

French

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Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age

*Proceedings of the First International Symposium
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EDITED BY

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DISCUSSION

S. Hiller proposed that there were three points to be considered: (1) the material, (2) iconographical, (3) chronological. First the material: Only the upper classes could afford precious Minoan objects. Perhaps the lower classes could have adopted Minoan cult objects too had they had the financial means. Secondly the iconographical: As R. Hägg himself had said, Minoan iconography need not imply a Minoan belief-system. Thirdly the chronological: There may be no difference in beliefs between early and late Mycenaean times. Since we have no rich tombs of the order of the shaft graves in the later period we have no means to check if the upper classes imported Minoan objects. Besides, Crete was not in a position to export much in LM III times.

R. Hägg answered that regarding the first point, the lower classes could easily have manufactured imitations of Minoan cult symbols and objects of cheaper material, if they had had any religious meaning to them.

C. Renfrew asked where wheel-made animals and figures belonged in R. Hägg's classification. An answer was given by K. Kilian, who said that the similarity of these figures with the procession frescoes from the palaces would suggest that wheel-made figures belonged to the upper classes.

R. Hägg admitted the difficulty in proving the hypothesis of the levels, although there was an *a priori* probability of their existence in any culture.

S. Hiller stressed the necessity of distinguishing between differences of religious beliefs and their expression. In his opinion, both the upper and lower classes had the same religious beliefs but expressed them in a different fashion.

E. French said that the socio-economic factor had to be considered. In the grave goods of chamber tombs we could see a change from precious, elitist materials in the early Mycenaean tombs to cheaper, more easily available ones in the later period. Thus, there was a change from *lapis lazuli* to blue glass, from amber to carnelian, from rich objects to figurines.

J. van Leuven pointed out that Minoan elements in Mycenaean sanctuaries were really very few. No case of a mainland sanctuary existed which was very similar to a Minoan one. Sanctuaries developed separately in the mainland although there clearly existed common beliefs. It should be noted that in the MH period we find objects such as the quadrupeds from Eleusis or the terracotta double axe from Lerna that were not Cretan imports. (In fact that axe was Anatolian in style.) This showed that the Middle Helladic peoples may have been working on the basis of ideas that existed not only in Crete, but all over the Aegean since the Early Bronze Age.

R. Hägg said that after all that had been said it would perhaps be time to think seriously about changing the term 'Minoan-Mycenaean religion'.

CULT PLACES AT MYCENAE

BY

ELIZABETH FRENCH

As recent studies of the various cult areas at Mycenae have suffered from sins of both omission and commission, it seems useful to give a summary list of the identifications.

I. The Palace

The Palace has generally been assumed to be the principal scene of cult activity in the Mycenaean period mainly because there has been little evidence of cult elsewhere. This situation is now radically altered and it would be well to treat with care the very scanty evidence from the eroded crest of the citadel (within the Palace area). The presence of later religious structures (both Archaic and Hellenistic) with unusual orientation has been used as evidence as has the 'deposit' from the ledge on the North slope which included the ivory group and stucco head.¹

Professor Mylonas is planning to work on this part of the site this summer (1980) and so detailed discussion of the area may well be postponed.

II. The Lion Gate Area

I am unable to accept the cult significance which has been assigned to the area between the west wall of the Lion Gate and the Granary. This area which contained untempered fill was dug with considerable care in 1920 and is illustrated by a section in the original report.² The material (including figurines) recovered from levels I and II (the key pieces are still preserved) is not consistent with a specialized function, nor is that from the higher levels though they can have no connection with the function of the area.

III. The Mound over the Tomb of Clytemnestra

The unusual nature of the deposits³ against the wall (both the poros and the rough stone sections) which edged the mound to the East seems to have been neglected in discussion. The whole pots, the burials, and the high propor-

tion of stirrup jars and figurines could suggest a cult function of some kind.

IV. The House of Shields

Both the plan and contents⁴ (notably the quantity of stone bowls) of this building isolate it from the other structures to the South and it quite clearly possessed a specialized function of some kind.

