THE ROLE OF THE RULER
IN THE PREHISTORIC AEGEAN

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FROM CHIEF TO KING IN MYCENAEN SOCIETY*

In his 1988 article on Mycenaean kingship Klaus Kilian examined the role of the wanax in the formation of an ideology of the Mycenaean state 1. This detailed model postulated that many of the institutions of the wanax-system were operating during LH I and II, which he characterized as the "proto-palatial" period. Kilian suggested that the process of stratification resulted in the emergence of a royal family headed by a wanax with authority over his odhos. The odhos he views as the center of a redistributive economy established through land holdings and the exploitation of labor. The core of his theory will be familiar to students of Finley's, The World of Odysseus 2. Kilian's emphasis on the role of ideology in the emergence of the Mycenaean state is significant and his argument for the pervasiveness of this ideology in the preserved evidence is compelling. The collection of papers in this volume is a tribute to the influence of his scholarship, which in many respects has paved the way for continuing study of the formation and structure of Mycenaean society.

Introduction

This paper will attempt to develop further the lines of Kilian's argument by investigating the mechanisms that produced the wanax system he has defined. I am interested not in reconstructing a pseudo-historical narrative of the origins of this system 3, but rather in showing how the rich fabric of information in the Aegean conforms to a variety of models currently employed by archaeologists on a worldwide basis. I do not subscribe to one theoretical viewpoint to the exclusion of others but prefer an eclectic approach because in that manner I believe the problems under scrutiny can be viewed from a variety of complementary perspectives 4. My primary interest is on the rise of complex societies, and here I am explicitly

* I wish to thank Jack Davis for commenting on a draft of this article and making many suggestions that helped improve the argument and Mary Helms for offering encouragement. The views and mistakes are, naturally, all my own.

The following abbreviations have been used in addition to those in the American Journal of Archaeology 95 (1991) 1-16.

EARLE, Chiefdoms = T. EARLE, ed., Chiefdoms: Power, Economy, and Ideology (1991);

3 D. CLARKE, Analytical Archaeology (1986) 12, 22-23.
concerned with the nature of leadership: how it evolves and what devices it employs to consolidate its position. Thus I am most interested in identifying the archaeological evidence that correlates to leadership and in interpreting how it demonstrates the evolution of leadership from the beginning of Mycenaean society (approximately late MH) until the establishment of the palaces (approximately LH IIIA). Specifically what needs to be explained for this study is how and why the rulers at Mycenaean centers appropriated so many tangible symbols and conceptual notions from neopalatial centers in Crete, and how they managed to transform them into viable and uniquely Mycenaean instruments of governance.

Although Kilian was aware that the institution of the waman did not create in one moment the Mycenaean palatial state, he did not sufficiently explain how this process occurred, nor did he consider that the formation of the palaces was not necessarily an inevitable result of such a mode of socio-political organization and its political economy, a point made eloquently by Cherry in his discussion of the evolution of the Mykonos palaces 5. In fact, we can extend the argument against the notion that the rise of the palaces was inevitable by observing that the term, "the palatial civilization of Mycenaean Greece" is a misnomer, if it is intended to refer to a politically integrated society 6, since the different sites of Mycenaean palaces all have their own evidence of local rule and an independent local historical development. The comparison to the different forms of state formation during the Archaic period, forms that lead in some instances to poleis and in others to ethne, is apt, especially since it clarifies the essential independence of each center within the larger cultural interdependence of Hellenic culture 7. Thus the rise of each Mycenaean palace center ought to be treated as an independent event to document, and it must be emphasized that although many centers were emerging during the periods prior to state formation only a few would result in palaces. Nonetheless, it is the case that, so far as we at present understand Mycenaean society during the palace period, there evolved remarkable uniformity in the various cultural institutions, evident in the Linear B script, in the organization of the citadels, in the crafts, and in the evidence of interaction. Colin Renfrew has suggested this phenomenon be studied from the perspective of "peer polity interaction", and I will make use of this model in this paper 8. It is a useful model in that it explains how, despite the individual origins of each palatial center, certain unifying institutions, such as kingship, were shared by them all.

