 125-127).
[240] Stockhammer (2009: 165).
[241] Stockhammer (2009: 165); Maran, *et al.* (2019: 69).
[242] Maran (2015: 283).
[243] Maran (2015: 283). The actual disaster which was responsible for the destruction is uncertain. However, given the evidence indicating systematic development of the zone in the Lower Citadel which was affected by the redirection of the stream in the years after the destruction, we could postulate that a major flooding was a contributing factor. However, this proposal needs to be substantiated with further research.
[244] Maran (2015: 284).

that they were likely derived from the inner circle of palatial decision makers.[245] Therefore, we can posit that these planners were part of the newly emerging social elite, for the several other building projects carried out in the LH IIIC period can be seen to demonstrate a conscious revival of previously important political symbols being applied to a new social context.

It is necessary to diverge here to discuss Eder's commentary on continuity of cult practice in the LH IIIC period. Eder believes that, due to the existence of small shrines and a small sanctuary in the Lower Citadel, cult practices which were in use in the palatial period continued into the LH IIIC period.[246] The shrines, which were built against the inner face of the fortification wall and opened into a small courtyard, have three architectural phases spanning the entire postpalatial period.[247] They are small, successive buildings (117, 110, 110a) that were also furnished with stucco floors and benches for cult objects, among which were large wheel-made figurines.[248] Because the location of the shrines and the small size of the courtyard suggest that it was perhaps restricted to a limited number of individuals, Eder argued the possibility that processions could have connected the shrine through a long corridor to the Upper Citadel and Building T, recalling similar patterns of communication at LH IIIB Tiryns and between the megaron and the Cult Centre at Mycenae.[249]

Mühlenbruch commented on the uniqueness of Room 127, highlighting the specific, elaborate elements in its layout: the three successive stucco floors, which he pointed out is a unique feature for

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[245] Maran (2015: 284).

[246] Eder (2019: 25). It is worth mentioning that, due to the appearance of LH IIIB wheel-made bulls and Psi-type figurines found at the LH IIIC sanctuary of Apollo Hyakinthos in the Eurotas plain of Lakonia, Eder (2019: 27) argued that these figurines "illustrate the still effective powers of Mycenaean palatial iconography in the one and a half centuries following the palatial collapse." She argued that these figurines, together with the small shrines in the Lower Citadel of Tiryns, represent the last examples of Mycenaean palatial shrines on the mainland, which disappeared at the end of the LH IIIC period. However, I see no reason to associate these with palatial iconography as Eder does, because I do not think these were figurines restricted to palatial ideology. The existence of these figurine types in LH IIIC Tiryns, and other regions, simply indicates that the postpalatial Greeks were still using Mycenaean objects in their daily life, in this case, they were reusing objects which had a religious association in the same context. This appears to be simply an example of continuity in the material culture.

[247] Eder (2019: 25).

[248] Eder (2019: 25).

[249] Eder (2019: 26).

the postpalatial period in Tiryns; the white plastered outer walls; and the arrangement of the façade with a post *in antis*.[250] According to Mühlenbruch, Kilian's excavations at Tiryns (1976-1985) revealed a foundation deposit belonging to Room 117, which was comprised of miniature vessels.[251] Because of these finds, Mühlenbruch argued that 'Courtyard One', which was central to Rooms 117, 110, 110a, and Building VI, was crucial for cultic activities, and that these shrines "could be interpreted as deposits for cult paraphernalia, for the preparation of religious activities or cultic rituals of a restricted circle."[252] Of further importance was the presence of bones from a variety of animals, including cattle, sheep/goats, and pigs in 'Courtyard One' within close proximity to Room 117.[253] These bones strongly indicate that feasting was a common occurrence in this section of the Lower Citadel, and it seems likely that the feasts were, perhaps, restricted to the social elite who were possibly inhabiting Building VI and Room 127.

While it is possible to argue as Eder did that the shrines and their possible connection to the processional way harken back to LH IIIB Tiryns, the openness of Building T and the transformed altar in the Great Court seem to suggest a shift of cult practices to a more communal context. It is certainly possible, given the layout of Rooms 117, 110, 110a, and Building VI that cult practices in this particular region of the Lower Citadel were restricted to the elite inhabiting this area. However, another possibility involves the development of an elevated social group, who, by developing much of the Lower Citadel with building projects, such as Megaron W, Room 8/00, and other living quarters in the north-eastern section of the Lower Citadel, were claiming these new living quarters for themselves and their kin.[254] Stockhammer's analysis of pottery from several phases of the LH IIIC occupation of the Lower Citadel have demonstrated the elevated position of certain households, while

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[250] Mühlenbruch (2015: 137).
[251] Mühlenbruch (2015: 137).
[252] Mühlenbruch (2015: 137).
[253] Mühlenbruch (2015: 138).
[254] Maran (2015: 284).

also showing how forms of commensality were employed to strengthen the cohesion of social groups and define the boundaries of intrasocietal groups.[255] Therefore, the shrines may simply be examples of this social cohesion in a private household context.

Mühlenbruch argued that Building VI was likely associated with the social elite who had prospered in the early postpalatial period, and therefore they may have had stronger ties to old palatial traditions.[256] Mühlenbruch also argued that the presence of a rich pottery assemblage in Room 127, located to the south of Building VI, on the southern end of 'Courtyard Two', may indicate that the inhabitants of this room belonged to a new elite, established during LH IIIC Middle.[257] This argument can be further substantiated by the fact that Room 127 was the largest structure in the LH IIIC Lower Citadel, and also featured a hearth and a drain in the south-west corner.[258]

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[255] Stockhammer (2009, 2011).
[256] Mühlenbruch (2015: 136).
[257] Mühlenbruch (2015: 136).
[258] Mühlenbruch (2015: 132).

### 3.2.2.1 The Tiryns treasure:

The so-called Tiryns treasure, found in the south-eastern section of the Lower Citadel, was deposited in a square pit with a width and depth of ca. 1 m.[259] The bottom of the pit was paved with small, flat stones, and contained two damaged swords, parts of two bronze firedogs, and a cauldron which was placed on top of the stones.[260] The cauldron contained: seven bronze vessels, gold items and other jewellery made of semi-precious stones, amber and faience, two sickles (one made of bronze, the other of iron), and pieces of worked and unworked ivory.[261] A Cypriote bronze tripod leaned against the side of the cauldron, though unfortunately, the artefact was destroyed at the time of the discovery of the treasure.[262] Maran has argued that the Tiryns treasure was likely the *keimelia* (a "treasure closely related to the possessions of a specific family") of one of the ruling families in postpalatial Tiryns.[263] This seems a reasonable conclusion, due to the fact that "the majority of items stored in the cauldron and also the tripod stand show such unusual and unmistakable traits of form and/or manufacture that they ideally meet the requirements for memorabilia.[264]

The significance of this ties into the discussion of the postpalatial elite's system of values. The presence of two gold signet rings is important, because they are typical symbols of authority in palatial times: these rings were perhaps a means of emphasising status in the postpalatial period.[265] Maran also argued that the treasure was likely a hidden cache, deposited sometime after the initial destructions of the palatial period.[266] This means that there was a conscious revival of important Mycenaean artefacts and other symbols in order to allow the ruling elite to establish a conspicuous connection to palatial times under the new social and cultural circumstances of the LH IIIC period.[267]

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[259] Maran (2006a: 133).
[260] Maran (2006a: 134).
[261] Maran (2006a: 134).
[262] Maran (2006a: 134).
[263] Maran (2006a: 141; 2011; 2012b; 2015: 285).
[264] Maran (2006a: 141).
[265] Maran (2006a: 141).
[266] Maran (2006a: 141).
[267] Maran (2011: 174).