V. The 'Cult Centre'

This area has been cleared in four stages: Tsountas 1886,⁵ Wace 1950,⁶ Tylor 1959-69⁷ and Mylonas 1966-75.⁸ This makes a totally cohesive account of the evidence difficult. An attempt will be made in the relevant fascicles of the report of the Helleno-British excavations now in preparation.⁹ It is obviously impossible here to cover the whole of the evidence and I shall confine my comment to points relevant to the work of the colloquium. A general plan is given in Fig. 1.

¹ A. J. B. Wace, *Mycenae. An Archaeological History and Guide*, Princeton 1949, pp. 83 f., Pls. 101-3; *BSA* 52, 1957, pp. 197-204.

² *BSA* 25, 1921/3, p. 19, Fig. 4.

³ W. D. Tylor, 'The Persian Area', *BSA* 50, 1955, pp. 199-237; E. B. French, 'A Group of Late Helladic IIIB 1 Pottery from Mycenae', *BSA* 61, 1966, pp. 216-238.

⁴ A. J. B. Wace, *The Mycenaean Tablets II*, pp. 5f. (Transactions of the American Philological Society, N.S. 48, Part 1, 1958).

⁵ *Praktika* 1886, pp. 59-79.

⁶ *JHS* 71, 1951, pp. 254 f.; *ILN* 23, xii, 1950, p. 1041 and Figs. 4-6.

⁷ *Deltion* 16, 1960, Chr., pp. 89-91; 18, 1963, Chr., pp. 82-84; 20, 1965, Chr., pp. 164-165; *ArchEph* 1959/60, p. 9; 1960/61, pp. 30-32; 1962/63, pp. 13-15; 1964/65, pp. 10-12; 1966/67, pp. 8 f.; 1968/69, pp. 11-13; 1969/70, pp. 11-13; *Antiquity* 43, 1969, pp. 91-97; 44, 1970, pp. 270-280.

⁸ *Praktika* 1966, pp. 107-110; 1968, pp. 9-11; 1970, pp. 118-124; 1971, pp. 146-156; 1972, pp. 116-126; 1973, pp. 99-103; 1974, pp. 89-92; 1975, pp. 153-158.

⁹ *Well Built Mycenae*, ed. by W. D. Tylor, E. B. French and K. A. Wardle.

