



ORIENT - OCCIDENT

**THE HERO'S HOME
SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE BUILDING
AT TOUMBA, LEFKANDI ¹**

The last three decades have witnessed the discovery of exciting finds, unearthed by the Greek-British excavations under the direction of P. Calligas, M.R. Popham, L.H. Sackett and P.G. Themelis at Lefkandi, on the island of Euboia : the surprisingly rich cemeteries yielded evidence for overseas relations with Cyprus, the Levantine coast, Egypt and Italy all through the so-called Dark Ages ; one of the burials beneath the Toumba building contained a robe of ankle length which happens to be the earliest find to date in Greece of relatively complete clothing ² ; apart from figuratively decorated pottery which appears to be older than the well-known Attic examples, the tombs produced a statuette of a fine centaur (ca. 900-875 B.C. or somewhat earlier), which is one of the first mythological representations in Greek art ³. Finds from the settlement demonstrate that, contrary to what was previously thought, sophisticated metalworking was being carried out in the Aegean at an early stage of the Dark Ages ⁴. Graffiti on pottery fragments rank among the very earliest Greek inscriptions known thus far ⁵. In short, the excavations underline that Lefkandi was one of the most active, outward-looking and prosperous communities in central and southern Greece during the 10th and 9th centuries. Partly as a result of these discoveries, the Euboians have been credited recently to be the original

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1. Although originally intended as a review of the *Lefkandi* II, 2 volume, the interest presented by the building and the tombs, their implications for the socio-political history of the Early Iron Age and the building's relevance for later Greek architectural history made us expand.
 2. BARBER 1990, 197.
 3. For the centaur, see *Lefkandi* I, 344-345 and CANCIANI 1984, 63 ; for the early figuratively decorated pottery, see *Lefkandi* I, 344 (S 19, 5), 348 (S 51, 2) ; *Lefkandi* II, 1, 25-26 ; POPHAM 1987 ; WHITLEY 1991a, 47-48.
 4. *Lefkandi* I, 93-97.
 5. *Lefkandi* I, 89-93 ; POWELL 1991, 15, 123.

audience of Homer's poems and some scholars even consider the *Odyssey* a Euboian poem ⁶. Moreover, the finds have changed our conception of the Dark Ages profoundly and it has been rightly stated that « Lefkandi has been perhaps the most important excavation of an Early Iron site in Greece since World War II » ⁷. It is unfortunate therefore that we are still unaware of the ancient name for the site ⁸.

The site of Lefkandi includes the coastal settlement of *Xeropolis* and a number of cemeteries situated somewhat inland. Occupation on *Xeropolis* started in Early Helladic and lasted till the Late Geometric period, but the cemeteries only cover the Submycenaean to Sub-Protogeometric III periods (ca. 1100-825 B.C.) ⁹. Up to now, six necropoleis have been located, three of which have been excavated and published to a greater extent ¹⁰: *Toumba*, *Palia Perivolia* and *Skoubris*; of the *East Cemetery*, the *Khaliotis Plots* and the *South Cemetery* only a few tombs have been excavated or located. The richest of these is clearly the so-called *Toumba Cemetery*, situated around and called after the large mound which covered a monumental building of the Protogeometric period ¹¹.

6. WATHELET 1981, 819-833; WEST 1988, 166, 172; POWELL 1991, 232.

7. SNODGRASS 1987, 65.

8. For references to the discussion of the ancient name of Lefkandi, see M.R. POPHAM in *Lefkandi* I, 423-427; MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1987, 18, n. 66-67; BÉRARD 1985, 268-275 and TOULOUPA 1992, 28, n. 1.

9. The Bronze Age material from *Xeropolis* has as yet only been discussed in preliminary reports, see POPHAM & SACKETT 1968, 4-23. For the Iron Age settlement, see *Lefkandi* I, 11-97 and for the Iron Age cemeteries, see the references below.

10. The cemeteries are published in *Lefkandi* I, 101-216 and POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982b. Preliminary reports on further excavations of the *Toumba Cemetery* are published in POPHAM, CALLIGAS & SACKETT 1989; FRENCH 1993, 40. For the location of the *South Cemetery* and, possibly, still other burial grounds, see CALLIGAS 1981, 200; CALLIGAS 1984-1985, 256; SAPOUNA-SAKELLARAKI 1984, 123; SAPOUNA-SAKELLARAKI 1986, 35; *Lefkandi* II, 2, 100, pl. 3.

11. The Protogeometric building was preliminarily presented in POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982a. For recent work on the site, see FRENCH 1993, 40, where mention is made of the excavation of some tombs in the *Toumba Cemetery* as well as the discovery of a stretch of east-west walling which may have served to retain the mound.

