

ΜΕΣΟΗΛΛΑΔΙΚΑ
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La Grèce continentale au Bronze Moyen
Η ηπειρωτική Ελλάδα στη Μέση εποχή του Χαλκού
The Greek Mainland in the Middle Bronze Age

Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française d'Athènes,
en collaboration avec l'American School of Classical Studies at Athens
et le Netherlands Institute in Athens,
Athènes, 8-12 mars 2006

Édités par Anna PHILIPPA-TOUCHAIS, Gilles TOUCHAIS, Sofia VOUTSAKI et James WRIGHT

MESHELLADIKΑ
ΜΕΣΟΕΛΛΑΔΙΚΑ

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Une partie des congressistes devant le Cotsen Hall (photo Ph. Touchais)

PRÉFACE

Allocution de bienvenue du Directeur de l'École française d'Athènes

L'étude du matériel des fouilles de l'habitat mésohelladique de la colline de l'Aspis étant en cours d'achèvement, les responsables du programme, Gilles Touchais et Anna Philippa-Touchais, ont souhaité orienter la recherche de deux manières : en entreprenant l'étude globale des vestiges architecturaux de l'habitat mis au jour depuis les premières fouilles de Vollgraff et en mettant à profit cette étude pour une mise en valeur du site, mais aussi en inscrivant cette recherche dans une interrogation plus large sur l'Helladique Moyen. Cela impliquait de faire le point sur l'une des périodes les plus mal connues de la protohistoire égéenne en essayant de réunir, au niveau international, les chercheurs que le hasard des découvertes ou un choix délibéré avaient conduits à travailler sur cette période. On pouvait ainsi espérer dresser un bilan entièrement renouvelé par les données des nombreuses fouilles et prospections menées au cours des trente dernières années.

C'est à cet objectif que répond le colloque Mesohelladika. La Grèce continentale au Bronze Moyen, dont l'École française d'Athènes a eu l'initiative. Pour permettre son organisation, elle s'est assurée le concours de l'École américaine et de l'Institut néerlandais et je remercie très chaleureusement mes collègues Stephen Tracy et Gert Jan Wijngaarden d'avoir accepté le principe de cette association. En répondant positivement à notre invitation, les très nombreux chercheurs présents, venus d'Australie, d'Autriche, des États-Unis, de Finlande, de France, de Grande-Bretagne, de Grèce, d'Italie, des Pays-Bas et de Suède ont témoigné de leur intérêt pour la thématique centrale du colloque : procéder à une réévaluation de l'Helladique Moyen. - À tous, je souhaite la bienvenue et de fructueux travaux.

Je remercie tous ceux qui, dans chacune des trois Écoles concernées, ont permis l'organisation de cette manifestation. J'adresse des remerciements tout particuliers à Gilles Touchais, qui m'a soumis ce projet dès 2003, et à Anna Philippa-Touchais, dont la présence à Athènes a permis de régler les mille et une questions que ne manque pas de soulever une manifestation de cette ampleur.

Dominique MULLIEZ

Wellcome address of the Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens

On behalf of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens welcome to this international conference Mesohelladika. It is wonderful to have such a large crowd on hand this evening. The program of the conference is diverse and rich; I think we will all learn much from our colleagues over the next four days. I know that we all are looking forward to it. The American School of Classical Studies is proud to cooperate with the Netherlands Institute and with the French School at Athens in hosting this conference. I want to congratulate and to thank the organizing committee and to single out Dr. Anna Philippa-Touchais, the person on the ground here in Athens, for all her hard work. Thank you all again and welcome.

Stephen TRACY

Wellcome address of the Director of the Netherlands Institute in Athens

Dear colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Some time ago, Dr Sofia Voutsaki persuaded me to support this conference. On the occasion she emphasized that the Middle Bronze Age of the Greek mainland had been neglected of late and that it was in serious need of attention. Taking a look at the impressive conference program, I could only acknowledge Sofia's claims: obviously many scholars felt a similar need to discuss Middle Helladic Greece.

For several of the archaeological programs of the Netherlands Institute in Athens, the Middle Bronze Age is of importance. This is true for the excavations at Geraki in Lakonia, for the surveys in Thessaly, Boeotia and Zakynthos, as well as for the analytical program on the Argolid. I am confident that the Mesohelladika conference will contribute to a better understanding of the materials dealt with in these programs.

I am very pleased that this conference is a joint venture of three foreign archaeological institutes in Greece. International academic events are increasingly more difficult and costly to organize and cooperation in this respect is, in my view, beneficial to all. I would like to thank warmly my colleagues Dominique Mulliez and Stephen Tracy for the fruitful cooperation and for the hospitality. I also congratulate the organizers with the impressive program and I wish all participants an enjoyable and fruitful conference.

Gert Jan VAN WIJNGAARDEN

INTRODUCTION

L'Helladique Moyen, période qui correspond, en gros, à la première moitié du II^e millénaire avant notre ère, s'intercale entre deux phases de prospérité économique et d'accomplissement culturel majeurs pour la Grèce continentale : le Bronze Ancien, d'une part, qui a vu naître et se développer, au cours du III^e millénaire, des communautés proto-urbaines déjà fortement organisées, ouvertes sur le reste du monde égéen, et l'époque mycénienne de l'autre, qui, dans la seconde moitié du II^e millénaire, portera à son apogée le système palatial et étendra son influence bien au-delà des rives de la mer Égée. C'est pourquoi l'Helladique Moyen est toujours apparu en retrait par rapport à ces deux grands moments, dans une vision purement négative que reflètent bien les termes de stagnation, de recul, d'isolement le plus souvent utilisés pour caractériser cette période. En outre, la comparaison avec l'essor que connaît, à la même époque, la Crète protopalatiale, tourne elle aussi au désavantage de la Grèce continentale et renforce cette impression négative, qui n'est sans doute pas étrangère au relatif désintérêt dont l'Helladique Moyen a pâti jusqu'à présent dans la recherche sur les civilisations égéennes.

Il apparaît cependant aujourd'hui, à la lumière des recherches récentes, que l'Helladique Moyen n'est pas cette longue période d'atonie si souvent décrite. Des indices de plus en plus nombreux suggèrent qu'elle a au contraire été marquée par de profonds changements d'ordre social, politique et culturel, qui conduisirent progressivement à la formation des entités politiques protomycéniennes et, plus tard, des royaumes mycéniens. C'est pourquoi il nous a semblé que le moment était venu de rassembler la documentation la plus large possible sur cette période encore mal connue – ou plutôt méconnue. Le meilleur moyen était de faire se rencontrer tous les collègues qui avaient accumulé de nouvelles données au cours des dernières décennies, mais aussi ceux qui tentaient d'interpréter celles dont on disposait. C'est ainsi qu'est née l'idée de ce colloque – le premier à être consacré exclusivement à l'Helladique Moyen – et que furent définis ses principaux objectifs : d'une part, dresser un bilan de nos connaissances sur la période, en ne négligeant aucun domaine de la recherche ; d'autre part, explorer les mécanismes qui sont à l'origine des changements

constatés et tenter d'apprécier leur dynamique. On suggéra donc plusieurs axes de réflexion : la topographie et l'habitat (réseaux d'occupation humaine, organisation spatiale) ; les pratiques rituelles et funéraires ; les problèmes chronologiques (séquences céramiques, synchronismes, datations absolues) ; l'économie et l'exploitation des ressources naturelles (agriculture et élevage, techniques et productions artisanales, alimentation) ; les problèmes démographiques et sanitaires ; les contacts, les échanges et les influences culturelles ; l'évolution des structures socio-politiques.

