

palaces), but many of the features which characterize post-Bronze Age (historic Greek) Crete are also apparent. In the fragmented regionalism of Postpalatial Minoan society lie the roots of the Archaic and Classical 'Crete of the hundred cities', an extreme example of the political divisions of ancient Greece. In the deliberately individualized Goddesses-with-Upraised-Arms are the first hints of the developed polytheism of ancient Greek religion. The end of something great provides its own impetus and continuity to the development of something more.

Viewed this way, it may well be that the analogy with which I began this paper is truly appropriate. The cosmic 'Big Bang' threw matter, in the form of galaxies and worlds, outwards to create the universe; in turn, the religious elements of Postpalatial Crete reveal a centrifugal scattering of religion and society from the 'Big Bang' of Palatial collapse, to provide the roots of later Greece.

3

*The Spatial Configuration of Belief:
The Archaeology of Mycenaean Religion*

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Introduction¹

The archaeological traces of Mycenaean religion demonstrate three broad types of religious sites. These are the megaron with its central hearth and throne, the shrine building, and open air settings. But there is no agreement among scholars as to how the available evidence fits into these categories. For example, Hägg has argued forcefully in favour of identifying a house shrine type, Lambrinoudakis has suggested that the remains at the Maleatas terrace at Epidaurus are of a Minoan-type peak sanctuary, and Klaus Kilian has hypothesized that the remains from Ayios Ilias near Tiryns are part of a cult located in a small cavern.² These examples illustrate the need for clear-cut criteria that distinguish among the different types and that allow us to speak comprehensively about the nature of Mycenaean religious practice and belief.

Equally, estimates of the number and distribution of religious sites varies. Some scholars, such as van Leuven and Rutkowski,³ using very loose criteria,

¹ Abbreviations: LH Late Helladic; LM Late Minoan; MH Middle Helladic; MM Middle Minoan. Acknowledgements: I wish to thank Susan Alcock, John Cherry, Andrew Cohen, Mary Dabney, Robin Hägg, Robin Osborne, and Ann Wright Parsons for commenting on earlier drafts of this article, suggesting references and lines of inquiry. They are, of course, in no way responsible for the views espoused here.

² R. Hägg, 'Official and Popular Cults in Mycenaean Greece', 'The House Sanctuary at Asine Revisited', and V. Lambrinoudakis, 'Remains of the Mycenaean Period in the Sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas', all in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (edd.), *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Stockholm, 1981), 35-40, 91-4 and 59-65; Klaus Kilian, 'Patterns in Cult Activity in the Mycenaean Argolid: Haghia Triada (Klenies), the Profitis Elias Cave (Haghios Hadrianos) and the Citadel of Tiryns', in R. Hägg and G. C. Nordquist (edd.), *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (Stockholm, 1990), 185-97.

³ J. C. van Leuven, 'The Mainland Tradition of Sanctuaries in Prehistoric Greece', *World Archaeology* 10 (1978), 138-48; 'Problems and Methods of Prehellenic Naology', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 11-25; B. Rutkowski, *The Cult Places of the Aegean* (New Haven, Conn., 1986), 169-221.

include uncritically virtually all the suggested sites of Late Bronze Age date. Others, such as Hägg, Vermeule, and Hope Simpson and Dickinson are more cautious,⁴ but neglect to state clearly the criteria for their selection. This state of affairs is not helped when one considers the history of religious sites, especially in relation to the formative stages of Mycenaean society. There is, as Mylonas has remarked,⁵ virtually no evidence to go on for the Middle Bronze Age. Aside from the artefacts from Epidauros, there is almost nothing that can be safely identified for the early period of Mycenaean culture, though most scholars are content to utilize artefacts found in the many tombs of LH I and II. Plainly evident religious remains have only recently been discovered; these are the sanctuaries which came into being slightly after the formation of the Mycenaean palaces: LH IIIA:2 at the earliest.⁶ As a result it is difficult to study the origins of Mycenaean religion and to see clearly how the sites of Mycenaean religion (not to mention the religion itself) changed over time.

The map (Ill. 3.1) illustrates the distribution of the three types mentioned above. It is easy to see that the best identified sites are located at the major palace centres and that there are relatively few obviously religious sites in the hinterlands surrounding them. This situation contrasts markedly with that mapped by Peatfield for Crete during its Palatial and Postpalatial periods where religious sites were widely dispersed over the landscape.⁷ By taking a wider focus the situation is seen in greater relief: between MH and LH IIB there are only two securely and eight possibly identifiable sites, while after that date the numbers increase to fourteen and twenty-two respectively.⁸ This contrast suggests that the formalization of religious activity in Mycenaean society was largely a phenomenon of the period of the palaces.

What other evidence is there that demonstrates that religious activity is closely linked to the palaces? What are the factors that caused this to happen? Why is there not more evidence of religious activity in earlier, Prepalatial times? These are questions to be pursued in this study. In doing so I hope to show

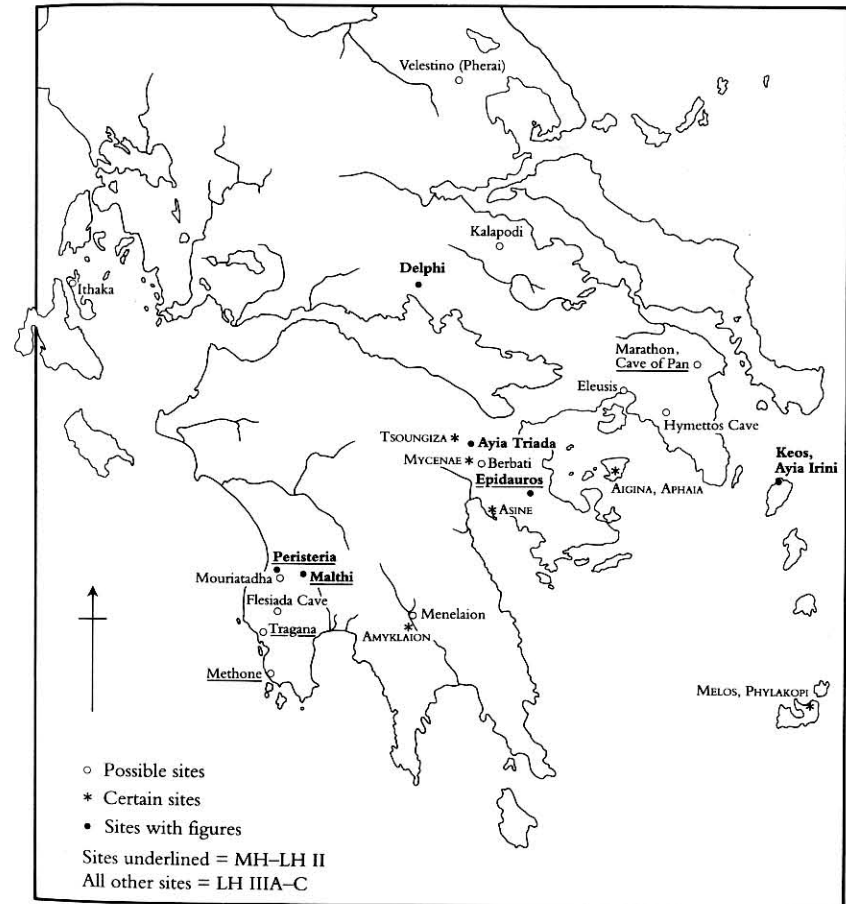
⁴ R. Hägg, 'Mykenische Kultstätten im archäologischen Material', *OpAth* 8 (1968), 39–60; E. T. Vermeule, 'Götterkult', in F. Matz and H. G. Buchholz (edd.), *Archaeologia Homerica*, iii, ch. V (Göttingen, 1974), 32–8, 56; R. Hope Simpson and O. T. P. K. Dickinson, *A Gazetteer of Aegean Civilisation in the Bronze Age*, i: *The Mainland and the Islands*, SIMA 52 (Göteborg, 1979), 427, *passim*.

⁵ G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), 137.

⁶ E. French, 'Cult Places at Mycenae', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 41–8; C. Renfrew, 'The Sanctuary at Phylakopi', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 67–79; *The Archaeology of Cult: The Sanctuary at Phylakopi*, *BSA Suppl.* 18 (London, 1985), 80; W. Taylour, *Well Built Mycenae*, fasc. 1: *The Excavations* (Warminster, 1981), 8–9; K. Kilian, 'Zeugnisse mykenische Kultauübung in Tiryns', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 49–58.

⁷ A. A. D. Peatfield, 'The Topography of Minoan Peak Sanctuaries', *BSA* 78 (1983), 273–80; 'Palace and Peak: The Political and Religious Relationship between Palaces and Peak Sanctuaries', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (edd.), *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm, 1987), 89–93.

⁸ These numbers are derived from the lists compiled by Hägg (n. 4) and Hope Simpson and Dickinson (n. 4), and include sites discovered since their publication.



ILL. 3.1 Map of sanctuary sites

how the archaeological study of religion is an indispensable component for the reconstruction of ancient societies. Such an analysis, however, cannot succeed without a firmer foundation. There is a great need for an explicit archaeological statement that, like Renfrew's, establishes archaeological correlates of religious behavior and also articulates the structure of religion in its many levels and varieties.⁹ Therefore a beginning must be made towards establishing the theoretical basis of an archaeological recognition of religion and in constructing a methodology for its reconstruction.

⁹ Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 11–26.

Issues in Theory and Method

The lack of a methodology for reconstructing religion in societies known only archaeologically has been acknowledged by several scholars.¹⁰ Geoffrey Conrad and Arthur Demarest have offered compelling arguments for the centrality of religion as a primary agent in the evolution of the Aztec state, and much recent theory supports this perspective.¹¹ In particular the works of Bourdieu, Giddens, and Bell provide an integrated, comprehensive framework for incorporating the study of religion into an archaeological perspective.¹² What they offer is an argument for the centrality of religion in society. In particular, they show how the act of symbolizing, which is central to religion, pervades human action and the construction of social organization. In this regard their critiques overcome the limitations of structuralist analyses of symbols by urging their placement within a dynamic societal context. Their perspectives take account of the spatial and temporal dimensions of social action, dimensions that are central to archaeology. Thus implicit in Giddens's 'theory of action', and Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, is a perspective that is vital for studying religion in relation to the evolution of society.¹³

These theoretical positions establish the fundamental relationship between belief and culture. They show how belief and values are closely interrelated in the construction of a society's cosmogony.¹⁴ In addition they indicate directions for examining the cognitive geography of a society. Such a geography, though conceptual, becomes manifest in ritual practice. In this manner places are invested with sacred meaning and frequently (though not necessarily) referred back to the most intimately known place, the human body. Thus the *omphalos*, the arms and legs, the sensory organs, and the openings of the body, become metaphors for social and cosmic structures; and oppositions, such as day and night, earth and sky, can be framed in reference to gender. This process fleshes out cognitive space, which being non-linear and atemporal is now cloaked in a physical referent which can operate simultaneously at many levels, for example

¹⁰ Notably in Aegean studies: S. G. Cole, 'Archaeology and Religion', in N. C. Wilkie and W. D. E. Coulson (edd.), *Contributions to Aegean Archaeology: Studies in Honor of William A. McDonald* (Minneapolis, 1985), 49–59; R. Laffineur, 'Archéologie et religion: problèmes et méthode', *Kernos* 1 (1988), 129–40. In the New World: G. Conrad and A. Demarest, *Religion and Empire* (New York, 1984), 209, and as a general issue, P. Garwood et al., *Sacred and Profane* (Oxford, 1989), introd. pp. v–ix.

¹¹ Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 215–26; C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York, 1973), 119; C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York, 1992), 82–5.

¹² P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York, 1977); A. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, 1979); *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley, 1984); Bell (n. 11).

¹³ Giddens, *Central* (n. 12), 45–8, *passim*; Bourdieu (n. 12), 97–8; Bell (n. 11) on practice, 69–93, on space and time, 124–30. Compare E. Zuesse, 'Meditation on Ritual', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975), 519, and Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 225.

¹⁴ A. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York, 1966), 71–5.

in common spaces such as dwellings and villages to less well-known regions like the world and the universe.¹⁵ Thus it is theoretically possible to examine and to some extent derive meaning from the archaeological record of a society by studying the organization of dwelling, the spatial form of settlement and distributions in the landscape, especially if a long-term record can be documented.¹⁶

Scholars of settlement organization and architecture have explored these issues in the past and more recently incorporated the ideas of some of these social theorists in their writings.¹⁷ In particular they have focused on differences in dwelling plan in relation to cultural habits and beliefs and attempted to relate differences in social organization to architectural complexity. In dwellings the division of space according to gender or cosmogonic orders is well illustrated in studies of contemporary architecture.¹⁸

In this chapter I will utilize these approaches to analyse the construction of space in Mycenaean society in order to show how such space reflects Mycenaean belief. In order to avoid a static and certainly incomplete analysis, I will consider the origins of this belief structure by examining first the spatial framework of Middle Helladic culture, as manifested on a regional basis at a number of sites on the mainland of Greece. I will then relate the central spatial components of this cultural tradition to the process of state formation as it evolves through

¹⁵ Bourdieu (n. 12), 87–9, 114–30, *passim* in explaining his notion of *habitus*, discusses the importance of the body as a primary referent for conceptualizing space. He refers to this process as 'conceptual schemes immanent in practice' (p. 118). See the illuminating discussion by Bell (n. 11), 79–80, and the eloquent discussion of the spatial correlates of ritual by Zuesse (n. 13), 521–4.

¹⁶ See n. 15 above and also: E. Guidoni, *Primitive Architecture* (New York, 1975) 8–31; P. Oliver, *Dwellings: The House across the World* (Austin, Tex., 1987), 153–79.