The Toumba-building ¹²

The *Toumba* building and the burial shafts beneath it are by far the most startling finds from Lefkandi. It has been commented upon as being « the sensation of the century in Greek Iron Age architecture » ¹³. Indeed, the building at *Toumba* is not only one of the earliest (1000-950 B.C.), but also by far the largest structure known from the Greek Dark Ages. Granted, as yet not much is known from that period. The building has an absidial shape, originally with a length of about 50 m and a width of 10 m, constructed on a large levelled platform. The edifice, which has an east-west orientation and follows the summit of a hill, was entered from the east through a shallow porch and the so-called East Room ¹⁴, which gave access to the large Central Room ; more to the west, there is a corridor, flanked by two small rooms – the North and South Rooms –, leading to the Apse Room. The building most probably had a thatched roof and was surrounded by a veranda of wooden posts. Under the Central Room, a double shaft was found, with, in one compartment, four horse skeletons, and, in the other, a bronze cremation urn of a warrior and next to it, the inhumed remains of a richly adorned woman – perhaps a suttee ¹⁵. Judging from the stylistic homogeneity of the pottery ¹⁶ and other observations ¹⁷, the building was used only for a short period in the Middle Protogeometric Period. Still during this phase, it was partly dismantled and a blocking wall was constructed at the east end of the structure. Then it was filled in and covered by a mound consisting of pebbles, mudbricks and earth. The subsequent burials on *Toumba* took the mound into account and it has been suggested that it covered the ancestor of an important lineage, the rich members of which were afterwards buried in the same cemetery ¹⁸.

12. Plans have been published in POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982b, 170, fig. 2 (= MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 6, fig. 1) and *Lefkandi* II, 1, plate 2 ; *Lefkandi* II, 2, plates 5, 38. For the relationship between the building and the tombs east of it, see also POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982b, 214, fig. 1.

13. FAGERSTRÖM 1988, 60.

14. It is very possible that another south entrance existed, as suggested by MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 6 (fig. 1), and as may have been shown by the Ephoreia trials (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 5-6). The pillar partition dividing the East Room in two parts (MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 8, fig. 1) is more dubious since, during the excavations, it could not be certified whether or not the floor covered this series of shallow pits (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 12).

15. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 21 ; HUGHES 1991, 46-48.

16. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 92-93.

17. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 98.

18. MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 9 ; *Lefkandi* II, 2, 99.

Partly investigated by trials in 1980 by the Greek ephorate, the central part was unfortunately destroyed the same year by illegal bulldozing, after which the building was completely excavated from 1981 to 1983 ¹⁹. Last year a roof was constructed on the site and restorations have been carried out to the walls. The pottery associated with the *Toumba* building has been published in a preceding volume (*Lefkandi* II, 1). The volume under consideration presents the excavation of the building, its architecture, the tombs and some of the finds, especially the bronze cremation amphora. Still to be published are most other metal objects (the weaponry and jewellery), a report on the linen robe and its preservation as well as a detailed physical-anthropological analysis of the human and animal remains.

The Protogeometric building at *Toumba* has profoundly altered the existing conception of architecture, culture and society during the Dark Ages. It is therefore highly praiseworthy that the evidence was published so quickly. The excavators defend the hypothesis that the building is a funerary structure with the burial shafts pre-dating the building, itself constructed to honour the death. However, in the more than ten years since its discovery, this interpretation has repeatedly been challenged ²⁰. The purpose of the present paper is therefore to underline the pro's and contra's of these opposite views. We thought it useful to play the devil's advocate by times, not because we doubt the excavators' judgements, but rather because such an attitude provokes the most interesting dialogue. However, after a careful reconsideration of all evidence, we feel that the opposite view – that the building was constructed first for a domestic purpose only later to be modified – has its merits and may indeed be preferred.

Anaktoron, Mausoleum or Heroon ?

The discovery of the burial shafts under the building immediately raises the important issue regarding the purpose and function of the edifice. Crucial for its interpretation is the chronological relationship between the construction of the building and the burials. The question is whether the edifice was erected as a funerary building after the warrior and his female companion had been buried, or if the edifice had been built first, perhaps for another purpose, only later to be modified to contain the burials. The excavators have differing views on the sequence of events and consequently on the function of the building. Popham and Sackett, supported by Coulton, advocate the possibility that the tombs were dug

19. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 1-4 for a history of the site and its excavations.

20. Especially by P. CALLIGAS but see also the comments in MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 6-9 ; MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1988, 116 ; FAGERSTRÖM 1988, 59-60, 129 ; WHITLEY 1991a, 185-186 ; WHITLEY 1991b, 350.

first, after which the building was constructed as a « heroon », imitating contemporary dwellings²¹. Calligas, on the other hand, holds the opinion that the grave shafts are of slightly later date and that the deceased were buried in their former residence²².