L'intuition que le sujet était « mûr » et qu'une vision moins négative de l'Helladique Moyen avait commencé de prévaloir parmi les spécialistes du monde égéen a été confirmée bien au-delà de nos espérances. Car même dans nos prévisions les plus optimistes, nous étions loin d'imaginer que notre initiative rencontrerait un tel écho. En effet, près de 130 chercheurs ont répondu à notre invitation, plus de 80 d'entre eux proposant de présenter une communication et plus d'une quarantaine de réaliser un poster. Finalement, sur les 69 communications présentées à Athènes, 63 sont éditées dans le présent volume¹, et 28 posters sur 29².

Ce projet n'aurait pu être mené à bien sans le soutien financier et logistique, mais aussi scientifique et moral, des trois institutions qui en ont assuré directement l'organisation : l'École française d'Athènes, l'American School of Classical Studies at Athens et le Netherlands Institute in Athens, dont nous tenons à remercier les directeurs respectifs, Dominique Mulliez, Stephen V. Tracy et Gert Jan van Wijngarten, pour les moyens matériels et humains qu'ils ont généreusement mis à notre disposition. L'Institute of Aegean Prehistory de Philadelphie a également répondu, avec sa libéralité coutumière, à nos demandes de subvention, aussi bien pour l'organisation du colloque lui-même que pour

1. Massimo Cultraro, qui n'avait pu participer au colloque, a envoyé le texte de sa communication, mais les textes suivants n'ont pas été remis : Antikleia Agrafioti, « Les industries lithiques du Bronze Moyen et l'enjeu des éléments de faucille » ; Polyxeni Arachoviti, « Αερινό, ένας οικισμός της Μέσης Εποχής του Χαλκού στη νοτιοανατολική Θεσσαλία » ; Ioanna Galanaki, « Lefkandi Phases 2-6 : Some Observations on the Communication Networks and Communication Processes during the Middle Helladic Period » ; Chrysanthi Gallou, « "In the Dark Heart of Maleas". The Transition from the Middle Helladic to the Early Mycenaean Period in the Southeastern Peloponnese » ; Olga Kyriazi, « Μαρτυρίες από την ανατολική Λοκρίδα σχετικά με τη μεταβατική περίοδο από τη Μέση στην Ύστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού: ενεργή συμμετοχή στις πολιτισμικές αλλαγές ή στο περιθώριο των εξελικτικών διεργασιών; » ; Elena Kountouri, « Προμυκηναϊκή Θήβα : τα δεδομένα από τις σύγχρονες έρευνες » ; Michael Lindblom, « The Middle Helladic Settlement at Mastos in the Berbati Valley » ; Adamantia Vassilogamvrou, « Η κεραμική της ME III-ΥΕ I φάσης από τη θέση Καταρραχιά Δυτικής Αχαΐας ».
2. Il manque celui d'Olga Philaniotou, « Naxos in the Middle Bronze Age. New Evidence for Habitation ». Pour la publication, nous avons choisi d'intégrer les posters aux unités thématiques auxquels ils se rapportent en les mêlant aux communications, plutôt que de les regrouper dans une section séparée comme cela se fait souvent.

la publication des actes : nous exprimons ici toute notre reconnaissance à son comité scientifique ainsi qu'à Karen Velluci, directrice des programmes de subvention, en qui nous avons toujours trouvé une interlocutrice efficace et attentionnée. Parmi les institutions françaises, le Centre national de la recherche scientifique et l'université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne ont apporté une contribution appréciable au financement du colloque. De leur côté, le Service culturel de la Ville d'Athènes (Δήμος Αθηναίων, Πολιτισμικός Οργανισμός) et l'office du Tourisme hellénique (Ελληνικός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού, Υπουργείου Τουριστικής Ανάπτυξης) ont soutenu la manifestation en mettant gracieusement à notre disposition 150 exemplaires de deux luxueuses brochures sur Athènes, l'Attique et ses monuments. Plusieurs participants au colloque ont par ailleurs bénéficié de l'hospitalité offerte par les Instituts danois et suédois, ainsi que par les Écoles britannique et italienne, que nous remercions sincèrement de leur concours. C'est une dette particulière que nous avons envers Bob Bridges, secrétaire général de l'École américaine, qui, pendant les trois jours où le colloque s'est tenu au Cotsen Hall, n'a ménagé ni son temps ni sa peine pour assurer le bon déroulement des séances et résoudre tous les problèmes techniques, sans se départir jamais de son sourire.

Nous remercions également pour leur précieux concours à l'organisation et au bon fonctionnement du colloque Maria Tsimboukaki, qui a géré le secrétariat avec un dévouement et une efficacité dignes d'éloge, Stratos Balis et Tomek Hertig (site Internet), Eleni Gerontakou et Catherine Pantazis (travaux de secrétariat), Philippe Touchais (photos d'ambiance), ainsi que les volontaires étudiants post-diplôme de l'universités d'Athènes, dont le zèle et la bonne humeur communicative ont largement contribué à l'ambiance chaleureuse qui a régné tout au long de cette rencontre : Giorgos Charitos, Giorgos Choulis, Nikolas Dimakis, Dimitris Kloukinas, Akathi Maria Kovaïou, Anna Loukidou, Stefania Michalopoulou, Konstantina Nikolopoulou, Evangelia Polyzou et Eva Roussaki. C'est d'autre part à Orestis Kakavakis, doctorant à l'université d'Athènes, que l'on doit la traduction grecque des résumés qui figurent dans le présent volume.

Nous sommes particulièrement reconnaissants à Catherine Aubert, responsable du service des publications de l'EFA, pour le soin qu'elle a apporté à l'édition des actes de ce colloque, et à Vélissarios Anagnostopoulos, auteur de l'affiche.

Cet ouvrage témoignera durablement du remarquable travail accompli ces dernières années par une communauté de chercheurs qui, *last but not least*, mérite elle aussi toute notre gratitude – une communauté qui a hélas été endeuillée, depuis le colloque, par la disparition prématurée de deux de ses membres : Maria Oikonomakou et Angeliki Pilali, dont nous tenons à saluer ici la mémoire.

Les éditeurs

ABRÉVIATIONS

PÉRIODIQUES ET SÉRIES

Les abréviations utilisées sont celles de l'*American Journal of Archaeology* (voir AJA 111 [2007], p. 14-34, ou le site internet www.ajaonline.org) auxquelles on ajoutera :

<i>AEMTh</i>	<i>Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη</i>
<i>BCH Chron.</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i> , «Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce »

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SUBDIVISIONS CHRONOLOGIQUES

English

EB(A), MB(A), LB(A)	Early Bronze (Age), Middle Bronze (Age), Late Bronze (Age)
EC, MC, LC	Early Cycladic, Middle Cycladic, Late Cycladic
EH, MH, LH	Early Helladic, Middle Helladic, Late Helladic
EIA	Early Iron Age
EM, MM, LM	Early Minoan, Middle Minoan, Late Minoan

Français

BA, BM, BR	Bronze Ancien, Bronze Moyen, Bronze Récent
CA, CM, CR	Cycladique Ancien, Cycladique Moyen, Cycladique Récent
HA, HM, HR	Helladique Ancien, Helladique Moyen, Helladique Récent
MA, MM, MR	Minoen Ancien, Minoen Moyen, Minoen Récent

Ελληνικά

ΠΕ, ΜΕ, ΥΕ	Πρωτοελλαδικός, Μεσοελλαδικός, Ύστεροελλαδικός
ΠΕΧ, ΜΕΧ, ΥΕΧ	Πρώιμη Εποχή του Χαλκού, Μέση Εποχή του Χαλκού, Ύστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού
ΠΜ, ΜΚ, ΥΚ	Πρωτικυκλαδικός, Μεσοκυκλαδικός, Ύστεροκυκλαδικός
ΠΧ, ΜΧ, ΥΧ	Πρωτοχαλκός, Μεσοχαλκός, Ύστεροχαλκός
	Πρώιμη Χαλκοκρατία, Μέση Χαλκοκρατία, Ύστερη Χαλκοκρατία

The Iconography of the Shaft Grave Period as Evidence for a Middle Helladic Tradition of Figurative Arts?*

Fritz BLAKOLMER

RÉSUMÉ

L'iconographie de l'époque des tombes à fosse comme preuve de l'existence d'une tradition mésohelladique d'arts figurés ?