The fact that this deposit contained certain jewellery items with political or religious insignia,[268] and that many of the items are linked to the preparation and consumption of food and drink,[269] indicates that these items were considered precious symbols to the family who decided to bury and protect them. We can infer that, just as the Mycenaean *wanax* ruling at Mycenae in the LH IIIB period thought it advantageous to rebuild and incorporate Grave Circle A into the citadel as a means of associating his authority with his ancestors, the contents of the Tiryns treasure were likely used for the same purpose by the ruling elite in the postpalatial period. In this respect, I agree with Maran's conclusion that the Tiryns treasure was indeed the *keimelia* of an elite family living in postpalatial Tiryns.[270] Possession of antique objects was an important means by which noble families could socially distinguish themselves. Furthermore, as the construction of Building T shows a conscious revival of an important palatial architectural feature, the conspicuous association of past objects with the present was a prime means of gaining social prominence.

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[268] Such as the two gold signet rings and the "enigmatic wheels" made of gold wire with added amber beads, which Maran (2006a: 141) states "may have served as a similar means of emphasising status in the post-palatial period."
[269] Maran (2012: 122-123).
[270] Maran (2006a: 141) says that due to the proximity of the find-spot to Megaron W, the treasure may have belonged to the group residing in this building.

## 3.3 Conclusions:

The construction projects of LH IIIC Tiryns, such as Building T, indicates the newly emerged elite were associating their authority with the palatial past. The transformation of the round, stone altar in the Great Court to a square platform implies continuity of Mycenaean cult practice, though it now appears to be more socially inclusive, rather than restricted to the palace.

As the LH IIIC ruling elite were in a significantly weaker position to that of the Mycenaean *wanax*, it may have been necessary to separate the religious sphere from 'profane power,' and so the imposing buildings of palatial Tiryns, such as the palatial megaron, were stripped of religious iconography and replaced with a more humble façade.[271] In doing so, "the basis for the emergence of temples separate from the seats of power was created",[272] and in the Iron Age, temples would become a separate authority from ruling elites.

Therefore, the basis of the authority of the Mycenaean *wanax* rapidly dwindled in the LH IIIC period, and the primary function of his role within Mycenaean society as a religious personality and intermediary became almost entirely separate from the rulers in the LH IIIC period. The social hierarchy became less rigid, and elites who oversaw the construction projects at Tiryns in the postpalatial period relied on the acquisition of conspicuous objects of palatial authority. It has been shown that these elites were likely part of (or descended from) the inner circle of palatial administration in the LH IIIB period. Mühlenbruch and Stockhammer's architectural analyses of the Lower Citadel, particularly in the south-western section comprising of Building VI, the shrines, and Room 127, have demonstrated that the LH IIIC elites inhabited an area which held an important cultic purpose, and that feasting was still a regular feature of postpalatial society. Therefore, while feasting was employed by the *wanax* as a means of maintaining his elevated social position and generating

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[271] Maran (2006a: 143).
[272] Maran (2006a: 144).

good relationships with his subjects, in postpalatial Tiryns, it appears to have held a less-politicised, hierarchical purpose, though it was still restricted to the social elite.

In postpalatial society, we can assume that there was no central authority on the level of the Mycenaean *wanax*, but rather positions of authority that were held by aristocratic individuals, possibly 'big-men', since this certainly appears to be the case in the Early Iron Age.

# 4. The Early Iron Age:

## 4.1 Introduction:

By the Early Iron Age (ca. 1050 BC), the centralised control that characterised the Mycenaean palatial period had entirely disintegrated. The material remains from the LH IIIC period show that, although some prestige objects dating to the palatial society were still in existence and being used by the elite as a way to legitimise their authority through establishing a connection to their remote past, no new such objects were being produced.

It is possible that the Early Iron Age rulers came to be referred to as '*basileis*', the term commonly employed by Homer in the epic poems to denote heroes.[273] *Basileus* is itself a derivation from the Linear B *qa-si-re-u*, a figure who was at least two tiers below the *wanax*, and was associated with bronze working.[274] According to Palaima, the *qa-si-re-we* can be "viewed as members of local, small-scale aristocracy". Ultimately, they can be interpreted as local chieftains who held minor responsibilities and who "derive their authority and privileges from society as it developed on this level".[275]

Antonaccio argued that with the demise of the palatial system, the authority of the *qa-si-re-we* became primary.[276] Further, she reasoned that the Iron Age *basileis* were the direct inheritors of the Mycenaean *qa-si-re-we*.[277] Feasting and gift exchange, which had been essential to the *wanax*'s own authority, were considered to be fundamental to elite social interaction and networking. These continued to be important social activities in the Early Iron Age, suggesting that these Bronze Age practices still resonated with the elite for at least another 500 years. Therefore, it is clear that some features of

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[273] Palaima (1995a: 123); See also Schmidt (2006: 443), who states that βασιλεύς was used to indicate a function.
[274] Palaima (1995a: 124-125); Antonaccio (2006: 387).
[275] Palaima (1995a: 124-125).
[276] Antonaccio (2006: 388).
[277] Antonaccio (2006: 383).

Mycenaean social constructs were so deeply engrained in cultural memory that they survived well into the Greek Archaic period.

In this study, I make use of the big-man social model. Big-men appear to have been the ruling authority figures of this period, perhaps having developed from the *qa-si-re-we* of the Mycenaean period within the social context of the Early Iron Age.[278] According to Donlan, the Homeric big-men were typically great warriors with numerous followers who were tightly bound with the big-man's oikos.[279] Although Donlan's description pertains to Homeric society, it seems that some elements are reflected in the archaeological material of select Early Iron Age sites. For example, Donlan stated that:

> "The webs of amity, obligation, and dependence connecting kinsman to kinsman, villager to villager, produced strong local solidarity groups. These networks of relatives and neighbours were fundamental structures. In the pre-state period most of the activities of ordinary life took place within overlapping 'communities' of kindred and village. The superordinate bond, nevertheless, seems to have been personal allegiance to a leader. And the operational political groupings appears as informal, flexible coalitions of lesser households orbiting around a grand house."[280]

The organisation of big-man societies is certainly applicable to regions such as the Peloponnese and Lefkandi, where fluctuating population movements and, in the case of Lefkandi, prominent large dwellings, surely indicate the presence of big-men.

