

THE ARGOLID IN 1400 - WHAT HAPPENED ?

For brevity's sake I will simply mention the names of Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy, Pierre Carlier, Klaus Kilian, C.B. Mee and W.G. Cavanagh as sources for this paper (among many others) ¹.

Events that matter in the Argolid after the first quarter of the 14th century just about has passed are the tholoi of Midea, Berbati, and Kokla abandoned (to be precise, 3 out of 6, not counting Mycenae) ²; the building of the tholoi "of Atreus" and "of Klytaimnestra" at Mycenae ³; and the creation of the Mycenaean Megaron ⁴. Of these milestones (for me they are) only the date of the first one is assured, the others may or may not be accepted. Regarding the dating of the "Treasury of Atreus" to LH IIIA1-2 I side with E. French, my reason being that the style of the main elements of the facade is as Minoan as can be, of the Late Palatial, not of the Palace Style period ⁵. Indeed, if measurements agreed, we would have no doubt but that we are seeing the half-columns missing to the left and right of the main passage in the north facade of the central court at Phaistos, reused at Mycenae ⁶. The creation of the Mycenaean Megaron is momentous, this being an altogether new type of building, a cross between mainland and Cretan traditions, clearly to express and substantiate new claims. As again Kilian has shown, the design existed in Tiryns in LH IIIA1, and I would speculate that it was created at this time (the period of interest to us), though probably not for Tiryns, rather for Mycenae ⁷. The design could have been older, or it could have evolved

- 1 S. DEGER-JALKOTZY, *E-qe-ta. Zur Rolle des Gefolgschaftswesens in der Sozialstruktur mykenischer Reiche* (1978); P. CARLIER, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (1984); K. KILIAN, "The Emergence of the Wanax Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces", *OJA* 7 (1988), 291-300; C.B. MEE, W.G. CAVANAGH, "Mycenaean Tholos Tombs and Social Organisation", *OJA* 3 (1984), 45-62.
- 2 O. PELON, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires* (1976), 178 ff. ([4], Dendra - Midea); 177 f. ([3], Berbati); K. DEMAKOPOULOU, "The Burial Ritual in the Tholos Tomb at Kokla, Argolis", in *Celebrations*, 123; MEE and CAVANAGH (*supra* n. 1), 53.
- 3 Because it seems to me dateable on art historical grounds I am only concerned with the "Atreus tholos", also ignoring the question whether it precedes or postdates the "Tholos of Klytaimnestra", on which there are differing opinions: PELON (*supra* n. 2.), 171 ff., 175, 382, 386 f. ("Klytaimnestra" earlier), 425 f. (facade), 408/9 (date).
- 4 See below, n. 7. The building of terraces should also be mentioned, J. C. WRIGHT, "Mycenaean Palatial Terraces", *AM* 95 (1980), 59-86, esp. 83 f.
- 5 E. FRENCH, "'Dynamis' in the Archaeological Record at Mycenae", in M.M. MACKENZIE, Ch. ROUECHE eds., *Images of Authority. Papers presented to Joyce Reynolds on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday*, Cambridge Philological Society, Suppl. Vol. 16 (1989), 124: LH IIIA1-2. I am grateful to Professor French for having made this paper available to me.
- 6 L. PERNIER, L. BANTI, *Il Palazzo minoico di Festos II. Il Secondo Palazzo* (1951), 442-445.
- 7 K. KILIAN, "Die 'Thronfolge' in Tiryns", *AM* 103 (1988), 1-9, 5 fig. 2 (I cannot explain why Kilian's schematic drawing is so much at variance with his plan [Beilage 1], a fact to which he draws attention by trying to explain the allegedly poor placing of the center square defined by the columns [5]). ID. (*supra* n. 1), 294-295; S.E. IAKOVIDIS, *Late Helladic Citadels on Mainland Greece* (1983), 56-57; R.L.N. BARBER, "The Origins of the Mycenaean Palace", in J.M. SANDERS ed., *ΦΙΛΟΛΑΚΩΝ. Lakonian Studies in Honor of Hector Catling* (1992), 11-23 is interested in the continuity of the 'palace' building

from rudimentary stages to full maturity in the 13th c. I would hold that it was made for Mycenae probably in LH IIIA1, and that it existed fully blown right from the beginning.