The excavators' careful observations on the different building phases allow a reconstruction of the sequence of events. Thus, they argue, during the life time of the hero, it was decided to level the rock to provide a spacious building platform on which his future mausoleum would be constructed ; then there may well have been a partial construction of the building but work was interrupted when the hero died. He was cremated on a pyre within the confines of the building plot where other additional funerary practices were performed. In the opinion of the excavators it is not entirely clear whether the burial shafts were dug before the building was completed or afterwards but in any case, once both activities were terminated, the building only served for a short time and may not even have been entirely completed²³. Then, the building was emptied of its contents, partly dismantled and filled with debris, first perhaps from within ; but once the entrance was blocked, ramps were built against the side walls and a fill was dumped from above and a mound constructed.

In this scheme, the main consecutive moments then appear to be : 1. Levelling of the bedrock ; 2. Start of building activities ; 3. Construction of pyre and cremation of the warrior ; 4. Digging of shafts and burial of the warrior and his consort ; 5. Finishing of building²⁴ ; 6. Partial dismantling of

21. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 49, 57.

22. CALLIGAS 1984-85, 260 ff ; CALLIGAS 1988, 230-232 ; POPHAM in *Lefkandi* II, 2, 101.

23. Observations based on the perhaps unfinished state of the probable staircase structure in the Central Room, the probably unfinished plastering of the interior and the flimsy character of the clay floors.

24. It may be observed that some post-holes are actually situated partly beneath the structures they were meant to support. Coulton suggests (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 39) that this results from the undercutting of the outer walls when the pits were dug so to place the posts against the walls. Moreover, it is said that the bedrock within the building would have been levelled once the walls were constructed, which would explain why they stand on a small bench (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 36). Both types of evidence, we feel, are hard to bring into agreement with each other and, again for the sake of the discussion, we wonder if it is not more likely that the builders first cleared an extensive hill-top for the construction of the building, then once more levelled the precise location for the building at the moment that a framework of timbers as well as the veranda were made and only then constructed the rubble and mudbrick walls and the other details after which the entire interior of the building was plastered ? This would imply that all wall and veranda posts were first put in position making use of measuring strings. Except for the undercutting of the walls by the pits for the posts, other arguments in favour of the posts being constructed first are

building ; 7. Partial filling of the building ; 8. Blocking of the entrance to the building ; 9. Covering of the building ; 10. Lay-out of later cemetery around the mound. There are good archaeological arguments for most moments and stratigraphical indications suggest their moment in the sequence. In other cases, a good deal of twisting is needed to fit all observations into a historical reconstruction.

The most important argument in the excavators' interpretation is the area south-east of the burial shafts, where the levelled rock had been scorched by intense heat and was covered by black ash. Cut into the rock was a circular cluster of post-holes ; some of them were found to contain burnt soil and five pieces of burnt bone, the only identifiable piece being that of a dog. Not far from this, near the south-east corner of the room, a clay box was found, containing wood-ash and bone fragments, two pieces of which were identified as belonging to caprines. Popham sees the scorched area as the location of the pyre on which the warrior had been cremated. Since this was found under the clay floor, he concludes that the building was constructed after the cremation and burial of the warrior and his unhappy companion. Part of the pyre and remains of animal sacrifices, Popham presumes, were later stored in the said clay box ²⁵.

This hypothesis depends heavily on the following assumptions : 1) the burnt area represents a pyre ; 2) this alleged pyre is the site where the warrior buried in the building was cremated ; 3) there is a connection between the burnt area and the ashy deposit in the clay box. One may wonder whether these assumptions are really valid. In the first place, as Popham himself admits ²⁶, pyres in the cemeteries at Lefkandi are usually not constructed on the surface making use of wooden supports set in the rock, but they were built over a pit, often cut quite deeply into the rock. Secondly, there is no reason to connect the burnt area with the cremation, except for its proximity (about 5 m.) to the burial shafts. Thirdly, the only feature the clay box and burnt area have in common is that both contain ashes and burnt (animal) bones. These features are, however, stratigraphically separated by the clay floor. In terms of chronology, this implies that, if we follow Popham's theory, the remains of the pyre were kept until the building was constructed and its floor laid out, after which the ashes could be stored in the clay box. Against this hypothesis is further the fact that both the

one instance where the outer wall appears actually to follow the position of the posts and not the other way around (S 25) and the almost perfect agreement between inner wall posts and veranda posts since it implies horizontal bracing timbers, later incorporated in the mudbrick walls. The fact that one post (N 9) is hidden behind an internal north-south partition wall suggests that at least some of the inner walls were constructed later.

25. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 15, 99-100.

26. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 99.

assumed pyre and the contents of the box have failed to produce positive evidence for human bone remains²⁷. Besides, other objects found amongst the ashes in the clay box (button, weight) also suggest that its contents had a non-funerary character. Hence, although the clay button is paralleled by similar examples from some of the pyres at Lefkandi and can be interpreted as fastenings for the garments of the deceased²⁸, the clay weight found with it in the clay box is unlikely to have anything but a domestic function. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the site of the assumed pyre was not the only such feature in the building. Under the floor in the middle of the Central Room four more places showing traces of burning were detected, one covering a second cluster of holes cut into the rock and containing carbonised wood and blackened soil²⁹. In the East Room too, an area with various traces of burning was located under the clay floor, again in association with a group of rock-cut pits, most of which contained ash³⁰. Popham suggested that these should be seen as the traces of some subsidiary funerary rite³¹, but this is a somewhat unsatisfactory explanation. The weakest point of the hypothesis is, however, that the scorching of the so-called pyre affected the **already levelled** rock³². The least this implies is indeed that the intention to construct a building came first and it is a matter of hypothesis whether further funerary activities, as the excavators assume, followed. Indeed, a rather troublesome sequence of events is needed to explain this, namely that the building was already partly constructed and that, during the lifetime of the hero, it was already intended to honour him with an outstanding funerary monument. Since the so-called pyre is situated within the building, the roof of the building could not have been completed. This supposes that the hero was running around with morbid premonitions, directing the levelling of the rock and the construction of part of an enormous building, knowing that he would not live to enjoy this! This seems hard to accept: if the so-called pyre has scorched the levelled rock³³, it means that building activities had started by then. Rather than implying that those who wanted to burn the eventual hero knew already that they not only wanted a levelled area of 53 by 20 m. as well as a better levelled area of ca. 50 by 10 m. where the later funerary building would be erected or was being erected³⁴, it is more logical to

27. An objection also made by MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 9.

28. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 74.

29. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 16.

30. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 12.

31. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 100.

32. This zone is, according to MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 9 too large to have served as a pyre.

33. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 100.

assume that the traces of fire have nothing to do with the pyre for the hero. The different post-holes that do not seem to be associated with the building itself as well as the traces of fire over a large area may point to some unspecified activities in this place, preceding or accompanying the construction of the building. There are then no stringent reasons to assume the presence of a pyre in the building itself and consequently we will have to locate it elsewhere.

The most important piece of evidence to establish the chronological relationship between the shafts and the building would be, of course, the fact that the shafts were cut through the floor fill, or, if one could decide whether the clay floor was laid out over the shafts³⁵. The illegal bulldozing of part of the Central Room had sheared away only the west side of the burial shafts, leaving the stratigraphy more or less intact³⁶, but nothing is mentioned vis-à-vis the presence or absence of the remains of the said clay floor over the burial pits. The excavators do discuss, however, the presence of a layer of grey, ash-like material visible in the section through the fill of the shafts and likewise present above the adjacent floor of the room³⁷. This probably represents the remains of the original roof construction of the building (reeds and rushes). The layer dips down into the shafts, which seems to indicate that, once the building was abandoned and filled in, the contents of the shaft subsided³⁸ and the overlying fill of the building intruded into this area of subsidence. This piece of stratigraphical information then suggests that if the floor of the structure originally would have overlaid the shafts, a large part of it would be out of its original position, but no comments are made on this matter by the excavators. If the clay floor would have been preserved in the area bordering the shafts or above the strip of rock dividing the shafts where the fill had dipped down less sharply, the excavators would certainly have noticed it, as they would have also noticed whether the floor ended abruptly near the shafts, suggesting that the shafts had cut through the floor³⁹. By looking at the section, the reader rather gets the second impression but if this is correct, it would be a strong argument against the hypothesis that the burials precede the edifice.

34. The levelled area extended from 6 m in front of the blocking wall to the east up to at least the other side of the building and up to 5 m north and south of the side walls (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 9, 27).

35. MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 9.

36. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 13, plate 9.

37. *Lefkandi* II, 2, plate 12.

38. There are signs of a wooden structure in the shafts ; when this had rotted away, the contents of the shafts may have subsided.

39. Popham only states that « there is no conclusive stratigraphical evidence » (*Lefkandi* II, 2, 99).

A third argument presented by the excavators to suggest that the shafts were dug first is related to the construction of the building. Hence, Coulton points out that the position of the southern shaft containing the human burials in relation to the central posts of the Central Room seems to imply a wider span between posts C4 and the next post to the west than any attested in the surviving part of the building. This, Coulton thinks, suggests that the position of the posts was modified to take the presence of the grave pits into account, hence concluding that the latter preceded the completion of the building. But must this necessarily be so? The normal spacing between the supports of the central line in the building is in between 1.68 and 3.40 m, their depth up to 148 cm⁴⁰. Since the « bulldozer had cut away a metre of the west sides of both shafts to a depth of nearly 2 m »⁴¹, it would have been surprising to find any evidence for post-holes at all. On the assumption that the next post west of the burial pit was at 3.40 m from the previous post, there would still have been room for a posthole, hence the argument is unconvincing. In fact, it may perhaps be turned around: the burial shafts were especially made at this particular spot because there was sufficient room for the digging of shafts, not interfering with the building's construction. This would explain why the burials are not placed in the centre of the building but more to the east, a divergence which is explained by the presence of central hearths in the centre of normal domestic buildings⁴².