Given the constraints of this thesis, only relevant archaeological material which reveals evidence for social authority in the Early Iron Age is discussed. Unfortunately, there is no textual evidence for this period, and it is difficult to properly examine Early Iron Age society as a whole by choosing an isolated

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[278] Antonaccio (1994: 409); Antonaccio (2006: 393) states that the *basileis* were the 'inheritors' of the *qa-si-re-we*.
[279] Donlan (1989: 12).
[280] Donlan (1989: 13).

region or site as a focal point. Therefore this analysis will examine the evidence on a regional basis. These regions include: the Peloponnese, Attica, Crete, and Euboea.

For the sake of simplicity, the scope of this chapter covers the period which is commonly referred to as the subdivision of the 'Protogeometric period', which spans from ca. 1050-900 BC. This period of Greek history is most relevant to this study, as it is my intention to discuss the situations throughout Greece in relation to what the specific regional circumstances can reveal about the development of authority after the LH IIIC period.

## 4.2 The Peloponnese:

In the palatial period, the Peloponnese contained many important sites from which we have gleaned much information concerning Mycenaean civilisation. The Argolid was perhaps one of the most prosperous regions of Mycenaean Greece, while Messenia also produced valuable information about the association of the *wanax* with religion, as demonstrated in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Several sites that are known to have been either major centres or second-order sites in the Mycenaean period were not rebuilt on a large scale in the Early Iron Age. Tiryns was certainly reconstructed to a degree in the LH IIIC period, as discussed in the previous chapter, but other sites such as Nichoria and Pylos were not reoccupied until sometime in the Early Iron Age.[281]

At Tiryns, earlier excavations demonstrated that a level of occupation was stratigraphically located above the LH IIIC Late layers, characterised by a type of 'wavy-line' skyphos that "appears to be a direct development from the final Mycenaean skyphoi".[282] However, there have been no excavations carried out in the Lower Citadel which suggest any clear signs of settlement continuity in the Early Iron Age.[283]

At Mycenae, French observed a slim stratum of wash with pottery of Submycenaean type, and therefore argued that there is no evidence to assume an interruption in occupation after LH IIIC Late.[284] On the basis of mortuary evidence, Lemos suggested that Mycenae was indeed occupied during the Protogeometric period, but this occupation was not likely to have been extensive.[285] There is a small scattering of Protogeometric tombs: on the Mycenaean acropolis, tombs which were dug into the ruins of the House of Shields and the House of the Sphinxes were discovered; other tombs

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[281] Eder (2009: 133); Crielaard (2011: 89).
[282] Papadimitriou (2006: 533).
[283] Maran (2015: 285).
[284] French (2002: 141).
[285] Lemos (2002: 160).

were found north-east of the tholos tomb of Atreus.[286] According to Lemos, the estimated number of published and unpublished tombs is from twelve to twenty, usually consisting of small clusters of two or three burials.[287]

With regard to Argos, Papadimitriou argued that after the LH IIIC period, the site became very active in trading due to the presence of certain vessels which demonstrated both the beginnings of the Protogeometric stylistic designs (an amphoriskos found in a cist grave at Argos contains the earliest known example of compass drawn concentric circles), and other vessels that were likely imported from Crete, Attica, and possibly Egypt and Cyprus.[288] The south-western region of Argos contained the most dense Protogeometric occupation levels, but the scattered remains of habitation levels appears to indicate that the site was comprised of several clusters of dwellings which were spread across the plain at the foot of the Larisa hill.[289]

Concerning Lakonia, this region was previously considered to typify the 'Dark Ages', due to the lack of stratified material between the Late Bronze Age and the rise of Sparta in the Archaic period.[290] More recent studies still recognise this issue but demonstrate that there is more evidence for Early Iron Age Lakonia, and indeed mainland Greece, than was previously assumed.[291]

These sites which do not exhibit continuous settlement patterns may be understood as 'unstable' settlements, and may best be explained as sites exemplifying characteristics of 'big-man' societies.[292] Whitley argued that the big-man social model best explains the situation of these unstable settlements because they are examples of settlements which do not necessarily demonstrate that they were already

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[286] Lemos (2002: 160).
[287] Lemos (2002: 160).
[288] Papadimitriou (2006: 534-542).
[289] Lemos (2002: 138).
[290] Coulson (1985: 29).
[291] See Eder (2009).
[292] Whitley (1991b: 184).

moving to the type of social organisation that would eventually become a polis.[293] It seems likely that the 'unstable' Peloponnesian settlement patterns were more fluid, and likely in a constant state of flux. This instability, the same instability which seems to be demonstrated by Homer's depiction of the polities presided over by the *basileis*, may be crucial to understanding the Early Iron Age society and social structure.[294]

According to Binford, competition in big-man systems "is for persons" because "it is not goods that move, but people", so that the result is "residential gravitation of people to the neighbourhood of big-men."[295] A big-man's status accrued based on his ability to provide security through negotiating alliances to gain support from his followers,[296] and this may explain why the appearance of Near Eastern goods in burials is an important aspect. The constant fluctuation in settlement patterns, including the abandonment of previously important palatial centres such as Tiryns and Pylos, may be explained by this big-man concept: people were moving away from the major centres because they no longer felt they were secure in those regions, so they would gravitate to other regions on the mainland where a big-man was in power. If this is the case, we can expect to see unstable settlement patterns and a lack of material remains in some regions. This movement and instability, which does not produce archaeological sites with long-term settlements, may be the reason why earlier scholarship had such difficulty believing that the Early Iron Age was not a period of stagnancy. People were likely adjusting to the newly emerging forms of authority, which were far less centralised than in the palatial period, and instead flocked to regions controlled by a *basileus* who was able to provide more security and economic prosperity. As Binford emphasised, "when a big-man dies, his alliances die with him

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[293] Whitley (1991b: 184). Athens in particular is an example of a more stable settlement which demonstrates that it was indeed in the early stages of polis-based social organisation.
[294] Antonaccio (2006: 388).
[295] Binford (1983: 219); Whitley (1991a: 348; 1991b: 184-185).
[296] Whitley (1991b: 185).

and his competitors gain in status as a result of his death", which leads to the "inevitable outflow of population associated with the death of high status persons."[297]