Supplementing this triad are other changes, equally of import: rapid increase in population, or at least in formal burial; intensified foreign relations (remarkable pharaonic finds⁸); a new line of production in pottery, more truly Mycenaean than ever; the vanishing of treasure from chamber tombs, replaced by modest furnishings (unless thrift made a point of depositing valuables and later taking them away); plain and little weaponry; these and others signs that something quite dramatically had changed within one or two generations, something extremely effective in its consequences.

Not only the conspicuous among these indicators attract interest, but others as well, weapons, burials, vases. The sizeable monuments one might say do not more than narrate the persistent grabbing for power, persistent in the Greek mainland, perhaps rightly termed barbaric, no matter how cultivated the veneer. Speaking of cultivation, one always suspects lack of genuine sophistication which later is quite evident, but that does not concern us.

The absence of rich weapons on the other hand, and the much simpler swords may suggest a recasting of the military class and of the political scene. Matthäus has deduced "a change in the manner of fighting", along with an "incisive social change"⁹. And here the years around and after 1400 BC obviously are of consequence. If such changes were introduced, they were introduced then, and that may lend relief to those building megara and big tombs.

Also, burial statistics are telling the abrupt rise of chamber tombs in Late Helladic IIIA, information for which we are indebted to Maureen Alden, whatever the drawbacks of that study¹⁰. This means that not so slowly, and steadily, for some reason a broad segment of landholders and producers living far below the level of the palace, emerges, doing well. The same is reflected in their pottery. The Late Helladic IIIA2 style of Tel el Amarna is quite an achievement, practical, simple (by comparison with earlier wares), yet pleasing, with an astonishing variety of shapes¹¹. That too is an indication of settled conditions, especially when one considers that potters dare being native, because in contrast to palatial artisans they rather ignore the Cretan tradition. This is a good and useful sign of the health of popular culture in advanced LH IIIA. New shapes and styles after 1200 BC make it quite clear that to look at pottery can be like feeling the pulse of the body politic.

Now, if we put this information together with claims made by Carlier, Halstead, and Palaima, to the effect that there was a large, significant 'private sector' to a Mycenaean domain like Pylos, and that the damos was politically represented¹², having its own voice, then two strands seem to converge¹³.

since MH, not in modifications undergone in LH IIIA1-2 (Dr. Hiller kindly drew my attention to this paper).

- 8 E. CLINE, "Amenhotep III and the Aegean: A Reassessment of Egypto-Aegean Relations in the 14th Century B.C.", *Orientalia* 56 (1987), 1-36.
- 9 H. MATTHÄUS, "Two Mycenaean Bronzes", *BSA* 74 (1979), 169.
- 10 M.J. ALDEN, *Bronze Age Population Fluctuations in the Argolid from the Evidence of Mycenaean Tombs* (1981), 322-327. Rev. K. KILIAN, *Gnomon* 55 (1983), 631-635.
- 11 Conspectus of the repertoire at Tel el Amarna, "representative of the period of manufacture", V. HANKEY, *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "The Mycenaeans in the Eastern Mediterranean"*, Nicosia 1972 (1973), 134 fig. 1.
- 12 CARLIER (*supra* n. 1), 130; L.R. PALMER, "The Mycenaean Palace and the Damos", in *Aux origines de l'Hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce. Hommage à Henri van Effenterre* (1984), 151-158; Th.G. PALAIMA, "Maritime Matters in the Linear B Tablets", in R. LAFFINEUR, L. BASCH eds, *Thalassa. L'Egée préhistorique et la mer. Actes de la troisième Rencontre égéenne internationale de l'Université de Liège, Station de recherches sous-marines et océanographiques (StaReSO), Calvi, Corse (23-25 avril 1990)*,

What to make of it ? A surge in repertoire and style such as we witness in the Argolid means prosperity, for this kind of pottery is luxury, if on a modest scale. And for a group to advertize itself in this manner - hanging out its shingle, as I think, Dr. Coldstream once wrote - has political implications. It is at liberty to do so, and feels it. When we see this utterance consolidate in the second quarter of the 14th century, then that again gives us the approximate date when something of political consequence happened, even if this was not in the form of an edict, only an attitude, but an insistent one. I would guess that the fortunes of a lower group had to have been significantly advanced, or stabilized. Security, stability is a factor, even if one highlights economy, pointing to the palace as consumer, or opportunities for 'export'. When in the course of the 13th century the level of formal burials declines, ostensibly nearly leaving no one to build the walls, one may conclude, again, that the palace was responsible, this time for privation. Usually one blames these statistics on destructions in or shortly after 1300, but I would think that any power capable of the works of around the middle of the 13th century should have been able to support recovery, had this been its intention.

