

THE GRAVE OF THE GRIFFIN WARRIOR AT PYLOS

CONSTRUCTION, BURIAL, AND AFTERMATH

ABSTRACT

The circumstances of the discovery, stratigraphy, and construction of the grave of the Griffin Warrior were described briefly in 2016 as an introduction to a detailed presentation of the four gold rings found inside it. Here the “life history” of the grave is considered fully. As a sealed context, the grave of the Griffin Warrior also provides a key dated context for many classes of artifact, the chronologies of which have not hitherto been well defined. Because of its importance in this regard, supporting evidence is presented that the Griffin Warrior was buried in Late Helladic IIA and that the burial deposit in the grave lay undisturbed after Late Helladic IIA.

Several years ago we reported the excavation of the grave of the Griffin Warrior (2015 and 2016).¹ In those reports we related how we found the grave in May 2015, on the first day of renewed excavations by the University of Cincinnati at the site where Carl Blegen and Konstantinos Kourouniotis had begun to uncover the Palace of Nestor in 1939. We briefly described the construction of the grave and discussed its date as an introduction to a detailed presentation of four gold rings. Excavations since have continued in the olive grove where the grave was found, on the acropolis of the Palace of Nestor, and, notably, also in a newly acquired field to the northeast, where in 2018 we discovered two previously unknown Mycenaean tholos tombs (Fig. 1).

1. Davis and Stocker 2016. For further reports, see Stocker and Davis 2017, 2020; Davis and Stocker 2018. McNamée is principal geoarchaeologist and Vitale principal ceramic analyst for the Palace of Nestor Excavations (PONEX). Karkanas, director of the Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), consults for PONEX in geoarchaeological matters. Stocker and Davis codirect

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