However, it is interesting that the majority of the archaeological evidence of the Peloponnese reveals more about the growth of sanctuaries, and less about clear instances of the exercise of authority by *basileis*, or big-men.[298] For example, excavations at the Apollo Hyakinthus sanctuary at Amyklai revealed material remains of a Late Bronze and Early Iron Age sanctuary.[299] The LH IIIC material was found on the surface of a hill without a clear context, mixed in with Protogeometric pottery.[300] Although the excavators were unable to clearly identify the chronological relationship between the LH IIIC and Protogeometric pottery, it could be argued that these excavations could imply continuous cult practices, and, by extension, continued use of this sanctuary. Additionally, finds from a bothros in the sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea in Arcadia revealed eight successive layers; the earliest containing late Protogeometric pottery with Argive and Attic affinities dating to the late tenth century BC.[301] Kotsonas recently demonstrated that the abundance of sanctuaries in the Peloponnese indicates that this region was 'spearheading' the developments toward the Classical landscape of cult, particularly in 'Phase C' (750-600 BC) of Kotsonas' tripartite dating system.[302] But the pre-eminence of sanctuary developments does not cancel out the evidence for the apparent lack of strong ruling authority figures in the Peloponnese. This may be an important clue to understanding how the Greek temples may have begun.

Mazarakis Ainian suggested that the cult activities within settlements may have been related to ruler's or chieftains' houses.[303] Asine and Nichoria provide evidence for cult activities in relation to dwellings

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[297] Binford (1983: 220).
[298] Eder (2019: 30).
[299] Eder (2009: 133).
[300] Eder (2009: 133).
[301] Eder (2009: 133).
[302] Kotsonas (2017: 62).
[303] Mazarakis Ainian (2016: 15-16).

of the elite, and, according to Mazarakis Ainian, these activities persist into the ninth and tenth centuries BC.[304] However, by the late eighth century BC, as the ruling nobility starts to lose their exclusivity in the management and control of communal affairs, which now become "collective affairs of the communities", we begin to observe the emergence of the first 'urban' temples.[305] Whether this is an accurate assumption and whether we can understand the level of community involvement in the rituals taking place in a ruler's dwelling is a difficult question.[306] Rather, Eder argues that we can more clearly observe small-scale ritual practices that likely occurred on the level of individual *oikoi*.[307]

At Asine, to the north of 'Building C' at the Karmaniola plot, Mazarakis Ainian described an hypaethral cult area centred around a pithos.[308] The pithos was ringed with stones and filled with various animal bones, pottery, and charcoal remains that were also found in the soil next to the pithos; Eder argues it is possible that sacrificial performances occurred in this area.[309] Further finds of pottery, including skyphoi, kernoi, and kalathoi suggest both communal drinking and ritual activities.[310] According to Mazarakis Ainian, in the immediate vicinity of Building C (an apsidal structure), five child and two adult tombs were discovered, dating to the tenth century BC.[311] By the Late Geometric period (ca. late eighth century BC), when this apsidal structure was in ruins, a circular pavement, a feature commonly thought to be associated with the veneration of ancestors, was built over the building.[312] While it is possible to assume this development simply had a domestic function, it could also be taken "as an indication that the owner(s) of the house, who doubtless would have belonged to an important family, may have been remembered and venerated in the LG period".[313] However, the

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[304] Mazarakis Ainian (2016: 16).
[305] Mazarakis Ainian (2016: 16).
[306] Eder (2019: 28).
[307] Eder (2019: 28).
[308] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 70); Eder (2019: 28).
[309] Eder (2019: 28).
[310] Eder (2019: 28).
[311] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 70).
[312] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 70); Lemos (2002: 138).
[313] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 70).

limited scale of the excavations do not permit us to substantiate this claim, but it is an attractive one. There are several other cases in Asine that also suggest a kind of veneration of the dead,[314] though these are simply (and unfortunately) only able to remain speculations until further excavations reveal more positive indications concerning the nature of the exercise of authority.

At Nichoria, in Messenia, the apsidal Protogeometric building (ca. tenth century BC) of Unit IV-1 has been identified as a chieftain's hut on the basis of its' large size.[315] The building was a large, apsidal structure, measuring ca. 10.5 x 7 m.[316] It follows an east-west orientation, and comprises a main room and a shallow porch on the eastern side.[317] This building was occupied as early as sometime during the MH to the end of the LH IIIB period, and again from the eleventh century until the mid-eighth century BC.[318] The building "underwent a radical transformation" around the mid-ninth century BC; these developments are summarised by Mazarakis Ainian.[319] The material from the first building phase (ca. 975-950 BC) consisted of about 40% fine wares, and among the finds were two clay spindle whorls, two bronze rings, a bronze needle, and an iron knife, along with a large number of animal bones scattered over the floor, some bearing traces of bite and knife marks.[320] The material associated with the second phase is more abundant, and is dated to the second half of the ninth century BC.[321] Significant finds include fragments of a pithoi, an iron knife, a bronze shield boss, an iron axe head, several clay whorls, a small iron tool, a bronze bar, several animal bones mixed with charcoal, and a deposit of charred seeds.[322]

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[314] See Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 70-73).
[315] Eder (2019: 28).
[316] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 75).
[317] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 75).
[318] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 74).
[319] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 76).
[320] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 78).
[321] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 78).
[322] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 78).

The connection between cult practice and individual oikos seems quite prevalent here: a circular stone structure was identified in this building, against the middle of the rear wall, measuring 1.6 m in diameter,[323] with carbonised material on top and animal bones nearby, suggesting that this structure may have served as an altar.[324] The finds from both building phases also indicate that the building served as a dwelling, and the size and "prominent location" of this structure suggests it may have been the residence of a wealthy individual and his family,[325] possibly a ruling *basileus*. However, this is highly speculative: Mazarakis Ainian argued Unit IV-1 "served important communal needs" that were certainly religious and possibly economic.[326] Unfortunately, scholarship appears to have reached an impasse concerning "communal versus domestic character" of cult at Nichoria; if we base our assumption on the grounds of architecture alone, it suggests that cult was more clearly related to the resident of this house, his oikos, and group of followers.[327]

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[323] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 76).
[324] Eder (2019: 28).
[325] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 78).
[326] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 79).
[327] Eder (2019: 28). The same conclusion may also be applied to the Heroön at Lefkandi, if we are to assume a cultic element took place there. It is interesting that we can observe a similarity with LBA society and the *wanax*'s religious position at the head of the state.

