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CIST GRAVES AND CHAMBER TOMBS

WHEN Tsountas first gave a coherent account of Mycenaean burial customs, he was in no doubt that chamber tombs held the burials of the 'mass of the people', 'simple burghers'; only slaves might be expected to be excluded from them.¹ Although the evidence for the types of tomb current in the Mycenaean period now suggests a more complicated picture than his simple division between tholoi and chamber tombs, the latter still represent a very high proportion of the total number of tombs known, and are found in every part of the Mycenaean world, often in extensive cemeteries. Nevertheless, there has been a growing tendency to suggest either that they were not the tombs of the 'mass of the people', but rather of a minority of higher status, at best including the 'middle classes',² and that the poorest social groups continued to use the types prevalent in the Middle Helladic period, pits and cists;³ or that, though undoubtedly very common, they were an essentially alien feature, adopted by the 'Helladic' substratum of society under the influence or duress of the upper classes, but discarded in favour of a hereditary natural preference for pits and cists when the opportunity arose.⁴ The topic has become closely bound up with the discussion of developments at the end of the Mycenaean period; for Desborough has argued that the change from chamber tombs to cists which took place then was so radical a break with the Mycenaean way of life that it seemed best explained in terms of the intrusion of a cist-using population, while Snodgrass has preferred to think in terms of a revival of customs never entirely forgotten once the exotic superstructure of Mycenaean culture was removed, and Hooker has argued, further, that this removal was the forcible deposition of Mycenaean masters by the 'Helladic' substratum, which then returned to its ancestral customs.⁵

While the actual evidence for the survival of the pit and cist in Mycenaean times and its reappearance in quantity at the end of the period has been analysed by both Desborough and Snodgrass,⁶ I feel that there is more to be said on this topic, as on that of Mycenaean burial customs generally. In fact, these really need a thorough re-examination from first principles, involving an explicit definition of terminology and methodology, for which there is no scope in an article of limited length; but I hope that this article will provide a worthwhile contribution towards that end. The discussion will centre on the following questions about chamber tombs: (1) were they only for the rich, or were they used by the bulk of the population? (2) were they an integral part of mainland culture, or an alien feature, imposed 'from the top'? (3) why

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Abbreviations. The following are used in addition to those in common use:

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| GDA | V. R. Desborough, <i>The Greek Dark Ages</i> (1972). |
| Origins | O. T. P. K. Dickinson, <i>The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation</i> (<i>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</i> 49, 1977). |
| SIMA 52 | R. Hope Simpson and O. T. P. K. Dickinson, <i>A Gazetteer of Aegean Civilisation in the Bronze Age, Part I: The Mainland and Islands</i> (<i>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</i> 52, 1979). |

Since much of the ground I shall be covering has already been covered in these, I have made extensive use of them as references for fuller discussion or collection of sources.

¹ C. Tsountas and J. I. Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age* (1897) 131, 142, 151.

² Lord William Taylour, *The Mycenaean Age* (1964) 86; W. A. McDonald and G. Rapp, Jr. (edd.), *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition* (1972) 138; J. L. Bintliff, *Natural Environment and Human Settlement in Prehistoric Greece* (1977) 289; cf. also E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (1964) 156.

³ Taylour, loc. cit.; Bintliff, loc. cit.

⁴ Most recently and emphatically, J. T. Hooker, *Mycenaean Greece* (1977) 179.

⁵ Hooker, *ibid.*; GDA 109–11; A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (1971) 186–7, 385.

⁶ GDA 107–8 and PPS 31 (1965) 216–18, 221–2; Snodgrass, *op. cit.* (n. 5) 179–84.

did they cease to be used, and when? But it will be necessary to say a good deal about the whole field of Aegean burial customs and to define terms in more detail than is usual, for one criticism that must be made of previous discussions is that terminology has been somewhat confused. I shall be making some assumptions common in previous discussion, that really should be demonstrated by rigorous analysis, but there is no space for that, and so I will simply make them explicit. These are that the degree of elaboration of the tombs, and the quantity and value of the goods placed in them, have direct relevance to the status of the buried persons in their society, particularly when the range of grave-goods available is wide; furthermore, that particular indicators of high or special status are items such as weapons, and vessels, jewellery, and other small objects of precious or unusual materials. The rarer these items are in a period, the more significant their appearance may be thought to be, on the same assumption; but when they are rare it does not follow that only those who are buried with them have high status. The use of such indicators is impressionistic and imprecise, inevitably, but I feel that it has value, nevertheless.

Everyone has a more or less clear idea of what is meant by a chamber tomb, but the terms shaft, cist, and pit are not so clearly self-explanatory, and are frequently used vaguely or in senses that appear to overlap. A pit is the simplest to define because it is the simplest form, a hole in the ground; often it is more or less rectangular, but it may be more oval, or even round. It can be cut into earth or soft rock, or through one into the other, depending on the local geology. There has been a tendency to call all more or less regular pits cut into rock 'shafts', but this provides such potential for confusion in connection with the Shaft Graves of Mycenae that I would prefer to reserve the term 'shaft graves' for tombs that resemble the Mycenae graves, that is, tombs which have roofs supported on ledges or walls some distance down the grave-cutting, leaving a space above the roof, the shaft proper, which was filled with earth. Such graves were cut through earth into rock at Mycenae, some deep and some, the earliest, shallow, but have been identified at Lerna, where they are cut into the settlement mound and deep, and at Argos, where they appear to be rather shallow and cut into a tumulus or artificial fill of earth and pebbles.⁷ All these seem to have roofs of brushwood or timber, to which layers of clay and, in the more elaborated examples, stone slabs could be added; but essentially similar graves which have roofs of slabs only have been reported from the Knossos region particularly, dating from LM II and later,⁸ and also from Attica in the Mycenaean period.⁹ Three of the Mycenaean graves at Kambi on Zakynthos consist of a narrower pit sunk below the floor of a wider one, the slab-roof being laid over the lip of the lower pit; these may well be a related type, and can be paralleled at Alyki in Attica.¹⁰ Essentially, the shaft grave is surely an elaboration of the pit; many pit-graves also have slab-roofs, and some may even have a lip at the mouth of the cutting to support them, while some, maybe many, MH graves in fact seem to have roofs sunk slightly below ground level.¹¹ The wooden roof might then be one of the most distinctive features, separating the Argolid graves from all the rest.