To begin, however, I wish to expand upon my insistence that the Mycenaean palace society evolved, and I will do so in the context of current theoretical approaches to the rise of prestate societies 9. One of these is "secondary state formation", a notion first proposed by

7 Y. FERGUSON, “Chiefdoms to City-States: the Greek Experience”, in EARLE, Chiefdoms 175-180.
8 Originally Renfrew coined the term "early state module" before developing the notion of "peer polity interaction"; see C. RENFREW, "Trade as Action at a Distance: Questions of Integration and Communication", in J. SABLOFF and C. LAMBERG-KARLOVSKY, eds., Ancient Civilization and Trade (1975) 12-21 and figure 3 for a map of the Mycenaean ESMs. Peer polities are defined in C. RENFREW, "Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change", in C. RENFREW and J. CHERRY eds., Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change (1986) 1-18.
Morton Fried in 1967 10. Another is the model of the chiefdom, which has received much attention in the last decade 11, and which is appropriate in the context of the first model, since the formation of secondary states often is visible in the transformation of chiefdoms. A third, equally complementary approach, the "prestige exchange mechanism", as developed by Friedman and Rowlands 12, offers a Marxist, socio-economic explanation of how secondary state formation might work. Coursing throughout these models and giving them meaning in a dynamic manner are the ideological underpinnings of the evolving society where authority finds ways to authenticate itself in ritual and augments the mechanical bareness of the prestige exchange model by emphasizing the importance of the acquisition of symbolic and conceptual information in the formation of complex societies 13.

The focus of these approaches will be on the formation of leadership as Mycenaean society evolved. One of the most visible manifestations of Mycenaean palatial society is what is termed in this volume "kingship". Kingship is here defined as an inherited, superior, political authority vested in a single person, the king, who holds his position for life and who maintains his power through a manipulation of economic, militaristic and ideological forces that reinforce relationships determined by value and belief systems in a society. On the one hand, these relationships are kin-based and extend backwards in time through linear kin-groups. On the other hand, the balance of these relationships is maintained by another source of power, namely the ability of the leader to assert continually his access to external and higher sources of power that exist outside the internal landscape he controls. In both these respects kingship is like chiefship, but, as I shall discuss at length later, chiefdoms tend to be less stable than kingdoms. The role of the king is better defined than that of a chief, in part because kings are the heads of states which are more highly structured and rule-bound than chiefdoms (see discussion below). But the boundaries between the definitions of chiefdoms and kingdoms are not clearcut, for chiefdoms grade into paramountcies, and paramountcies into kingdoms (see discussion below). Often what is applicable to one applies as well to the other. Thus in a study of the evolution of kingship, the models of the chiefdom and of secondary state formation are fundamental, particularly because they work in complementary ways to illustrate the internal and external dimensions of the process of state formation.

Secondary State Formation

The model of secondary state formation posits that higher order societies create a situation that stimulates bordering, less highly organized social groups to define themselves more clearly. This process is contagious in that the creation of one secondary society can affect


13 T. EARLE, "The Evolution of Chiefdoms", in EARLE, Chiefdoms 5-8, see now, M. HELMS, Craft and the Kings' ideal (1993).
neighboring areas, and it is chaotic, since the forces of stimulus vary as do the structure and conditions of each reactive group. One problem that needs to be ascertained in each case study to which this model is applied concerns the different degrees of socio-political and economic integration between the two groups in question. For example is the superior one by definition a chiefdom or a state and the lesser a band, a tribe or a chieftain? This is important to ascertain since the archaeological framework of the discussion needs to be adjusted to the appropriate scale of political and economic complexity in order be sure that the data fit appropriately. For the case of band the evidence fits well with the neolithic Minoina society having been a state, while on the Greek mainland (at the first period of interest relevant to this paper, namely late MH, LH I) local societal groups were variously in transition to the chiefdom. Another problem affecting our view of this period relates to 10erry's admonition that the individual trajectory of societal groups is neither predetermined nor predictable, and this means that our reading of the process of complex socio-political formations from the archaeological evidence will be variously opaque or, at best, translucent when viewed from the perspective of different emergent regional groups, since, probably, only some of them will result in complex chiefdoms or states.

The Chiefdom

The model of the chiefdom is not a static one. Research indicates that chiefdoms are highly various in form and organization (supra n. 5). In part this is because they are fluid, volatile and often impermanent or fragile forms of political organization. Thus by their nature they are susceptible to change. Nonetheless, we need a definition of chiefdom in order to proceed to apply the other models of organization to our problem. Certain features are common to all. Chiefdoms are organized along hereditary lines. Power is vested in the chief, who is the center of the coordination of economic, social and religious activities. His principal concern, however, is oriented towards maintaining his position of dominance, which is open to challenge by peers. As a result much of his decision-making is focused on utilizing the resources at his command to consolidate his authority. Thus rules are established that favor his position, through rituals and exemplar behavior and through succession. Central to the maintenance of the chief's authority, as defined by Elman Service, is the notion of redistribution, through which the chief receives goods from commoners and redistributes them to his supporters.