## 4.3 Attica, Central Greece:

According to Wallace, after the crises on the mainland in the twelfth century BC, central Greece experienced a longer and patchier 'transitional' period of cultural and social adaptation.[328] However, from sometime in the tenth century BC, central Greece was clearly "engaged with the expanding east Mediterranean trade system in a pro-active way, which laid its communities open to considerable social tensions."[329] Boundaries between communities were fluid, and usually short term, meaning that there was a focus on "representing the power of the individual within large communities" in order to accommodate the growing economic competition.[330] However, the development of Attica throughout the Early Iron Age is unusual in comparison to other areas in the mainland: the Athenian pottery, for example, begins with a distinctive provincial Attic version of the LH IIIC, and its style was widely copied throughout Greece until the late Geometric period.[331] There has been a significant amount of research conducted on mortuary evidence from Attica, and indeed Lefkandi.[332] Because of this, scholarship has been able to establish contextual data and assess the stylistic development of pottery styles in both Attica and Euboea.[333]

A major feature of the Attic evidence is the large number of graves.[334] During the Protogeometric period, there is a marked increase in the number of sites.[335] At Athens and Thorikos, there are clear signs of settlements towards the end of the Protogeometric period, while at Menidhi, Eleusis, and Marathon, the quantity of grave finds is small, but most vases uncovered in these regions are quite similar to contemporary Athenian examples.[336] Whitley therefore reasoned that, if this stylistic affinity

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[328] Wallace (2006: 620).
[329] Wallace (2006: 620).
[330] Wallace (2006: 620).
[331] Whitley (1991b: 54).
[332] Lefkandi is discussed in this chapter, Section 4.5.
[333] Eder (2009: 134).
[334] Whitley (1991b: 54). Lemos (2002: 135) emphasised that architectural remains of Protogeometric Attica may have not yet been found, and that "almost all the PG material comes from graves", and most of this evidence comes from Athens.
[335] Whitley (1991b: 55).
[336] Whitley (1991b: 55).

does not imply cultural affinity, then "it would appear that we are witnessing the beginnings of an expansion of settlement from Athens into the Attic countryside", and the small number of finds could mean that these settlements were at an early stage of development.[337]

Between the eleventh and ninth centuries BC, Attica experiences "a remarkable stylistic homogeneity", and although we cannot definitively conclude that this suggests political unity, Whitley argued that there are good reasons to suppose this.[338] A main factor Whitley used to best corroborate his argument for "internal colonisation" concerns the idea of historical memory, which attests that Attica had always been relatively unified and centred upon Athens.[339] Furthermore, Whitley stated that unity was brought about by internal resettlement and further "reinforced by ties of kinship and cultural affinity."[340] Cultural affinity is observed in the homogenous pottery styles, while kinship ties can perhaps be explained by the mortuary evidence.

The areas which were used for burials in the earlier Submycenaean period (ca. 1080-1040)[341] were reused in the Early Iron Age, and according to Lemos, the richer burials are mostly found at the Kerameikos, and the cemetery in Vasilissis Sophias Street.[342] Cremation was the primary burial practice of the Early Iron Age, in which the incinerated bones of the deceased, together with a selection of personal ornaments, were placed in an urn, usually an amphora.[343] In this period, there are distinct differences in the choice of grave amphora, which appear to distinguish male and female burials. Male cremations were typically found in neck-handled amphoras, while the females were found in belly-

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[337] Whitley (1991b: 55).
[338] Whitley (1991b: 58).
[339] Whitley (1991b: 58). For example, Whitley says this is true because the city never had to resort to the extreme measures employed by the Spartans to maintain control over Lakonia and Messenia, in fact, there was never any separatist movement in Attica until the Peloponnesian War.
[340] Whitley (1991b: 58).
[341] Deger-Jalkotzy (2014: 48) dates the Submycenaean period to between 1080 and 1040 BC.
[342] Lemos (2006: 512). Whitley (1991b: 101) says, of the Kerameikos cemetery, that "if ever there was a cemetery that showed clear signs of uninterrupted use from SM times onwards it is the Kerameikos."
[343] Lemos (2006: 512-513).

handled amphoras.[344] This sexual division is also demonstrated by the type of artefacts placed within the amphoras: males are usually interred with weapons, probably to indicate the desire to project the male's identity as a warrior; females were interred with dress pins, fibulae, and rings.[345] Although sex appears to be distinguished by the grave goods, there does not appear to be any clear indications given by funerary displays that suggest the presence of a big-man.

By the ninth century, there is an increase in the quantity and indeed quality of rich offerings given to the dead, including gold funerary ornaments and imports from the Near East.[346] Many of the graves containing these rich offerings were found in the Kerameikos, while others were found on the south bank of the Eridanos River, and on the north slope of the Areopagus.[347] It appears that Athens was comprised of "an agglomeration of houses and burials,"[348] grouped loosely around the Acropolis and the Agora.[349] Because the distribution of graves and housing appears to be scattered throughout Athens in the Early Iron Age, it is difficult to say whether there was a big-man system in place. Whitley concludes that Athens was a relatively egalitarian society until sometime in the tenth and ninth centuries, when Athens transitions into a more hierarchical form of society.[350] Therefore, it seems likely that there was a kind of kin grouping that was gradually becoming more spatially and clearly defined throughout the Early Iron Age,[351] and that there was an important focus on activity that was becoming increasingly centred on the Acropolis and Agora at Athens.[352]

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[344] Whitley (1991b: 105).
[345] Whitley (1991b: 105).
[346] Lemos (2006: 513).
[347] Lemos (2006: 513).
[348] Lemos (2006: 514).
[349] Whitley (1991b: 61).
[350] Whitley (1991b: 198).
[351] Whitley (1991b: 64).
[352] Lemos (2006: 515).

## 4.4 Crete:

While central Greece lacked early social institutionalisation, which Wallace argued likely enabled the "explosive growth of central Greece societies into the dynamic small states of the eighth century," Crete was, from much earlier, subjected to a significant degree of institutionalisation.[353] It is likely this feature allowed Crete to stabilise itself after the disruptions of the LH IIIB period; in fact, Wallace argued that the pre-emptive adjustment strategies that were in place on Crete almost entirely averted the kind of settlement destruction seen on the mainland.[354]

Sites such as Knossos, Phaistos, and Chania, which were important throughout the Late Bronze Age remained in use after the twelfth century BC, probably because their remaining populations were large, and indeed, prosperous enough, to defend and maintain themselves, and because "their pre-eminent function as trade gateways was too valuable to give up."[355]

Like the Peloponnese, Crete is known to have had a large number of cult and sanctuary sites between the eleventh and ninth centuries BC.[356] According to Mazarakis Ainian, Crete is the primary location where we can follow the "socio-political mutations" at the conclusion of the Late Bronze Age: here, we can observe the foundation of new settlements and religious attitudes in LM IIIC (the Cretan equivalent of LH IIIC), some of which lasted until the Early Iron Age.[357] After 1200 BC, there was a dramatic shift from the Late Bronze Age system of nucleated settlements on coastal plains and low-lying flat and fertile areas, to elevated and dispersed locations which were established around the foothills of mountain ranges or on high rocky hills above the sea.[358] In doing so, the Cretan populations were moving to more defensible – and therefore less accessible – locations, demonstrating the pressing