Weapons, burials, pots, all signs that in ca 1400 the palace dominating the Argolid did *something*. By suppressing or limiting status weapons it may have made clear who was in power, just as simpler weapons may point to a new type of soldier. In line with this, Dr. Deger-Jalkotzy has thought even of the *e-qe-ta* essentially as a dependent ¹⁴. There is good reason to believe that military operations had prime importance in a struggle for supremacy that I think caused families like those burying at Dendra, Berbati, and Kokla to disappear ¹⁵. Some may indeed have emigrated to Rhodes, as C.B. Mee has proposed ¹⁶. All this is, of course, tentative.

Burials and pottery could suggest some kind of contact between the land and the new dispensation at Mycenae, which would be a sign of statecraft. For models one might cite Minoan Crete, where we have not burials, but cities, and further afield but at this time figuratively speaking still within earshot polities in the Near East, with traditions of equitable rule. If we ask how Mycenaean government in general reflects beyond palaces and citadels in the archaeological record, one can only say poorly, if at all. But in the Argolid we have some significant evidence.

Mycenaean rule as it now emerges mostly from reading between the lines gets to be ever more ambiguous. On the one hand, it seems over-organized, ridden with titles and charges whose actual service value is something that we never seem to want to doubt. And yet something in our perception should depend on answering the question of the original

Aegaeum 7 (1991), 309 is less explicit about the possible role of the "private sector" than he was in a position paper circulated before this publication (see next n.).

13 CARLIER (*supra* n. 1), 121-125; ID., "La double face du pouvoir royal dans le monde mycénien", in Cl. NICOLET ed., *Du pouvoir dans l'antiquité: mots et réalités* (1990), 37-40; P. HALSTEAD, "The Mycenaean Palatial Economy: Making the Most of the Gaps in the Evidence", *Proc. of the Cambridge Philological Soc.* 38 (1992), 70-75 (I owe this reference to Joost Crouwel). Th.G. PALAIMA, "Linear B Evidence for the Mycenaean Use of the Sea", *Aegean Bronze Age Colloquium* 1/9/91, 12: "private entrepreneurs independent of the palace could have played a significant role in conducting overseas trade".

14 DEGER-JALKOTZY (*supra* n. 1), 199.

15 On the possible role of the institution of the *e-qe-tai* in this scenario, DEGER-JALKOTZY (*supra* n. 1), 202-203. With a view to explaining why tholoi were abandoned, H.W. Catling speculates about an unspecified "catastrophe" in ca 1400 BC and may have in mind a natural disaster, a view which K. Demakopoulou voices less equivocally (H.W. CATLING, in R.E. JONES ed., *Greek and Cypriot Pottery* [1985], 593; DEMAKOPOULOU [*supra* n. 2], 123). But the Dendra-Midea tholos collapsed only much later, nor suffered the one at Kazarma near Tiryns as a structure in 1400 (A.W. PERSSON, *The Royal Tombs at Dendra Near Midea* [1931], 11; PELON [*supra* n. 2], 181 [6]).

16 C. MEE, "A Mycenaean Thalssocracy in the Eastern Aegean ?", in *Problems*, 304.

home of this vocabulary, whence it derived its meaning. Was there really always a need for the vezir-like creation (Carlier), the *la-wa-ge-ta*? The title may suit the grandest setting, but Pylos? Were *qa-si-re-u* and *ko-re-te-re* in titular and in fact loyal subjects? Showered with tax receipts, ranks and titles and knowing of the wanax, what else can we think but that Pylos was a "Beamtenstaat"? This sounds and is ridiculous, but do we face the implications? On the other hand, with respect to administering the domain, the palace looks rather more the peasant shareholder than the lord, minding its own, collecting tribute, shunning the sea. Sheep yes, trade no, the typical 'aristocrat's' wisdom of profit without risk, but might one not expect a ruler's concern for the risk of leaving vital supplies to subjects and strangers¹⁷?