The term 'cist' is simply the Greek word for box or chest, and a cist ought to have some appearance of a box, being square or rectangular and lined on all sides as well as roofed: upright

⁷ On the criteria stated, virtually all the graves of Circle B are of this type, as are those of Circle A but almost no others at Mycenae; see further *Origins* 42, 51. LERNA: *Archaeology* 13 (1960) 130-2; ARGOS: *ADelt* 28 (1973) B 108, 29 (1973-4) B 206; F. Schachermeyr, *Die ägäische Frühzeit I* (1976) 256-7.

⁸ *Archaeologia* 59 (1905) 401-5, *BSA* 47 (1952) 245-6, 249, *AR* 1978-9 45-6.

⁹ ATHENS: M. Pantelidou, *Αἱ προϊστορικαὶ Ἀθήναι* (Athens Ph.D. thesis 1975) 95-106; PERATI: S. Iakovidis, *Excavations of the*

Necropolis of Perati (1980) 7. The exact type of the 'LH II shaft' of Vari-Varkiza (*Antiquity* 24 (1960) 266 n. 4) remains unknown.

¹⁰ KAMBI: *ADelt* 28 (1973) A 199, 202-3 (Ts. II, IX, XIV); ALYKI: *PAE* (1957) 31-2.

¹¹ *Origins* 115 (Ch. III (5) n. 9) for some references; see also *AR* 1976-7 32 (the 'Shaft Grave') and 1980-1 16 for Laconian examples.

slabs were used in many examples, but walls of rubble, slabs, shaped stones, or mud-brick can be found, and many graves were too long to be roofed with a single slab only and thus resemble a box most closely. These, too, are surely elaborations of the basic pit. But there are other rectangular stone-built tombs which it seems misleading to call cists. These are large and deep, with good stone walls and a roof of several slabs, and they were very often provided with an entrance in one side. These were often used for a succession of burials, differing in this from the pit and cist, which were rarely used more than once. No doubt they are also elaborations of the cist, and the dividing line cannot always be drawn absolutely clearly, but I feel that they should be separately termed 'rectangular built tombs'. They are commoner than is often suggested.

Pits, cists, shaft graves, and built tombs can occur on their own, or as parts of more elaborate mortuary structures. They may be sunk in the earth or beneath the floor of tumuli, mounds which normally have a circular plan and a rounded profile, some high, some apparently low, and are held in by a retaining wall. They may also be found in Mycenaean chamber and tholos tombs, both in the chambers and in the dromoi, sometimes apparently cut to hold the remains of earlier burials, removed from the floor of the chamber, sometimes to hold primary burials within the tomb. The difference between a small cemetery of defined extent and sometimes marked boundaries, which contains such tombs, and a single tholos, chamber tomb, or tumulus which does seem to me more apparent than real; the same principle, that of grouping related burials together, is likely to be involved. When found outside such tombs, pits, cists, etc. may occur in small groups or in fairly extensive cemeteries; the latter will always be found extramurally, while graves can occur singly or in small groups intramurally, beside or beneath houses, or in some temporarily abandoned part of the area normally settled. They can also be found in cemeteries containing graves of other types; the pits of Argos, which are so often mentioned in the discussion, are in fact part of the chamber tomb cemetery there, and some can be associated with particular graves.¹²

Chamber tombs are not complicated to define. An open passage, the dromos, was cut into soft rock to lead into a hollowed-out chamber, often but not always through a narrower covered entrance-way, the stomion, in which a blocking wall would be built to seal off the chamber. The major variations among chamber tombs are in the size and the quality of shaping and finish; sometimes extra chambers may lead off the same dromos or the main chamber, but proportionately such cases are very rare. Another type may be considered with the chamber tomb, that Evans called the pit-cave, in which a small chamber was opened off one side of a vertical shaft into soft rock; these are small, and normally contain only a single burial. The type was first identified in the Zafer Papoura cemetery at Knossos, where it is numerous, and has been found at other cemeteries around Knossos of LM II and III date, down to Sub-Minoan;¹³ it also occurs on the mainland in small numbers, in chamber tomb cemeteries in the Argolid, occasionally in Attica and Boeotia, and also once at Pylos.¹⁴ So far, it has always been found with tombs of other types, mainly chamber tombs, never on its own; it may well be a labour-saving version of the chamber tomb.

Tholos tombs are often treated as totally distinct from chamber tombs, but they share the three basic elements, dromos, stomion, and chamber, and smaller, less regular stone-built tombs

¹² J. Deshayes, *Argos: les fouilles de la Deiras* (1965) 30 (Ts. 1 and 2 associated with T. XII), 39 (T. 5 associated with T. XIII), 62 (Ts. 12 and 13 aligned with neighbouring tombs), 86 (T. 22 in dromos of T. XXVII), 101 (T. 28 in dromos of T. XXVIII), 103 (Ts. 27 and 29 closely aligned with dromos of T. XXIV), 109 (T. 28 in dromos of T. XXXV).

¹³ *Archaeologia* 59 (1905) 405-9, *BSA* 47 (1952) 251-2, *AR*

1978-9 46.

¹⁴ ARGOLID: Tiryns Ts. III, IV (*Tiryns VI* 29-30, 32); Deiras T. 26 (Deshayes, op. cit. (n. 12) 104); Nauplia (*PAE* (1953) 204); Galataki (*PAE* (1958) 136); ATTICA: Athens Agora T. XXIX seems closely related (*Agora XIII* 231); Alyki Ts. E, Z (*PAE* (1955) 99); BOEOTIA: Tanagra (*PAE* (1977) 24-5, *Ergon* (1980) 21-2); PYLOS: in dromos of T. E-10 (*Pylos III* 208).

bridge the gap between them. These last resemble chamber tombs in their average size, contents, and often in the number found in a group. There has been a tendency to call them tholos tombs when, as most often, they are of circular plan, but it is not always clear that they were domed like true tholoi, and to consider them in the same category as the large, carefully built, and richly provided tombs, quite clearly the burial-places of important personages, that were originally classed as such seems quite misleading. The dividing line is somewhat arbitrary, for some tholoi which were clearly intended for potentates of some sort, to judge from their contents, may be as small as or even slightly smaller than others which do not seem to have been, on the same basis. If not circular, these stone-built tombs may have oval, rectangular, or square plans, thus resembling some of the more popular forms of chamber tombs; all had a built entrance of some sort, and an often rudimentary dromos. These tombs have the feature in common with tholos tombs proper and chamber tombs, that they were all normally used for several burials. In Messenia, at Koukounara and Kaminia, built tombs have been found sunk into large mounds that seem a continuation of the tumulus tradition; in this case they have no dromos but only an entrance.¹⁵ In this connection the extraordinary structures within the Marathon tumuli might also be mentioned; the earliest, T. 1, of MH date, contained cists and rectangular built tombs only, but the later contained structures resembling suites of rooms.¹⁶