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[353] Wallace (2006: 621).
[354] Wallace (2011: 323).
[355] Wallace (2006: 624).
[356] Kotsonas (2017: 60).
[357] Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 377).
[358] Wallace (2003: 256).

concern for security after 1200 BC.[359] Additionally, that there are over 120 new settlements between the twelfth and eleventh centuries BC show major changes in social and economic life, while the range of settlement size indicates that this was changing "to a generally more equally-balanced one within a small to medium size range, and without clear evidence of hierarchical or functionally-related distribution by region."[360]

Wallace argued that because all major Protogeometric to Archaic settlements had originally been founded in, or continued from LM IIIC, there were strong notions of regional identity by the time of the Protogeometric period, and that this likely played a significant role in the socio-political changes over the next 500 years.[361] Some of the defensible sites of LM IIIC, such as Kavousi Kastro, Vrokastro, and Smari Profitis Elias (among others) remained inhabited throughout the Early Iron Age.[362] Rather than assuming these sites represented groups physically resistant to incorporation in to the main nucleated communities, Wallace maintained that they more likely "reflect an agreed autonomy of residence" in small areas that were "fundamentally well incorporated into the larger communities."[363]

Knossos, which had been a highly important site from Minoan times, provides an interesting comparison with the large mainland centres such as Athens and Argos. According to Coldstream, the burials at Athens and Argos "extend over an area not much more than two kilometres at their greatest dimension – and these plots were serving widely scattered villages."[364] At Knossos, the cemeteries surrounding the site in the ninth century extended over a distance of five kilometres, north to south.[365] The abundance and variety of imports found in the tombs reveal that Early Iron Age Knossos remained

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[359] Wallace (2006: 623).
[360] Wallace (2006: 624).
[361] Wallace (2003: 259).
[362] Wallace (2003: 259).
[363] Wallace (2003: 259).
[364] Coldstream (2006: 584).
[365] Coldstream (2006: 584-586).

heavily involved in trade. The continuous sequence in the North Cemetery of over 100 Attic vessels of the tenth to eighth centuries BC indicate continued contact with the mainland,[366] while other artefacts found in Cretan tombs, such as Phoenician storage vessels (Kommos) and bronze vessels (Knossos), Egyptian blue scarabs (Knossos) and other Near Eastern artefacts,[367] indicate that Crete was an active trading conduit in the tenth and ninth centuries BC.

But Knossos, like Athens, was a relatively stable site throughout the Iron Age. The Fortesta and North cemeteries remained the primary cemetery areas from Subminoan times until the seventh century BC, suggesting that inhabitants of both sites "possessed a notion of community that did not depend on the transient authority of a big man."[368] This, I believe, is also the case in Athens, where we can observe Near Eastern goods in mortuary contexts, and where there are no apparent indications of rule by a big-man, but rather a sense of community and kin-groups.

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[366] Coldstream (2006: 588).
[367] See Stampolidis & Kotsonas (2006: 341-349) for a full description of imported artefacts.
[368] Whitley (1991b: 186).

## 4.5 Euboea, Lefkandi:

Excavations carried out between 1970-1990 revealed Lefkandi to be one of the most active and prosperous communities in Greece during the tenth and ninth centuries BC.[369] Lefkandi was occupied during the LH IIIC period, although, by the tenth century BC, the settlement had moved to the nearby Toumba hill.[370] The Toumba is a hillock located in a prominent position, overlooking the lower Lelantine Plain to the west, and the modern village of Lefkandi to the south.[371] Excavations in the 1980s revealed a large, Protogeometric apsidal building measuring roughly 10 x 45m.[372] According to Calligas and Popham, before the discovery of this building, four nearby Iron Age cemeteries had been excavated, containing burials with a date as early as 1100 BC and as late as ca. 825 BC.[373] One of these burial grounds was given the name 'Toumba' "because it was located on the lower, east slope of the hillock of that name, and as we now know, lay immediately in front of the east entrance of the Protogeometric building."[374] In the centre of the building, two burial shafts were excavated, one containing the cremated remains of a male and a buried female, the second containing the bones of four slaughtered horses.[375] This burial has been roughly dated to the Middle Protogeometric period, around 950 BC.[376] It has been considered to be a heroic burial, given the prestige objects found within the burial pits and the resemblance to the funeral of Patroclus in *Iliad* (book XXIII, lines 161-257).[377] Consequently, the structure is referred to as a 'Heroön', because the structure seems to have served to venerate the deceased male after his death. This individual was likely a ruling *basileus*.

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[369] Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 251).
[370] Whitley (1991a: 347).
[371] Calligas & Popham (1993: 1).
[372] Herdt (2015: 203).
[373] Calligas & Popham (1993: 1) state that by 825 BC, all known Iron Age cemeteries in this area "cease to be used."
[374] Calligas & Popham (1993: 1).
[375] Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 253).
[376] Crielaard (2006: 287).
[377] Herdt (2015: 203); Whitley (1991b:38). Antonaccio (2006: 390) also states that the site is believed to resonate with the funeral of Patroclus, and this is another reason why the Heroön is believed to be the burial of a hero.

The sequence of events in which the site was created has been debated. The original excavators believed the burial shafts were created first, then the building was constructed over the burials, and that this was followed by the "almost immediate destruction" of the building and the erection of a tumulus over it.[378] However, Whitley and other scholars provide a different scenario: they propose that the structure was built as a monumental residence for the chieftain ruling the region; and that upon the death of the chieftain, instead of using the building for the next ruler, the community decided to inter him and the woman (perhaps his wife) beneath the floor of the building; eventually the building fell into disrepair (or it was actively deconstructed), and finally, a tumulus was raised over the building.[379]

Mazarakis Ainian claimed that authority in 'Dark Age' Greece is "almost synonymous" with this building, and that the Heroön functioned either as a princely residence of the *basileus* and his wife, who were buried in the centre pits, or as an imitation of such a residence for his use after death.[380] The unusual richness and exoticism of the central burials is particularly striking.[381] The male's cremated remains were wrapped in a cloth which was contained in a large amphora made of bronze.[382] A bronze bowl covered the amphora, and nearby were found a sword, razor, iron spearhead and a whetstone.[383] The amphora was a special object – imported from Cyprus and dating to the LH IIIC period, it must have been a prized antique when it was chosen to be used for this man's remains.[384] The rim of the amphora was decorated with a frieze of hunters and various animals,[385] and beneath the handles a pair

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[378] Whitley (1991a: 350). See Popham (1993: 97-98).
[379] Whitley (1991a: 350). Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 253) also believe this sequence of events. They think that the building was constructed, used for a short time, and then partly dismantled before being filled in and covered by a mound of pebbles, mudbricks and earth. It is worth mentioning that the finds within the earth used to cover the building are dated to the LH IIIC period. Crielaard and Driessen state that this "must point to a late Mycenaean occupation in the immediate neighbourhood of the Toumba burial ground" (1994: 261).
[380] Mazarakis Ainian (2006: 188).
[381] Crielaard (2006: 287).
[382] Calligas & Popham (1993: 3).
[383] Popham (1993: 19).
[384] Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 261).
[385] Popham (1993: 19).

of trees were depicted, a symbol which Coldstream stated designates a highly elite individual.[386] The cloth features an interesting design: a small section of the cloth band (1.5 cm wide) was decorated with diamonds,[387] which further supports the classification of the male as an elite individual.