¹⁷ Some early studies in this area are: C. E. Cunningham, 'Order in the Atoni House', and G. H. Gossen, 'Temporal and Spatial Equivalents in Chamba Ritual Symbolism', both in W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt (edd.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (New York, 1972), 116–35 and 135–49. A number of authors considered different aspects of this problem in P. J. Ucko, G. W. Dimbleby and R. Tringham (edd.), *Man, Settlement and Urbanism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), notably M. Douglas in a cautionary study, 'Symbolic Orders in the Use of Domestic Space' (513–52); see also R. Tringham, 'Territorial Demarcation of Prehistoric Settlement' (463–76); R. Martin, 'Concepts of Human Territoriality' (427–45); M. J. Rowlands, 'Defence: A Factor in the Territorial Demarcation of Settlements' (447–62); R. W. Schwerdtfeger, 'Urban Settlement Patterns in Northern Nigeria (Hausaland)' (547–56). Subsequent wide-ranging ethnographic surveys by Guidoni (n. 16) and Oliver (n. 16) provide many examples of contemporary settings among simple to complex societies for examining the variability in spatial expression of belief systems. S. Kent has explored theoretical issues with 'middle-range' studies in a variety of important studies: *Analyzing Activity Areas: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Use of Space*, (Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1984); 'A Cross-cultural Study of Segmentation, Architecture and the Use of Space' in S. Kent (ed.), *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space* (New York, 1990), 127–52. L. Donley-Reid has made explicit the link between the above-discussed theoretical positions and the ethnographic record in 'A Structuring Structure: The Swahili House' in the same volume. See also E. Pavlides and J. Hesser, 'Sacred Space, Ritual and the Traditional Greek House' in J.-P. Bourdier and N. Alsayyad (edd.), *Dwellings, Settlements and Traditions: Cross-cultural Perspectives* (New York, 1989), 275–94.

¹⁸ Guidoni (n. 16), 28–32, 284–88; Oliver (n. 16), 153–70.

contact with other Aegean cultures, notably Minoan, and show how a distinctive Mycenaean belief system emerges at the palace centres on the mainland.¹⁹

The Spatial Correlates of Religion in Mycenaean Greece

During the Early Mycenaean period there are virtually no cult installations. The map (Ill. 3.1) shows those sites identified as demonstrably and possibly associated with religious activity. The number is paltry and, in most instances, the sites are obscure. Subdivision of the sites by more specific periods (late MH, LH I, LH II) so fragments the record as to make it incomprehensible.

A survey of the history of scholarship of Mycenaean religion shows it to be largely intellectualist in approach, that is, speculative without placing the subject in the context of an explicit holistic cultural approach to reconstructing the evolving Mycenaean society.²⁰ Such an approach naturally focuses on the visible monuments and readily interpretable symbolic artefacts of a society. Consequently any interpretation is biased not only towards the cultural apices of a society but also towards a narrative that links such moments through time—much as if the method of archaeology were to be found in detective mysteries. Issues of collecting evidence to test theories of origins, evolution, process, and change are only considered piecemeal at best. Naturally, the scarcity of evidence for the Early Mycenaean period (MH III–LH II) encourages this kind of scholarship. Yet such a dearth of material should not be surprising in view of the fact that primitive religions are characteristically decentralized, personalized, and fluid.²¹ Predictably they would have an underdeveloped symbolism that was neither standardized nor strongly under central control. Just as religion will be recognized in the monuments of a society, so should religion be reflected in the lack of centralizing forces in a society. In such instances we must seek our evidence of religion in different, less substantive manifestations. For example we might expect such ritual practice to focus on age distinctions, initiations, corporate membership, and community stability, and we must find our symbols in these concepts.

If religion, like mortuary custom, reflects to some degree the social organ-

¹⁹ Since the focus of this study is religion, it is important to have a working definition in mind. For archaeological purposes that of Wallace (n. 14), 107, is useful: 'Religion is a set of rituals, rationalized by myth, which mobilizes supernatural powers for the purpose of achieving or preventing transformations of state in man and nature.' This definition is more inclusive and specific than that chosen by Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 14, which permits only simplistic correlations between belief and archaeological evidence (cf. 18–20, 24–6).

²⁰ For references see: R. Hägg, 'Mycenaean Religion: The Helladic and the Minoan Components', in A. Morpurgo Davies and Y. Duhoux (edd.), *Linear B: A 1984 Survey*, Bibliothèque des cahiers de l'Institut de linguistique de Louvain 26 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985), 203–25; id. 'The Religion of the Mycenaean', *II Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia* (Rome and Naples, in press).

²¹ R. N. Bellah, 'Religious Evolution', in Lessa and Vogt (n. 17), 40–1; M. Bloch, 'Religion and Ritual', in A. Kuper and J. Kuper (edd.), *The Social Science Encyclopaedia* (Boston, 1985), 698–701.

ization of the society,²² then it seems likely that in a primitive society in which relationship to the group, and especially the head of the group is important, the structure of these relationships will be manifested in symbolic action. As stated at the outset of this paper, likely places for this evidence to be preserved are in the organization of households and settlements, in the creation of central ceremonial spaces, and at cemeteries.²³ The sparse information about Middle Helladic settlement organization and the lack of ceremonial areas in settlements or at the burial sites of the Early Mycenaean period (as Mylonas has forcefully argued)²⁴ create difficulties in this venture. This paucity of evidence should not, however, lead to the conclusion that the religion of these people lacked organization, especially since much ritual expression will have left no physical trace, and in burial the rituals enacted will have been focused on the immediate corporate group to which the deceased belonged.²⁵ Instead information can be recovered by focusing our attention on detectable changes over time in the manifestation of ritual.

Middle Bronze Age

The dramatic upswing in marked or grouped burials at the end of the Middle Helladic period and the steady increase in the creation of monumental tombs in the immediately ensuing periods has long been recognized as a pivotal period of change in the Middle Bronze Age of Mainland Greece.²⁶ The events of that transformation permit us to reach backward and forwards to isolate continuities in Helladic culture and examine how they change. The process of recognizing continuities is, of course, essential to the identification of a 'Mycenaean' culture and its various characteristics, though it has been too often ignored in studies of Mycenaean institutions.²⁷

In burial practices the focus of energy on a few important burials implies a radical change in the manner in which ancestors are venerated and, in the instance of the monumental tombs of the Early Mycenaean period, the way in which resources and people are managed. Similar developments are reflected

²² E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Glencoe, Ill., 1926). This was for Marx and Engels a central thesis: K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York, 1947), 20. But organized religion does not always support authority, Bloch (n. 21), 700; Wallace (n. 14), 87–8.

²³ H. Wright, 'Prestate Political Formation', in T. K. Earle (ed.), *On the Evolution of Complex Societies: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer, 1982* (Malibu, 1984), 43–4; I. Morris, 'The Archaeology of Ancestors: The Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis Revisited', *CAJ* 1 (1991), 147–69.

²⁴ Mylonas (n. 5), 176–86; in fact most of the burials were not even marked: see O. T. P. K. Dickinson, 'Cist Graves and Chamber Tombs', *BSA* 78 (1983), 59–60.

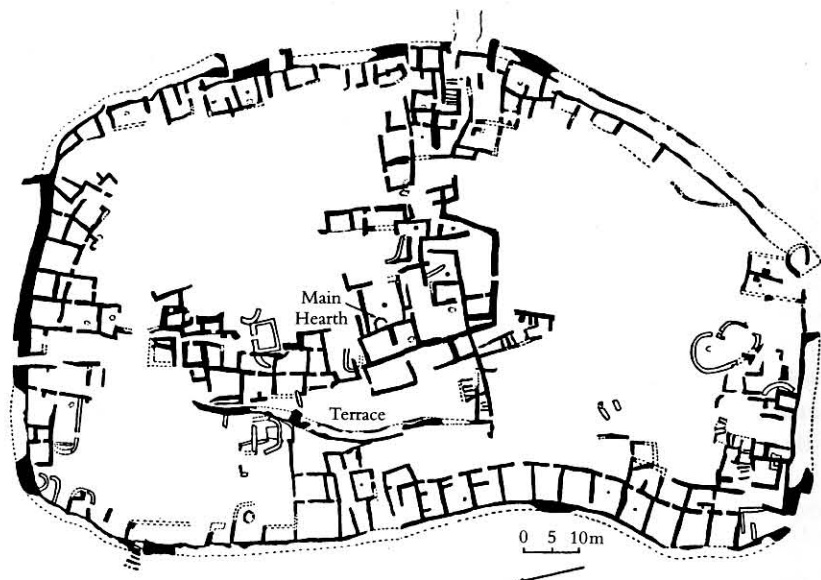
²⁵ J. C. Wright, 'Death and Power at Mycenae', in R. Laffineur (ed.), *Thanatos: Les Coutumes funéraires en Égée à l'âge du bronze*, Aegaeum 1 (Liège, 1987), 174, 176.

²⁶ S. Iakovidis, 'Royal Shaft Graves outside Mycenae', *Temple University Aegean Symposium* 6 (1981), 17–28; Dickinson (n. 24), 60; C. B. Mee and W. G. Cavanagh, 'Mycenaean Tombs as Evidence for Social and Political Organization', *OJA* 3 (1984), 48–51.

²⁷ See for example, K. Kilian's important, but static study: 'The Emergence of the *Wanax* Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces', *OJA* 7 (1988), 291–302.

in changes in the organization of settlements. As has often been pointed out, settlements begin to take on a more focused organization starting in the late Middle Bronze Age and continue increasingly to be oriented towards a centre of the settlement where the leader either resides or conducts business.²⁸ The fact that there are few known settlements of this period merely points up the fact that the process of centralizing power initially is highly variable, dependent upon regional factors that encourage it in one instance and delay or discourage it in another.²⁹ Thus particular examples must be cited to demonstrate the leading edge of the process, while recognizing that most settlements were not initially participating in any observable fashion in these changes.

At the only completely excavated site of the period, Malthi (Ill. 3.2), there is little direct artefactual evidence of religion, nor any obvious architectural focus of religious activity. The dispersed distribution of intramural burials throughout the settlement contrasts to the more focused organization of the settlement itself. Burials are neither grouped nor located in cemeteries outside



ILL. 3.2 Plan of Malthi

²⁸ Wright (n. 25); Kilian (n. 27).

²⁹ M. Dabney and J. C. Wright, 'Mortuary Customs, Palatial Society and State Formation in the Aegean Area: A Comparative Study', in Hägg and Nordquist (n. 2), 45–53; J. Lewthwaite, 'Why did Civilisation Not Emerge More Often? A Comparative Approach to the Development of Minoan Crete', in O. Krzyszkowska and L. Nixon (edd.), *Minoan Society* (Bristol, 1983), 171–83. Additionally, we are hampered by the extent to which early remains are covered over or irrevocably disturbed at the major palace sites.

the settlement. Instead they are distributed, perhaps in special areas within households and throughout the settlement.³⁰ This suggests, perhaps, that identity in death was strongly focused on the family rather than the community.³¹ In contrast the layout of the settlement with a reserved area of large central rooms surrounded by clusters of regular rectangular small rooms built against the inside of the fortification suggests some segregation in architectural arrangement. This may reflect the inception of differentiation within the community.³² It appears that Malthi has all the characteristics of a social group in transformation: it is sedentary, concerned with defence, becoming highly standardized in its organization of space, and reserving areas that may be used for centralized decision-making. These features are conditions for rudimentarily organized religion and should be traced to discern if there is any development in rituals to ancestors and signs of increasing centralization of authority, and especially, of any possible links between these two. Such a development is most apparent in the next phase of settlement when there occurs a dramatic shift in mortuary custom, such that two monumental tholos tombs were built into the hillside at the base of the hill on which the settlement is situated.³³

Hägg considers the so-called Ceremonial Room at Malthi with its apsidal hearth as a probable focus of cult. Even though there is no hard artefactual evidence to demonstrate the hearth's importance in religion at this site during this time,³⁴ it is likely it was a major focus of rituals of the inhabitants, as will be shown below (pp. 57–60). Louis Deroy attempted to show how the hearth had a continuous history of religious importance from the arrival of the Indo-Europeans down to Roman times.³⁵ Although his arguments do not stand up to scrutiny, there is no question of the role the hearth played in historic times in both Greek and Roman culture as it does apparently in many societies,³⁶ and it is highly likely, as I shall later discuss, that it was central to the structure of Mycenaean religion during the Palace period. The appearance of the hearth as a central element in the architecture of the Early Mycenaean period is, therefore, highly suggestive of its position in the conceptual framework of these people.³⁷

³⁰ N. Valmin, *The Swedish Messenia Expedition* (London, 1938), 233.

³¹ A. Saxe, *Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practice* (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1971), 65–71; Morris (n. 23), 147–69.

³² Wright (n. 23), 44.

³³ Valmin (n. 30) 207–25; O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 229 (Paris, 1976), 213–19, 402; O. T. P. K. Dickinson, *The Origins of Mycenaean Civilization*, SIMA 49 (Göteborg, 1977), 93 and n. 45.

³⁴ Hägg (n. 4), 46, no. 11; Vermeule (n. 4) 37; see also J. C. van Leuven, 'The Sanctuaries of Malthi', *Scripta Mediterranea* 5 (1984), 1–26, for an optimistic interpretation of the meagre evidence from Malthi. I owe this reference to R. Hägg.

³⁵ L. Deroy, 'Le Culte du foyer dans la Grèce mycénienne', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 137 (1950), 26–43.

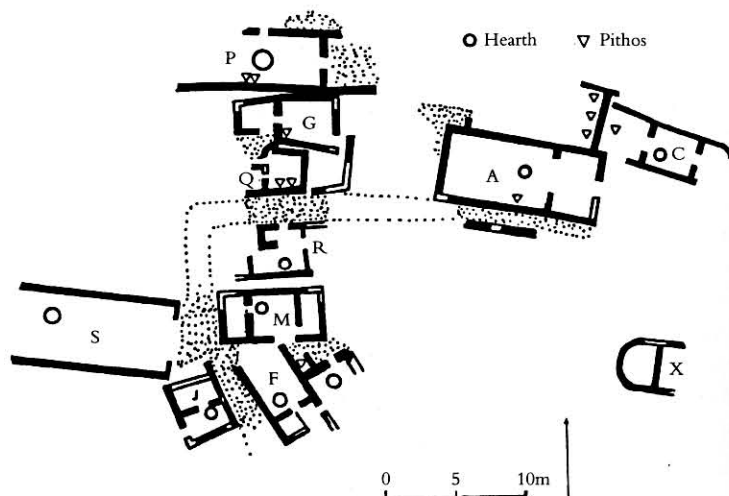
³⁶ Guidoni (n. 16), 108; Oliver (n. 16), 158.