Finally, the custom of pot-burial should be mentioned. Most frequently pot-burial was used for infants or small children, intramurally, but massive pithoi were used for adult burials in several tumuli, though never, to my knowledge, outside tumuli in MH or Mycenaean contexts, with the exception of the elaborate LH IIIC example from Mycenae.¹⁷

The MH period is the first to provide really copious evidence for burial customs on the Greek mainland, conveniently, since MH is the direct cultural ancestor of Mycenaean in many important respects. There is an increasing amount of evidence for EH II grave-types, admittedly, including early forms of chamber tomb, cists, and pits,¹⁸ but there is no clear continuity to MH: chamber tombs in particular disappear completely. So it seems best to start with MH. In the Helladic area, roughly equivalent to Classical mainland Greece together with Aigina, Euboea, and most of the Ionian Islands, but not Corcyra or Kythera, certainly MH burials have been identified at more than fifty sites and plausibly reported at some twenty more. Relatively few of these, perhaps no more than a dozen, have produced fairly considerable numbers of graves; of these, five are in the Argolid, Mycenae, Prosymna, Argos, Lerna, and Asine, reflecting the bias in the distribution of major excavations, but the remainder have a wide spread (Ay. Stephanos, Malthi, Eleusis, Thebes, Orchomenos, Kirrha, and Sesklo), as does the sample in general. Intramural burial was not necessarily a universal feature in MH, though examples have been found at every site where the strata have been extensively investigated, but it was certainly very common; extramural graves most often occur late in the period.

Occasionally there is evidence for a definable cemetery area, but this certainly did not include all burials, even in the latest stages, as shown by the evidence from Eleusis;¹⁹ more often, graves are found scattered in small groups. There is a little evidence that, when extramural, such groups could be surrounded or marked off by a wall,²⁰ as Grave Circle B was to be, and it is possible to consider the burial-tumulus another form of such a group. Tumuli were the only monumental form of MH burial, and it may be presumed from the labour that must have been involved in their construction, and their richer grave-goods in many cases, that they were for persons of

¹⁵ *PAE* (1974) 141-4, (1975) 431-512.

¹⁶ *PAE* (1970) 9-18.

¹⁷ *BSA* 25 (1921-3) 406-7.

¹⁸ See under 'cists and pit graves' and 'rock cut (chamber

tombs' in *SIMA* 52, 427-8; add to latter A 52, Old Corinth (*AJA* 1 (1897) 513-15).

¹⁹ *SIMA* 52, 204.

²⁰ References are collected in *Origins* 115 (Ch. III (3) n. 3).

special status; but their known distribution is uneven, involving a heavy concentration in western Messenia, particularly in the hinterland of modern Pylos, a scatter further up the western side of Greece, several examples in the Argolid and Attica, and one, unusually early to judge from its pottery, in central Phocis.²¹ They may not have been a universal feature like the commoner forms of grave. Their origin remains obscure, but they are too varied in type, and their distribution is too sporadic, for them to be seen with any plausibility as evidence for a distinct ethnic element.

The commonest forms of MH grave were the pit and cist, in the various forms set out above. Both occur throughout the Helladic area. I can detect no pattern in the distribution of variants, though brick-enclosed graves seem more a feature of central Greece and Thessaly, and, though cists must have required more trouble to prepare than pits, there is no clear indication that their users were of higher status. It was also common practice to bury infants in pots, or under large fragments of broken jars; both domestic and finely decorated vases could be used for this purpose. Pithoi were used for adults' burials in several tumuli, particularly in Messenia, where the custom seems traceable from beginning to end of MH;²² it also occurs at Argos and Aphidna in mature MH contexts, but seems to have been abandoned in the Argolid and Attica well before the end of the period. There seems no compelling reason to attribute this to influence from the Minoan cultural sphere, which is thin at best during this period and not otherwise to be suspected on the west side of Greece, and the origin of the custom, as of the use of tumuli, must remain obscure at present. There might be a link in both cases with the predominantly EH II R graves of Leukas, which closely resemble tumuli and can contain jar-burials,²³ but such a theory would be easier to accept if it could explain how and why customs should spread from such a relatively remote part of Greece at this particular time.

In general, some trouble seems to have been taken over the preparation of MH graves: apart from the common provision of a roof and walls, the floor was frequently sprinkled with a layer of pebbles. But the graves were small, necessitating placing the dead in a more or less contracted posture on one side, and very frequently no detectable grave-goods were provided at all; when found, these most often consist of a single vase or other object. More often than may have been realized, some form of grave-marker may have been provided, ranging from a heap of stones to a large rock or slab, eventually a shaped rectangular stele; sixteen examples were noted among 230 or so graves at Lerna, a figure which constituted almost half the total reported before the recent excavations at Argos, in which many more examples have been found by Mrs. Protonotariou-Deilaki.²⁴ Sometimes a MH tomb was used for a second burial, very rarely for a third. In the Lerna sample, the most numerous and best documented, there were ten double burials, only two triple, and one case of five burials in a single grave, which may have a special explanation, but only seven of these seem cases of reuse of a grave rather than simultaneous burials.²⁵ Most possible combinations of age and sex were found at Lerna, indicating that double burials are not always cases of mother-and-child or husband-and-wife burial; a relationship may be presumed, but that is all. Finally, although a particular site or group of graves may show a preference for a consistent

²¹ See further *Origins* 34 and *SIMA* 2, 429 under 'tumuli and burial mounds', to which add D 8, Voidhokoilia (*PAE* (1977) 262-88, (1978) 353-9, (1979) 143-9) and F 29, Thorikos (*AR* 1979-80 19). A whole series of tumuli has been claimed for Argos; see particularly *ADelt* 29 (1973-4) B 207-8, *AR* 1978-9 14, 1979-80 25, Schachermeyr, op. cit. (n. 7) 256-8, *ΠΕΛΟΠΩΝΝΗΣΙΑΚΑ* 14 (1980-1) 222-31.

²² As at Voidhokoilia (op. cit. (n. 21)) and Pappoulia (*PAE* (1978) 326-32).

²³ See most recently *BSA* 70 (1975) 145-9.

²⁴ E. Tucker Blackburn, 'Middle Helladic Graves and Burial Customs with Special Reference to Lerna in the Argolid' (Cincinnati Ph.D. thesis 1970) 285; there are various references in the sources already cited for Argos in nn. 7 and 21.