The skeleton of the female was positioned along the north wall of the shaft, its head facing west.[388] A variety of artefacts associated with the female suggest she also held a high-status position. These finds include: two gilt coils, a gold-pendant necklace with thirty-nine spherical beads of gold (two were of faience and one of crystal), two large discs of sheet gold placed over the chest with an embossed "spiral-like design", a "lunate-shaped" sheet of gold placed beneath the previous sheets, two rings (one gold, one of electron), a cluster of nine pins (two of gilt iron with decorated globes and caps of gold, five of bronze and two of iron with bone heads), and an iron knife with an ivory pommel.[389]

The horse burials placed next to the human burials has only one parallel dated to the same period, Toumba Tomb 68; according to Popham, "the practice of horse burials appears to be limited to Crete and Cyprus and, where datable, are later."[390] Popham also commented on the comparison of heroic burials in the Homeric epics, stating:

> "The horse burials are only one of the features which recall the burial rites given to the heroes in the Homeric epics; we may add the cremation of the warrior, the placing of the ashes in an amphora (naturally of gold in Homer), the burial of the receptacle and sacrifice of the horse as well as possibly that of pet dogs. The similarities can hardly be accidental."[391]

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[386] Mazarakis Ainian (2006: 193).
[387] Popham (1993: 20).
[388] Popham (1993: 20).
[389] Popham (1993: 20-21).
[390] Popham (1993: 22).
[391] Popham (1993: 22).

Thus, we may speculate that Homer's descriptions of hero burials were drawing on known practices of the Early Iron Age. In any case, the richness of the grave goods and presence of the horses in the adjacent grave certainly indicate that the deceased couple were of elite status, and the male could have indeed been a ruling big-man.

There are several artefacts found in the couple's shaft which suggest Near Eastern influence was present at Lefkandi in the tenth century BC: the amphora containing the male's cremated remains, the bronze bowl which covered the amphora, the iron knife and ivory pommel found with the female, and the necklace found on the female's body. According to Crielaard, these objects were imported from Cyprus (the amphora in particular) and "other parts of the eastern Mediterranean."[392] The presence of these artefacts is interesting for two reasons: firstly because the occurrence of eastern imports in a tomb dating to the mid-Protogeometric period is unusual, "since archaeological data from other parts of Greece suggest that this period saw a decline in contacts with the eastern Mediterranean."[393] Secondly, that these valuable objects do appear at this site may actually indicate that the big-man ruling this area may have had access to long-distance trade routes. Access to external trade links, and by extension, the acquisition of exotic and valuable goods, must have been an important way for big-men to project the visage of security and prosperity to his community because it demonstrated that he was able to maintain alliances to support him and also his community.[394] The importance of the deceased male may be further emphasised by the fact that shortly after the placement of the burials, the Heroön either fell into disrepair or was deconstructed, and a tumulus was raised over the building.

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[392] Crielaard (2006: 287); Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 261). It is worth noting that the central pendent on the necklace of the female in the shaft grave finds its closest parallels from Elba, Dilbat and Larsa, dated to 1700-1600 BC (Lemos, 2002: 131). Lemos (2002: 132) supposes that the necklace may have been an heirloom, that perhaps came into the Aegean during the Mycenaean period and remained in the possession of the same family before being buried in the Heroön.
[393] Crielaard (2006: 287).
[394] Binford (1983: 217-219).

On either side and in front of the Heroön were later burials that seem to emulate the burials within the building. The connection between this cemetery and the tumulus was described by Popham *et al.* as "inescapable", and that the implication is that "the same family, presumably a royal one, possessed this particular region of the burial ground at Lefkandi."[395] The importance of this implication has been summarised by Crielaard:

> "It seems likely that the men, women, and children who were buried around the tumulus claimed a special status through kinship relationships with the heroised couple. If so, the consequence would be that the other cemeteries, too, can be considered to represent kinship groups or – as time passed – descent groups."[396]

According to Popham, it could be argued that the entire hillside on which the tumulus was constructed may have been the designated cemetery area of the community.[397] Although Whitley argued that Lefkandi exhibits characteristics of an 'unstable settlement' because of the population movements throughout the tenth and ninth centuries BC,[398] Crielaard emphasised that we should consider the fact that the Heroön was not deserted upon the death of the occupants. Great pains were taken to monumentalise the structure under a large tumulus.[399] By constructing a mound over the deceased occupants, their grave goods, the slaughtered horses, and the entire structure, the community was perhaps demonstrating an act of veneration. In fact, Crielaard stated that the "erection of a tumulus can be seen as the culmination of a collective ceremony that gave permanence to the memory of the defunct occupants and their home."[400] Further, the importance of the Heroön was emphasised by the installation of the surrounding cemeteries. The positioning of these burials post-950 BC may be

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[395] Popham, Touloupa & Sackett (1982: 247).
[396] Crielaard (2006: 288-289). See also Mazarakis Ainian (2006: 193-194).
[397] Popham (1993: 100).
[398] Whitley (1991a: 346-350).
[399] Crielaard (2006: 288). See also Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 266).
[400] Crielaard (2006: 288).

explained as an important social strategy: the claim to be associated with significant past rulers in order to legitimise their own positions in society was also employed by the Mycenaean *wanax* ruling at Mycenae in the LH IIIB period.[401] This concept has also been proposed by Maran, who claimed that the Early Iron Age elite continued to relate to the past by using social practices that were in use in the LH IIIC period, which was rooted in the social and political context of the period immediately following the demise of the palaces.[402] If, as Popham *et al*. contended, we view the tumulus as a monument to a hero, then perhaps we can view the founding of the cemetery around the tumulus as serving a ritual purpose, linking the authority of the deceased *basileus* to a development of ancestor cult. [403]

The size and location of the tumulus also indicates its importance. The structure stands in a highly conspicuous position on the summit of a low hill, which, according to Whitley, feeds into the big-man system.[404] Placing such a prominent display of architecture, and by extension, authority, in a prominent position within the landscape, was likely used by big-men as "a highly effective means of 'advertising', a necessary feature in a big-man system."[405] It was imperative for a big-man to display his ability to provide security for his people, which could be exerted through the control of valuable, exotic goods through trade, and through a warrior-like image.