³⁷ Hägg, 'Religion' (n. 20).

The lack of associated artefactual evidence to demonstrate the special function of the hearth is predictable in a society that has yet no need for a highly controlled and centralized set of durable symbols. Yet it is important to consider these architectural remains as symbols themselves. Here, a structural analysis of the spatial order of the settlement is revealing (Ill. 3.2).³⁸

A spatial hierarchy is announced in the planning of the settlement in a series of concentric rings. The first is the fortification wall. Within it peripheral structures, very uniform in plan, form an inner ring farthest from the centre of the settlement. On the higher central portion of the settlement is the inner terrace, rectilinear in shape and containing the largest structure of the settlement, a rambling association of rooms with a squarish one in the approximate centre. This room (Ill. 3.2) contains the apsidal hearth built against the centre of the rear wall.³⁹

This centripetal spatial organization is not confirmed at other Middle Helladic or early Mycenaean sites. It would, in fact, be denied at Eutresis (Ill. 3.3),⁴⁰



ILL. 3.3 Plan of Eutresis

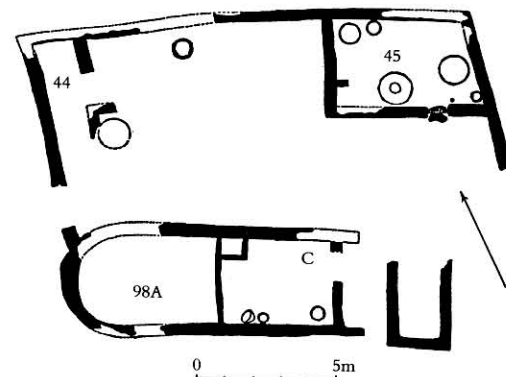
³⁸ See above, n. 17, for the basis of this approach. I follow Bourdieu (n. 12), 87–95, 188, *passim*, Giddens, *Central* (n. 12) and Donley-Reid (n. 17), 115–16, in applying principles of post-structural analysis that do not seek binary opposites, but rather attempt to isolate the values or practices embedded in the symbolic ordering of space. The religio-philosophical underpinnings of this position are discussed in terms of the spatial correlates of ritual by Zuesse (n. 13) 521–4.

³⁹ Valmin (n. 30), 79–80, fig. 20. The hearth is 1.75 m. in diameter surrounded by a stone curb 0.15 m. high.

⁴⁰ K. Kilian, 'L'Architecture des résidences mycénienne: Origine et extension d'une structure du pouvoir politique pendant l'âge du Bronze récent', in E. Lévy (ed.), *Le Système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome* (Leiden, 1985), 203–17.

which merely confirms my insistence that we must examine individual cases and not seek uniformity over our self-imposed domain of study. The general notion of the enclosing circle, however, is a significant symbol, suggestive of inclusion and storage, and it is likely it reflects lineage ties extending beyond the nuclear family. Its wide application for most group and all monumental burials, whether in south-western Messenia, the Argolid, Attica, or Boiotia is a significant indicator of this concept in action. The circle is also represented in the apsidal end of many Middle Helladic buildings. The apsidal room at the back of the house suggests an innermost area of storage and often contains storage jars. Here too, the notion of inclusiveness is reinforced, but the plan of the houses is not circular, rather linear and axial.⁴¹

Middle and Late Helladic houses are organized along a linear axis with movement progressing from outer vestibule to inner rooms, one of which sometimes has a central hearth or even a column or two. In the example of House 98 and Room 45 at Middle Bronze Age Lerna V (Ill. 3.4) a simple combination of elements demonstrates an elaborate structure that constitutes probably a single homestead.⁴² At one side is the main apsidal house. Attached is an enclosing wall forming a square compound with an additional small square storage room in the corner of the yard. In the one instance other than Malthi where a number of structures are grouped together, namely at Eutresis,⁴³ the striking fact is the independence each axially planned building takes (Ill. 3.3). A few rectilinear structures in the centre of the settlement are attached to each



ILL. 3.4 Lerna, plan of House 98 and Room 45

⁴¹ R. Hunter-Anderson, 'A Theoretical Approach to the Study of House Form', in L. Binford (ed.), *For Theory Building in Archaeology* (New York, 1977), 295–307.

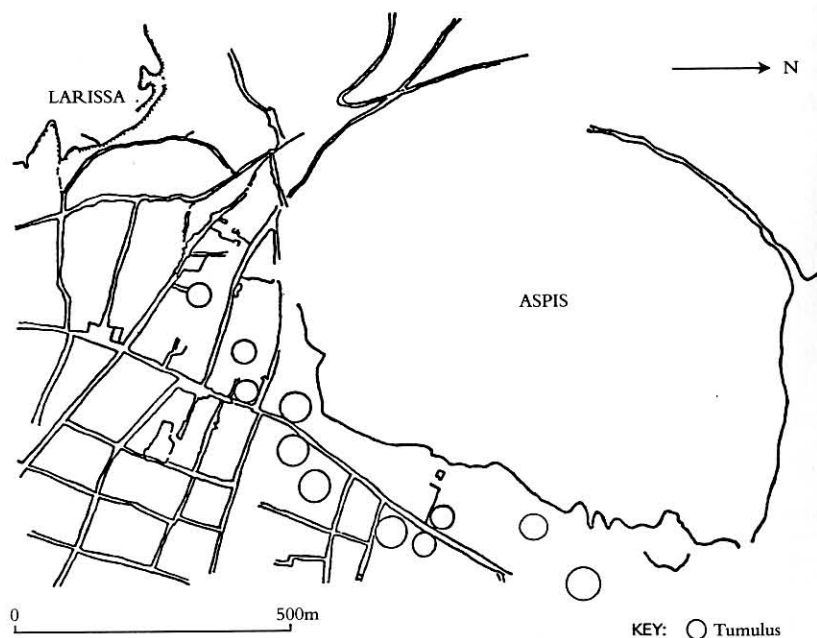
⁴² J. L. Caskey, 'Excavations at Lerna: 1956', *Hesperia* 26 (1957), 149–51; cf. G. Nordquist, *A Middle Helladic Village: Asine in the Argolid*, *Boreas* 16 (Uppsala, 1983), 88.

⁴³ H. Goldman, *Excavations at Eutresis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 31–64; Kilian (n. 40).

other, but these are distinctly different from the main structures; they are production areas with numerous hearths, ovens, and bins and are much less formally organized than the larger buildings.

There seem to be some rules at work here, though the preserved sample permits no quantitative measures. Circularity seems to represent small or highly undifferentiated groups. These groups are stored, like undifferentiated grain, in bulk containers. Axial arrangements are more focused and express heterogeneity and differentiation.⁴⁴ These are spatial symbols of a society on the verge of transformation from an undifferentiated to a highly differentiated order. They do not spell out the content of the beliefs and value structure of the society but indicate directions that can be pursued when more and diverse evidence is available.

The transformation is most evident in changes in burial form. For example, whereas in many areas burial in pithoi is common and these jars are frequently placed within tumuli (e.g. Voidokoilia, Papoulia, Argos, Aphidna), a change is marked when rectangular stone-built cist burials are introduced. Thus at Marathon the core burial (grave 1) of tumulus 1 is an elaborate rectangular cist with



ILL. 3.5 Plan of Argos

⁴⁴ Hunter-Anderson (n. 41), 304-12; Kent, 'Cross-cultural' (n. 17).

axial entrance, and later additions to the tumuli follow this lead.⁴⁵ At Argos, Asine, and Dendra cist tombs are prevalent forms whether placed in burial groups or within tumuli (Ill. 3.5).⁴⁶ At Mycenae the cist is normal but in Circle B it becomes a receptacle for important individuals and family groups whose lineages are accentuated by inclusion within the circle.⁴⁷ At Koukounara (Kaminia) in Messenia, emergent multiple tholoi first appear within a tumulus, and then, at Voidokoilia the tholos assumes a more overtly individualistic focus with the construction of one tomb in the tumulus while still respecting the earlier burials.⁴⁸

Discussion

These spatial habits can be understood as symbolizing bounded social groups recognizable in the layout and architecture of their settlements and their burials. Such social grouping is a natural result of a lineage system of descent. In her discussion of this system, Carol MacCormack points out that different marriage rules have different results regarding the origins of hierarchies, and, although the interest of her research on this question has to do with the origins of exchange,⁴⁹ clearly equal differences will be reflected in the spatial ordering of dwellings and settlements. Kent has proposed that changes towards complexity in social organization increase the segmentation of space and architecture, and this proposition, closely related to Hunter-Anderson's, is applicable in analysis of the remains of Middle Helladic and early Mycenaean Greece.⁵⁰

On the surface these developments towards complexity in Mycenaean society seem to be largely social in nature, but they reflect an emerging conceptual framework of values and beliefs that later come to characterize Mycenaean religion. At the core of this conceptual development is the notion of centredness. Centredness is a general concept to describe the centripetal organization of Mycenaean society, an organizing principle common in many societies,

⁴⁵ Pithos burials: Pelon (n. 33); Dickinson (n. 24), 59. Marathon: S. Marinatos, 'Further News from Marathon', *AAA* 3 (1970), 162-3; 'Further Discoveries at Marathon', *AAA* 3 (1970), 351.

⁴⁶ Argos: E. Deilaki, *Hoi tumboi tou Argous* (Athens, 1980). Asine: S. Dietz, *Asine ii. 2: The Middle Helladic Cemetery, The Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean Deposits* (Stockholm, 1980); id. *The Argolid at the Transition to the Mycenaean Age* (Copenhagen, 1991), 145-7.

⁴⁷ Dickinson (n. 33), 40-1; G. Graziadio, 'The Chronology of the Graves of Circle B at Mycenae: A New Hypothesis', *AJA* 92 (1988), 343-72; 'The Process of Social Stratification at Mycenae in the Shaft Grave Period: A Comparative Examination of the Evidence', *AJA* 95 (1991), 403-40.

⁴⁸ Koukounara: G. S. Korres, 'Anaskaphe Pylou', *Praktika* (1975), 484-512; 'Anaskaphe ana ten Pulian', *Praktika* (1980), 125-9; 'Anaskaphe Voidokilias Pylas', *Praktika* (1982), 230; *Ethnographisch-Archaeologische Zeitschrift* 28 (1987), 711-43; Dickinson (n. 24), 58.

⁴⁹ C. P. MacCormack, 'Exchange and Hierarchy', in A. Sheridan and G. Bailey (edd.), *Economic Archaeology*, BAR Int. Ser. 96 (Oxford, 1981), 161. See also: J. Friedman and M. J. Rowlands, 'Notes towards an Epigenetic Model of the Evolution of "Civilisation"', in J. Friedman and M. J. Rowlands (edd.), *The Evolution of Social Systems* (London, 1977), 201-76.

⁵⁰ Kent, 'Cross-cultural' (n. 17); Hunter-Anderson (n. 41), 295-307.

especially complex ones,⁵¹ and it is validated in the case at hand because characteristic spatial components of it appear in the Middle Bronze Age, as just discussed, and carry over into the more fully developed Late Bronze Age. Centredness in Mycenaean society may be understood from three perspectives. First is the notion of inclusiveness within the circle which distinguishes the community as an undifferentiated yet highly distinct social entity. Second is the notion of the contents of the circle, which may be conceptualized as the multi-linear relations of kin groups. Third is the process of differentiation, which is lineage based and strongly affects burial, dwelling and settlement form. Naturally, as such a society constructs its cosmogony and belief system, social organization and religion will interact and be symbolized conceptually and, consequently, spatially, though the correlation between the two will not be precise.

Transitional Period

In Mycenaean society symbolic utilization of space becomes somewhat more evident during the period spanning LH I–LH IIB, which roughly would be considered the transitional stage from chieftdom to state.⁵² The spread of the tholos across the mainland is one example of this process, for, aside from its monumental quasi-public character, the tholos establishes a distinct physical domain, usually around the outer perimeter of a settlement. As Cavanagh and Mee have pointed out, however, this relation is rarely explicit: the distribution of burials to settlements and of chamber tombs to tholoi and to roads, is neither regular nor in systematic alignment.⁵³ In architecture the evidence is less ubiquitous. The dearth of architectural remains of LH I–II date from both citadels and outlying sites precludes certainty about the level of planning and technical skills employed in central architecture. Evidence from elsewhere confirms only the tendency towards rectilinear and free-standing forms. Neither size nor organization appears to increase in any consistent manner. At the Menelaion, however, Mansion I shows (as did Malthi earlier) the advance guard of developments towards a monumental, standardized arrangement of complex forms. Although it may not be permitted to generalize a widespread contemporaneous phenomenon from a single example, the plan of Mansion I clearly exhibits the core principles of organization which subsequently governed

⁵¹ P. Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters* (Edinburgh, 1971), 257–67; D. H. Knipe, 'The Temple in Image and Reality', in M. V. Fox (ed.), *Temple in Society* (Winona Lake, Wis., 1988), 107–12; Guidoni (n. 16), 49, 59, 79, 92, 102–3, 130, 191, 252; Oliver (n. 16), 157.

⁵² Wright (n. 25); Dabney and Wright (n. 29); Kilian (n. 40); Kilian (n. 27), 291–302.

⁵³ W. C. Cavanagh and C. B. Mee, 'The Location of Mycenaean Chamber Tombs in the Argolid', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 55–64; 'The Spatial Distribution of Mycenaean Tombs', *BSA* 85 (1990), 225–43.

palatial planning. At the centre is the central room of the megaron, fronted by a vestibule and flanked by corridors leading to secondary rooms. Here is the first strong architectural manifestation of the centripetal character of Mycenaean society, one which will become increasingly evident in the formal planning of the palaces and citadels during LH IIIA:1 and in subsequent periods.

Palatial Period

The developed spatial form of this ideology is well represented at Mycenae during its heyday (LH IIB). Architectural icons form a series of concentric rings of symbols that increasingly focus on the centre of Mycenaean ritual and authority, which is the megaron with its monumental hearth and royal throne.