²⁵ Tucker Blackburn, op. cit. (n. 24) Ch. II, and on reuse 18, 291.

orientation, there is no general MH pattern; local features may have been the determining factor.

Towards the end of the period, in what I have elsewhere called the Late Phase, perhaps the last century or so of MH, there is perceptible development. Essentially, what happens is that graves either become larger and more elaborate, or richer in goods, or both, while the provision of a vase or two seems generally commoner, and unusual features of all sorts—grave-markers, extramural cemeteries, tumuli—occur more often. Graves in fact provide the bulk of the available evidence for the Late Phase, and they are the source of most known examples of MH weapons, other metal implements, metal jewellery, beads of faience and semiprecious stones, and other exceptional finds. They include most examples of tumuli and extramural cemeteries, and some are of very unusual type, such as a cremation in a pit at Argos and a partly built tomb within a natural hollow at Volimidia.²⁶ This is the context in which Grave Circle B was founded, and, just as the Shaft Graves present an unbroken sequence into the LH period, so generally the transition is gradual, and the features recognized as Mycenaean appear at different times in different places during it. The appearance of Mycenaean decorated pottery has traditionally been used to mark the division between MH and LH, but it has become clear that this is one of the latest and least significant of the new Mycenaean features: new types of tomb and artefact, and the new wealth, had already become established, and tombs which contain wholly MH types of pottery can be contemporary with those which contain examples of the earliest Mycenaean style.

This is particularly clear in Messenia, where the appearance of the tholos tomb, as represented by the well-known Osmanaga example near Koryphasion, also by a smaller tomb imitating the type at Nichoria (Nikitopoulou T. 4), and probably by the so-called 'Grave Circle' at Pylos, certainly seems to antedate that of Mycenaean pottery.²⁷ The type is extremely popular in Messenia in LH I: not only are there characteristic examples at half a dozen sites at least,²⁸ but there are the imitations sunk in mounds at Koukounara and Kaminia, and a whole cemetery of chamber tombs imitates the type at Volimidia.²⁹ But it should be noted that these are not necessarily the earliest tombs to show wealth or contain multiple burials: the earliest rich tomb at Peristeria was not a tholos but a free-standing, more or less square built tomb,³⁰ and the odd tomb at Volimidia previously mentioned (see n. 26) contained several burials and unusual quantities of pottery and small bronzes. There is thus no exclusive association of these features with 'foreign' types of tomb in Messenia, any more than in the Argolid, where the Shaft Graves demonstrate massive accumulation of wealth and increasing reuse of graves, for up to five burials, over the period to the end of LH I.

Chamber tombs, of different forms from the tholos-imitating type established as canonical at Volimidia during LH I, were established in at least two other areas over the same period. At Epidaurus Limera in eastern Laconia they are consistently oval, entered on a long side via a short dromos, off which in some cases a second, circular, chamber opened. In the Argolid, at Mycenae and Prosymna, they are closest to the type which becomes canonical for most of the Mycenaean world, but two of the four certainly founded in LH I have side-chambers opening off the main chamber, one in Prosymna T. 26 but no less than three in its neighbour, T. 25, of which at least two were part of the original plan. These, and Mycenae T. 518, which has a large niche at

²⁶ Argos T. 301 (*BCH* 92 (1968) 1038–9); Volimidia, Kephavryso T. 1 (*PAE* (1964) 86–9).

²⁷ *OSMANAGA*: *Hesperia* 23 (1954) 158–62; *NIKITOPOULOU* T. 4: *AE* (1973) 39–45; *PYLOS* 'Grave Circle': *Pylos III* 148–56, see comments in *SIMA* 52, 159 and O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires* (1976) 396–7.

²⁸ *Origins* 62, *SIMA* 52 under D 1, 35, 54, 100, 200, to which add Voidhokoilia, D 8 (*PAE* (1977) 293–4, (1978) 334); the arguments for Kakovatos, B 94, in *PAE* (1976) 277 do not seem conclusive to me.

²⁹ References are gathered under D 20 in *SIMA* 52.

³⁰ *PAE* (1976) 485–501, (1977) 307–15.

the back, are fairly impressive tombs with long dromoi and large, more or less regular four-sided chambers; but the fourth, Prosymna T. 52, was much smaller and rougher in construction, and was used for two burials only. No other chamber tombs, in the Argolid or elsewhere, are certainly so early; one that may be is Ay. Anna T. 2 at Thebes, very similar in dimensions to Mycenae T. 518.³¹

But this nowhere near exhausts the evidence now available for tombs containing LH I pottery. There are elaborate forms of rectangular built tomb, apparently developed at the end of MH at Eleusis,³² and a fine example with a dromos-like approach, walled entrance, and gabled roof, apparently set in its own small stone tumulus, at Argos.³³ Perhaps more significant is the survival of the cist and pit, which continued in use for adults' and children's burials, intramural and extramural, at many sites over a wide area. There are certain examples at Argos, Lerna, Ay. Stephanos, and Kirrha, probable examples at Pitsa (in the Corinthia), Malthi, Peristeria, Eleusis site, Athens, Dramesi, Orchomenos, Lefkandi, and Pefkakia, and quite possibly others at Thebes, Krisa, and Volos.³⁴ Tumuli containing pit-burials even seem to have been established at the time of the MH-LH transition at Makrysia and Samikon in Triphylia, to be used well into the Mycenaean period.³⁵

This picture of local diversity, of old and new types side by side, might well be expected of a transitional phase like LH I. Certainly, in LH II, roughly the fifteenth century B.C., chamber tomb cemeteries became established over a wide area of the mainland, occurring at all the major sites of the Argolid, for instance,³⁶ and the tholos tomb spread, to become the Mycenaean princely tomb *par excellence*, though most early examples have been found in the Peloponnese. But at the same time more local variants occurred, cemeteries of small circular or oval stone-built tombs, at several south Peloponnesian sites—oval examples were also constructed at Thorikos, site of a unique oval tholos³⁷—and most of the old variants already noted as established persisted, the unusual chamber tombs of Volimidia and Epidauros Limera, the rectangular built tombs of Eleusis, the tholos-like tombs in mounds at Koukounara and Kaminia, also the tumuli containing house-like structures at Marathon. They continued, indeed, into the period of greatest Mycenaean homogeneity, the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., when chamber tombs were certainly dominant, occurring at well over 150 sites in the Mycenaean area, which by this time included many of the islands and south-west Asia Minor. Small stone-built tombs occurred as a particularly common variant where chamber tombs were rare, as in Messenia and in Thessaly; Theochaes quited correctly described them as 'built chamber tombs'.³⁸

³¹ For fuller discussion and references see *Origins* 63–4.