La Grèce HM n'est pas particulièrement réputée pour ses réalisations en matière d'arts figurés. Cependant la documentation iconographique issue des tombes à fosse de Mycènes et d'autres contextes funéraires analogues de Grèce continentale permet d'analyser un certain nombre d'objets d'art du point de vue de leur tradition artistique. La présente étude se concentre sur les aspects des représentations figurées de la période des tombes à fosse dont l'iconographie, le style et la technique du relief diffèrent radicalement des traditions crétoises. Quelques-uns au moins de ces traits artistiques non minoens ne constituent pas des modes de représentation isolés ou individuels, créés *ex nihilo* ; ils semblent au contraire enracinés dans une tradition artistique cohérente remontant à la Grèce HM. Certains traits continentaux pourraient être liés au motif du « méandre curviligne », qui a fait l'objet de nombreux débats. Dans le cas de plusieurs stèles des tombes à fosse, cet art helladique reflète une identité continentale « conservatrice », par opposition à l'ouverture innovante que représentent les tendances artistiques minoennes. Toutefois ces veines autochtones de l'art des tombes à fosse ne doivent sans doute pas être considérées comme la source de ce que l'on appelle traditionnellement « l'art mycénien ».

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η εικονογραφία της περιόδου των λακκοειδών τάφων ως τεκμήριο μιας μεσοελλαδικής παράδοσης εικονιστικών τεχνών;

Η Ελλάδα της ΜΕΧ δεν φημίζεται για σημαντικά επιτεύγματα στον τομέα των εικονιστικών τεχνών. Ωστόσο, τα εικονογραφικά στοιχεία από τους λακκοειδείς τάφους των Μυκηνών και από ανάλογα ταφικά σύνολα της ηπειρωτικής Ελλάδας επιτρέπουν την ανάλυση διαφόρων έργων τέχνης αναφορικά με την καλλιτεχνική τους παράδοση. Το παρόν άρθρο επιχειρεί να εστιάσει σε εκείνες τις όψεις των εικονιστικών παραστάσεων της περιόδου των λακκοειδών τάφων, των οποίων η εικονογραφία, το στυλ και η τεχνική διαφοροποιούνται ριζικά από την κρητική παράδοση. Τουλάχιστον κάποια από αυτά τα μη μινωικά καλλιτεχνικά στοιχεία δεν αποτελούν μεμονωμένους τρόπους αναπαράστασης, προερχόμενους εκ του μηδενός, αλλά φαίνεται ότι έχουν τις ρίζες τους σε μία συνεπή καλλιτεχνική παράδοση, που μπορεί να αναχθεί στη ΜΕ περίοδο. Κάποια ηπειρωτικά στοιχεία μπορούν πιθανώς να συσχετιστούν με το πολυσυζητημένο μοτίβο του «καμπυλόγραμμου μαιάνδρου». Στην περίπτωση μερικών σηλών από τους λακκοειδείς τάφους, αυτή η ελλαδική τέχνη αντανακλά μία «συντηρητική» ηπειρωτική ταυτότητα, σε αντίθεση προς τη νεωτεριστική δεκτικότητα στις μινωικές καλλιτεχνικές τάσεις. Ωστόσο, αυτά τα αυτόχθονα ψήγματα τέχνης από την περίοδο των λακκοειδών τάφων δεν θα έπρεπε να θεωρηθούν ως τα θεμέλια της λεγόμενης «μυκηναϊκής τέχνης».

INTRODUCTION

The Middle Bronze Age on the Greek mainland is a period which is certainly not known for any special achievements in the field of artistic expression. According to the traditional opinion, Middle Helladic art was rather restricted to some linear ornaments and therefore basically of un-iconic character.¹ Only a few linear drawings occur on ceramic vessels coming from Argos, Mycenae, Tsoungiza, Korakou, Kolonna, Iolkos, and other places² which show some stick-figures and other isolated motifs. Schematic and individual as these examples may appear, they provide some evidence that in the late Middle Helladic period there existed “something” like figurative art.

Hitherto, the Helladic artistic idiom of the Shaft Grave period has been defined mainly by “looking back” from the iconography of the Late Mycenaean palace periods.³ The present approach will follow a different course. Among the heterogeneous iconographical objects

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The following special abbreviations will be used:

HEURTLEY 1921-23 = W. A. HEURTLEY, “Excavations at Mycenae. The Grave Stelai”, *BSA* 25, p. 126-146.

Iconographie minoenne = P. DARCQUE, J.-Cl. POURSAT (eds.), *L’Iconographie minoenne. Actes de la Table ronde d’Athènes, 21-22 avril 1983*, *BCH Suppl.* 11 (1985).

MYLONAS 1951 = G. E. MYLONAS, “The Figured Mycenaean Stelai”, *AJA* 55, p. 134-147.

VERMEULE 1975 = E. T. VERMEULE, *The Art of the Shaft Graves of Mycenae. Lectures in Memory of Louise Taft Semple, Delivered April 30 and May 1, 1973*.

YOUNGER 1997 = J. G. YOUNGER, “The Stelai of Mycenae Grave Circles A and B”, in *TEXNH*, p. 229-239.

1. Cf. VERMEULE 1975, p. 25, 50; F. MATZ, *Kreta und frühes Griechenland* (1975), p. 169; *Origins*, p. 84; J. HURWIT, “The Dendra Octopus Cup and the Problem of Style in the Fifteenth Century Aegean”, *AJA* 83 (1979), p. 415; W.-D. NIEMEIER, “Zum Problem von Import und Imitation Minoischer Keramik in Frühmykenischer Zeit”, in *Aux origines de l’hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce, Hommage à Henri Van Effenterre* (1984), p. 113.
2. See A. FURTWÄNGLER, G. LOESCHKE, *Mykenische Vasen. Vorhellenische Tongefäße aus dem Gebiete des Mittelmeeres* (1886), p. 54 (no. 169), pl. XXIII; *Korakou*, p. 24, fig. 34; 2; D. A. THEOCHARIS, “Iolkos, whence Sailed the Argonauts”, *Archaeology* 11 (1958), fig. on p. 17; S. A. IMMERWAHR, “Some Pictorial Fragments from Iolkos in the Volos Museum”, *ArchEph* 124 (1985), p. 86-87, fig. 1 a-b; *Kirrha*, p. 73, pl. XXXII a; BUCK, p. 277 (motifs 130 and 132-133), pl. 44; E. PROTONOTARIOU-DEILAKI, “Ship Representations from Prehistoric Argolid (MH Period)”, in H. TZALAS (ed.), *Tropis II. Second International Symposium on Ship Construction in Antiquity, Delphi, 27, 28, 29 August 1987* (1991), p. 123-126, figs. 1-4; *Alt-Ägina IV.I*, p. 55 (no. 74), pl. 14; p. 62 (no. 158), pl. 37 and col. pl.; p. 62 (no. 162), pl. 38; RUTTER, *Review II* (1993), p. 778-779, fig. 14; p. 791-792, fig. 17; PHILIPPA-TOUCHAIS, *Céramique Aspis I*, p. 32-34 (no. 94), figs. 25-26.
3. Cf. J. HURWIT (*supra*, n. 1), p. 416.