The most immediately visible encircling element in this iconic family is the Mycenaean fortification wall.⁵⁴ In its most elaborate form the magnitude of the fortification wall is clearly more concerned with making a statement of power than with practical defence.⁵⁵ Eight-metre thick walls or five-metre-long blocks, as are found at Tiryns, were hardly necessary to repel an attacker. A distinctive spatial characteristic of Mycenaean fortification is the elaboration of the gate by using special masonry forms; this creates accentuated nodes on the cognitive map of the onlooker.⁵⁶ At Mycenae (Ill. 3.6) this process achieves its most grandiose version in the plan and execution of the Lion Gate.⁵⁷ The plan with an exterior *dromos* focuses attention on the gate in the cross wall (Ill. 3.6). The material employed (massive rectangular blocks of conglomerate) stands out among the surrounding irregular, roughly faced limestone blocks that make up the wall (Ill. 3.7). The special slabs employed for the threshold, jambs and lintel of the gate provide focus to the entrance. The crowning limestone relief (Ill. 3.7) sends a triple message of natural power (the flanking lions) guarding the palace (represented by the column) and based on religion (the altars).⁵⁸ These icons are equally important as legitimating expressions of authority, much like the Lion of St Mark, because they are Minoan in origin and part of the

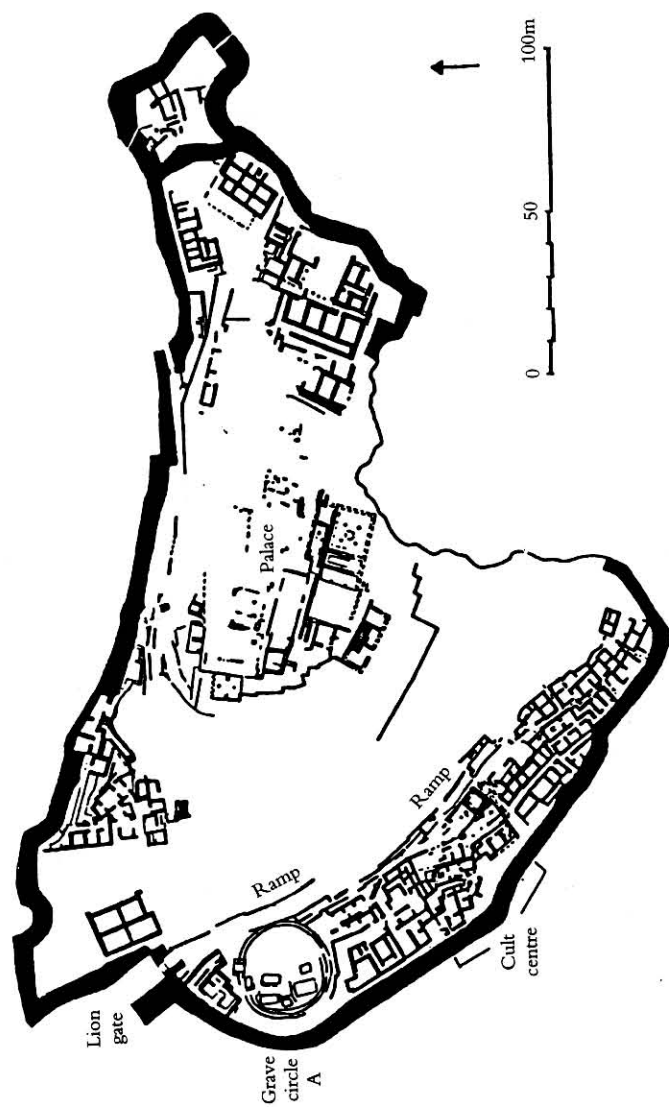
⁵⁴ The term 'iconic family' is borrowed from J. V. Knight, Jr., 'The Institutional Organization of Mississippian Religion', *American Antiquity* 51 (1986), 676.

⁵⁵ B. G. Trigger, 'Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour', *World Archaeology* 22 (1990), 119–32.

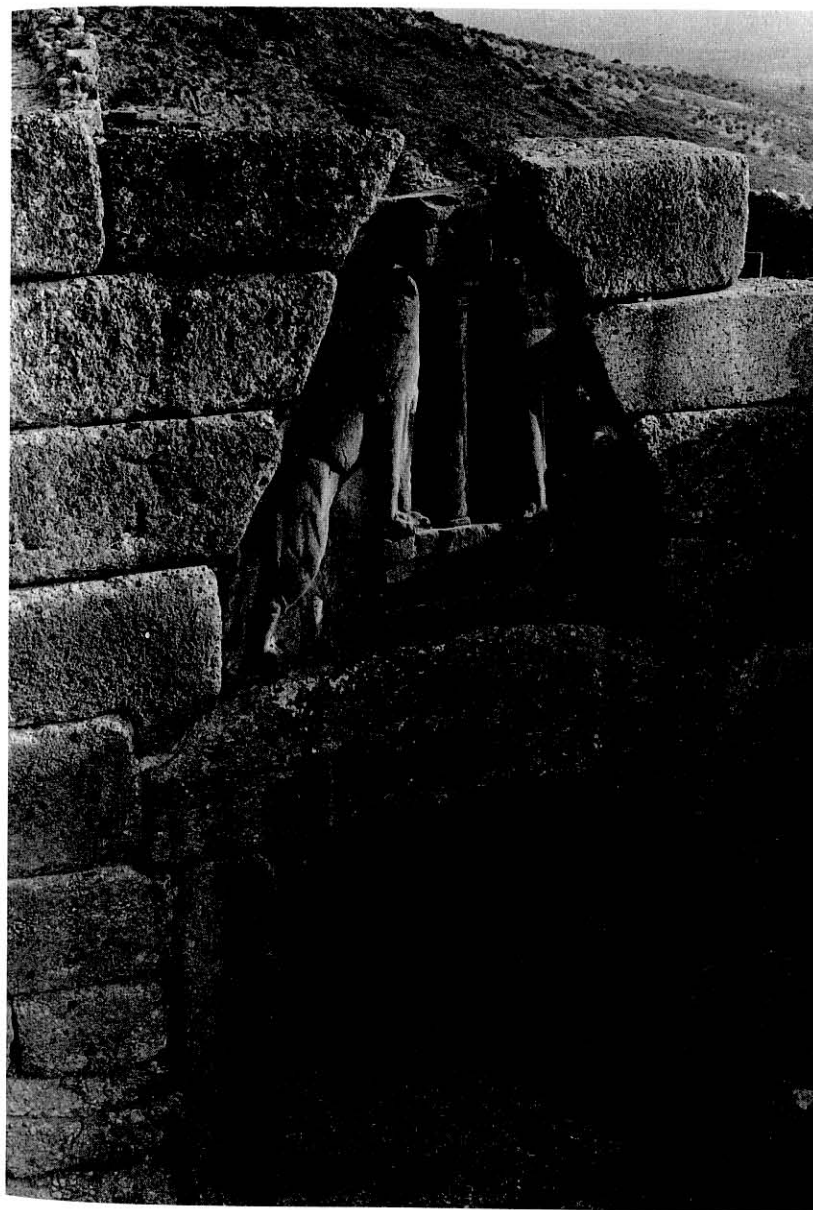
⁵⁶ For a detailed examination of these phenomena at many sites, see J. C. Wright, 'Mycenaean Masonry and Elements of Construction' (Ph. D., diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1978), 168–70, 172, 179, 181, *passim*; see also S. Iakovides, *Late Helladic Citadels on the Mainland of Greece* (Leiden, 1983).

⁵⁷ Wright (n. 25), 182.

⁵⁸ P. Åström and B. Blomé, 'A Reconstruction of the Lion Relief at Mycenae', *OpAth* 5 (1964), 159–91; E. Protonatariou-Deilaki, 'Peri tes pules ton Mykenon', *AE* (1965), 7–25; Mylonas (n. 5), 173–5; C. Kardara, 'He semasia tou anaglyphou tes pules ton leonton', *AAA* 3 (1970), 238–46; M. Shaw, 'The Lion Gate Relief of Mycenae Reconsidered', in *Philia epe eis Georgion E. Mulonan*, i (Athens, 1986), 108–23.



ILL. 3.6 Plan of Mycenae



ILL. 3.7 The Lion Gate

iconography of power in Neopalatial Crete.⁵⁹ This use of Minoan symbols by Mycenaean rulers was part of the process of differentiation of their lineage groups from those of commoners. Mycenaean chiefs, who had access to the highest levels of the Minoan state, appropriated and adapted the symbols of Minoan religion and ruling authority as a means of removing themselves from the common beliefs and authority structure of Helladic custom, thus symbolically elevating themselves above the commoners.⁶⁰

The passage through the gate is, naturally enough, the final destination of a system of state-operated roadways emanating from the palace. Placement of such symbols at the gate marks the transition into an area of special ritual significance. The monumental ramp that rises beyond the gate leads upwards to the crest of the citadel where another circle is perceived in the monumental terracing that supports the palace (Ill. 3.6).⁶¹ Although the course of the road as it ascends is lost, the presence of two monumental entrances to the palace, the one through a formal propylon and the other up the Grand Staircase, reiterate the notion of passing through boundaries to the innermost seat of authority. The increasing repetition of special masonry forms and techniques, notably cut conglomerate stones used for column and anta bases, in these entrances emphasizes the architectural symbolism. From within these entrances the organization of corridors and courts provides another spatial surround before access to the megaron (Ill. 3.6). Here the architectural details are further enhanced by elaborate use of ashlar masonry, half-timbering, special flooring, and painted plaster. The plan at Tiryns (Ill. 3.8) is the most regular of all the palaces with a strict rectilinearity to its organization.

Analysis of the Megaron

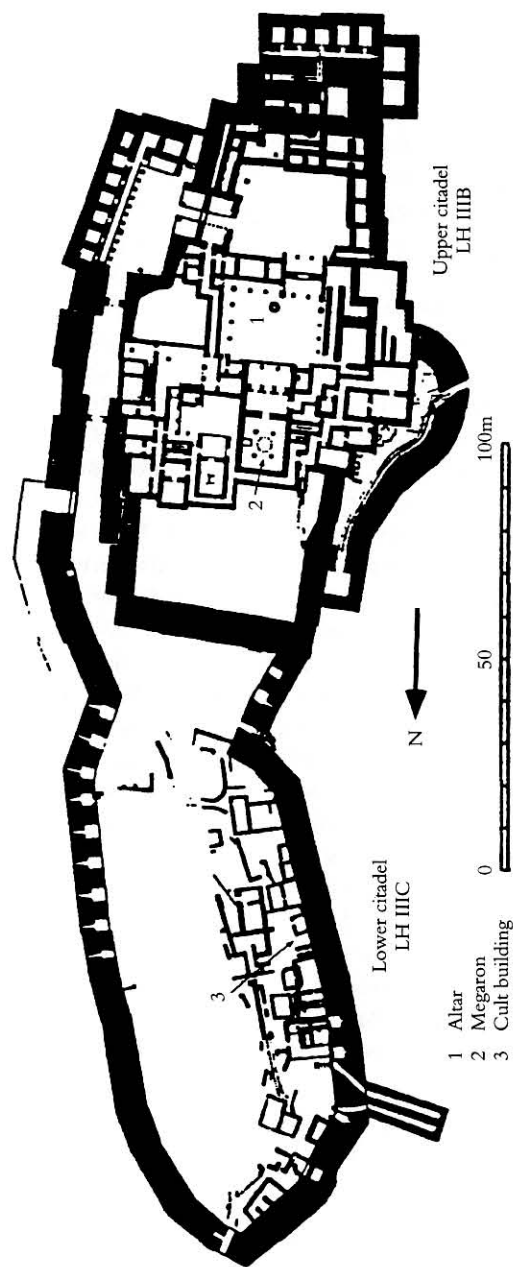
The organization of the megaron produces one more shell around the core, (compare Ill. 3.8) for one must traverse first the porch (with its own special arrangement of cult furnishings),⁶² then the vestibule before reaching the throne

⁵⁹ Vermeule (n. 4), 49–50; C. Boulotis, 'Villes et palais dans l'art égéen du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.', in Hägg and Nordquist (n. 2), 455–7; K. Krattenmaker, *Minoan Architectural Representation* (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1991), 14–45, 92–7, 295–330; J. C. Wright, 'Empty Cups and Empty Jugs: The Social Role of Wine in Minoan and Mycenaean Society', in P. McGovern, S. Fleming, and S. Katz (edd.), *The Origins and History of Ancient Wine* (New York, in press). See the example at Athens in J. C. Wright, 'The Mycenaean Entrance System at the West End of the Akropolis of Athens', *Hesperia*, 63 (1994), 323–60.

⁶⁰ Friedman and Rowlands (n. 49); Wright, 'Empty' (n. 59).

⁶¹ H. Lauter, 'Nouveaux aspects du palais de Mycènes au HR IIIB', in E. Lévy (ed.), *Le Système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome* (Leiden, 1987), 219–25, has suggested that some conglomerate blocks above the main ramp are part of another propylon in this area; the blocks, however, are no longer *in situ*.

⁶² Between the southern column of the porch and the southern anta, I. Papadimitriou found what he interpreted as the remains of an altar, a carved offering table, and a compartmentalized basin set into the flooring slabs: 'Anaskaphai eis Mykenon', *Praktika* (1955), 230–2; see also H. Plommer, 'A Carved Block from the Megaron at Mycenae', *BSA* 60 (1965), 211, who thinks the block a column capital.



ILL. 3.8 Plan of Tiryns with Lower Citadel

room. This plan is a formalization of the linear, axial arrangement characteristic of Middle Bronze Age architecture, and it has as its goal the circular monumental hearth in the centre of the megaron which is itself surrounded by four monumental columns. The flanking throne against the centre of the wall on one's right is set on the cross axis of the hearth. It supports the human authority who administers the cults that are symbolized by the hearth.

From a structuralist viewpoint the organization of the megaron is of keen interest. For example, at Tiryns the axiality of the megaron is enhanced by its orientation to a circular stone-built altar in the great court (Ill. 3.8).⁶³ The megaron opens out to the court through its *distyle in antis* porch façade. From that point one is in liminal passage. The next room, a vestibule, is pierced by three doorways that retain the opening out into the more public court, but it also turns attention to the inner room, which is reached through a single doorway. Upon entering the room the plan and decoration focus and enframe the great central hearth. To the side, averted to the right, is the throne, which itself is centred on the hearth.⁶⁴ Thus, despite the presence of the seat of a powerful human in the room, the hearth is the centre of attention. The surrounding four columns support the opening in the ceiling that links the hearth with the heavens.