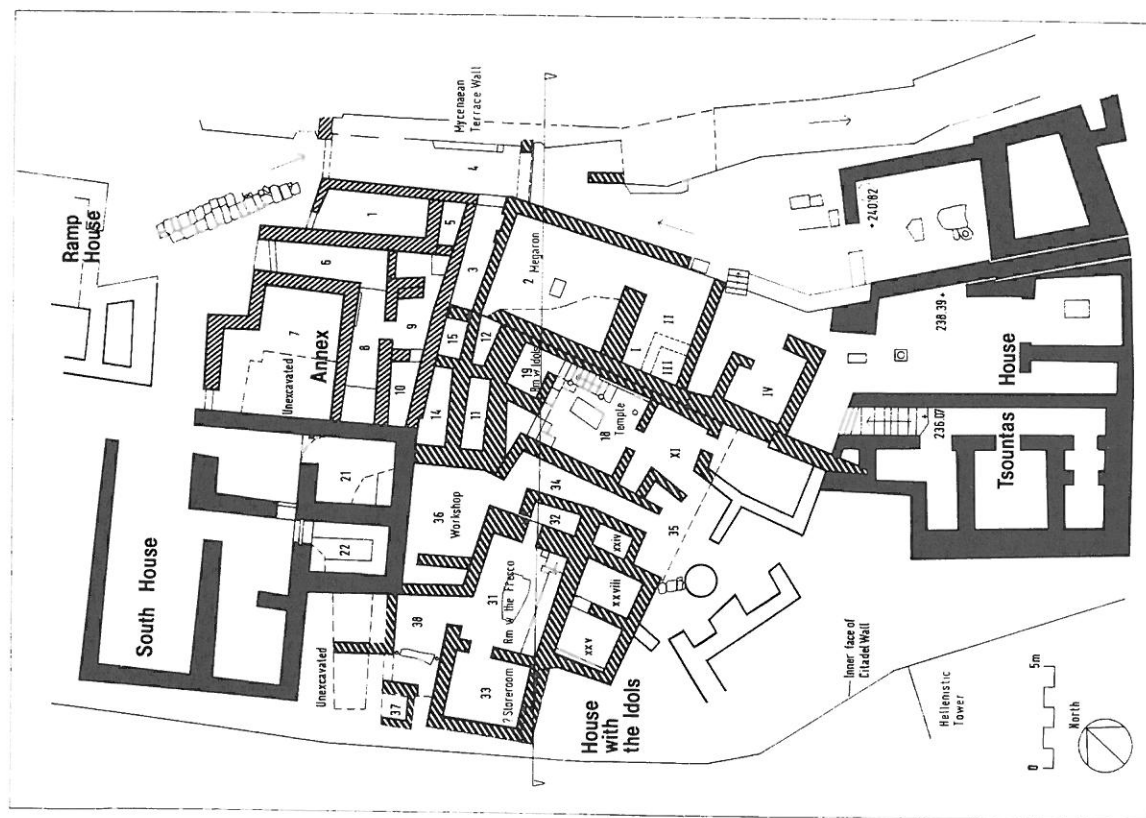


Fig. 1. General plan of the Cult Area.

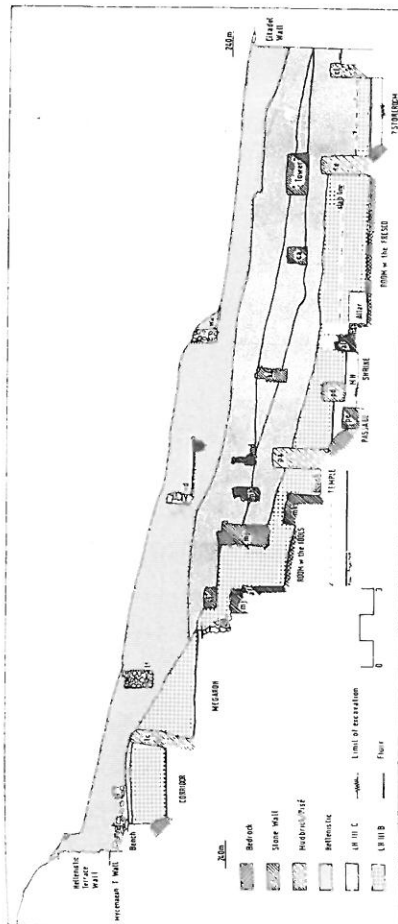


Fig. 2. Section across the Cult Area (N face of Main Baulk).

1. Date of construction and overall lay-out

Debris used in the fill of the terrace supporting the South House can be dated to LH III B³ and as the House with the Idols complex abuts against the South House it must have been constructed subsequently though in the same phase. It must be noted, moreover, that two secondary building phases, the addition of the 'shrine' to the Room with the Fresco and the upper level of the 'Tsountas' House Shrine, also have a *terminus post quem* of LH III B 1. Quite possibly the development of this area was more or less continuous with frequent changes and adaptations throughout the LH III B period.

According to present ideas⁴ the whole of this section of the site (below the 250 m contour at least) would have been outside the citadel until 'mid' LH III B. A construction date for the cult complex following almost immediately on the construction of the citadel wall which enclosed a new area seems highly likely. It is possible that a road or path leading to the earlier version of the 'Great Ramp'⁵ passed through this area and that some of the later ramps/passages were already in use (though not necessarily 'built') before the Citadel Wall was constructed. This might account, to some extent, for the rather casual lay-out.

The suggestion that some structure of a religious function had once existed on this slope or on the slope above has been made on the basis of the finds in the 'Rhyton Well'⁶ and this might also be the source of some of the scattered cult objects found by Tsountas.

³ P. A. Mountjoy, 'LH III B 1 Pottery dating the Construction of the South House at Mycenae', *BSA* 71, 1976, pp. 77-111.

⁴ G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, Princeton, N. J. 1966, pp. 22-28 and 33.

⁵ G. E. Mylonas (supra n. 10), pp. 25-7.