from inside and from above the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, nowadays we are able to define one artistic element relatively clearly, and this is Minoan art in its entire complexity. Consequently, those artefacts which imitate or adapt Minoan iconography allow us to filter out some “other” artistic features by a critical analysis of style. Such remaining artistic trends, obviously, can be understood as of mainland character, possibly earlier in date and therefore may give us some hints of how to reconstruct an autochthonous figurative art in Middle Helladic Greece, at least in its later part. Though I have to confess that, at first sight, the topic of this article is of a rather speculative character, an extrapolation and definition of non-Minoan elements in the Shaft Grave artefacts permits us recognize at least 28 artistic features that seem to be characteristic of a certain Middle Helladic tradition of figurative art. Let me present these Helladic elements briefly before I will try to discuss the meaning and the consequences of these early features of mainland art.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTOCHTHONOUS IMAGES OF THE SHAFT GRAVE PERIOD

First of all we can recognize an arrangement of ornamental and figurative motifs in broad horizontal as well as in vertical panels (**Figs. 2 and 7-10**) sometimes reminding us of the structure of decoration on Middle Helladic pottery.⁴ A predilection for heavy border zones surrounding the image (**Figs. 8 and 11**) attributes to them a remarkably “active” role. Often the panels contain imagery and those containing ornaments have been treated as having the same importance and the same value (**Figs. 2, 7 and 9-10**).

On several relief stelai the combination of figurative motifs and filling spiral ornaments implies a “horror vacui” (**Figs. 7 and 9**). Very often there are an astonishing clumsiness in the composition and remarkably unconstrained irregularities in the ornaments as well as in the images. Especially some of the panels with spiral rapport decoration (**Figs. 7, 9 and 10**) testify to an unconcerned improvisation and to modest standards of quality. Various examples, such as the enemy inserted later on one of the Shaft Grave stelai (**Fig. 10**), make clear that the meaning of preliminary drawings has been misunderstood or disregarded. Several images illustrate the absence of any compositional harmony and therefore present a confused compilation of ‘Minoanising’ motifs with reduced stylistic details (**Figs. 2, 5, 7 and 11**). All the images of mainland origin are characterized by coarseness and a schematic concept and execution. The Minoan motif of two lions attacking a bull on the unfinished stele of Shaft Grave Alpha presents such a high complexity, that it remains enigmatic how this iconographical motif could have been executed in the Helladic relief style, which lacks

4. See already HEURTLEY 1921-23, p. 140-141, 144.

the necessary pronounced plasticity.⁵ Often, the compositional principle of “horror vacui” has been applied in such a predominant way that the close and compact position of elements generates a picture lacking in homogeneity (Figs. 2, 7, 9 and 11).⁶ Several animal motifs attest to a tendency towards a seriation of uniform motifs (Figs. 3 and 8).

On all those objects bearing images or ornaments, the style of relief is flat, schematic, and of a graphic, linear character, inclining towards an un-Minoan working in two layers without any homogeneity and flowing plasticity. In some of these relief pictures we observe an abstract segmentation of the motifs into smaller forms (Figs. 1-2 and 4). In these images the force of gravity often has been neglected, and several figures rather appear to float on the surface without having any concrete spatial links (Figs. 7 and 10). The differences in scale of the figures in one and the same image can be substantial (Figs. 1-2, 7 and 9). In some cases, figures of higher importance have been enlarged (Fig. 9) –an iconographical convention that occurs very seldom in Aegean Bronze Age iconography. The proportions of the constituent parts of human and animal figures often differ in an inconsistent way.⁷ Preferences for spiral, loop, and hook ornaments can be recognized not only in the repertory of design in the Shaft Grave period (Figs. 2 and 7-11), but also sometimes in the rendering of figures in iconographical scenes (Figs. 3-5). A tendency towards a playful ornamentation and geometric forms is obvious. Furthermore, there is an astonishing lack of signification in the silhouette form of human figures (Figs. 1, 7, 9-10 and 12). The substantial variability in the representation of chariots and their pair of wheels,⁸ suggests a lack of artistic conceptions of these motifs rather than a variety of chariot forms.

Human figures are drawn mainly in a schematic, undifferentiated way and have a minimum of indicated internal details (Figs. 1, 5, 7, 9-12). Sometimes, human heads possess engraved eyes and parallel strands of hair (Figs. 5 and 12). Any indications of beards and garments are lacking. Several warriors and hunters on the Shaft Grave stelai are rendered in a crouching position and with their extremities uncoordinated and sticking out.⁹ Sometimes,

5. S. MARINATOS, “The Stelai of Circle B at Mycenae”, *AAA* 1 (1968), p. 175-177, fig. 1; G. MYLONAS, *Ancient Mycenae. The Capital City of Agamemnon* (1957), p. 131, pl. 41; MYLONAS, *TKB*, p. 33-34, pl. 12 α - β ; YOUNGER 1997, p. 237 (no. 13), pls. LXXXIX b-c, XCIV a.

6. Cf. VERMEULE 1975, p. 24.

7. See the gold cup with running lions from Shaft Grave V: KARO, p. 125-126 (no. 656), pl. CXXVI; K. MÜLLER, “Frühmykenische Reliefs aus Kreta und vom griechischen Festland”, *JdI* 30 (1915), p. 312-313, fig. 29; S. MARINATOS, M. HIRMER, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas*² (1973), pl. 214 top.

8. Cf. the pair of wheels as represented on fragments of a stone stela from Grave Circle A: HEURTLEY 1921-23, p. 134-136 (no. IX a-b), fig. 30; YOUNGER 1997, p. 236-237 (no. IX), pl. XCII a.

9. Cf. e.g. a lentoid seal from Vaphio showing a boar hunt scene (*CMS* I, no. 227) and an MM II sealing from Phaistos (*CMS* II 5, no. 323); F. BLAKOLMER, “Zum Lentoidsiegel mit Keilerjagdt aus dem frühmykenischen Tholosgrab von Vapheio”, in Ch. FRANAK *et al.* (eds.), *Thiasos. Festschrift für Erwin Pochmarski zum 65. Geburtstag* (2008), p. 89-100.

their arms are not leading outside, as in Minoan art, but drawn across the body (Figs. 7 and 12). The bent legs suggest probably a vivid motion (Figs. 7, 9-10 and 12).

In several examples, the Minoan “flying gallop” has been adopted for running quadrupeds (Figs. 2, 4 and 11). However, there existed also another, very particular iconographical formula for running animals: some kind of “jumping gallop” (Figs. 1 and 8-11) – an artistic convention which, obviously, has been borrowed directly from Near Eastern iconography. The origin of this formula, possibly, can be concretized: hind hooves touching the ground line only by their front points (cf. Figs. 9-10) constitute a special feature of Egyptian iconography.¹⁰ In contrast to the imitations of the Minoan “flying gallop”, in the “jumping gallop” the pair of horse legs has not been separated. This artistic convention was used for horses (Figs. 8-11), a deer (Fig. 11), and a lion (Fig. 1).