³² G. Mylonas, *Τὸ Δύτικον Νεκροταφεῖον τῆς Ἑλευσίνος* 3 (1975) Pls. 126: 660–1 and 129: 662–3 show the most certain examples of LH I style, from small cists, Θπ13, 14, but Pl. 60: 485 from the gamma-shaped tomb Hπ3 is also very likely (Pl. 62: 495, 502, and even Pl. 61: 493 might go with this, but could equally well be early LH IIA), also Pl. 67: 506 from Hπ5, which has a good parallel from Prosymna (*Prosymna* fig. 654). But many of the small vases decorated in MH styles are probably contemporary with LH I, also plain goblets like Pl. 56: 477 from Hπ1, so that many more tombs or burials are potentially of similar date.

³³ *ADelt* 28 (1973) B 98 (Prokopiou T. XXVIII).

³⁴ *Origins* 58, 65, to which more examples from Argos (in the tumuli) and Eleusis (the West Cemetery, see n. 32) can be added; Kafkania should be deleted, as LH IIIC (see below). The Athens tomb is fully published in Pantelidou, op. cit. (n. 9) 61–6; I assume that all the goods belong to a single burial and would classify the small jars as LH I. The Pitsa grave-group (A

81 in *SIMA* 52) may well be from a pit or cist. At Thebes, graves in the cemetery at site I 8 and the rich grave at site II 1 in D. Konsola, *Προμυκηναϊκή Θήβα* (Ph.D. thesis, Athens 1981) 86–7, belong to the MH-LH transition if not to LH I.

³⁵ *Origins* 60; the indications of circular peribolos-walls at both sites, as well as the stratigraphy at Samikon, suggest that these are tumuli and not pit-cemeteries, as has been suggested to me by Professor S. Iakovidis.

³⁶ *Origins* 64, to which add examples from Argos (*ADelt* 26 (1971) B 76–8), Nauplia (ibid. 28 (1973) B 91–2, 29 (1973–4) B 202), and Kokla, south of Argos (1982 excavations; I am indebted to Dr. K. Demakopoulou-Papantoniou for permission to mention these and for showing me some of the material and photographs).

³⁷ *Origins* 63–4.

³⁸ *ADelt* 19 (1964) B 261, referring to *SIMA* 52, H 57; cf. other tombs at H 4, 13, 14, 22?, 31, 33?, 38?, 48, 63 in Thessaly, D 25, 53, 100 in Messenia, C 9, 27 (not cited here, but see under Ay. Strategos in *BSA* 55 (1960) 87) in Laconia, B 8 in Arcadia, E 23 and 39 in the Ionian Islands.

Pits and cists did not survive in the same way; except for children's burials, they are relatively rare after LH II. As has been noted, they might be dug within chamber and tholos tombs, or in their dromoi to hold remains moved out of the chamber or burials for which it was apparently not considered worth while to open it; and it was common practice, if a dromos cut for a new chamber tomb hit a zone of hard rock and had to be abandoned, to cut a pit in its floor, presumably for the burials(s) for which the tomb had been begun. As noted, they occurred in close association with the chamber tomb cemetery at Argos; they have been found similarly associated, much more rarely, at other Argolid sites, in Attica at Athens (in groups in the Agora) and other sites, and occasionally elsewhere.³⁹ They are also found, intermingled with built tombs, mostly rectangular but one resembling a tholos, in the LH IIIA–C cemetery at Medeon in Phocis.⁴⁰ But cemeteries consisting exclusively of pits and cists are very difficult to identify. There are reports from Phocis and, more substantial, from Thessaly,⁴¹ where there is one certain example from Volos. Here, in the Nea Ionia suburb, a cemetery of at least twenty cists was found, mostly single burials, containing LH IIIA₁–2 vases and some other goods, including in the case of two reused graves fine weapons of the 'Warrior Grave' type.⁴² There are some comparable large cists on the site at Kirrha, containing weapons and several burials in some cases but no pottery later than LH II.⁴³ Another cemetery already referred to (n. 10) is that of rock-cut pits at Kambi on Zakynthos; of the fourteen investigated, several had clearly been used frequently over LH IIIA–B. Otherwise there are only an unconfirmed report of a cist cemetery on Rhodes, isolated cists at Skoura in Achaia and Emporio on Chios, and a cemetery of massively built cists on Psara with which much LH III pottery was associated.⁴⁴ The last could represent a pre-Mycenaean local tradition, since Mycenaean activity hardly extended into this part of the Aegean until late in the period, on present evidence, and the Zakynthos cemetery has been explained as resulting from the isolation of the site and unsuitability of the local rock for cutting chamber tombs, but the evidence from Thessaly and perhaps Phocis might suggest the continuation of the pre-Mycenaean tradition in the remoter parts of mainland Greece, and could be compared with the situation in non-Mycenaean Epirus, where cists seem to have been common in a period equivalent to LH IIIB–C and later, if not before.⁴⁵

On the face of it, this does not provide much support for any theory that the poorer classes of Mycenaean society were commonly buried in pits and cists, for if that were so one would expect much more evidence for such graves in the provinces from which much material is known, including some indication for separate cemeteries of them, and one would also expect them to show some sign of poverty in comparison with chamber tombs, a particularly important point in the light of some views expressed. These expectations are not fulfilled. Whatever resources were needed to have a chamber tomb constructed—and in my belief this would have been a matter of employing skilled labour, not simply of a family's doing it themselves—the goods buried with the dead in most chamber tombs do not suggest that they were of very high status. They cover, in fact, very much the same range as is covered by the goods in the MH Late Phase graves, and it

³⁹ ARGOLID: Mycenae (*PAE* (1972) 115–16); Prosymna Ts. 21B, 25 (*Prosymna* 42, 45); Kokla (information from Dr. K. Demakopoulou-Papantoniou); ATTICA: for Athens see plan, *Agora XIII* Pl. 91; Alyki: *PAE* (1955) 99; Vari-Varkiza: *AAA* 7 (1974) 422–32; Perati: Iakovidis, loc. cit. (n. 9). At Pylos, T. E-3 is on the same slope as the chamber tombs, though separated (*Pylos III* 176–8). Occasional pits are found in the Ialysos chamber tomb cemeteries: *ASAtene* 6–7 (1923–4) 194, 196 (Ts. 39, 41), 13–14 (1930–1) 279, 304, 311 (Ts. 68, 76, 81, none quite so clear examples).

⁴⁰ C. Vatin, *Médéon de Phocide* (1969) 44–5.