This overall organization is equally evident in the plans of other citadels, but thorough analysis of each case is not necessary here, though it is instructive to examine briefly the situation at Pylos. There, as recently argued by Lucinda R. McCallum, the vestibule and inner room of the megaron are linked by a programme of frescos. In the outer room a procession shows a bull being led inwards and in the inner room, at one's right, is a painted scene of sacrifice and ritual feasting.⁶⁵ Clearly this scene enhances the ritualistic nature of this room and provides a more detailed view than can be gained from the remains at the other palaces where these frescos were not preserved.

The Symbolism of the Megaron

Kilian has made the argument that the megaron arrangement of the palaces developed directly from the plan of Middle Helladic houses.⁶⁶ Although more complete studies of Early Mycenaean architecture caution against such an oversimplified notion of an architectural canon, there can be no question that

R. Hägg regards the basin as a place for libation: 'The Role of Libation in Mycenaean Ceremony', in Hägg and Nordquist (n. 2), 180, fig. 4.

⁶³ Hägg (n. 62), 181, 184.

⁶⁴ See now for Tiryns: K. Kilian, 'Die «Thronfolge» in Tiryns', *AM* 103 (1988), 1-9.

⁶⁵ L. R. McCallum, 'Frescoes from the Throne Room at Pylos: A New Interpretation', *AJA* 91 (1987), 296; R. Hägg, 'Pictorial Programmes in Minoan Palaces and Villas?' in P. Darque and J.-C. Poursat (edd.), *L'Iconographie minoenne*, *BCH* Suppl. 11 (Paris, 1980), 216; Hägg, 'Religion' (n. 20). See also Wright (n. 59).

⁶⁶ Kilian (n. 40), 212-13; compare the discussion by G. Hiesel, *Späthelladische Hausarchitektur. Studien zur Architekturgeschichte des griechischen Festlandes in der späten Bronzezeit* (Mainz, 1990), 203-9.

the linear and axial principles of organization found in the palaces have a long history in Helladic architecture. What is missing in the Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean period is evidence of the monumentalization of this architecture. Only the first 'mansion' at the Menelaion has a plan that suggests in its complexity the transition to the standard palatial plan, though there are several large rectangular buildings at other sites dating to LH II.⁶⁷ Clearly the peer polity interaction model is applicable when examining the creation of the homologous palace plans beginning in LH IIIA:1 with their focus on the monumental megaron.⁶⁸ Fundamental to the axial organization of the megaron is the central hearth, and nearly as important are the columns surrounding it.

The Hearth

As mentioned previously the hearth is commonly important in many Indo-European cultures and in Classical Greece. Jean-Pierre Vernant has argued that the goddess Hestia represents both the 'centre of the domestic sphere' and 'the navel which ties the hearth to the earth'. In Classical Greece the hearth fixed and oriented human space and was located at 'the centre of the cosmos'.⁶⁹ Its location at the centre of the physical sphere of Mycenaean society and its overtly symbolic nature in its monumentalized form in Mycenaean palaces supports a similar cognitive interpretation. Even the flame pattern painted on the stucco rim reinforces the notion of the sacred fire which it contained.⁷⁰ Paraphernalia found at Pylos around the hearth and the throne amplify its nature. Resting on a small tripod table next to the hearth were several miniature kylikes, which Hägg has cogently argued were used for libations. Next to the throne are the well-known interconnected plaster depressions that since Blegen's publication have been accepted as for receiving liquid libations.⁷¹

The orientation of the throne to the hearth suggests that the occupant of the throne, presumably the *wanax*, officiated in the rituals. He may have been the guardian of the hearth, and, in so far as the hearth represents the household, also the guardian of the family, protector of the household, and guarantor of its future. Vernant, explaining the role of the *hestia* in Greek thought, discusses at length the important roles symbolized by the hearth: patrilocality, fertility, the proper order of the household and the state, feasting, fraternity, and xenophilia.⁷² Although there is neither epigraphic nor iconographic evidence to argue a

⁶⁷ Hiesel (n. 66), 204-7.

⁶⁸ C. Renfrew and J. F. Cherry (edd.), *Peer-Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change* (Cambridge, 1986).

⁶⁹ J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Thought Among the Greeks* (Boston, 1983), 128-31; Deroy (n. 35); compare Zuesse (n. 13), 521.

⁷⁰ C. W. Blegen and M. Rawson, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia, 1: The Buildings and their Contents* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), 64.

⁷¹ Hägg (n. 62), 183; Wright (n. 59).

⁷² Vernant (n. 69), 133-42.

continuity between Mycenaean and Greek religion, the more complete picture of the symbolic content of the hearth provided in Vernant's analysis is useful for reconstructing the outlines of Mycenaean cosmology. Certainly, if one accepts the notion that Helladic culture was structured around the concept of lineage and that it evolved into a series of chiefdoms or paramount lineages, the idea of a powerful male ruling figure emerging in Mycenaean times is hardly far-fetched. Thus it is not improbable to suggest that the palace hearth symbolizes the centre of the state, and the *wanax* was in this sense its father and chief. Such an argument describes a cult institution of power and authority that reinforces the stability of the state,⁷³ but it also demonstrates the priority of religion in the organization of the seat of power. Again this distinction needs emphasis since it is common in anthropology to view religion and ideology only as tools of state power.⁷⁴

The Columns

As Hiesel has observed, the columns surrounding the hearth are not merely decorative. We might suspect this from the frequency with which the column is imbued in many societies with fundamental symbolic meaning.⁷⁵ The column was an important icon in Minoan representation and becomes especially so in Mycenaean, appearing frequently flanked by animals and fantastic beasts and in association with altars.⁷⁶ In Mycenaean society, at one level the column represents the palace, which contains the hearth and the seat of the *wanax*, but it may well also represent something more substantive that relates different elements in Mycenaean cosmology.⁷⁷ Hence, in the two preserved locales where monumental entrance displays are preserved in the external fortifications, Athens and Mycenae, the column appears as a central element (Ill. 3.7). At Mycenae it is the central motive in the Lion Gate relief, which, as I have explained above, combines symbols of nature and the supernatural around the column. At Athens the column appears in the centre of the Cyclopean bastion before the west gate. We do not know if it stood alone or if other elements were placed in the niche that held it, but there are traces of burning and possible artefacts in the ledge below.⁷⁸ At Tiryns it is likely that a monumental relief may have been

⁷³ I use the term 'cult institution' in the sense of Wallace (n. 14), 75.

⁷⁴ Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 203; M. Leone, 'Opinions about Recovering Mind', *American Antiquity* 47 (1982), 742-60; J. Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State* (New York, 1982) 174-80; compare Bell (n. 11), 83-5.

⁷⁵ Hiesel (n. 66), 225, 232; Guidoni (n. 16), 110, 152, 288; Oliver (n. 16), 162.

⁷⁶ M. P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (Lund, 1950), 236-62; A. Evans, *The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and its Mediterranean Relations* (London, 1901), 58-65; Protonariou-Deilaki (n. 58).

⁷⁷ Vermeule (n. 4), 49-50, 53.

⁷⁸ N. Balanos, 'He nea anastelosis tou naou tes Athenas Nikes (1935-39)', *AE* (1937), 776-807; Wright, 'Mycenaean Entrance' (n. 59).

placed above the Steintor and the remains of a monumental entrance-way atop the Larisa at Argos allow the possibility of another.⁷⁹ At Pylos, a fragment of wall-painting found in the inner propylon shows a variation where facing sphinxes repose *en gardant* above a monumental entrance with an ornate central post.⁸⁰ What is important to recognize here is that none of these primary symbols represents a human, a conclusion reinforced by the above observation that the throne is oriented to the hearth. Thus the column as a generic symbol may be strongly suggestive of the supernatural force that supports human authority.⁸¹ The role of the column in the megaron, however, is fundamentally architectural. As such it supports an opening that allows smoke to vent from the building. But at the symbolic level it mediates between the human structure that contains the hearth and the heavens; it may be viewed as holding up the heavens or as connecting them with the hearth at the centre of the cosmos.

The Hearth as Cult Institution

Kilian has proposed a term for the phenomenon of emphasizing political authority in Mycenaean society; he calls it the *wanax* ideology.⁸² In the light of the present study this term represents only half of the equation because it focuses only on the ruler and neglects the hearth and the associated rituals which the ruler performs; a preferable term might be the hearth-*wanax* ideology. In its most developed form the hearth-*wanax* ideology is a major cult institution of Mycenaean society. As we have seen, this ideology is composed of many all-embracing spatial elements, and as such, it probably is represented by contradictory and disparate symbols. For example, the increase of militaristic imagery in Mycenaean artefacts and art occurs in conjunction with the maintenance of the sylvan nature scenes of Minoan iconography.⁸³

A significant architectural and spatial expression of this cult is in the reorganization and monumental display of the burials in Circle A at Mycenae, which, as I have argued elsewhere, is part of a highly organized iconic display of architecture focused on the palace at Mycenae but appealing to a very broad audience on the mainland of Greece, at least. By placing the Lion Gate before the refurbished grave circle the rulers at Mycenae emphasized the strength of ancestral authority (Ill. 3.6).⁸⁴

The symbolism of the role of the *wanax* outlined here describes a centripetal

⁷⁹ K. Müller, *Tiryns*, iii: *Die Architektur der Burg und des Palastes* (Augsburg, 1930), 73; W. Vollgraff, 'Arx Argorum', *Mnemosyne* 56 (1928), 315-28; Åström and Blomé (n. 58), 180, figs. 3-5.

⁸⁰ M. L. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Southwestern Messenia*, ii: *The Frescoes* (Princeton, NJ, 1968), fragment 1A2, 135-7; Shaw (n. 58), 123.

⁸¹ The column is a dominant symbol, as in V. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY, 1967), 20-32; cf. Wallace (n. 14), 237-8.

⁸² Kilian (n. 27).

⁸³ Compare P. Rehak, 'New Observations on the Mycenaean "Warrior Goddess"', *AA* (1984), 542.

⁸⁴ Wright (n. 25), 181.

organization located in the megaron of the palace and focused on the hearth where the ruler is responsible for the maintenance of the cult.⁸⁵ The history of the development of this institution suggests an ever-increasing process of centring authority and power in the hands of an ecclesiastical primate ruler. Part of this process, which distinguishes the Mycenaean system of belief from the Minoan, is the appropriation of primary cult under the control of the ruler, a process which continues throughout the Palatial period. This distinction, however, is especially observable when comparing mortuary customs of the Minoans and Mycenaeans. In Minoan society traditional community burials are maintained at continuously inhabited Prepalatial settlements during Protopalatial and Neopalatial times. Individual burials only assert themselves during the developed phase of the Neopalatial period.⁸⁶ In contrast in Mycenaean culture ostentatious mortuary customs for individuals of high rank and status precede palace formation and are characteristically located close by the locus of power. The differences also are reflected in the lack of power-centred iconography in Minoan art and in the emphasis on rituals that show communal participation, such as the 'Grandstand Fresco' or the 'Harvester Vase', or in the architectural layout of the sanctuary at Simi Viannou.⁸⁷ In Mycenaean iconography a contrasting emphasis on individual or restricted group activity is more common, as in the frequent battle and hunt scenes in relief, on rings and seals, and in wall-painting.⁸⁸ Places for communal worship are rare. Those that are available, such as the great court at Tiryns, are in special, presumably restricted, locations.

In terms of the process of the development of the citadels and the growth of their territorial control, however, the centralized hearth-*wanax* cult may have been too exclusive to effect the kind of integration necessary for a territorially based state-level society. Local places of worship and assembly surely existed, although not necessarily under the control of the palace. This problem, so far discussed in Mycenaean studies in terms of official versus popular cults, may also be viewed as a contrast between urban and rural cults. However viewed, these dichotomies were not frozen in space and time, for the conditions of the emergence and relations of these cults can only be viewed diachronically as part of the process of the evolution of a complex society.⁸⁹ In the next part of this paper the problem of this relationship will be examined.

⁸⁵ Wheatley (n. 51), 257-67.

⁸⁶ Dabney and Wright (n. 29), 46. Compare this situation to that described in Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 11-83, 218-20, for the Aztec state with its decentralized response to ideological custom.

⁸⁷ A. Lebesse and P. Muhly, 'Aspects of Minoan Cult. Sacred Enclosures: The Evidence from the Syme Sanctuary (Crete)', *AA* (1990), 315-36.

⁸⁸ This is a much discussed issue; see recent research in N. Marinatos, 'Celebrations of Death and the Symbolism of the Lion Hunt', and C. Morris, 'In Pursuit of the White-tusked Boar: Aspects of Hunting in Mycenaean Civilization', both in Hägg and Nordquist (n. 2), 143-8 and 149-56.

⁸⁹ Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 201-5; Wallace (n. 14), 86-8, 91-100; Bellah (n. 21), 42.

Citadel Cult Centres

We can begin by studying the other well-known focus of ritual activity at the citadels, the so-called Cult Centres. The process of centring also is manifest in the establishment of these cults within the citadels. The relationship of these areas to the palace has not been much examined and remains a major issue to consider.⁹⁰ The Cult Centres form an important part of our evidence for Mycenaean religion, in particular because they demonstrate the architectural form and artefactual content of Mycenaean shrines. The salient features of these installations are: 1. the late date of their establishment; 2. their construction in vernacular techniques using a vernacular plan; 3. their location within the citadel as far from the palace as possible and up against the circuit wall; 4. their use of large figures as cult statuary;⁹¹ and 5. within the shrine buildings, the appearance of a bench as one focus of ritual activity. Finally, it should be stressed that the Cult Centres vary among themselves in degrees of complexity; some, such as those at Mycenae and Phylakopi, show evidence of a constellation of different cults probably located in different shrines.⁹²

These distinguishing features differentiate the Citadel Cult Centres and their activities from those outlined above in the discussion of the megaron. They also suggest the centres were of lesser importance than the cults in the megaron of the palace. Their late establishment implies that they evolved out of circumstances that did not exist on a critical scale in the early years of the palaces. This is confirmed by the varying evidence for their establishment: LH IIIA:2 at Phylakopi, LH IIIB:1 at Mycenae, LH IIIB:2 at Tiryns, and the evidence that they continued to be used after the palaces were destroyed and abandoned.⁹³

The notion of the Citadel Cult Centres as being less important than the cults in the palace is demonstrated by the lack of attention paid to their architectural adornment. Only rarely do any of the shrine buildings utilize the architectural techniques for monumental buildings, such as ashlar masonry, half-timbered wall construction and cut stone for column bases and antae. Only a few buildings preserve wall-paintings, and when they do at Mycenae—the most elaborate of the Cult Centres—the paintings are found at the entrance leading from, probably,

⁹⁰ See Cole (n. 10), 54. Some scholars now maintain that the megaron was not a centre of cult as I have argued, and that cult activity was focused in the shrines of the 'Cult Centres' within the citadels: see G. E. Mylonas, *The Cult Center at Mycenae* (Athens, 1972), 34-5, 40; Hägg, 'Official and Popular' (n. 2), 36; Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 389, 401-2; but see Hägg, 'Religion' (n. 20).