The limited horizon of Pylos likely should not be used to describe what was done in the Argolid, for here venturing had a long and consequential tradition. I cannot but believe that Mycenaean Mycenae and Mycenaean Pylos were different indeed, the latter stagnant, a westernmost fringe, ever since Cretan interest waned; the former internationally connected, perhaps consciously the heir to Knossos. There is no need to tell this audience that Mycenae figures along with Knossos in the so-called Itinerary from Thebes/Egypt from the mortuary temple of Amenophis III, nor to draw attention to finds from Mycenae with that Pharaoh's cartouches¹⁸. Records at Mycenae in ca 1400 BC may have shown the same charges as those at Pylos in ca 1300 BC or 1200 BC, but whether that should be taken to emphasize the same is anybody's guess. There need not have been much similarity in fact.

In short, moving from modest tangible signs like graves and pots back to the big symbolic ones like the "Atreus tholos", with a detour through Pylos, one may guess that the Argolid in ca 1400 BC may have had quite a cosmopolitan complexion, if at any time then, and then perhaps not for long. There is no question but that Mycenae offers the most impressive evidence by far for the metamorphosis of a (!) wanax into a new kind of ruler¹⁹. The wanax as reformer? In Greece, civilization of eastern style with sanctions on arbitrary behavior may have had a hard time in coming and may have made its home there only in the 8th century. But perhaps in ca 1400 BC in the Argolid there was progress in this direction. In the beginning I had disparaging things to say about the Mycenaean hall at Mycenae (if it existed), and about the facade of the Atreus tholos. I amend this. As far as the Minoan elements are concerned, there is a chance of an informed choice.

Guenter KOPCKE

17 PALAIMA (*supra* n. 13), sees reason to believe in a "war-fleet" entertained by the palace, but no evidence for vessels for purposes of trade.

18 CLINE (*supra* n. 8).

19 CARLIER (*supra* n. 13), 51.

DISCUSSION

T.G. Palaima: Since G. Kopcke has made allusions to Mycenaean texts and also to some degree slandered Pylos as a region, as a kind of the stagnant western fringe, a conservative backwater, I want to say that I very much agree with his approach here. I really believe that one of the harmful effects of a kind of handbook knowledge of Ventris and Chadwick is that it tends to level out the information provided by the Linear B texts. One of the challenges facing Linear B scholars in the next twenty or thirty years — and one that we are coming to terms with now — is really to try to see, with the variations in information that are available from site to site, what the regional differences are even in the documentation for administration and economic and social structure from site to site. So it is very tempting to take the documentation that we have from Pylos — say texts Un 718 and Er 312 — and extrapolate from them universally. I think G. Kopcke has done an amazingly good job as he normally does. We should indeed not expect that Mycenae will conform to the pattern we see in the Linear B texts from Pylos. That being said, I think he has also done a very good job at suggesting how we can use the Pylos documents. We also should not expect that Mycenaean Knossos is going to conform to the pattern that we see at Pylos. So it is a real challenge to figure out region to region what is going on in the period of full palatial culture.

C.G. Thomas: You mentioned almost in passing in connection with the broken weapons during this period which you are considering; that it might indicate a new kind of soldier. I imagine that a number of us are aware of the new theory of R. Drews that we can ascribe the difficulties at the end of the Bronze Age to the massive military transformation, to the arrival of a new kind of soldier, one that is an infantry soldier rather than a chariot fighter. Your period I know is about a hundred years too early even for the earliest period affected by the arguments of Drews. But I was wondering if you were pointing to that at least for your particular purposes of the Mycenaean Greeks.

G. Kopcke: My view is really based on H. Matthäus' analysis of weaponry, the change in weaponry; and Matthäus just in two sentences has mentioned the consequences that conceivably one might draw. We have to keep in mind that this is a period of really great openness; and it is a period of the greatest contemporary ruler, Thutmosis III. He has been called a military genius. I think that via Knossos the Egyptian army so to speak was an effective paradigm. I think that Egypt acted over wide stretches of the Bronze Age as a kind of stove, emitting heat that one can sense all around its parameters.

P. Carlier: I agree that there were probably big differences between the palace of Mycenae, the palace of Pylos, and the other palaces. But when we read the texts, we see very strange and very strong similarities between the texts, the archives, of the different sites. When one finds new texts at Tiryns, they are similar to texts we already have in Pylos or in Knossos. Probably there are differences; but the hard fact is the similarity: in the vocabulary, in the bureaucracy. The bureaucratic point of view and the bureaucratic way of administering the kingdom are the same on most points.