⁴¹ *SIMA* 52 under G 48, 52 for Phocis, H 25, 36², 40, and J 15 for Thessaly.

⁴² *AAA* 3 (1970) 198–203.

⁴³ *Kirrha* 116–24: decorated vases from Ts. 10, 24, and 42, and weapons from Ts. 5 and 18 are classifiable as LH II (the latter on the basis of their associations elsewhere); most if not all the other tombs classified as MH IIIB and LH I are likely to belong to the transitional MH–LH stage at earliest and may well be of equivalent date to LH I in most cases.

⁴⁴ SKOURA: T. J. Papadopoulos, *Mycenaean Achaia* (1979) 33; *SIMA* 52, 350 (Soroni on Rhodes), 370 (Emporio), 371 (Psara).

⁴⁵ *SIMA* 52, K 6, 8, 9, 10 especially.

must be stressed that this is true of *all* the types of tomb so far mentioned. Pottery, decorated more often than not, is by far the commonest class of object deposited, though only one or two vases may be provided for each burial; the so-called spindle whorls, conical and biconical objects of clay and serpentine which may in many cases be clothing weights,⁴⁶ are also very popular, and minor items of jewellery, including beads of semiprecious stones and glass or faience, and small bronze implements such as knives, pairs of tweezers, and what may well be razors, are less commonly but still frequently reported. So also, from LH III contexts, are clay figurines of various types, especially the female Phi and Psi forms, but these are unevenly distributed, as are seal-stones, stone or bronze arrowheads, and amber beads, which are all quite common overall. But there are plenty of graves in which none of these minor objects are found, but only pottery, and there are graves where even this is rare: one recently excavated at Volimidia probably contained over a dozen burials, but with them only a single Vapheio cup and six stone arrowheads.⁴⁷ Major weapons like swords and spears, gold jewellery and seal-rings, objects of ivory, and even more valuable items such as armour or vessels of metal, stone, faience, or glass, all of which one might expect in the graves of 'court retainers or royal relatives',⁴⁸ are rarest of all, scarcely occurring in most cemeteries though reported quite often from several Argolid sites, especially Mycenae, also from Thebes and from some tombs at Athens. Some of these may indeed have held burials of virtually royal status, but the goods from chamber tombs as a whole span as wide a range as that between the richest of the Shaft Graves and the poorest of the graves contemporary with them.

The sheer numbers of chamber tombs at sites where there has been much excavation, such as Mycenae, Thebes, Tanagra, and Ialysos, where they can be counted in hundreds, and the dozens reported from many other separate sites, also suggest that chamber tombs were not used merely by notional 'middle classes', but by a very large proportion of the total population. Where other types were current, they were used in comparable fashion: one of the great mounds at Koukounara (n. 15) contained ten built tombs and a minimum of about a hundred burials, for instance, covering most of the Mycenaean period but provided with little more than pottery. Since there were several such mounds associated with this one site, it is difficult not to believe that the majority of the local population was buried in them. The same is true for the thirty-plus chamber tombs of Volimidia, most of which have produced evidence for very frequent use over a long period; at any one time, fifteen to twenty were probably in use. Yet Volimidia was not a really major centre. Only by defining nearly all the Mycenaean population as 'middle class' can one accommodate such numbers, or for that matter the fifty-five or more chamber tombs of Prosymna, a substantial but not outstanding site in the Argolid hierarchy. Finally, any attempt to make a distinction in wealth between the users of built or rock-cut tombs and those of cists and pits must founder on the fact that at several sites the burials in cists and pits were quite as richly provided as any in built or rock-cut tombs.⁴⁹ The LM II-III cemeteries of Knossos show a comparable picture: burials in chamber tombs, shaft graves, and pit-caves may be equally rich or poor. The reasons for the choice of a particular type of tomb are likely to have to do with regional or family traditions or simply convenience rather than class or wealth.

Though it may very well be correct to suggest that the more elaborate types of tomb were adopted first by the more exalted members of society, their example does seem to have been followed eventually by most of the population. I see no need to suggest that there was any attempt to *impose* uniformity (an idea which I find difficult to accept *a priori* and for which I know

⁴⁶ *BSA* 72 (1977) 113-19.

⁴⁷ *ADelt* 27 (1972) B 256-7.

⁴⁸ McDonald and Rapp, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 138.

⁴⁹ e.g. the 'warrior graves' of Volos (n. 42), several at Medeon (Vatin, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 18 (T. 99), 22 (Ts. 29, 29 bis), 29 (T. 162)), and the Lily Bowl Grave at Athens (*Agora XIII* 205-8).

of no parallel), not only because no uniformity is in fact detectable, but because it would have been unnecessary; burial customs seem to be a sphere in which fashion and emulation of the customs of one's social superiors appear again and again as important factors in the archaeological and historical record. Nor need it be argued that these more elaborate forms are alien to the mainland. I have suggested that the shaft grave and rectangular built tomb derive from the cist and pit, while the tholos tomb is, in my view, inextricably connected with the tumulus. It appears first in an area where tumuli are notably popular, western Messenia, and early examples can often be linked to sites where tumuli were established previously; the most telling example is at Voidhokoilia, where a LH I tholos was built into a tumulus in use up to that time. The two forms are also linked by sharing a circular ground-plan and the custom of pithos-burial.⁵⁰ It seems quite possible to me that the tholos is in a sense a 'petrification' of the tumulus, adopting its entrance and chamber form from Aegean types of tomb but a local development in response to a local demand.⁵¹

Admittedly, the chamber tomb does not have any such native links; but neither is it easily provided with an ancestry elsewhere, for the fact remains that single-chamber tombs of the type most widely adopted on the mainland are extremely rare in the Aegean at the period of their adoption. Indeed, rock-cut chamber tombs of any sort are very confined in their distribution then, being found only in the Knossos region and Kythera; two in each area that are likely to date somewhere in the Second Palace Period (MM III–LM I) are canonical single-chamber tombs with dromos and stomion, but more commonly they are multi-chambered, or have a very large irregular chamber that may be divided by rock pillars or built walls.⁵² The tombs at Kythera seem more neat in their arrangement than most of those around Knossos, often having a proper dromos and side-chambers opening at regular intervals off the main chamber; they could well have provided the immediate inspiration for the mainland tombs. It should be noted in this connection that Phylakopi also had cemeteries of very varied forms of rock-cut tombs, particularly small chamber tombs, with dimensions not over 2 m, of canonical form and circular or rectangular plan. The possibility that these were in use at this period has rather been discounted;⁵³ there can be no certainty, since they had long been robbed when investigated, but the pottery reported from their vicinity included not only types of First and Second City date but what was described as 'imported Mycenaean', which in the terminology of the period of the report's publication should mean LM or LH. I believe that it is quite possible that they were still in use, and could provide another example for mainlanders who wished to demonstrate their wealth, status, new cultural ties or beliefs to emulate; the material evidence for links between Phylakopi and the mainland is notably more abundant than for Knossos or Kythera at this time. In any case, no single source or unified hypothesis seems likely to explain the adoption of varied forms in different parts of the Peloponnese at roughly the same time, certainly not that they were part of an alien cultural package. I would rather suggest that, as earlier and later evidence from Greece shows, the rock-cut tomb is one obvious possibility if a more elaborate form of burial is thought desirable. As has been stated, skilled labour would have been needed to cut them, and many of the early examples are in fact notably fine, if not as elaborate as some Knossian and Kytheran examples; indeed, most fine chamber tombs are of early Mycenaean date. As they became more common, in LH III, their quality declined, and it is quite possible that many were