⁹¹ Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 413-26.

⁹² See French, 'Cult' (n. 6) and in Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6); N. Marinatos, 'The Fresco from Room 31 at Mycenae: Problems of Method and Interpretation', in K. A. Wardle and E. A. French (edd.), *Problems in Greek Prehistory* (Bristol, 1988), 245-51; Mylonas (n. 90); I. Kritseli-Providi, *Toichographies tou threskeutikou kentrou ton Mykenon* (Athens, 1982).

⁹³ Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 80 (Phylakopi); French, 'Cult' (n. 6) 42 (Mycenae); Kilian (n. 6), 53 (Tiryns).

the palace⁹⁴ decorating the altar area of the so-called House of the Frescos, and located around and within the so-called South-west Building, a mudbrick structure separated from the main cult area.⁹⁵ Most of the buildings have a simple plan with a small floor area; the plan is often irregular and without a strong orientation. The benches built within the shrines are constructed of rubble and mud and sometimes contain deposits of the debris of worship.⁹⁶ The third point in the list above, the location of the centres, suggests a secondary nature. At Mycenae the Cult Centre is set alongside the circuit wall at its lowest point—literally at the bottom of the citadel, tucked behind the display of Grave Circle A and not obviously accessible, either from the area of the Grave Circle or from the great ramp that leads up from the Lion Gate (Ill. 3.6). At Tiryns the small one-room cult building is set against the wall of the Lower Citadel and is hardly distinguishable among the architecture of this area (Ill. 3.8). At Phylakopi, again, the cult is set along the inside of the fortification wall at some distance from the location of the megaron. Only at Mycenae is there a suggestion of a relationship between the Cult Centre and the palace. There, an elaborate rampway with a monumentalized gate leads up from the Cult Centre to a cut masonry-built stairway that ascends the citadel. Although the rest is lost, it is not improbable that a 'sacred way', perhaps for processions, led from there up to the Grand Staircase below the megaron.

After the architectural settings, the large human figures associated with the Cult Centres seem to be their other most salient characteristic. Among the figures, however, there is much variety—enough to indicate that they distinguish among different cults or rituals within sanctuaries. Thus the grotesques and snakes from the 'House of the Idols' are unique to Mycenae and large male figures are found only at Phylakopi. It is not merely the presence of these figures which so impresses the viewer but also the aggregate of diverse finds: bovine rhyta, all varieties of figurines, scarabs, beads, seals, objects in precious metals, bronzes, ivories, etc. It is, however, the figures which stand out, and in Mycenaean times they were clearly a major feature in Mycenaean religion, since there is a strong relationship between them and the smaller figurines which are distributed throughout the whole Eastern Mediterranean (see discussion below).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Mylonas (n. 90), 19; Kritseli-Providi (n. 92), 19, 90–2, *passim*. Worth noticing is the construction of the stairway leading down to the spacious landing to the ramp that descends to the Cult Centre. It is built of cut poros ashlar blocks and is 2.5 m. wide. The entranceway itself is fitted with jambs of cut conglomerate stone—the technique used in all the palace architecture.

⁹⁵ Marinatos (n. 92); Kritseli-Providi (n. 92), 16–18. Other frescos in the area come from the Ramp House: A. J. B. Wace, 'Excavations at Mycenae', *BSA* 25 (1921–3), 79–80.

⁹⁶ Van Leuven (n. 3); G. Fernandez, 'Cult Places of the Bronze Age: The Identification Problem', in Wardle and French (n. 92), 234; *AR* (1969–70), 12–13.

⁹⁷ E. French, 'Mycenaean Figures and Figurines, their Typology and Function', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 172.

These features of the Citadel Cult Centres, especially the evidence for the variety of worship that took place within them, suggest they embraced the diversity of religious beliefs and customs in the territories of the palaces and thereby gave an official sanction to these beliefs by having a recognized centre within the citadel.

Locales of Cult Activity Outside the Palaces

As we know from the Linear B documents and from other studies the inception of a palatial society and the accompanying increase in the problem of administering a larger territory and population also resulted in a more complex religious life, in the growth of cult institutions and in the formalization of ritual practices and ritual places.⁹⁸ These developments are not restricted to the palace, however. Numerous sites of ritual activity are known at non-palatial centres, and it is important to try to understand what evidence they provide about Mycenaean religion prior to and independent of the palaces and how the religion changed after their formation. This task will be clearer after examining the evidence from these other sites.

An underlying assumption in current studies is that these 'non-palatial' cults represent 'popular' as opposed to 'official' religion. The following discussion will show, however, that this binary distinction sets up a false opposition between different aspects of an evolving Mycenaean religion. Rather than viewing these in opposition, it will prove more illuminating to understand them as different moments on a scale of increasing complexity.⁹⁹

Citadel of Asine

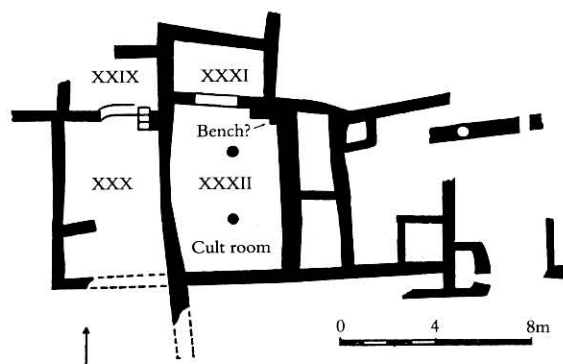
The first instance to consider is that of 'House G' at Asine (Ill. 3.9). This structure has been recently republished by Hägg. The cult room contains an assemblage that includes a large head of a probable female figure,¹⁰⁰ female figurines, pottery (including a kylix and an up-ended vessel that seems to have served as a receptacle), and a stone hand-tool. All this material was found around a roughly built bench in a corner of the room.¹⁰¹ The date of the complex is LH IIIC. The building does not easily fit categories for Mycenaean architecture, though with two centrally placed column bases it is not unlike

⁹⁸ See Bellah (n. 21), 42; Wallace (n. 14), 88–9.

⁹⁹ Hägg, however, has recently qualified this distinction by acknowledging intermediate scales of organization between these extremes.

¹⁰⁰ Hägg, 'House Sanctuary' (n. 2); E. French, 'The Development of Mycenaean Terracotta Figurines', *BSA* 66 (1971), 148.

¹⁰¹ Hägg expresses concern about the evidence of the bench: 'House Sanctuary' (n. 2), 93. In 'The Role of Libation' he has identified the kylix as the standard vessel for ritual libations (n. 62). See also Wright (n. 59).



ILL. 3.9 Asine, plan of House G

contemporary buildings at Tiryns and Korakou, for example.¹⁰² It is located at the northern edge of the Lower Terrace of the citadel.

Hägg has urged the notion that this structure represents a 'house shrine', a kind of intermediary between palace Cult Centre and rural shrine.¹⁰³ In the same article he also classifies 'House G' as an example of popular cult, in contrast to the official cults housed in the palatial Cult Centres. This is an example of the problem with such formulations as 'popular' and 'official' and 'palace' and 'household'. They are also not formulations that make clear their relationship to each other.

Meagre as they are, the contents of 'House G' (see Table 3.1) seem more in accord with the paraphernalia at the Citadel Cult Centres than the material from other sites; notable in this respect is the presence of the one large figure. Although we have no reason to expect an elaborate building to house a shrine, the architecture of House G is in fact rather formalized with its two rooms and axially placed interior columns (Ill. 3.9). It also bears observing that House G is located near the northern edge of the Lower Terrace of the citadel: in other words in a position not unlike that of the shrines at the other sites. Furthermore, Asine is apparently the central place in the immediately surrounding territory. These observations seem to fulfil the criteria defined above (p. 61) for Citadel Cult Centres. This shrine at Asine is perhaps best understood as another example of a cult facility within a citadel that embraces the religious traditions of the wider territory.

¹⁰² Asine: Hiesel (n. 66), 84–5. For Korakou (Houses L and M), Tiryns (Megaron W), Nichoria (Unit IV4), see Hiesel (n. 66), 49, 63–9, 80, 107.

¹⁰³ Hägg, 'Official and Popular' (n. 2), 39.

Amyklai

The site of Amyklai outside Sparta contrasts to House G at Asine. It is associated neither with a citadel nor a palace. In fact the architectural evidence is extremely scanty.¹⁰⁴ It does not seem likely that the sanctuary could be considered as part of a major settlement. Fragments of large figures are particularly intriguing: one shows a female with an elaborate coiffure, perhaps crowned with some kind of head-dress and another is a fragment of a hand grasping the stem of a chalice or goblet. There are also fragments representing a total of 28 bovine figures, 74 Psi-type female figurines, 32 animal, 2 horse, and 4 bird ones. In addition a group of bronze axes are thought to be contemporaneous dedications. The context of these remains is very late LH IIIB, or LH IIIC, and there are many indications of continuing use through much of the succeeding Dark Age.¹⁰⁵

Despite the lack of architecture and the distance to a major settlement, the artefacts are similar to those of the Citadel Cult Centres. In fact the figure fragments fit into an important iconographic tradition of ceremonial drinking associated with the nobility and with divinities.¹⁰⁶ The absence of a palace complex to which to relate the sanctuary should not bias our interpretation of the remains at Amyklai, since in Lakonia there may have been a different resolution of the conditions that promoted the founding of the palaces: perhaps, for example, the ascendant groups in the region were content to share power among a group of strong communities, such as at Pellanes, the Menelaion, Vapheio-Palaiopyrgi, Geraki, and Ayios Stephanos.¹⁰⁷ In such an instance a site like Amyklai might have been the focus of regional ritual activity. None the less, the chronological evidence from this site suggests an absence of interest in it prior to the period of the palaces; in fact, as at many of the palace sites, the artefacts are Postpalatial and even Dark Age in date.

Epidauros

Excavations by Papadimitriou shortly after World War II discovered traces of Mycenaean activity beneath the Sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros.¹⁰⁸ During the last fifteen years Lambrinouidakis has clarified the nature of this site, uncovering traces of buildings within a terrace retaining wall on the

¹⁰⁴ K. Demakopoulou, 'To Mykenaiko iero sto Amyklaio kai i YE IIIC Periodos sti Lakonia' (Ph.D. diss., University of Athens, 1982).

¹⁰⁵ Demakopoulou (n. 104), 40, 43–78.

¹⁰⁶ Wright (n. 59); K. Kilian, 'Zur Darstellung eines Wagenrennens aus spätmykenischer Zeit', *AM* 95 (1990), 21–31.

¹⁰⁷ Hope Simpson and Dickinson (n. 4): Sites C 4, 12, 17, 56; pp. 109, 111–13, 123.

¹⁰⁸ I. Papadimitriou, *Praktika* (1944–8); (1950).

TABLE 3.1 Cult locales and artefact assemblages*

Artefact type	Site									
	Phylakopi	Mycenae	Tiryns	Asine, House G	Amyklai	Tsongiza	Epidaurus, Apollo Maleatas	Delphi	Aphaia, Aigina	Agia Triada
Figure										
Female	×	×	×	×	×	×			×	
Male	×									
Grotesque		×					?			
Snake		×								
Rhyton										
Animal	×		×		×		×			×
Figurine										
Female	×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×	×
Animal	×	(x)	×	×	×	(x)	×	×	×	×
Horse			×	×	×		×	×	×	
Bird			×	×	×			(?)		
Driven ox	×									
Chariot	×		×					(?)		
Furniture	×					×	×		×	
Bronze										
Human										
Animal	×									
Tool/weapon	×									
Ivory/Ostrich/ Bone/Tortoise										
Glass										
Faience			×	×						
Lead	×		×						×	
Silver	×	×								
Gold	×									
Stone vase										
Conch							×			
Architecture										
Building	×	×	×	×	?	?				
Special technique	×	×	×	×						
Altar	×	×	×	×						
Hearth	×	×	(?)	?						
Furnishing										
Bench	×	×	×	×						
Larnax	×	×								
Fresco		×								
'Baetyl'	×									

* Because of the inconsistency of reporting among the sites it is not possible to provide accurate numbers in all cases, therefore only presence/absence is indicated. In addition, some sites are not reported yet in detail (e.g. Mycenae) which means more artefact types may have been recovered than are published.

slope of Mt. Kynortion.¹⁰⁹ Although some of the evidence from this area records the existence of a Mycenaean settlement, most documents the establishment of an Early Mycenaean ritual centre, which continued in use throughout the Mycenaean era.¹¹⁰ The finds from this sanctuary are equally intriguing. Unlike the sites previously discussed, the Maleatas sanctuary lacks remains of large human figures, though a large bovine figure was found.¹¹¹ However, a normal mixture of figurine types is present: female, animal, horse, and furniture.¹¹² In addition a series of remarkable and in some instances unique artefacts (namely, a sheet-bronze animal face, bronze swords—and a stone pommel—and bronze miniature double axes) represent categories of objects scarcely known from the other sites.¹¹³ An important fragment of a steatite relief vessel showing warriors in a boat fills out this unusual inventory.¹¹⁴ Pottery from the site consists mostly of sherds; among other shapes Vapheio cups and kylikes are recognizable.