Some images illustrate iconographical incoherencies by including human figures, even in a Minoan motif of lions attacking a bull (Fig. 7).¹¹ There was no need for the representation of the natural surrounding. All the plant and terrain motifs to be found in this mainland art result from the imitation of Minoan iconographical models (Figs. 2, 5, 6 and 11). The additive structure of more extensive images and the compiling of different themes and motifs is illustrated best by one relief stele from Shaft Grave V (Fig. 11) showing a Helladic battle scene combined with a “Minoanising” lion pursuing a quadruped, and framed by Minoan rockwork of marine (!) character.¹² In respect of the thematic spectrum we can talk both of a certain predilection for the topics of hunt and war and of a specific iconography of animals and men.¹³

10. Cf. esp. A. MOORTGAT, “Der Kampf zu Wagen in der Kunst des Alten Orients”, *OLZ* 33 (1930), p. 848-849; M. A. LITTAUER, “The Military Use of the Chariot in the Aegean in the Late Bronze Age”, *AJA* 76 (1972), p. 150, n. 40; ead., J. H. CROUWEL, *Wheeled Vehicles and Ridden Animals in the Ancient Near East* (1979), p. 62-64, figs. 32-33, 35-36; VERMEULE 1975, p. 16-17; S. HILLER, “Scenes of Warfare and Combat in the Arts of Aegean Late Bronze Age. Reflections on Typology and Development”, in *Polemos*, p. 326, pl. LXXI, 12-13; id., “Beni Hassan, die Anfänge der minoischen Freskenkunst und Fragen der Chronologie”, in M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. II. Proceedings of the SCIEEM 2000 – EuroConference, Haindorf 2nd of May – 7th of May 2001* (2003), p. 496-497, figs. 22-23. Cf. further R. M. CZICHON, *Die Gestaltungsprinzipien der neuassyrischen Flachbildkunst und ihre Entwicklung vom 9. zum 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (1992), p. 33.

11. See also the image on the unfinished stele from Shaft Grave A (*supra*, n. 5).

12. Cf. K. MÜLLER (*supra*, n. 7), p. 287; A. EVANS, *The Shaft Graves and Bee-hive Tombs of Mycenae and their Interrelations* (1929), p. 56; id., *The Palace of Minos at Knossos IV* (1935), p. 252; MYLONAS 1951, p. 146-147.

13. See e.g. VERMEULE 1975, p. 22-26.

THE MEANING OF THE AUTOCHTHONOUS STYLE OF THE SHAFT GRAVE PERIOD

How can we understand these indigenous artistic features in Helladic images of the Shaft Grave period? They occur on at least 17 artefacts of gold, silver, ivory and stone, coming from Mycenae, Peristeria (Fig. 5) and Thorikos (Fig. 6). Although the spectrum of these artistic forms appears manifold, in fact it is not so extensive, so that we could speak of arbitrariness or of creations by a single workshop at Mycenae. In spite of the hybrid and transitional character of all these images, some artistic features seem to be rather firmly established, so that we can grasp the remains of a more or less homogeneous artistic tradition, as supposed already by W. Heurtley.¹⁴ The adoption of numerous elements of the foreign Cretan iconography in *those* versions suggests that during the Shaft Grave period Helladic artisans on the Greek mainland already possessed some artistic conceptions of their own. The Helladic images mentioned above do not constitute a humble “Minoanising” *ex nihilo*,¹⁵ but rather are artistic adaptations based on an indigenous mainland tradition. If we include also examples of the “rope and pulley” decoration in our considerations, this mainland art also possesses a deliberate geographical extension which reached places far beyond the Argolid and allow us to detect even regional diversity.¹⁶

A CONNECTION WITH THE ARTS OF THE “EURASIAN STEPPE”?

The connection of the figurative art under discussion and the particular ornament style of “rope and pulley” decoration is substantiated by the fact that both of them occur on some stone relief stelai side by side (cf. e.g. Figs. 8, 10 and 11). In considering this figurative art we should rather not talk of a “Eurasian animal style”, as proposed by E. Vermeule and others.¹⁷ With the exception of horses represented on the stelai at Mycenae, the animal motifs in the indigenous style of the Shaft Grave period possess clear and, at least partly, older counterparts in the iconography of Minoan Crete. This holds true also for several of the

14. HEURTLEY 1921-23, esp. p. 145.

15. Cf. *Origins*, esp. p. 85.

16. To this point cf. esp. K. MÜLLER, “Alt-Pylos II: Die Funde aus den Kuppelgräbern von Kakovatos”, *AM* 34 (1909), p. 287; S. PENNER, *Schliemanns Schachtgräber und der europäische Nordosten. Studien zur Herkunft der frühmykenischen Streitwagenausstattung* (1998), esp. p. 139, 145 with fig. 29. Contra: O. DICKINSON, “The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation’ Revisited”, in *Transition*, p. 132.

17. See VERMEULE 1975, p. 22-26; S. DIAMANT, “Mycenaean Origins: Infiltration from the North?”, in E. B. FRENCH, K. A. WARDLE (eds.), *Problems in Greek Prehistory. Papers Presented at the Centenary Conference of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, Manchester, April 1986* (1988), p. 157; A. XENAKI-SAKELLARIOU, “Αναζήτηση του εργαστηρίου των χρυσών κυπέλλων του Βαφειού”, *ArchEph* 130 (1991), p. 60; J. MAKKAY, *The Early Mycenaean Rulers and the Contemporary Early Iranians of the Northeast* (2000), p. 22-25.

ornamental motifs:¹⁸ for example, the textile decoration on the kilt rendered in detail of the well-known acrobat on a golden hilt-guard of a sword from old-palatial Malia¹⁹ presents the same “flat meander” design as the decoration on the border of some Shaft Grave stelai.²⁰

HOW DID THIS MIDDLE HELLADIC ART LOOK LIKE?

How can we imagine this Middle Helladic figurative art in objective terms? Artistic media such as the few mainland seals do not give us any hints,²¹ whereas the pictorial motifs on Middle Helladic ceramic vessels appear too heterogeneous and individual in character.²² That is the reason why W. Heurtley’s comparison of iconography and style of the stelai from Mycenae with those of Middle Helladic and Middle Cycladic pottery should be seen as being in fact too optimistic.²³ The similarities do not exceed a certain “geometrical tradition” of the ornaments, a horizontal as well as a vertical organization, etc.²⁴ This mainland art does not share very much with the highly pictorial painted pottery of the late Middle Cycladic period.²⁵ Therefore, every reconstruction of this Middle Helladic iconography appears