⁶ A. J. B. Wace in lectures on the 1950 season of excavation at Mycenae and elsewhere though I am unable to trace a published reference at present.

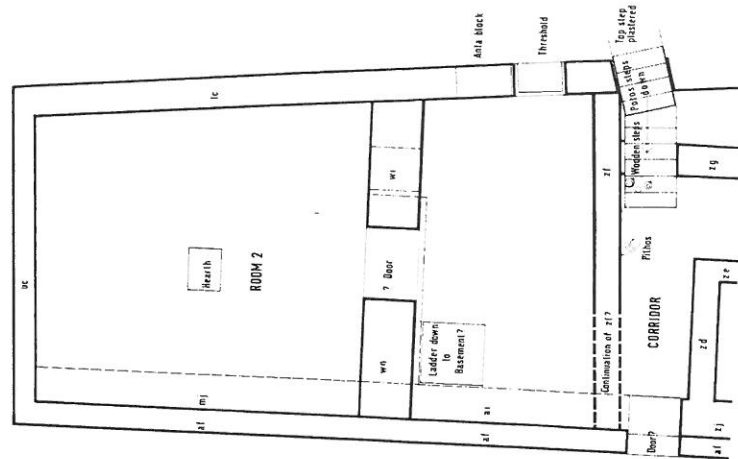


Fig. 3. Room 2 or the Megaron, diagrammatic plan, North approx. upward, Scale 1:100.

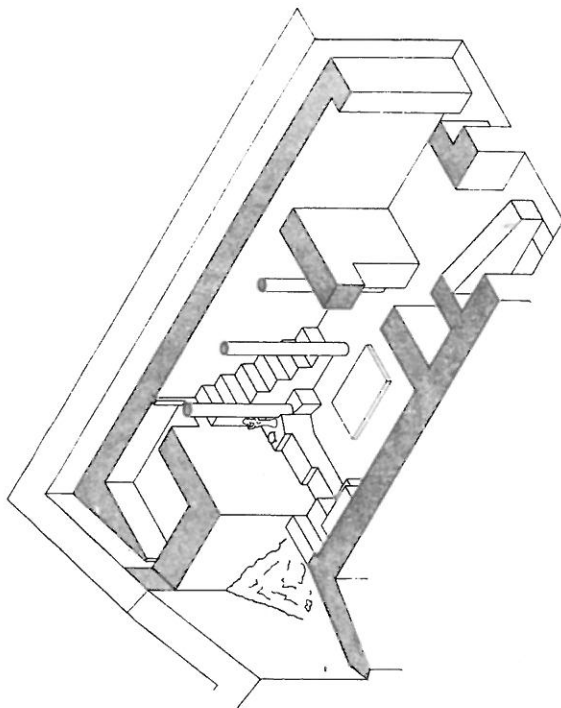


Fig. 4. Isometric drawing of the Temple, viewed from the SW.

The area as a whole seems remarkably un-planned though this may be the result of the very sharp drop in the surface of the rock at this point which precluded a tidy overall scheme. The extent of the rock slope can be seen clearly in the section (Fig. 2). This variation of the rock level must be remembered in any account of the means of approach to the various units of the area.

2. The Buildings (Figs. 3-16)

The area comprises four building complexes: the Tsountas' House Shrine and the house to the W of it, the 'Megaron' or Room 2, the 'Temple' or Room with the Platforms and the Room with the Idols leading off to the N, and the Room with the Fresco and the small 'Shrine' / Room 32 built onto its E end. Recent accounts¹³ of the cult centre seem to ignore the second building complex of this area, Room 2 or the 'Megaron' (Fig. 3). This structure was excavated in 1960 and 1962¹⁴, and finally completely cleared in 1968¹⁵ when the great bulk was demolished. It was entered from the corridor to the East by a doorway at the SE corner. This doorway appears to have been of unusually fine construction. The walls of the Megaron are not preserved except on the N and at the NE corner but a large number of well-cut poros blocks found in the Hellenistic buildings immediately above can be assigned to them. This style of architecture would compare with that of the Palace. The North half of the room rests on a large terrace but at the South there was a pair of basement storerooms. A large square 'hearth' was found in the room covered with thick black ash. Little but sherds was re-

covered from the main room but the basements were full.¹⁶

There has been some discussion about the floor level in the 'Shrine', Room 32 (Fig. 15). The section (Fig. 2) illustrates the situation clearly. The levels below the floor comprise a levelling of LH III B 1 (identified by the placing of a large krater sherd as levelling material) and of Middle Helladic debris running under the later walls to an MH wall under the passage to the East. The gap in the North wall at the junction is only 30 cms and cannot have been used as a doorway. Its purpose is obscure.