The remains have led the excavator and several other scholars to conclude that the site was a 'peak sanctuary' and to categorize it as an 'official cult'.¹¹⁵ We are surely mistaken to apply both terms to the site. The former conclusion seems misleading, for it suggests a degree of borrowing of Minoan customs on the part of the Mycenaean that is not demonstrated by the finds.¹¹⁶ The latter ignores the fact that the site has so far presented us with none of the typical large figures of 'official cult' and seems clearly located in a setting well apart from any major citadel. Furthermore, on the basis of the evidence from the palace sites and others just discussed, an 'official cult' ought to have come into being with the founding of the palaces, not before. The very early date for the inception of this site surely is important evidence that some local places of ritual activity were coalescing during a period *prior* to state formation; thus providing *prima facie* evidence that the assemblage is independent of the palaces, which would seem to be the major characteristic of this sanctuary.

¹⁰⁹ Reports in *Praktika* (1974), 93–101; (1975), 162–75; (1977), 187–94; (1978), 111–21; (1979), 127–9; (1981), 158–60; (1983), 152–4; (1987), 52–8.

¹¹⁰ Lambrinouidakis (n. 2).

¹¹¹ Except possibly a large grotesque: see Papadimitriou, *Praktika* (1950), 199, fig. 6. Bovine figure: Lambrinouidakis (n. 2), 63, fig. 8.

¹¹² *Praktika* (1983), 137.

¹¹³ See, however, Delphi (below, p. 70).

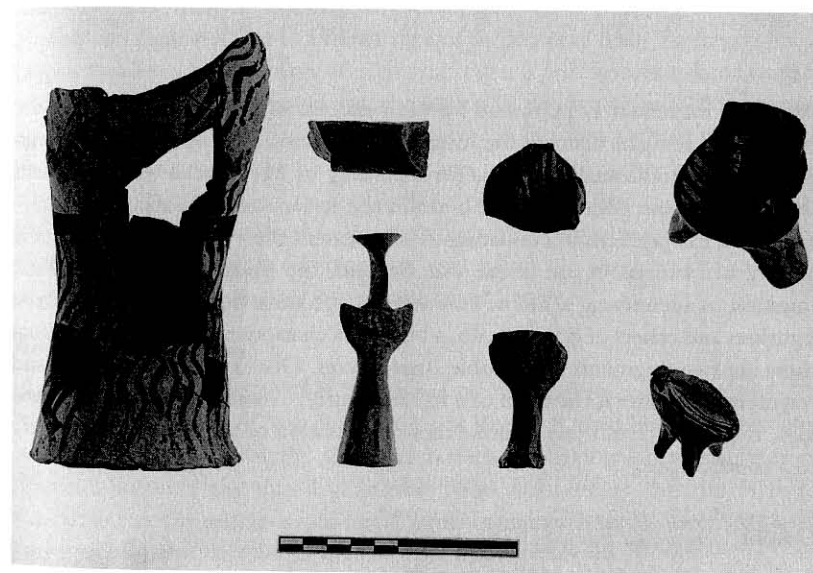
¹¹⁴ I. Papadimitriou, *Praktika* (1950), 200–2, fig. 10; B. Kaiser, *Untersuchungen zum minoischen Relief* (Bonn, 1976), 95, 133–4, 174.

¹¹⁵ Lambrinouidakis (n. 2); Hägg, 'Official and Popular' (n. 2), 36.

¹¹⁶ See A. A. D. Peatfield, 'Minoan Peak Sanctuaries: History and Society', *OpAth* 18 (1990), 120–2. Hägg has repeatedly argued against the interpretation of this site as a 'peak sanctuary': in 'Degrees and Character of the Minoan Influence on the Mainland', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (edd.), *The Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth or Reality* (Stockholm, 1987), 119–21; Hägg, 'Religion' (n. 20).

Tsougiza

Recent excavation of a Mycenaean settlement on the hill of Tsougiza at Nemea has disclosed evidence of what an 'official cult' in a rural setting might have looked like. In a large deposit of LH IIIA:2 pottery which contained numerous female and animal figurines was discovered the lower part of a figure (Ill. 3.10) like the 'Lady of Phylakopi'. In addition were found two rare figurines thought to represent someone making bread. Preliminary analysis of this large deposit suggests a selected series of shapes, primarily kylikes and bowls. The faunal remains, which are also still under analysis, may suggest selective disposal, possibly distinctive for feasting.¹¹⁷



ILL. 3.10 Assemblage of votives from Tsougiza

No architecture is associated with this deposit, though settlement architecture from earliest LH I down to the end of LH IIIB is well represented at the site. The deposit is located at the base of the crown of the hill which, it is thought, was the centre of the area of habitation. The deposit is clearly a dump, not unlike numerous others scattered over the site, and the remains almost certainly

¹¹⁷ Preliminary notice in J. C. Wright *et al.*, 'The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A Preliminary Report', *Hesperia* 59 (1990), 635–6. Prof. Patrick Thomas completed study of this deposit in the summer of 1992. Dr Paul Halstead has completed analysis of the faunal remains and informs me that he is fairly certain that the discard pattern is interpretable as relating to feasting.

originated from a structure, which is no longer preserved but which lay, perhaps, up the slope.

The presence of the figure provides an obvious linkage to the palaces, and the LH IIIA:1 date provides a *terminus post quem* for their invention which French had anticipated on the basis of her study of the remains from Phylakopi. This date corresponds with the best evidence for the initial construction of the palaces and the great fortifications around the citadels and it seems likely that their appearance is linked to these events.¹¹⁸ The rural location of Tsoungiza probably falls within the territory of Mycenae, and the fortunes of the site throughout the Late Bronze Age seem closely tied to the rise and fall of that site.¹¹⁹ Perhaps the settlement at Tsoungiza contained a rural shrine that was an extension of the cult located in the palace of Mycenae.

Aigina

Although inadequately published for the concerns of modern scholarship, the Mycenaean remains beneath the terrace of the historic period cult of Athena-Aphaia pose additional questions for the study of Mycenaean religion. First, the nature of the context—a fill beneath the terrace of the archaic temple—highlights the problem of evaluating to what extent the evidence represents the variety of material in use at the site. Second, the finds preserved focus the question of identifying a site of cult activity, for aside from numerous female figurines and others of horses, bulls, a bird (?), a charioteer, a throne, and a boat there are two fragments of probable large figures. One is a large arm and hand fragment, the other is the torso of a female figure.¹²⁰ As at Amyklai and Tsoungiza, the presence of these figures raises the question of the relation of this site to a central place.

Delphi

A recent restudy by S. Müller of early excavations at Delphi has published fragments of several bovine figures such as those known from Epidauros, the Amyklaion, and Phylakopi. In addition there is a fragment of a female figure. Unfortunately, the context of these finds is not known, but it seems fair to think that they were associated with the architectural remains in the sanctuary of Apollo.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ French in Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 215; Dabney and Wright (n. 29), 31.

¹¹⁹ J. C. Wright, 'A Mycenaean Hamlet on Tsoungiza at Ancient Nemea', in R. Treuil and P. Darque (edd.), *L'Habitat égéen préhistorique*, BCH Suppl. 19 (Paris, 1990), 347–54; J. L. Davis, 'If There's a Room at the Top, What's at the Bottom?', *BICS* 35 (1988), 164–5.

¹²⁰ H. Thiersch in A. Furtwängler, *Aegina: Das Heiligtum der Aphaia* (Munich, 1906), 370–5.

¹²¹ S. Müller, 'Delphes et sa région à l'époque mycénienne', *BCH* 116 (1992), 478, fig. 16.1, 481. I thank R. Hägg for bringing this recent publication to my attention.

Discussion

Although the evidence of the establishment of shrines within the citadels and outside them in their territories may lead one to suspect a general phenomenon in the establishment of religion during the period of the establishment of the Mycenaean citadel-states, such a conclusion is only valid for heuristic purposes. The site of Epidauros stands out as an exception and a warning that the individual context of each case must be considered before any explanatory narrative can be constructed. This is equally true for consideration of the formalization of these sanctuaries, since only that at Tsoungiza has a clear date (LH IIIA:1) corresponding with the establishment of the palaces, and the others follow later: Phylakopi—LH IIIA:2; Mycenae—LH IIIB:1; Tiryns—LH IIIB:2; Amyklai—LH IIIB/C. Turning to another important category of evidence, Mycenaean figurines, the LH IIIA:1 date of the material from Tsoungiza lends support to French's assertion of 1971 that the earliest figurines dated to that period, but, as she has pointed out, the period of the formation of Mycenaean figurines must be assigned to LH II.¹²² Taking this fact into account may further complicate the problem of identifying stages in the emergence of Mycenaean religion. In consideration of this problem it may be that the figurines are indicative of yet another level in the evolving scale of Mycenaean ritual activity. Thus a variety of possibly religious sites exist which are characterized solely, or almost so, by the presence of large numbers of figurines.

Ambiguous Examples

Places less clearly recognizable as centres of cult activity are well known.¹²³ Some, such as the site of Ayia Triada at Ayios Vasilios (Corinthia) or the remains at the Marmaria at Delphi, are characterized by having large quantities of figurines but little else that distinguishes them and nothing that ties them to the better known religious centres.¹²⁴ Both contain a heavy concentration of figurines of many varieties as well as other diverse material.¹²⁵

¹²² French (n. 100), 105–6.

¹²³ Deposits primarily consisting of figurines are known from a variety of sites that include Aigina (Aphrodite sanctuaries), Argos, Athens, Ayios Stephanos, Ayioi Theodoroi, Berbati, Dendra, Eleusis, Ialysos, Korakou, Lefkandi, Lerna, Nauplion, Prosymna, and Zygouries; in addition similar deposits were found at Mycenae and Tiryns in areas separate from the Cult Centres. This list is determined on the basis of French's chart (n. 100), 185–7, which is a summary of all the figurines found at a site, and does not represent their discrete contexts.

¹²⁴ Ayia Triada: the site was excavated eighty years ago by Frickenhaus and only recently well published by Kilian (n. 2), 185–90. It is near the village of Ayios Vasilios, not Klenies, as stated by Kilian. Delphi: R. Demangel, *Fouilles de Delphes: Le Sanctuaire d'Athèna Pronaia* (Paris, 1926), 5–26; Müller (n. 121), 481–6.

¹²⁵ Caves were also places of worship and have been well documented by Hägg (n. 4), 49–52 and Rutkowski (n. 3), 200–1, 210. When the function is in doubt, however, it is well to realize that caves can have been used for more than worship, as examination of any modern shepherd's fold will reveal, see P. Murray and C. Chang, 'An Ethnoarchaeological Study of a Contemporary Herder's Site', *JFA* 8 (1981), 372–81.

Åkerström has raised the question of household cults in his publication of two installations in rooms at Berbati.¹²⁶ To the informed sceptic the meagre remains of figurines, vessels, and small benches, could be seen as nothing more than a coincidental scatter of artefacts within a living area.¹²⁷ Yet it may be that the mere presence of such an assemblage within a building is indicative of the extent to which a uniform Mycenaean religion had been established during the period of the palace. Kilian has demonstrated at Tiryns that the distributional pattern of figurines favoured doors and hearths, which he interpreted as evidence of their use as protective devices.¹²⁸ Thus it remains highly possible that such meagre assemblages, when found in an architectural setting, may well be the remnants of Mycenaean belief manifested in the most accessible, humble and traditional forms of symbol and action.¹²⁹

These examples sharpen the question of identifying a locus of ritual activity. Although French is justified in observing that the ubiquitous distribution of Mycenaean figurines in tombs, settlements, and sanctuaries all over the Eastern Mediterranean makes them unlikely indicators of cult activity, yet they are the most recognizable icon of Mycenaean society, one that was clearly accessible and utilized by many members of the society, perhaps as a ritual expression of belief.¹³⁰ Highly individualized religious activity, whether of an individual or a small community, may often leave nothing or only the barest of archaeological traces.¹³¹

Official or Popular Cults?

This review of sites clearly demonstrates the problem in applying dualistic categories to the interpretation of locales of Mycenaean ritual.¹³² A more fruitful line of approach has been laid down by Anthony Wallace and been applied to

¹²⁶ Å. Åkerström, 'Cultic Installations in Mycenaean Rooms and Tombs', in Wardle and French (n. 92), 201–2.

¹²⁷ Thus French (n. 97), 173, has cautioned that 'the figurines take their function from their context and not *vice versa*', a position she had earlier stated (n. 100), 107–8.

¹²⁸ K. Kilian, 'Mycenaean Up to Date', in Wardle and French (n. 92), 115–52; Hägg (n. 62), 178–84, has begun to define some of the common elements of a ritual assemblage, and certainly the conjunction of material at the cult locales at Mycenae, Tiryns, Phylakopi, the Amyklaion and elsewhere (see discussion and Table 3.1 below) demonstrate the wider range of material at major centres.

¹²⁹ Bourdieu's analysis of this problem is particularly helpful in understanding the nature of ritual as action, and the problems experienced by the external observer in explaining what is observed without losing in the process what is practised: (n. 12), 114–19, *passim*.

¹³⁰ Figurines are notoriously ambiguous in their interpretation. See P. J. Ucko, 'The Interpretation of Prehistoric Figurines', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 92 (1962), 47–8; French (n. 100), 107–8; M. Voigt, *Hajji Firuz Tepe, Iran: The Neolithic Settlement* (Philadelphia, 1983), 186–95; L. E. Talalay, 'Rethinking the Function of Clay Figurine Legs from Neolithic Greece: An Argument by Analogy', *AJA* 91 (1987), 161–9.

¹³¹ Wallace (n. 14), 85–6, 88–90, *passim*.

¹³² Hägg, 'Official and Popular' (n. 2), 38–40; Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 401–2.

archaeological settings by James V. Knight. Wallace organized religion according to levels of activity, from the smallest elements of ritual upwards through a variety of increasingly complex cult institutions.¹³³ Cult institutions are made up of rituals that fulfil social and religious needs according to the level of societal complexity. They also incorporate the diversity of ritual practices, such that contrasting notions like 'popular' and 'official' are not necessary categories for examining belief and action. Thus Wallace's division of cult institutions into four classes (Individualistic, Shamanic, Communal, and Ecclesiastical) reflects not only different levels of socio-political integration but also the belief systems of a society on a continuum. The model is inclusive so that the lower orders of institution may continue to be present and functioning even as the higher orders emerge and dwarf them by their greater visibility.