18. A. EVANS, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos II* (1928), p. 195-202, figs. 105-110; IV (1935), esp. p. 255; HEURTLEY 1921-23, p. 144-145; G. WALBERG, *Tradition and Innovation. Essays in Minoan Art* (1986), p. 39-56; J.-Cl. POURSAT, “Ivory Relief Carving in Minoan Crete (2000-1450 B.C.)”, in J. L. FITTON (ed.), *Ivory in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period* (1992), p. 3-5, pl. 1; B. KULL, “Untersuchungen zur Mittelbronzezeit in der Türkei und ihrer Bedeutung für die absolute Datierung der europäischen Bronzezeit”, *PZ* 64 (1989), p. 48-73; I. PINI, “Flechtbänder und Schlaufenbänder: eine ägäische Entwicklung oder eine Übernahme aus dem Vordernen Orient?”, in T. KORKUT (ed.), *Festschrift für Fahri İşik zum 60. Geburtstag* (2004), p. 601-609, esp. 606. Cf. further S. M. PEIRCE, “Syrian Influence on Middle Minoan Art”, *AJA* 84 (1980), p. 226. See also VERMEULE 1975, p. 32, figs. 37-38; J. L. CROWLEY, “Essay on Ten Precious Gems: Originality in Aegean Art”, in *Meletemata*, p. 160.
19. F. CHAPOUTHIER, *Deux épées d'apparat découvertes en 1936 au palais de Mallia, ÉtCrét* 5 (1938), p. 30-62; P. REHAK, “Aegean Breechcloth, Kilts, and the Keftiu Paintings”, *AJA* 100 (1996), p. 43. For its dating to MM II see O. PELON, “L’épée à l’acrobate et la chronologie maliote”, *BCH* 106 (1982), p. 165-190, esp. 186-187, fig. 27; *id.*, “L’épée à l’acrobate et la chronologie maliote (II)”, *BCH* 107 (1983), p. 679-703; *id.*, “L’acrobate de Malia et l’art de l’époque protopalatiale en Crète”, in *Iconographie minoenne*, p. 35-40.
20. See esp. F. CHAPOUTHIER (*supra*), p. 38-39, fig. 14 a; E. J. W. BARBER, *Prehistoric Textiles. The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean* (1991), p. 319-320, fig. 15, 5. Cf. the Shaft Grave stele in YOUNGER 1997, p. 236 (no. VIII), pl. XCI d.
21. See J. G. YOUNGER, “Seals? from Middle Helladic Greece”, *Hydra* 8 (1991), p. 35-54; I. PINI, “Minoische und helladische Tonsiegel”, in *Aux origines de l’hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce, Hommage à Henri Van Effenterre* (1984), p. 75; *id.*, “Some Considerations on the Use of Seals for Administrative Purposes in Mycenaean Greece”, *SMEA* 28 (1990), p. 108; *id.*, “Minoische Siegel außerhalb Kretas”, in *Minoan Thalassocracy*, p. 123-131.
22. See *supra*, n. 2.
23. HEURTLEY 1921-23, esp. p. 140-142, 145. See also the criticism by EVANS (1929, *supra*, n. 12), p. 57.
24. Cf. HEURTLEY 1921-23, p. 140-144. See further *Asine I*, p. 257.
25. See esp. A. N. MASTRABAS, *Η ανθρώπινη και οι ζωϊκές μορφές στην προϊστορική κεραμική των Κυκλάδων* (1991), p. 181-191; Ch. G. DOUMAS, “A Pictorial Pithos from Akrotiri, Thera”, in N. Ch. STAMBOLIDIS (ed.), *Φώς Κυκλαδικόν. Τιμητικός τόμος στη μνήμη του Νίκου Ζαφειρόπουλου* (1999), p. 54-63; M. MARTHARI, “The

hypothetical, and of course it would seem highly questionable to postulate any chariot scenes such as on the stone stelai already in the mainland iconography that preceded the Shaft Grave period. However, it is remarkable that the limited complexity of this iconography corresponds more or less to that of Middle Minoan Crete, namely the artistic style *before* the invention of the “Cretan Naturalism” in later MM II. Such an observation provides some further hints for the evidence of a longer tradition of this mainland style.²⁶ It is also tempting to imagine the “complexity” of this iconography in a form similar to the simple figural scenes on the Early Cycladic stone plaques from Korphi t’Aroniou on Naxos e.g.²⁷ The tendencies to flatness in relief art suggest a modest Middle Helladic iconography in painting, in relief carving, and possibly on textiles.

In the Shaft Grave period we notice a substantial open-mindedness of Helladic artists towards the “Modern Style”, the “New Wave” coming from Crete.²⁸ Now, with the exception of the curious chariot scenes, the Helladic world of images does not show any independent iconographical themes, only certain preferences, at the best. In several instances, the reception of Minoan imagery rather appears aimless, arbitrary, often awkward, and in many respects misunderstood. As models and stimulations the mainland artists used, without any doubt, the iconography of Minoan objects of prestige imported from Crete. So, how about the involvement of Cretan artists on the mainland? Nothing allows us recognize the work of “*a slightly clumsy artist*” working under the guidance of a ‘Master’ emigrated from Crete.²⁹ Obviously, *nobody* explained the foreign and often individually misunderstood Minoan iconography and its artistic conventions to the mainland artists.

Furthermore, already the iconography on the tomb stelai of the earlier Grave Circle B at Mycenae (Fig. 7) implies the existence of Creto-Minoan prototypes.³⁰ Although the chronological sequence of the Shaft Grave stelai remains highly unclear, it is especially the iconography of some stelai found above the latest tombs IV and V (Figs. 9-10) that shows Minoan

Attraction of the Pictorial: Observations on the Relationship of Thera Pottery and Thera Fresco Iconography”, in S. SHERRATT (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Symposium ‘The Wall Paintings of Thera’, 30 August - 4 September 1997* (2000), vol. II, p. 873-889.

26. Cf. G. WALBERG (*supra*, n. 18), p. 6-38; S. A. IMMERWAHR, “A Possible Influence of Egyptian Art in the Creation of Minoan Wall Painting”, in *Iconographie minoenne*, p. 41-50; F. BLAKOLMER, “Minoan Wall-Painting: The Transformation of a Craft into an Art Form”, in *TEXNH*, p. 95-105; *id.*, “The History of Middle Minoan Wall Painting: The ‘Kamarea Connection’”, in *Meletemata*, p. 41-51.

27. Ch. DOUMAS, “Κορφή τ’ Ἀρωνίου”, *ArchDelt* 20 (1965) A’, p. 41-63, figs. 3-12, pls. 35-40; *id.*, “Le incisioni rupestre di Nasso nelle Cicladi”, *Bollettino del Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici* 3 (1967), p. 111-132; L. MARANGOU (ed.), *Cycladic Culture. Naxos in the 3rd Millennium B.C.* (1990), p. 82 (nos. 80 and 81), p. 89 (no. 88), p. 116 (no. 112).

28. See in general O. DICKINSON (*supra*, n. 16), p. 135-136.

29. Cf. J. G. YOUNGER, “The Mycenae-Vapheio Lion Workshop, III”, *TUAS* 6 (1981), p. 68.

30. See esp. I. PINI, “Das Motiv des Löwenüberfalls in der spätminoischen und mykenischen Glyptik”, in *Iconographie minoenne*, p. 156-157.

elements to a lesser extent³¹. We could well imagine that the representative “semata” made of durable stone on the top of these graves should present consciously their “own” Helladic mainland tradition. For these and other reasons it seems rather problematic to postulate a strictly linear artistic development in terms of an increasing “Minoanisation”.

IS THIS THE ORIGIN OF “MYCENAEAN ART”?