In the Tsountas' House Shrine (Fig. 5) there are two phases: the first with a single room containing the bolster-shaped altar and a bench behind (Fig. 6), the second when the area was extended North with a porch containing an altar/bench and when the bolster altar was completely covered. The heavy stone slab belongs to the second phase.¹⁷

It should be noted that plans of the area of the cult centre based on that prepared in 1973 after the Room with the Fresco was back-filled do not show details of this area.¹⁸

¹³ e.g. G. E. Mylonas, *Παρθενώνα της 'Ακρόπολης* 'Αθῶν 39, 1977; Sp. Iakovides, 'The Present State of Research at the Citadel of Mycenae', *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London* 14, 1977, pp. 99-141.

¹⁴ *Deltion* 18, 1963, Chronika, pp. 82-84.

¹⁵ *JHS* 71, 1951, p. 255.

¹⁶ *Praktika* 1973, p. 100, Fig. 1, used by Iakovides in op. cit. supra n. 13. The plan in 1972, p. 125, Fig. 2 which is used by Iakovides in *AntJ* 58, 1978, pp. 13-30 is accurate.



Fig. 5. Tsountas' House, general view from NE.

3. Paraphernalia

If we distinguish carefully between material in the fill and that from the rooms themselves, we can identify the following, though it must be noted that in no part of the Mycenaean excavations were there used retrieval methods that would have identified natural offerings (food stuffs etc.).

Tsountas' House Shrine (Fig. 5)

First phase: cooking pot as receptacle for libation funnel; flat tray/dish with three handles FS 322; miniature kylix.¹⁹ Second phase: large vat in NE corner.

Megaron/Room 2 (Fig. 3)

No finds of significance in the actual room: basements full¹⁴ (see also below, section 4). Fragments of a procession fresco (identified by Dr. Cameron in 1978) found in the fill of the 'Temple' on the terrace below may come from here or from a room above the 'Temple'.

'Temple' / Room with the Platforms (Figs. 4 and 7)

One idol of type b but upraised arms and a rough clay altar (foot broken and propped on a coarse sherd) on the bench by the stair (Fig. 8).²⁰ No other finds except in the anteroom.

Room with the Idols (Fig. 16)

Full. One should note that the pottery was of very poor quality and that there were absolutely no animal figures or animal figurines of any kind.

Room with the Fresco (Figs. 9-10)

Many varied finds²⁰ including the fresco (Figs. 12-14),



Fig. 6. Tsountas' House, detail of bolster altar and bench.

worked ivories (head, lion), faience plaque of Amenhotep III etc., also pots, lurnax (Fig. 11), and a lead vessel.

'Shrine' / Room 32 (Fig. 15)

Full²⁰ (see also below, section 4), including pots and another lead vessel.

4. Workshop areas/religious stores

'Workshop' type tools and raw materials (often partly worked) were found in three areas: the basements of the Megaron, the open area North of the Room with the Fresco and in the 'Shrine'. The parallels among the repositories of finds are striking. Only the last however also contained what could be called a cult object: the figure in position on a small dais. This parallels the material in the Room with the Idols, though that was more crowded and many of the figures and offerings were broken. I am inclined to think that the 'Shrine' was more of a religious store than an actual 'Shrine'.

It should be pointed out that the lighting in both the basements and the 'Shrine' seems quite inadequate for indoor workshops. It could be that both these areas dispensed materials which were then worked in the open area to the North and possibly on other parts of the site as well. The artisan would return both the finished object and the scrap material to store when he finished. The presence of the small clay objects usually known as gaming counters could be connected with such a scheme as counters or tallies.²¹

¹⁹ *ILN* 23, xii, 1950, Fig. 4 top right.