⁵⁰ Clearest in South Tholos at Peristeria (*PAE* (1976) 510), also the Pylos 'Grave Circle' if it is accepted that this is a tholos tomb, see references in n. 27; it is not impossible that some of the numerous large LH IIA jars in other early tholoi could have served to hold skeletal remains, like one in the 'Grave Circle'.

⁵¹ As argued by Cavanagh and Laxton in *BSA* 76 (1981) 132–3 on structural grounds.

⁵² *Origins* 61 for a fuller discussion, with references for these and the Phylakopi tombs.

⁵³ e.g. by Renfrew in *The Emergence of Civilisation* (1972) 189, 511.

cut by local house-builders or similar craftsmen, since it is difficult to believe that tomb-cutting would provide sufficient employment for specialists, unless they moved around large areas.

The chamber tomb, with which the similar stone-built tombs can be included, is the nearest to an alien form of tomb to be found commonly in the Mycenaean period, but I would rather see it, like the tholos, as essentially a local development, though with a clearer foreign inspiration. Cemeteries like those of the mainland do not occur elsewhere in the Aegean until LM II and later, although, admittedly, there is relatively little evidence of any sort from Crete and the Aegean Islands for burial customs in the period of the Second Palaces. The dating of the mainland tombs makes it clear that the cemeteries grew in size fairly slowly; many were not founded until LH III, and there can be no question of a *sudden* switch from cists and pits to chamber tombs, as one would expect if the custom were imposed.

What, then, of the custom of multiple burial? There is a tendency to suggest that this is inherently aristocratic and so a custom of the ruling class, but this is not necessarily so; there is good anthropological evidence to indicate that a concern with lineage and heredity is by no means an exclusively aristocratic feature, and it is difficult to believe that the occupants of the relatively numerous late MM multiple burial tombs around Knossos were all aristocrats, let alone the occupants of earlier tombs, often called 'communal', of Crete, although these can contain rich goods. It is in fact possible to suggest that the custom of multiple burial was by no means alien to MH Greece, and that in any case it is not exclusively associated with chamber tombs. The burial tumuli, which can contain up to a dozen burials or more, are the clearest examples of MH multiple burials; others are late and have already been cited, the Volimidia rock-cut tomb, the later Shaft Graves at Mycenae, perhaps some of the large Eleusis tombs. These are cases of several rather than many burials, but so, it must be emphasized, are most chamber tombs. Examples which contain considerable numbers of burials, twenty to thirty or more, are quite rare, and when investigated generally prove to be cases where a tomb has gone out of use, then been opened and reused after a lapse of time, presumably by a different group. The average number of burials in a chamber tomb is six to eight, and there are numerous examples that contain fewer. Moreover, in some it scarcely seems that the tomb can have been intended for multiple use, in the sense of a series of burials over generations. This is a regular feature of the chamber tombs of Ialysos, where single burials are quite common and the norm is between one and three; examples of larger numbers relate almost exclusively to use or reuse in LH IIIC. This seems to be a regional variant, since such low figures can be matched in Cos and also the mainland cemetery of Müsgebi near Halicarnassos;⁵⁴ it is particularly remarkable if it is accepted, as many believe, that these tombs represent mainly settlers from the Mycenaean heartland. There are also occasional single burials in chamber tombs on the mainland, as in the Corslet Tomb at Dendra, and in LM II–III Crete it was regular to put few burials in a chamber tomb, often because they were placed in larnakes, of which only a limited number could be fitted into most chamber tombs.

On the whole, it seems reasonable to say that it was the Mycenaean custom to use any form of tomb several times; this even applies to several of the Argos pit-graves often cited in the discussion.⁵⁵ But the custom of using a tomb on only a single occasion was by no means unknown, and equally this could apply to any form of tomb. The same types of grave-goods were laid with the dead, in whatever form of tomb they were buried, and there is no discernible pattern whereby particular forms of tomb were always rich or always poor; large tholos tombs were

⁵⁴ See *SIMA* 52, under Ialysos (348), Kos: Langada (361), for full references for the cemeteries; for Müsgebi see *AJA* 60 (1965) 140, 62 (1967) 163, *Anadolu* 11 (1967) 31–9.

⁵⁵ Deshayes, *op. cit.* (n. 12) 69–70 (T. 8: a horse and two persons), 78 (T. 18: at least seven persons).

probably always richly provided, but several chamber tombs, even in the full LH III period, are likely to have been equally rich, such as the remarkable frescoed tomb with two dromoi recently found at Thebes and the multiple chamber tomb at Spata in Attica.⁵⁶ There is far less uniformity in tomb-types over the Mycenaean area than is often suggested; regional variants obstinately persisted, and single sites can have associated tombs of varying types. Thus, at Nichoria there are proper chamber tombs, stone-built tombs mostly imitating the tholos shape, and an extraordinary mound containing two apsidal stone structures and a cist, of apparently Mycenaean date, as well as two tholos tombs, and various minor burials in the settlement area.⁵⁷ What governed the choice of particular form of tomb is not at all clear, any more than the reason why some tombs were used much more frequently than others; it does not seem possible to sum up the evidence in any simple formulation.