Can we define this reconstructed indigenous “artistic language” on the Greek mainland as the origin of “Mycenaean Art”?³² Though it sounds paradoxical, to be really “Mycenaean” these Helladic images of the Shaft Grave period still lack a lot of Minoan features. Obviously, these hybrid, experimental, and individual attempts do not constitute the foundations of the later iconography of the Mycenaean palaces. Neither these motif variations of the warrior in his chariot nor their stylistic peculiarities find any real successors in Late Mycenaean art. Although the ‘Palace Style’ in Greek mainland pottery lets us detect some related schemes of decoration,³³ the artistic style under discussion definitely misses something: its *future*. The future of the arts on the Mycenaean mainland rather lies in the Cretan motifs themselves, which served as models already for the Helladic artists of the Shaft Grave period.

Only a few things can be stated about this hypothetic figurative art of Middle Helladic Greece. However, its qualities are thus specific and rather homogeneous, so that we should anticipate a certain, longer tradition. To conclude, let me briefly mention two points:

- 1) If our conception of an Indo-European immigration towards the end of the third millennium holds true, the arts under discussion constitute the earliest “Greek Art”.
- 2) If what I have presented here is Helladic mainland art, numerous other objects from the Shaft Grave period bearing some highly sophisticated imagery, such as the “Battle Krater” from Grave IV, the gold rings from Mycenae as well as the golden relief cups from Vapheio, obviously, belong to a quite different tradition.

31. For the concentration of objects decorated in the “rope and pulley” style in Shaft Graves III, IV and V see O. DICKINSON, “Invasion, Migration and the Shaft Graves”, *BICS* 43 (1999), p. 106.

32. See e.g. VERMEULE 1975, p. 22-26.

33. K. KALOGEROPOULOS, *Die frühmykenischen Grabfunde von Analipsis. Mit einem Beitrag zu den palatialen Amphoren des griechischen Festlandes* (1998), p. 159-174; *id.*, “Decorative Schemes as an Indicator of Artistic Relations between Early Mycenaean Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean”, in *Emporia*, p. 393-402; O. T. P. K. DICKINSON, “Late Helladic IIA and IIB. Some Evidence from Korakou”, *BSA* 67 (1972), p. 103-112; W.-D. NIEMEIER (*supra*, n. 1), p. 116-117.

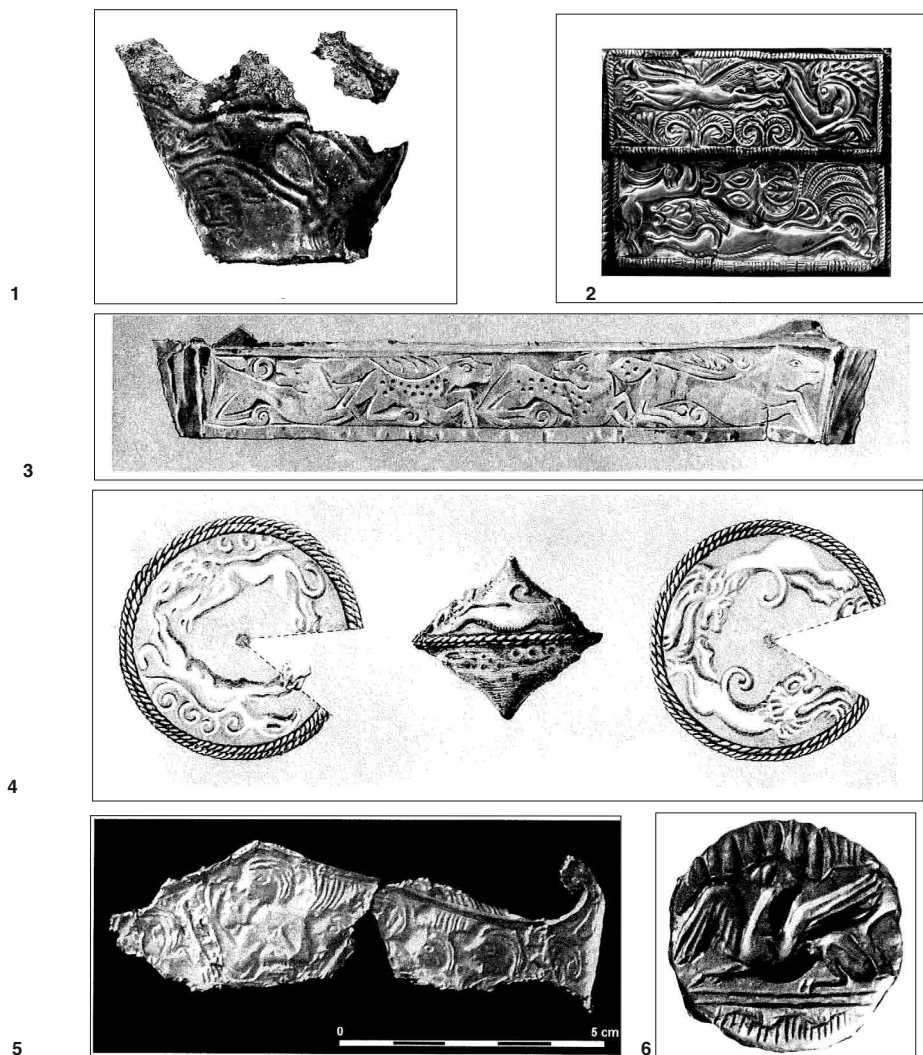


Fig. 1. – Silver cup from Shaft Grave Δ at Mycenae (after S. MARINATOS, “The stelai of Circle B at Mycenae”, *AAA* 1 [1968], p. 177, fig. 3).

Fig. 2. – Gold plates from a wooden box from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae (after S. MARINATOS & M. HIRMER, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas*² [1973], pl. 220 top).

Fig. 3. – Gold strip from Shaft Grave III at Mycenae (after KARO, pl. XXXII bottom).

Fig. 4. – Golden pin from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (after KARO, pl. XXXII top).

Fig. 5. – Gold relief sheet from Peristeria (after S. MARINATOS, “Problemi archeologici e filologici di Pilo”, *SMEA* 3 [1967], p. 11 Abb. 15; with courtesy by G. St. Korres).

Fig. 6. – Gold relief sheet from Thorikos (after J. SERVAIS & B. SERVAIS-SOYEZ, *Thorikos VIII* [1984], p. 48, fig. 26, 6, a).