²⁰ *Antiquity* 44, 1970, p. 273, Fig. 2.

²¹ Op. cit. supra n. 19, p. 277.

²² Denise Schmandt-Besserat, 'The Beginnings of the Use of Clay in Turkey', *AnatSt* 27, 1977, pp. 133-50 with references.

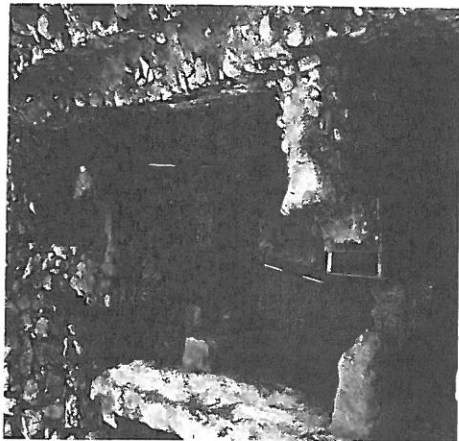


Fig. 7. Temple and Room with the Idols from S.



Fig. 8. Temple, detail of bench with finds *in situ*.

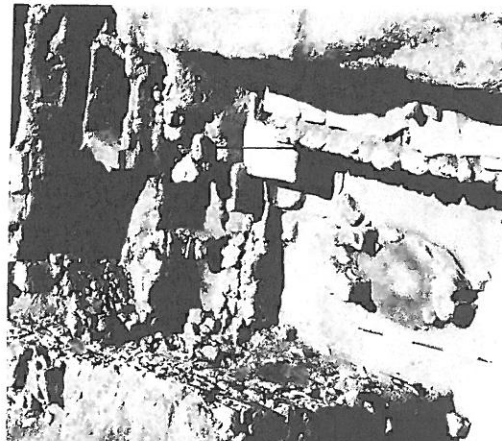


Fig. 9. Room with the Fresco and 'Shrine' from W (after removal of fresco).

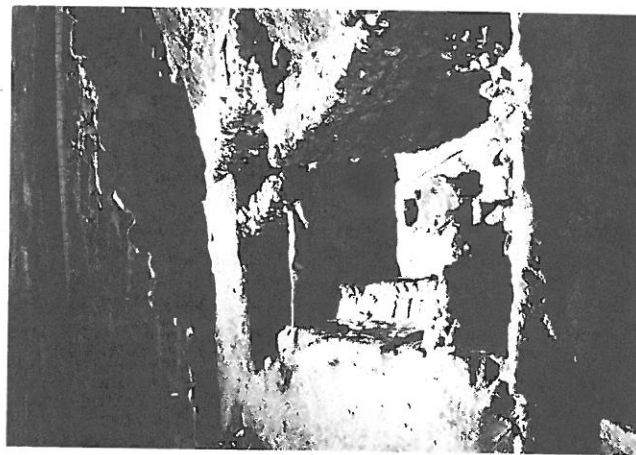


Fig. 10. Room with the Fresco from E.



Fig. 11. (top left). Room with the Fresco, detail of hearth and bath. — Fig. 12. (top right). Fresco, overall view as restored in the Nauplion Museum. — Fig. 13. (below left). Fresco, showing



the bench altar *in situ* — Fig. 14. (below right). Fresco, panel by the bench altar as restored.

5. Destruction

The process by which the area went out of use was twofold and we have not yet worked out a totally coherent and internally consistent account of all the phenomena observed.

In several areas the preliminary collapse could be the result of a mild earthquake but in the Tsountas' House Shrine the bench behind the altar seems to have been deliberately destroyed. In either case many objects which had been broken or damaged were later packed away and concealed and various structural alterations were made. The final destruction was accompanied by widespread burning.

After this the whole area was filled with debris and subsequent re-occupation was at a much higher level (Fig. 2).