Knight recognized that this scheme for analysing religion had important applications to archaeology. His case-study of communal cult institutions among Mississippian mound builders shows how this method for reconstructing different cult institutions provides a way of discriminating among different rituals on the basis of their content, both in terms of consideration of location or date, and in terms of their level of integration into the socio-political matrix in which they flourished.¹³⁴ This approach requires the investigation of linkages (and their absence) among the artefacts associated with cult activity. Such assemblages Knight calls *sacra*—defined as 'the totality of representational art, artifact and icons that by inference appear to have been charged with conventional supernatural meaning, in the context of ritual activity or display'.¹³⁵

The adoption of this approach to the study of Mycenaean religion permits a balanced treatment of cult places in the citadels and those outside them, facilitates appreciation of the variation evident in their location, architecture, and artefacts, and encourages interpretation according to the widest possible understanding of the socio-political level of the society of which they are a part. In addition this method respects regional variation such that the conditions evident at a primary centre, like Mycenae, will not have to be met elsewhere, such as at Amyklai. Finally this approach avoids the 'either-or' distinction forced by the categories of popular and official religion while also preserving the possibility of discovering important links between extra-palatial and palace-centred shrines on the basis of similar *sacra*.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine each instance of purported cult places in Mycenaean Greece, some idea of the variation among

¹³³ Wallace (n. 14), 83; J. V. Knight, Jr., *Mississippian Religion* (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1981), and (n. 54), 675–87.

¹³⁴ Compare Wallace (n. 14), 132, 256.

¹³⁵ Knight (n. 54), 687; cf. Turner (n. 81), 102.

the major ones may be gained from Table 3.1, where the complexity of artefact forms found at those discussed in this paper is displayed.¹³⁶

Except for the Maleatas sanctuary, all of these sites were active only during the period of the palaces or after their destruction. Since many of these sites are situated outside the citadels, this relationship is important, for it conforms to our general understanding that the formalization of ritual practice and its codification and monumentalization are directly related to the scale of socio-political complexity. In spatial terms the establishment of such cult installations as that reconstructed at Tsoungiza appears to be evidence of the consolidation of territory by establishing external locations for conducting officially sanctioned rituals. These are secondary locations tied to the primary centres of the citadels. Several interesting questions are raised by taking this view.

First, is the cult established in such peripheral settings simultaneous with the establishment of the palaces, or in consequence of them? This question has been dealt with by Carla Antonaccio in a recent discussion (and in this volume, Ch. 4), and she has forcefully made the point, following the lead of de Polignac, that such activity usually is an *ex post facto* consolidation by the ruling power.¹³⁷ This is a fundamentally important observation since it relates closely to two problems that have centred in discussions of the role of religion in the formation of complex societies.¹³⁸ First, it indicates that the use of religion as a conscious instrument in the extension of power is not necessarily the case. Second, it suggests that religion is only used as a part of a process of rationalizing and justifying expansion after the fact. What is not demonstrated, however, is whether religion is the prime causal factor behind societal growth.¹³⁹

Another important question arises when one considers the extremely late date of most of these installations, whether in the citadels or outside them. Since the true floruit of most of them follows upon the destructions at the palaces and citadels, after the loss of literacy and the administrative hierarchy, to what extent do they represent the state religion? This question has preoccupied Renfrew in various discussions, and in them he introduces the notion of popular cult. The core of his thinking on this subject seems to be that the ritual activity of these Cult Centres replaces the lost stability provided by the palatial society.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ For a list, see Hägg (n. 4), and compare to maps in Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 414–19.

¹³⁷ C. Antonaccio, 'Terraces, Tombs, and the Early Argive Heraion', *Hesperia* 61 (1992), 103–5; F. de Polignac, *La Naissance de la cité grecque: Cultes, espace et société VIIIe-VIIe siècles* (Paris, 1984).

¹³⁸ Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 207, 215–16; see Bell (n. 11) 82–3.

¹³⁹ This is, of course, the thrust of the arguments of Conrad and Demarest (n. 10) regarding Aztec expansion. The theoretical aspects of the issue of intentionality and agency are clearly set forth by Giddens, *Constitution* (n. 12), 5–14, 244–62, 293–304, 319–27.

¹⁴⁰ C. Renfrew, 'Systems Collapse as Social Transformation: Catastrophe and Anastrophe in Early State Societies', in C. Renfrew and K. L. Cooke (edd.), *Transformations: Mathematical Approaches to Culture Change* (New York, 1979), 481–506; 'Questions of Minoan and Mycenaean Cult', in Hägg and Marinatos (n. 2), 28–31; *Archaeology* (n. 6), 396–8, 436–7. The problem with these discussions is that they are satisfied to list the symptoms of change without seeking also to offer an explanation of why.

In order to pursue this matter further, we must ask how this could be the case?

To answer this question we must reconsider the origins of 'official' religion—rituals controlled by the ruling powers. On the one hand is the hearth-*wanax* cult, which, as I have argued, represents the traditional value structure of Helladic society. As demonstrated here the maintenance of this cult by the ruler in the palace removed the commoners from direct participation. As the Helladic institution *par excellence*, however, the cult was celebrated at every household hearth by every head of household, and it is this redundancy that makes the cult so powerful when officially celebrated in the palace. On the other hand is the establishment of the Citadel Cult Centres, which, if they have a direct relation to cult locales outside the palaces, were probably much more open to public participation—a point underlined not only by their informal architecture but also by their removal from the palace. Temporally and, probably, functionally between these is the ubiquitous evidence of Mycenaean figurines. Although they may have origins in the Minoan practice of manufacturing figurines and have been influenced by such early examples as the statuettes at the sanctuary at Ayia Irini, Keos,¹⁴¹ they only begin to become common with the founding of the palaces, and from the LH IIIA:2 period their popularity increases dramatically; they are found in large quantities at almost every kind of Mycenaean site. The formal similarity between the highly popular Psi figurines and many of the large figures suggests a strong relationship between them, one also recognized in the popularity in Crete of the 'Goddess-with-Upraised Arms'.¹⁴² This relationship is important because it probably signifies the success of the effort by the ruling authorities to establish a viable ritual object for common use that was tied into the ideological structure controlled and administered by the palaces.¹⁴³ In so far as the figurine became a universal symbol of Mycenaean religion it meets Turner's definition of a dominant symbol—one, like a crescent or a cross, that embraces a host of religious associations.¹⁴⁴ Among other things the figurines may have symbolized the figures at Cult Centres and thereby provided a symbolic link to the seat of cult at the citadel centres. The fact that some are pierced to be suspended and others are decorated with necklaces adorned with pendants has been argued by Hägg and Kilian-Dirlmeier

¹⁴¹ French (n. 100), 105; Renfrew, *Archaeology* (n. 6), 437; cf. the statuettes from Ayia Irini, Keos, which precede the Phi-type figurine: M. E. Caskey, *Keos*, ii. 1: *The Temple at Ayia Irini. The Statues* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

¹⁴² Peatfield, this volume (Ch. 2). See now: R. Mersereau, 'Cretan Cylindrical Models', *AJA* 97 (1993), 15; S. Alexiou, 'He minoike thea meth' upsomenon cheiron', *KrChron* 12 (1958), 179–299; cf. Caskey (n. 141).

¹⁴³ I treat this complicated phenomenon in 'From Chief to King in Mycenaean Greece', in P. Rehak (ed.), *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean*, Aegaeum II (Liège and Austin, 1995), 63–80.

¹⁴⁴ Turner (n. 81), 20–32; see Wallace (n. 14), 237–8.

to imply their religious function.¹⁴⁵ In this sense they may not be any different from miniature and portable paraphernalia relating to saints sold at the site of their shrines and burial places. Believers purchase such items as a way of establishing a continuing immediate link with the object of veneration. Thus the popularity of these items over such a wide geography in Mycenaean times is illustrative of the success of palace-instituted ritual and cult locale. Once established and personalized, this religious object and its associations would take on a meaning independent of the palaces and hence would outlast them.

In conclusion there seem to be strong spatial and chronological similarities between territorially peripheral cult installations and the Cult Centres established in the citadels. Consequently, it is likely that the founding of these ritual areas represents an extension of cult from the palace centre outwards as an act of appropriation and incorporation of local and rurally based cults into the official palace-based religion. Presumably the palaces became interested in these external areas as they expanded or consolidated territory. This process of expansion may have occurred in several stages, from as early as LH I to as late as LH IIIB, depending upon the local conditions of state-formation. Whatever the case, it occurred in reference to existing autonomous local cults, the evidence of which is virtually impossible for us to recognize archaeologically.

As remarked, the sequence of the evolution of Mycenaean religion generally parallels that recognized by Conrad and Demarest in their analysis of Inca and Aztec expansion. Their evidence led them to argue for the importance of considering volition as a prime mover in societal evolution, such that societal institutions develop in irrational, often self-contradictory ways. This means that events are often only recognized, consolidated, and justified after the fact, instead of being planned.¹⁴⁶

The traces for the evolution of Mycenaean religion, as Hägg has well established, are twofold: with origins on the one hand in the appropriation and adaptation of Minoan ritual and iconography,¹⁴⁷ and on the other in the consolidation of the indigenous practice of Helladic values. The amalgamation of these into a Mycenaean religion is seen as probably stochastic in process, corresponding to major stages in the evolution of Mycenaean society.

¹⁴⁵ Hägg, 'Official and Popular' (n. 2), 38; I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, 'Zum Halschmuck mykenischer Idole', *Jahresbericht des Institutes für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt am Main* (1978-9), 29-43.

¹⁴⁶ Conrad and Demarest (n. 10), 207, 215-16. See Bell (n. 11), 82-3; the sequence that can be reconstructed on the basis of Conrad and Demarest's emphasis is as follows: Volition → Maladaptation → Contradiction → Crisis → Explosion → Collapse → Reformation. This sequence is anticipated in Wallace's notion of 'revitalization': (n. 14), 157-66; 'Revitalization Movements', *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956), 264-81. Compare Zuesse (n. 13), 522-9; Giddens, *Constitution* (n. 12), 5-14, 319-27.

¹⁴⁷ Wright (n. 59); Rehak (n. 83); Morris (n. 88); Marinatos (n. 88); Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier, 'Cult Scenes on Gold Rings from the Argolid', in Hägg and Nordquist (n. 2), 165-70.

Conclusion

Through the application of evolutionary and post-structural theories this chapter has examined the structure and functioning of Mycenaean religion from its origins in the Middle Bronze Age into the Palace period. I have argued for the pre-eminence of belief and custom as determining a social custom of lineage relations that evolves into a hierarchical descent-based political structure which historically had strong, if not permanent, control of the central rituals of the society. In so far as there existed a priesthood, it developed only in response to the managerial needs of an increasingly complex group of cults.¹⁴⁸ The complexity of the process of the evolution of Mycenaean religion is not readily apparent at any point in our study of this society. This analysis thus contradicts commonly held assumptions that the character of Mycenaean society was immediately formed upon contact with the Minoans during the Neopalatial period, for the view espoused here is neither static nor synchronic, and the position is maintained that only by studying a society in process can its institutions actually be examined and their various strands recognized and understood.

The earliest form of Mycenaean religion is probably manifested in individualistic and shamanistic cult institutions that are not easily detectable in archaeological remains. However, they may be inferred through spatial-structural analysis of the organization of dwellings, settlements, and mortuary facilities. Next occur communal cult institutions, which also are not easily reflected in the material record. They may be recognized in the establishment of the palaces, the erection of fortifications, and the first signs of cult areas segregated from the dwelling of the ruling lineage. As the consolidation of power at certain citadels continued, the needs of administering the cults gathered in through expansion of territory kept pace with demands on the decision-making system in political and economic terms. At this time, which marks the transition to statehood, the religion began to branch out like the roots and limbs of a tree, the former reaching back to and drawing from historic indigenous and external sources, the latter extending forward over new territory and through new leaves of expression. Thus the complexity apparent in the record of the Palatial and Postpalatial periods tends to overshadow the central sources of belief and custom and their accompanying institutional forms. This structure endures in many areas during the Postpalatial period. The continuing vitality of some of the institutions of Palatial society was achieved because the structure of Mycenaean society—its values and beliefs—were still nourished from ancient cultural roots. Finally, just as a tree that withers and dies may still regenerate itself with new

¹⁴⁸ Wallace (n. 14), 87-8; Bellah (n. 21), 42.

shoots from old roots, it seems likely, looking beyond the Bronze Age, that the beliefs and customs of the Helladic society continued to nourish new forms of ritual practice throughout the Dark Age.

4

*Placing the Past: the Bronze Age in the Cultic
Topography of Early Greece**

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The aim of this paper is to make a contribution towards understanding the development of one type of social landscape, the sacred landscapes of the protohistorical Greek Iron Age. This phase presents opportunities in some ways similar to those for Iron Age Europe; for example, in reconstructing the complex interplay of factors in a period strongly conditioned by the past and fundamental for the future. The Greek Iron Age requires different treatment from either the Bronze Age or the historical Archaic and Classical phases, however, as will become apparent.¹ From the beginning, the study of sanctuaries has always held a privileged position in classical archaeology. Focusing on the recovery and reconstruction of major monuments (a concern that persists to the present), votive offerings made at sanctuaries have been scrutinized to various ends, including identifying the cult, or the votaries. While new frameworks of enquiry and interpretation have been constructed, for example the class and gender of worshippers, most studies have remained within the confines of these traditional approaches, many of them grounded in some version of formal analysis.²

While studies of the Iron Age have hardly ignored the role of the Bronze Age in shaping it, most of the discussion has centred on whether or when later Greeks became aware of or acknowledged their predecessors, and on the

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¹ See D. Miles, 'Social Landscapes: Pattern and Purpose?', in M. Jones and G. Dimbleby (edd.), *The Environment of Man: the Iron Age to the Anglo-Saxon Period*, BAR Br. Ser. 87 (Oxford, 1981), 9–18.

² To choose just two studies, cf. B. Bergquist, *The Archaic Greek Temenos* (Lund, 1967), and F. van Straten, 'Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries', in A. Schachter (ed.), *Le Sanctuaire grec*, Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt sur l'antiquité classique 37 (Geneva, 1992), 247–86.