More clues to decide whether the structure's original function was either domestic or funerary may perhaps be found in its special features as well as its contents. The building has, fortunately, preserved a series of architectural details, such as the fixed installations in the three corners of the East Room. Their precise purpose is not entirely clear, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they had a function in daily life. The same comment goes for the Apse where several pits were found, probably made to hold large storage jars, which were removed at a later stage⁴³. Such architectural details are certainly superfluous for a building designed solely with a funerary function in mind. The same goes for the internal finishing of the walls with clay plaster, even if this was not completed at the time of destruction. Nevertheless, a central hearth, so common in contemporary or somewhat later architecture, was not found, but, as remarked by Coulton, it is not unlikely that it had been destroyed by the bulldozer⁴⁴. A circle of stones in the south-east corner of the East Rooms is highly suggestive for some kind of hearth but no traces of burning were found. Coulton wondered if it could have

40. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 64, 62, but see also p. 42.

41. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 17.

42. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 50.

43. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 71-72: part of what may have been the metal locking device of the door of the Apse room was retrieved.

44. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 50.

been an unused hearth or rather a feature comparable to similar structures elsewhere, according to R. Hägg, connected with ancestor cult involving ritual meals⁴⁵. Against both interpretations is the fact that the circular structure in the East Room is not centrally placed, nor free-standing, two features which would allow people to take place around them⁴⁶.

An indication that the building not really served a domestic function is, according to the excavators, the fact that almost no movable objects were found⁴⁷. Indeed, only a dozen or so finds may be considered as really representing floor deposits or can be regarded as closely associated with specific features of the building. Hence, detailed study has allowed to reconstruct about sixteen vases which probably belong to the floor deposits : a massive crater (n° 327), an oenochoe (n° 644), a skyphos (n° 120), a lekythos (n° 723) and a cooking pot (n° 828) in the Central Room, two cups (n° 1, 57) in the South Room, two neck-handled amphoras (n° 461-462) and a hydria (n° 469) in the Apse Room as well as fragments of cups and bowls (n° 2-99-184-293), a belly-handled amphora (n° 452) in the East Room and a Black Slip jug (n° 788) from the South Veranda⁴⁸. It is suggested by I. Lemos that the krater, which had a diameter of 88 cm and a height of around 80 cm, served as a *sema* or grave marker, especially since it was found very near the burial shafts⁴⁹. This is an attractive suggestion but it has some consequences : it means that the krater was intended to be seen at least for a while but this then further implies that the dismantling and covering of the building were not originally intended⁵⁰. It is perhaps more likely to assume that the krater was originally a domestic, feasting vessel, perhaps reused for a while for a funerary purpose, although even this will

45. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 51.

46. For hearths, see DRERUP 1969, 123 and FAGERSTRÖM 1988, 130-131 ; for platforms for ritual meals, see HÄGG 1983, and the following Discussion on p. 193-194

47. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 100-101. All extant finds (a variety of small vases, buttons, loomweights, a spindle whorl and possibly some fragmentary storage vessels in the Apse), however, seem to represent objects for domestic use (cf. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 17, 23-24, 27, 28, 73-74, 78).

48. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 3-4.

49. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 25, 29 although her argument is circulatory since kraters are rare in funerary contexts.

50. It was suggested earlier that three pits east of the entrance to the building could have served for a bronze tripod (cf. *Lefkandi* I, 105, 214, POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982b, 214, fig. 1 and MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 8).

not carry unanimous agreement⁵¹. As for the other vessels, it seems obvious that oenochoi usually form part of settlement assemblages⁵² and the same goes for circles skyphoi⁵³, neck-handled amphoras⁵⁴, hydrias⁵⁵, Middle Protogeometric black slip ware⁵⁶ and, of course, cooking pots⁵⁷. Cups, bowls and lekythoi seem to occur both in domestic and funerary contexts⁵⁸ and this also applies to belly-handled amphoras, although R. Catling suggests that these may also have formed part of feasting equipment⁵⁹. This was perhaps also the original purpose of the finely decorated bronze amphora, a Late Cypriot III heirloom⁶⁰. Among the other finds, discussed by L.H. Sackett, only the parts of a very large clay figurine – originally perhaps a chariot drawn by horses⁶¹ – were found on or near the floor of the Central Room. This could conceivably have had a funerary purpose but its very fragmentary state suggests that it formed part of the fill and not the floor assemblage.

In the reviews of the *Toumba* building, little attention has been given as yet to the finds from within the earth used to cover the building after its dismantling: thus, an obvious concentration of Late Helladic IIIC sherds and figurines were noted in the fill of the Apse⁶². Although it puzzled the excavators, it must point to a late Mycenaean occupation in the immediate neighbourhood of *Toumba*. The rest of the fill too obviously came from domestic deposits for which *Xeropolis* is suggested⁶³, although this seems

51. *Lefkandi* I, 215, 339 where it is explicitly stated that no kraters were placed in tombs or pyres but that their presence in deposits found in the cemeteries must be explained by the fact that they formed part of the funerary feasting equipment.

52. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 45.

53. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 21: the numbering used in the volume is somewhat confusing but n° 189 (p. 4, a museum number) is n° 120 in the catalogue (Plate 5h).

54. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 38: only in LPG times some neck amphoras are used as ash urns.

55. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 41.

56. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 54.

57. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 59-60, although some miniature versions sometimes occur in tombs.

58. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 15, 49.

59. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 35.

60. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 87, although the clay lining inside is against this.

61. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 73, 78.

62. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 5; II, 2, 73, 91, and, for a brief discussion of this material, p. 86; see also MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 6.

63. Stressed in *Lefkandi* II, 1, 91.

rather unlikely in view of its distance (750 m and uphill) ⁶⁴. It contained, amongst other things, quite a few furnace fragments ⁶⁵. It is explicitly stated that there is no stylistic difference between the pottery from the fill and that of the floor deposits of the building itself ⁶⁶ which – although not explicitly stated – implies that the floor deposits should **also** be regarded as domestic in nature. The architectural and ceramic components of the fill consisting of stones, pebbles, earth, mudbricks and an « immense » ⁶⁷ amount of pottery which was basically Middle Protogeometric in date, suggest a nearby settlement. Finally, could not the mere fact that the building was so furiously cleared out be suggestive for its original domestic function, which was deliberately altered when it was decided to turn it into a morgue ? In this respect, the Apse, which originally seems to have been a storage area, is significant ⁶⁸. Coulton argues that « a storage function would be appropriate either to a real or a symbolic funerary house » ⁶⁹. But if the edifice had a symbolic function, why remove the storage jars at all ? Their removal too seems to form part, we believe, of the deliberate alteration of the original function of the construction.

Two final arguments should be commented upon which could be used to defend the hypothesis that the structure was a funerary building rather than a dwelling, in the latter case not excluding perhaps cultic or civic functions. The first argument concerns the veranda and the eastward orientation of the edifice, both features which are of course reminiscent of later temples ⁷⁰. Indeed, the *Toumba* building has the oldest and largest Iron Age *peristasis* ⁷¹. However, it may well be – as Coulton himself rightly remarks – that the veranda first came to be associated with princely abodes and was only later taken over as mark of a divine dwelling ⁷². One may add that the same could be true for the eastward orientation, which is, in any agricultural society, one of the most common orientations. The main aberrant feature of the complex, however, is its size : although comparable to the later *hekatompeda*, its length of almost 50 m. makes it much larger than any contemporary building, whatever its function. Only at the end of the 8th century buildings were constructed with a length exceeding 30 m, which usually had a cult function. There is lack of evidence for either cult

64. See also Coulton's discussion in *Lefkandi* II, 2, 55-56.

65. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 74-76.

66. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 4.

67. *Lefkandi* II, 1, 3

68. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 25-27, 50.

69. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 50.

70. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 59.

71. MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 18.

72. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 59.

or funerary practices in or around the building, although such an interpretation is favoured by the excavators to explain enigmatic features. Hence, it is assumed that light timber partitions originally divided the East Room and the Apse, which would indicate the area to which those honouring the deceased were to be given access⁷³. Any other guess is equally valid, however, the more so as it is not clear whether or not these post-holes belong to the original lay-out of the structure⁷⁴.

The second argument does not so much favour the building's funerary character but rather constitutes a negative argument against regarding it as a dwelling. As Popham rightly observes, the edifice is situated in an area with an explicit funerary function⁷⁵. Apparently, it is located outside the main settlement nucleus which through much of the Early Iron Age seems to have been situated on *Xeropolis*. Claims by Whitley and Calligas that the settlement shifted from *Xeropolis* to *Toumba* and back or that the dispersed settlement pattern in Protogeometric times was characterised by similar, isolated chieftain's houses on hilltops are not supported by archaeological data⁷⁶. It should be pointed out though, firstly, that it is not at all evident that *Palia Perivolía*, the cemetery closest to *Toumba*, was already in existence at the time when the building was constructed. It is true that the earliest tombs in *Palia Perivolía* date to the Middle Protogeometric period while the whole sequence of events on *Toumba*, including the construction of the building, the burial of the warrior and his spouse, the demolishing of the structure and the construction of the mound, also took place within this phase, probably near its end⁷⁷. Thus, it is theoretically possible, as argued by Popham, that the earliest graves in *Palia Perivolía* pre-date the building. On the other hand, one may wonder at what stage to place the construction and demolishing of the *Toumba* building within the Middle Protogeometric period? It cannot be at the very end since a time lapse should be left to allow the first Middle Protogeometric tombs to be dug in the periphery of the tumulus (T 12B, T 49, T 62B). In the second place, the recent discovery of other necropoleis in the area between *Xeropolis* and *Toumba* indicates that the distribution of the cemeteries and their potential relationship to one or more settlement nuclei may well be more complex than previously thought. Against this background it is perhaps more prudent to admit that with the available evidence, the unusual location of the *Toumba* building simply eludes our understanding, but, as mentioned above, the contents of the fill used

73. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 44, 52; also MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 8, fig. 1.

74. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 12.

75. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 100.

76. WHITLEY 1991a, 184-185; WHITLEY 1991b, 346-350; CALLIGAS, 1987, 18-19; CALLIGAS 1988, 230.

77. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 101.

to construct the mound over the building clearly suggests the existence of a settlement in the more immediate neighbourhood of *Toumba*.

All this evidence then indicates that the building, the plan of which compares admirably well with domestic architecture of the period, was indeed planned as a domestic structure – perhaps with some cult functions - ⁷⁸, and was only turned into a heroon afterwards.

The King has died, long live the King

The care given to the preparation of the site and the construction and finishing of the building, as well as its size, its equipment and the presence of a *peristasis*, all suggest that the edifice was conceived and constructed as an *anaktoron*, the home of the hero and his consort, which at the same time may have been intended to perform certain religious and ritual functions. There can be no doubt that the building did not last very long and indeed it is possible that it was not even finished when it was decided to bury the hero ⁷⁹. There are signs of damage, especially in the west part and this damage appears to be structural, which may have been the reason why it was given up ⁸⁰. Its brief use is concluded on the basis of a very hard to define floor level – although the fact that the building was filled in partly from within could have helped to deteriorate the floors. In this regard, the heaps of clay plaster found in the building could conceivably represent material brought in for renovation activities or remains of fallen ceiling material. In fact, there is little against part of the roof having collapsed at this moment, rather than that it had been demolished intentionally at the moment the building was dismantled. It is hence possible that e. g. an earthquake ⁸¹ damaged the structure and that in its monumentality also lay its fragility.

78. MAZARAKIS-AINIAN 1985, 43 argues that the « maison du chef » was basically « la maison où l'on honore les dieux », a reason why this type of building would eventually be used as the prototype of the Greek temple.

79. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 98, a suggestion based on the presence in the South Room of heaps of fresh clay for plastering and the absence of steps in the Central Room (if planned as a staircase). If the latter was in wood, however, this construction too may have been stripped before the building was covered.

80. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 98: the north wall of the South Room was displaced and the west wing of the doorway of the North Room had probably collapsed.

81. According to STRABO (X. 1.9, p. 447 C), Euboia is subject to earthquakes, in particular the region of the Straits. On an earlier occasion, it was suggested that some walls subsided because of the presence of Mycenaean tombs underneath the west part of the building (POPHAM, TOULOUPA & SACKETT 1982a, 174), which collapsed under the weight of the building. The excavators assumed that the Lefkandians then investigated the reason for the collapse,

It is not exactly clear why the hero and his consort were buried under the building and why a tumulus was heaped over this. Yet, the interment of the hero under his former residence is nothing exceptional as during Protogeometric times intramural burials are well attested, e.g. at *Plasi* near Marathon and *Iolkos*. Besides, it is also evidenced at Lefkandi itself in the LH IIIC settlement at *Xeropolis*⁸². Covering an occupation site and turning it into an area with a funerary function also has (earlier) parallels on Greek soil, e.g. at Lerna and Olympia. Moreover, the construction of mounds as funerary monuments has a long tradition in Greece⁸³, while the Homeric epics tell us that a burial mound, and more specifically its size and position, were an indication of high status and could be a useful instrument to keep the deceased's memory alive⁸⁴. In the context of the functioning of the mound as a memorial monument, one may keep in mind that « the past, especially through ritual communication (including the context of death), is often used to 'naturalise' and legitimate hierarchies of power and inequality which would otherwise be unstable. (...) The dead are consequently susceptible to manipulation by certain groups to maintain or enhance their influence over others. This can be done by idealising certain aspects of the past through the dead »⁸⁵. This may also have been the reason for the dismantling and covering of the building in which the hero of Lefkandi and his consort were buried. After the building was damaged, the hero's descendants may have wished to turn the site into a funerary monument and the construction of a burial mound probably was considered appropriate for such an occasion. In this light, it is instructive to look at other examples of hero or

found the Mycenaean tomb – which would explain the presence of figurines in the Apse – and, to cover their desecration, they abandoned the building and constructed a mound. In the final report, no allusion seems to be made to this.