6. Usage

It may be emphasized that both the material found in and the actual lay-out of the four cult structures differs considerably from one to another. This would seem to indicate a difference of deity and of practice. There is also some variation through time but the details of this are connected with the processes of collapse mentioned in section 5 and have not finally been rationalized.



Fig. 15. 'Shrine' with figure and vase in situ.



Fig. 16. Room with the Idols, early stage of clearance showing storage positions.

7. Re-occupation

It must be made quite clear that there was no re-occupation or re-use of any of the four structures after the main destruction by fire. All were filled with burnt debris, much of which was exceedingly hard. This was never cleared away and the re-occupation floors are at a much higher level (Fig. 2).

There are only two possible areas of cult usage in the re-occupation period. These are an 'altar' adjacent to the citadel wall and the round 'Tower' which lay approxi-

DISCUSSION

K. Kilian, in attaching importance to the paraphernalia as constituting evidence for the existence of sanctuaries, brought attention to the staircase by the Lion Gate, where 11 human and 6 animal figurines had been found. E. French commented that all these figurines were fragmentary and they were a normal phenomenon for Mycenaean, where any given spot would yield an average of six fragmentary figurines in each basket.

Answering J. van Leuven's question on the function of the upper building, E. French said that its function could not be determined since the building had been very much destroyed, having been used as a base for a Hellenistic building.

N. Marinatos asked whether the workshops were organically connected with the sanctuaries. E. French believed they were. The shrines owned rich materials, which they gave out to be worked as in the Oriental system. However, some of the alleged workshops must be discarded in her opinion because of their inadequate lighting. Rather, they must be redefined as storage rooms. There was much evidence of material in the state of being worked and the tools with which they worked it, mostly ivory and moulds. E. French expressed the opinion that because most of the objects were of a small size, they could have been brought out in the open to be worked.

²² *Praktika* 1972, pp. 122f., Pl. 100a.

ZEUGNISSE MYKENISCHER KULTAUSÜBUNG IN TIRYNS*

VON

KLAUS KILIAN

Wohl nicht zuletzt unter dem Eindruck von Tempelanlagen der späten Bronzezeit in Siedlungskernen der Levante¹, als Auswirkung der anhand der Funde und Publikation nachvollziehbaren Raumanalyse im Palast zu Pylos², unter der Ansammlung von Einzelnachrichten zu Palast und Tempel aus den Linear B-Texten³ beginnt sich die Interpretation mykenischer Palastanlagen⁴ von den Homer-orientierten Benennungen⁵ der einzelnen Räume und ihres Bauwertes zu entfernen⁶. Die Palastanlage als Herrschaftssitz, das Megaron als Endpunkt einer gegliederten Steigerung der Architektur und, wenn man Pylos heranzieht, auch der Ausmalung der Wände bleiben auch gerade mit dem sich in den Fresken thematisierenden repräsentativen Selbstverständnis der Herrschenden — Belagerung, offener Kampf, kriegerische Aufmärsche, festliche Aufzüge, Ausfahrt der Damen, Jagd, Tiere wie Menschen und Architektur in amöben Landschaften — Ausdruck der zentralorganisierten Palastwelt. Die Anordnung der Freskenzyklen im Palast von Pylos, die Neuinterpretation der Frauenfriese⁷ aufgrund der vergleichbaren Szenen auf Thera⁸, der Prozessionen auf Larnakes⁹ und glücklicher Freskenfunde zu Mykene¹⁰ geben uns deutlichere Hinweise und Belege, wie stark die „Staatsreligion“, dem Vorschlag von R. Hägg folgend, die Funktion der einzelnen Bauten und vielleicht auch das Planungskonzept bestimmt.