In order for a big-man to attract followers, an investment in the display of resources and authority was necessary. It has been argued that the short lifespan of the Heroön, which culminated in the erection

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[401] See Dabney & Wright (1990) and Lupack (2014) for further discussion.
[402] Maran (2011: 171).
[403] In a number of tombs in the Toumba necropolis, heirlooms were also found. For example, Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 266) discuss Tomb 12B, one of the first burials in the Toumba necropolis, which contained a pair of Mycenaean seals. Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 266-267) also describe: Tomb 55, which contained an urn cremation and an inhumation, Tomb 68 which contained horse burials, and Tomb 49, which was comprised of a double burial in a deep shaft lined with timber and mudbricks. The significance of these tombs is such that they offer clear parallels to the Heroön. Crielaard & Driessen (1994: 267) concluded that "the turning of the house of the 'hero' into a funerary monument, as well as the deposition of heirlooms and imitative funerary behaviour were all aspects of a death ritual intended by the Lefkandiot elite to legitimate and cement the existing socio-political structure.
[404] Whitley (1991a: 349).
[405] Whitley (1991a: 349).

of a tumulus, suggests that the interred couple were certainly high elites, and that the male was very likely a *basileus*. It is reasonable to assume that the big-men ruling at sites like Lefkandi were the *basileis* of the Early Iron Age. Their positions were dependent on their ability to provide security and resources, and populations likely gravitated towards those who could provide such luxuries.

## 4.6 Conclusions:

This discussion has demonstrated the unique, and certainly divergent development patterns across a small selection of regions throughout Early Iron Age Greece. We can clearly observe that this period was certainly the opposite of a 'Dark Age', and should rather be characterised as one that was in a state of fluctuation, which indeed encompassed a great deal of variation in societal and political frameworks.

Areas such as Lefkandi and many regions throughout the Peloponnese can be considered 'unstable' settlements, if we are to follow Whitley's proposal, whereas Attica and Crete (especially Athens and Knossos) seem to exhibit a more consistent display of kinship groupings through their mortuary evidence.

Settlements and mortuary evidence from Lefkandi and Asine and Nichoria in the Peloponnese provide evidence for the presence of big-men, and these individuals were likely the *basileis*, the inheritors of the *qa-si-re-we*. We may conclude that due to the lack of permanence of their settlements, we may cautiously accept that this was the result of the fluctuating populations, which would change as they gravitated towards different big-men who were capable of providing resources and security.[406]

In contrast, the continuity of habitation at Early Iron Age Athens and Knossos demonstrate that in these locations there was a sense of community which was maintained through kinship groupings and reflected in the number of surrounding cemeteries.

Therefore, it must be emphasised that although the big-man concept seems to be appropriately applied to certain areas on the Greek mainland, it is incorrect to assume that this was the only way that societies were organised during the Greek Iron Age. Rather, different communities had entirely different reactions after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilisation, and, in the case of Athens in particular, this

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[406] Whitley (1991a: 348).

basis of kinship may have been the early social development that would eventually lead to the

formation of the Archaic and Classical Greek *poleis*.[407]

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# 5. Final Conclusions:

Using archaeological and Linear B evidence, Chapter Two demonstrated that the Mycenaean *wanax*, as the centre of the state in the Late Bronze Age period, appears to have held a substantial religious role – particularly at Pylos. The Pylos feasting fresco, when taken alongside PY Er 312, Er 880, Un 718 and the PY Fr series in particular, reveal that the *wanax* was heavily involved in religious ceremonies. In one example he is the primary benefactor to the ritual feast in PY Un 718. As a second example, it seems that the *wanax* at Mycenae and Pylos may have based their authority on descent from an ancestral *wanax* who was the subject of veneration in a ritual context. The architectural layout of Pylos, Tiryns, and Mycenae have been shown to clearly express the authority and religious connection of the *wanax* to the megaron and hearth, which served as a way to enable the *wanax* to fulfil his role as the intermediary between the state and the gods, while the rich grave goods from the Grave Circles at Mycenae show the conspicuous consumption of exotic and valuable goods in the mortuary sphere, which were an important means of displaying social status and fostering the social memory of familial links as a means to maintain authority. The continued use of the Grave Circles demonstrate that the use of social memory as a means of legitimising a ruler's authority was established by the MH III period. This was certainly capitalised by the *wanax* ruling in the LH IIIB period, because the restoration of the grave stelai and rearrangement of Grave Circle A, and the construction surrounding Grave Circle B which incorporated this Grave Circle into the walls of Mycenae, demonstrate a conscious decision made by the *wanax* to reconnect his authority with his ancestors.

Chapter Three demonstrated that in the LH IIIC period, the people at Tiryns retained this use of social memory as a way to preserve the connection to the palatial period. Positions of authority were no longer held by a figure holding absolute power in various social spheres in the same way the *wanax* did. Rather, authority was most likely held by a group of elite individuals, who were possibly the

inheritors of the Mycenaean *qa-si-re-we*, and whom we can classify as 'big-men' in the Early Iron Age. The acquisition of antique and exotic objects was an important aspect of maintaining social status. The Tiryns treasure and the construction of Building T upon the ruins of the megaron shows a conscious desire to preserve the memory of the Mycenaean period.

Finally, Chapter Four showed that in the Early Iron Age, the power of the ruler had dwindled to that of a more localised basis of authority. The big-men of this period were in power in certain regions of Greece during the Early Iron Age, typically where we can observe unstable settlement patterns. The presence of cult areas near large dwellings believed to have been the residences of elite persons, such as at Nichoria and Asine in the Peloponnese, indicate that, like the *wanax*, the *basileis* still held some degree of religious authority, though it is difficult to determine whether this functioned on a communal or domestic level.

Therefore, this thesis has demonstrated the diachronic progression of authority from the LH IIIA/B period to the Early Iron Age. While the Mycenaean *wanax* maintained a clear religious function and maintained a complex economic administration which was centred around his reign, in succeeding time periods the ruler's authority became more dependent on the ability to attract followers in a big-man society. I believe it is indeed likely that the ruling authority figures of the LH IIIC and Early Iron Age were inheritors of the *qa-si-re-we*. This term survived to be recorded as *basileis* in epic poetry sometime in the late eighth century BC. Thus, in some regions in the Early Iron Age, the social organisation seems to be best characterised in some regions such as the Peloponnese and Euboea as big-men societies. These communities consisted of wildly fluctuating populations which gravitated towards big-men who could provide security and resources to their followers. Other areas, such as Athens and Crete exhibit characteristics of stable settlements which constituted a collection of small

villages that already possessed the early notions of a community that was not dependent on the existence of a big-man.[408]

The Early Iron Age, then, was a complex and entirely variable period consisting of both stable and unstable settlements. If anything, the Early Iron Age is certainly far from being a 'Dark Age'.

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[408] Whitley (1991b: 186).

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