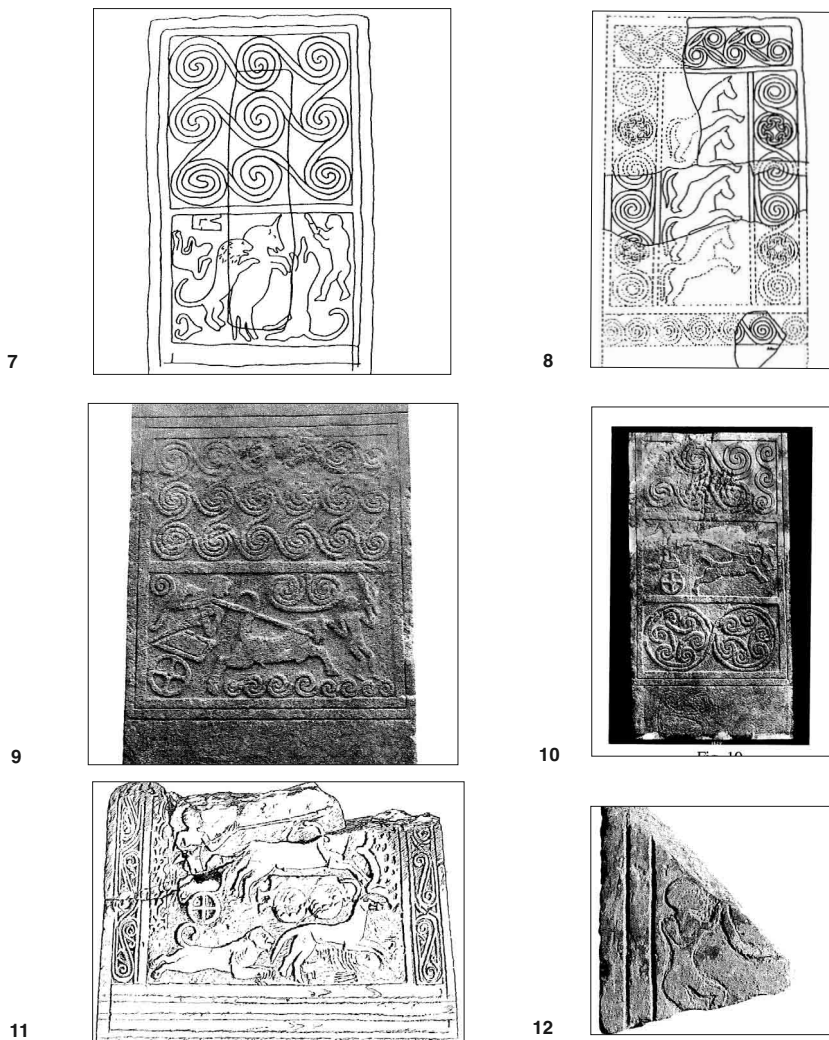


Fig. 7. – Stone relief stela from Shaft Grave Γ at Mycenae (drawing by the author).

Fig. 8. – Stone relief stela from Grave Circle A at Mycenae (after J. G. YOUNGER, “The stelai of Mycenae Grave Circles A and B”, in *TEXNH*, I, pl. XCI, b).

Fig. 9. – Stone relief stela from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae (after S. MARINATOS & M. HIRMER, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas*² [1973], pl. 169).

Fig. 10. – Stone relief stela from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae (KARO, pl. VI).

Fig. 11. – Stone relief stela from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae (after A. EVANS, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* IV [1935], p. 551, fig. 189).

Fig. 12. – Fragment of a stone relief stela from Grave Circle A at Mycenae (after K. DEMAKOPOULOU [ed.], *Troja, Mykene, Tiryns, Orchomenos. Heinrich Schliemann zum 100. Todestag, Catalogue of exhibition* [1990], p. 317, fig. 275 top).

CONCLUSION

The major question at issue in this conference is: "Have we made progress in our knowledge of mainland Greece during the Middle Bronze Age?" The answer is indisputably yes, even if there remain many avenues for further research. Oliver Dickinson opened the conference by expressing his hope that we would learn much new about this phase of Greek prehistory, broaden our horizons, and ask new questions. The subsequent four days of papers ranged over many areas and themes and it is clear from listening to them that we have succeeded in informing each other in ways that make for a much more nuanced understanding of this period than we had before we arrived.

This progress has been made in three different respects. First is *geographical*. Regions which had been largely unknown and under-appreciated such as Elis, Achaia, Aetolia, Phthiotis-Lokris, Thessaly, and the Spercheios Valley, are now understood to be important and exciting areas for research. Important settlements which were not known in enough detail are much clearer thanks to reports given here. For examples we can point to Thebes, Dimini and Kिरrha, among many others. Second is *chronological*. We are now at a point where, especially thanks to the patient and careful work of all of our colleagues in the Archaeological Service, we can provide an archaeological definition of MH I and MH II, at least within restricted regions; and this is not limited to the study of ceramics but also leads to an emerging understanding of the organization of settlement and to indications of the directions of interaction among different regions. Third is *thematic*. Of the approximately 70 communications, less than a dozen focused on ceramics (although this subject was often recognized as a component of other papers) and just slightly fewer focused on burials and funerary customs. Yet if the

conference had taken place 10 or 15 years before, without doubt many more papers would have addressed these themes, because at that time they monopolized our interests.

This signifies, without any disrespect for these subjects, how scholarly interest has matured. Henceforth many other important subjects, such as lithics, architecture and settlement, economy, subsistence and modes of life, and social structure will drive our research. A number of presentations here have illustrated also the importance of attention to highly detailed and scientific applications that have the potential to revise fundamentally our traditional view of Middle Helladic societies. All these new and enlarged themes are owed to a transformation in the approaches Aegean archaeologists take to their fields of study, and we can take pride that our international community cooperates not only in research but also in training and that our host country of Greece continues to welcome new approaches and new ideas in the study of its past.

The attention to the *geographic spread* of Middle Helladic cultures and the variety of *interconnections* among different regions of Greece bears further comment. We are especially grateful to the participants for presenting much important new material, for bringing to light old material that was insufficiently known, and for focusing on the interpretation of evidence at many levels. As already noted, we have come to appreciate much better, thanks to the reports presented here, the vitality and viability of different regions. The papers have opened our eyes to settlement around the Saronic Gulf, throughout Attika, in Lokris and Thessaly, throughout the Corinthian Gulf and its opening to the West, in the southwestern Peloponnesos, in relationship to the Cycladic islands and those of the northeast Aegean, and of course in relation to Crete.

Of special notice are the reports that show the strong relations among Thessaly, Lokris, and Phokis and their relationship to the Corinthian Gulf. Discussion of settlements along the Corinthian Gulf show how they are interconnected, thus emphasizing its important role as a corridor connecting the Saronic Region at the east with Western Greece. From there, following on several reports, we are reminded that during the Middle Bronze Age knowledge of the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coasts was increased and even that the geography of the Western Mediterranean was within the ken of these peoples. When we look eastwards into the Aegean, several reports make clear the fundamental importance for mainlanders of connections to the islands, whether looking at local relations with the important offshore islands of Aegina and Keos or the Cyclades, with their emerging gateway communities that controlled access to Crete.

Also of interest is the role of Crete during this period. Several of the papers point to Cretan interest in metals, not least a reason for Cretan interest in the northern and northeastern Aegean as more advanced forms of copper and bronze metallurgy begin to take hold. We need continuously reassess the role of Crete at this time, since as the work at Kythera demonstrates, it is not as straightforward as models of Cretan "colonization" of the Aegean had previously led scholars to believe.

The outstanding work of our colleagues in the Archaeological Service deserves further notice. Without their reports on new discoveries, their restudy of old material that commands our attention, and their assessment of the details of stratigraphy, ceramic development, and evidence of interconnections, this conference would not have succeeded. What has been provided to the conferees as a result of these reports is nothing less than a rewriting of the Middle Helladic as a cultural period. In connection with this work, the many papers which reevaluated different aspects of Middle Helladic culture and its social practices, provide us with a picture of a culture that is distinctly Middle Helladic, yet remains one without a strong center. In this regard the mosaic of regional and local forms that come into view is especially tantalizing as a picture of what we know was to come in the Late Bronze Age. Middle Helladic Greece is not merely an appendage of Early Helladic nor only a prelude to the Mycenaeans. It was a vigorous and dynamic interregional cultural phenomenon that established social and economic relations in a fashion that was different from the small centralized polities of the Early Bronze Age. At a time when new connections were forged and older ones reestablished, it was a new beginning, but hardly the one of stagnant cultural practices and an immobilized and impoverished population that most of us have been taught. There are many lessons for us to draw from the proceedings and we hope that they will bring to a wider public the interest and excitement shown by the participants at the conference.

The editors

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