Als palastzeitliche Hinterlassenschaften der „Staatsreligion“ sind aus Tiryns einmal das überdimensionierte große Megaron¹¹, der mit mächtig dazugeordnete Rundaltar im Säulenhof¹² (Abb. 1) und bestimmte Themen der Freskenausmalung verschiedener Räume zu nennen. Aus dem jüngeren Palast zählen hierunter insbesondere die Prozession der Gabenträgerinnen¹³, denen nach einem Rekonstruktionsvorschlag von Ch. Boulton¹⁴ eine Frau mit einem Idol auf der Hand vorausschreitet. Nach einer entsprechenden Darstellung aus dem Kultzentrum von Mykene bzw. auf dem Sarkophag von Tanagra und der Opferprozession im Vorraum des Megarons von Pylos¹⁵ ist nun auch der Zug der Gabenbringerinnen von Tiryns eindeutig mit Kulthandlungen in dem so ausgemalten Raum selbst oder, wie in Pylos, in einem angrenzenden verbunden. Nach der Fundlage des Frieses in der West-

* *Abbildungsnachweis*: Abb. 1.6 Photo DAI, Athen; 3.7 ebd., Archiv Grabung Tiryns; 2.8 isometrische Zeichnung von M.-L. Charalambi; 4.5.9 isometrische Zeichnung von W. Schnuchel.

¹ M. Ottosson, *Temples and cult places in Palestine* (1980) (= Boreas 12); A. Archi, *Dialoghi di archeologia* 9–10, 1976–77, 75ff.

² C. W. Blegen & M. Rawson, *The palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia* 1 (1966); M. Lang, *The palace of Nestor at Pylos II* (1969).

³ J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* 2 (1973) 125ff.; E. Vermeule, *Güterkult* (1974) (= *Archäologia Homerica* Kap. V) 59ff.; u.a. ferner C. G. Thomas, *SMEA* 17, 1976, 93ff.

⁴ J. T. Hooker, *Mycenaean Greece* (1977) 202f.; J. van Leuven, *World archaeology* 10, 1978, 139ff.; ebenso anregend S. Miné, *Das Thronanale des Palastes von Knossos* (1979) 61ff.

⁵ H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the monuments* (1950) 407ff.; A. J. B. Wace & F. H. Stubbings, *A companion to Homer* (1963) 489ff.

⁶ U. a. van Leuven, *World archaeology* 10, 1978, 141ff. mit Abb. 2; G. Saffund, *OpAth* 13, 1980, 237ff.

⁷ E. Vermeule, *Güterkult* (1974) 45ff.; 48f.; Ch. Boulton, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 9, 1979, 59ff. — Tiryns; N. Verdelis, *Archéoph* 1956, Chronika, 7 Abb. 16 Frauenhand mit Pxyis über Altar(?).

⁸ S. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera V* (1972) 38ff. Taf. 97, 100; ders., ebd. VII (1976) 33ff. Taf. A–K, 58–66; ders., *SBWien* 287, 1 Abb. (1973) 24ff.

⁹ S. Spyropoulos, *Praktika* 1973, Taf. 10b.

¹⁰ G. Mylonas, *The cult center of Mycenae* (1972) Taf. 10, 14; *IsotriaEllenika* (1974) 311 Abb. — aus SH III C-Befund. Frau, die in ihrer Rechten den gebogenen Stiel einer Blume hält; Mylonas, *Praktika* 1971, 147 Taf. 180; dem Ausgräber habe ich für Autopsie zu danken.

¹¹ G. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (1966) 63 Abb. 16. — Zu den Altarfunden im Vorraum des Megarons von Mykene: J. Papadimitriou, *Praktika* 1955, 235f. Taf. 77–79.

¹² K. Müller, *Tiryns III* (1930) 137ff. Abb. 64, 65 Taf. 1; B. Rutkowski, *Cult places in the Aegean world* (1972) 69; hier vorgestragener Zeitanalyse möglich, da keine nachmykenischen Scherben bekannt sind bzw. eine trennende Erdschicht zwischen Altarphase II/III vorhanden ist; Müller, a. O. 139.

¹³ G. Rodenwaldt, *Tiryns II* (1912) 73ff. Taf. 8–10; weiterer Fries schreitender Frauen: ebd. 94ff.; vgl. auch Lang (s. Anm. 2) 55f.

¹⁴ Boulton (s. Anm. 7) 59ff. Abb. 1.

¹⁵ Zu Mykene vgl. Anm. 10; zu Tanagra vgl. Anm. 9; zu Pylos: Lang (s. Anm. 2) 38ff. Taf. 19; 51ff. (älterer Palast).