82. For *Plasi*, see CATLING 1985, 11; for *Iolkos*, see THEMELIS 1976, 43-46; for *Xeropolis*: POPHAM & SACKETT 1968, 14. G. Kopcke has pointed to Troy, where a necropolis of the 13th century B.C. has been excavated (KOPCKE 1992, 105, n. 10). It yielded a number of Mycenaean vases and is located in the place where according to tradition the Achaeans landed during the Trojan war. In certain respects, this cemetery has produced rather close, although probably accidental parallels: in the cemetery's centre, a funerary building of megaron-type was found. On the floor of its central room, a terracotta krater was placed. Although inhumation was the prevailing burial rite, the burials under this room were cremations – a Hittite influence according to the excavator. At a later stage, several tombs were dug around the building, including a very large pithos placed beneath the entrance and containing a double inhumation. At a certain point, the portico of the building was closed with stones (KORFMANN 1986, 311-329; KORFMANN 1988, 395-396).

83. See MÜLLER 1989, 36-39 for a recent list of Bronze Age mounds.

84. See e.g. *Il.* VII. 85ff; *Od.* XI. 75-76, XXIV. 80-84.

85. PARKER PEARSON 1982, 101.

ancestor cult, such as at Eretria, in later times one of the most important *poleis* on the island of Euboia. In the period between ca. 720-680 B.C., a small family graveyard developed in a very prominent place near the later West Gate of the city, when a warrior was interred here, followed by the burial of his relatives during the next two or three generations. In the early 7th century, a triangular funerary monument was constructed, but also during the following centuries the place remained a centre of cult activity⁸⁶. Despite the chronological gap between the heroes of Lefkandi and Eretria, there are some striking similarities in what may be called funerary ideology. The common element in this ideology is the emphasis on the dominant socio-political position of the deceased and on the continuity of the privileged position in society of their kinsmen. In both cases, the heroes were buried in « epic » style⁸⁷, with extensive ceremonial, even employing similar status symbols, such as the bronze vessels used for cremation urns. Most striking is the fact that, like at Lefkandi, at Eretria a heirloom was buried with the hero, in the latter case, a bronze Mycenaean spearhead. Quite often, the presence of heirlooms is regarded as a symptom of poverty, but here this is obviously not the case. These status symbols were passed over from one generation to the next and seem to express the continuity of the domination of a powerful *oikos*. A parallel case can be found at the Geometric cemetery at Grotta on the island of Naxos. Here, the ruins of a Mycenaean settlement were used as a privileged burial site. This necropolis too shows evidence of veneration of direct ancestors by the family, which later turned into a cult of ancestral heroes. A close analogy with the finds from Lefkandi and Eretria is a LH IIIC hydria, placed on the covering slabs of a LPG cist grave. As V.K. Lambrinoudakis suggested, the function of this heirloom too was to link the PG dead to the Mycenaean ancestors⁸⁸.

If the section of the Lefkandiot population burying its dead in the *Toumba* necropolis was indeed formed by descendants of the « hero » of Lefkandi, they may have conceived the construction of the mound as a more permanent funerary monument, which not only underlined the importance of the dead « hero », but also the status inherited by his living descendants. In this respect it is significant that the « hero's » descendants sometimes imitated – probably deliberately – the funerary ritual with which their ancestor was buried. For example, T 12B, one of the first burials in the *Toumba* necropolis, contained heirlooms too, in this case a pair of Mycenaean seals. As Popham also stresses, *Toumba* further produced another tomb containing an urn cremation and an inhumation (T 55), horse burials (T 68) and another double burial in an extremely deep shaft lined

86. BÉRARD 1972; BÉRARD 1982.

87. For burials in « epic » style, see references in BLOME 1984.

88. LAMBRINOUDAKIS 1988, esp. 235, 245 n. 24. For other aspects of hero cult, see HADZISTELIOU-PRICE 1979; MORRIS 1988 and SNODGRASS 1988.

with timber and mudbricks (T 49)⁸⁹. Thus, it seems that turning the house of the « hero » into a funerary monument, as well as the deposition of heirlooms and imitative funerary behaviour were all aspects of a death ritual intended by the Lefkandiot elite to legitimate and cement the existing socio-political structure.

In conclusion, after reconsideration of all evidence, we opt for the following order of events, which we feel agrees better with the stratigraphical evidence and produces a more logical sequence. Three phases in the functioning of the building may be discriminated :

Phase I : Construction of the *anaktoron* : 1. Clearing of the *Toumba* hill-top ; 2. Levelling of the bedrock ; 3a. Erection of timber framework and veranda ; 3b. Construction of walls.

Phase II : Alteration of building into mausoleum : 4. Clearing of contents of building and digging of burial shafts ; 5. Burial of warrior and his consort [cremation taking place elsewhere] ; 6. Functioning of building as a mausoleum ; 7. Damaging of building, possibly including collapse of roof.

Phase III : Alteration of building into permanent funerary monument : 8. Further dismantling of building ; 9. Partial filling of the building ; 10. Blocking of the entrance ; 11. Covering of the building ; 12. Lay-out of the *Toumba* cemetery.

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89. *Lefkandi* II, 2, 21-22 ; POPHAM, CALLIGAS & SACKETT 1989, 118.

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