All this has an obvious bearing on theories of what was happening in the final Mycenaean phases, LH IIIC and 'Submycenaean'. Evidence from tombs becomes extremely important for this period: between two-thirds and three quarters of the 122 sites either marked on the Gazetteer map for these phases or known to me as recent discoveries consist solely, or in large part, of evidence from tombs. All but seven or eight of the LH IIIC cemeteries consist of chamber tombs, and the exceptions are mostly other established cemeteries continuing in use, such as the built tombs of Medeon and the pits of Kambi, or cases of reuse, such as Tragana T. 1. The Hexalophos tumulus in Thessaly, which contained at least two cists, and a group of cists which may have been sunk in a tumulus at Kaskania near Olympia, recently published,⁵⁸ are more novel; both seem to belong to a mature or late stage of LH IIIC. But many of the 'Submycenaean' sites are new cemeteries of pits and cists, and at others the burials of 'Submycenaean' type are in new groups of such tombs, although earlier burials were in chamber tombs. Thus, there might seem to be a change.

But I believe that this contrast is illusory. Desborough noted several cases where pottery that he would consider stylistically Submycenaean was found in chamber tombs of traditional form, and more can be added. Such pottery has now been found in chamber tombs at Argos, Nauplia, Epidauros Limera, Palaioakastro in western Arcadia, probably several sites in Achaea, Grotta on Naxos, and even in Attica, at the heart of the area of the 'Submycenaean culture', which is supposed to have deliberately abandoned chamber tombs.⁵⁹ Metalwork of types found in the 'Submycenaean' tombs is also known from Argos, Perati, and the Achaean and Kephallenian cemeteries,⁶⁰ and the characteristic metal types are reported, together with vases that sound very like 'Submycenaean', from the chamber tomb cemetery at Amphikleia in Phocis, which seems to belong exclusively to this phase.⁶¹ 'Submycenaean' vase-types also appear in Tragana T. 1, a tholos, and in a built tomb, associated with an urn-cremation, at Asarlik in Caria.⁶² Since neither the pottery nor the metalwork types are exclusively associated with cist and pit cemeteries, there seems no good basis for isolating a 'Submycenaean culture' based on them. In any case, these cemeteries display no homogeneity in custom: at some sites only cists are found, at

⁵⁶ *SIMA* 52, 246 (Thebes) and under F47 (Spata).

⁵⁷ *SIMA* 52, 153.

⁵⁸ *ADelt* (1974) A 25-58.

⁵⁹ *GDA* 72-3 (Argos), 81 (Epidauros Limera, cf. *SIMA* 52 under C 35), 82 (Grotta); C.-G. Styrenius, *Submycenaean Studies* (1967) 126 (Achaea; Palaioakastro, cf. *SIMA* 52 under B 32), 134 with fig. 51 (Nauplia); *ADelt* 25 (1970) B 71 with Pl. 628 (Athens), cf. also 20 (1965) B Pl. 99 for vases from Salamis (*SIMA* 52, under F 12, is probably too dogmatic, but α : third from right and β : right could be 'Submycenaean', though comparable vases are common at Perati); see further

Papadopoulos, op. cit. (n. 44) 173 on the Achaean cemeteries, also *GDA* 93 (on duck vases) and *SIMA* 52, under B 38 and 44 and E 48.

⁶⁰ *GDA* 72-3 (Argos), 81-2 (Perati), 90-1 (Kephallenia); Papadopoulos, op. cit. (n. 44) 138 (fibulae), 162-3 (a shield boss).

⁶¹ *ADelt* 25 (1970) B 237-40, 26 (1971) B 231-2: pins, fibulae (including the arched type), and a ring with spiral terminals are reported.

⁶² *GDA* 83 (Asarlik), 84-5 (Tragana).

others only pits, urn-cremation can occur at Athens and on Salamis, and the Lefkandi cemeteries present a unique combination of features associated with inhumation and cremation. It is surely easier to see both the pottery and metalwork types only as indicators of relative date, i.e. late in LH IIIC. The distinction between users of cists and pits and of chamber tombs and built tombs would then relate to local circumstances. At sites where both occur, it may be that chamber tomb users were of higher status, but this is difficult to demonstrate at Argos, and in general the goods found in the different types of tomb, as in earlier Mycenaean phases, cover much the same range; the contents of the Kerameikos cists and Amphikleia chamber tombs, for example, seem closely comparable.

LH IIIC is in fact comparable with the transitional MH-LH phase and LH I, in that it is a phase of changing cultural features, and this shows up particularly in the burial customs. A new rite, cremation, appeared sporadically; there were isolated instances of unusual forms, such as the pithos and larnax burials at Mycenae; there were also developments of older forms, such as the 'cave-dormitories' of Kephallenia, chamber tombs of varied plan which are close to true communal tombs, and contain many pits in the floor, that are sometimes arranged in regular rows, all of which seem to have been used for multiple burials simultaneously.⁶³ The main difference between the two phases is that the beginning of the Mycenaean period was one of advance, its end one of decline; in such circumstances, the growing popularity of simpler forms of tomb is wholly understandable, an example of the tendency towards economy of effort that I think is characteristic of the start of the Dark Ages. The cist and pit have obvious attractions: they can be constructed anywhere—in fact, they were generally sited close to the settlement, perhaps because it would be less easy to rob them undetected—and require little skill to construct. But it is worth noting that, just as the chamber tombs and built tombs had not wholly driven out other forms, so the cist and pit did not do so; in Crete, indeed, they never gained currency, and chamber tombs and built tombs continued to be the preferred forms right through into Archaic times, so that Crete somehow became Dorian without the intervention of cist-users! But the tholos-like built tombs also seem to have survived in Messenia and Thessaly,⁶⁴ and rock-cut chamber tombs without a dromos seem to have lasted in Phocis into the early Dark Age.⁶⁵

Local variation, in fact, continued to be a notable feature after the end of the Bronze Age, and if anything intensified during the Dark Age with the spread of various forms of cremation. The adoption of urn-cremation as the majority rite, though not wholly dominant, at Athens in the Protogeometric phase marked the second change in burial customs within a century, and is not usually associated with social upheaval or ethnic change. The survey of Greek burial customs by Kurtz and Boardman⁶⁶ demonstrates that local variation continued in Archaic and Classical times, and at Athens the various changes were never followed by every group, so that even within a single community custom could vary for reasons, presumably, of local or family tradition. Such differences cannot easily be correlated with social status or ethnic origin in documented periods; I hope that this paper has shown reason to doubt whether they can in Mycenaean times either, and has presented enough evidence to suggest that Mycenaean burial customs are a very complicated topic.

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⁶³ For a good discussion see V. R. Desborough, *Last Mycenaean and their Successors* (1964) 103–4.

⁶⁴ *GDA* 102 (Thessaly), 251–4 (Messenia).

⁶⁵ *GDA* 95, 103, and *SIMA* 52, B 103, G 55 for Lithovouni and Delphi respectively.

⁶⁶ D. C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (1971).