This definition contrasts to that of the state, which is defined as a "complex of institutions by means of which the power of a society is organized on a basis superior to kinship". Thus states are characterized by offices that are abstracted, formally defined and independent of the individual who fills them. This contrasts with chiefdoms where the chief and his person are indistinguishable. States consist of formalized institutions that exercise the specialized

14 J. CHERRY, "Politics and Palaces: Some Problems in Minoean State Formation", in C. RENFREW and J. CHERRY (supra n. 8) 19-45; M. DANSEY and J. WRIGHT (supra n. 6).
15 J. CHERRY (supra n. 5) 33-43.
18 FRIED (supra n. 10) 229.
functions of government, such as police forces or standing armies, ecclesiastical, economic, and administrative institutions. In contrast to chiefdoms where decision-making is centralized in the chief and undifferentiated as to function (i.e., there are no specialized decision-making offices), in states decision-making is itself a specialized function and breeds a hierarchy of differentiated tiers within each institutional function of the state. Thus chiefdoms may be diagrammed as operating at up to three levels of control and states with three or more 19.

These distinctions are important when applied to archaeological data and explored over a broad geographic landscape, but it is not easy to distinguish between complex chiefdoms and formative states 20. The reason for this has to do with the variability and stability of complex chiefdoms as compared to states 21. Ethnographic documentation of chiefdoms shows considerable variability in their size, from groups of ca. 1,000 or less to large ones of tens of thousands. The normal unit of residence is the village, but groups of villages can cover a broad region defining a single chiefdom or paramountcy. Within the territory there can be specific locales for the paramount and others for lesser chiefs. For example, places may be reserved for residence and ritual. In or around settlements residential and mortuary areas will often be distinct. Useful for archaeological analysis is the fact that between simple and complex chiefdoms there are visible differences 22. Whereas in a simple chiefdom residential and mortuary differentiation may exist but only be recognized through impermanence or small scale individualistic symbols or through ritual action, in complex societies the areas themselves become architectonically formalized, even monumentalized, such that the segregation of residential, mortuary and ritual areas is often observable in the archaeological record.

The personalized structure of chiefdoms creates pressures to establish more complex levels of control. If the chief is a successful manager, he may set the chiefdom on the road to the formation of a state. Failure to do so may result either in the fissure of a chiefdom as challenging cadet groups "fly off" to found their own groups, or in the collapse of the chief’s authority and the reversion of the society to a lower level of organization. In an area of restricted resources fissure is not likely, since there is nowhere for the challenging group to go, and instead conflict may result 23.

Many of these pressures result from the expectations created by a controlling, centralized leadership. The need for an economic system that can deliver goods and services to the controlled populace is generally considered central to the survival of the chief, although he may not control (nor need to control) this sector 24. Specifically the chief has to try to ensure the flow of agricultural and craft goods for redistribution among the elite groups around him. Yet the comparative archaeological evidence suggests that more attention will be focused on strategies oriented towards the personal achievement of the chief to maintain his inherited position.

Since numerous uncontrollable variables, for example climatic perturbation, will periodically disrupt this system, the chief naturally turns to other means of overriding or compensating for these shortcomings. That is partly why ritual activities become a major concern of chiefdoms. They can distract from the unpredictable instabilities inherent in an open system and be used as a mechanism for reestablishing the superiority of the chief by

19 H. WRIGHT (supra n. 11) 42-43.
20 FERGUSON (supra n. 7) 169-171.
21 EARLE, Chiefdoms 5-8.
22 H. WRIGHT (supra n. 11) 42-44.
23 CARNEIRO (supra n. 11) 64, 78-79.
24 See the considerable debate of this issue in EARLE (supra n. 15) B. V. STEFONAS, “Contrasting Patterns of Mississippian Development”, in EARLE, Chiefdoms 213-216; R. DRENNAN, “Pre-Hispanic Chiefdom Trajectories in Mesoamerica, Central America, and Northern South America”, in EARLE, Chiefdoms 281-287.
emphasizing kinship ties and the rights of lineage, which are particularly important as claims to heroic or divine ancestors.25 Likewise rituals can be used to demonstrate the leader's access to external sources of power that symbolize his ability to control the unpredictable.26 Success in this process much improves the ability of the chief to exploit commoners and mollify the malcontents within the elite group. This process is largely accomplished through displays of wealth, as in a potlatch or ritual feast, and is also the occasion for the display of symbols of power, authority and wealth. Hence prestige goods are fundamental in this process.

Among the chiefly elite, however, this system of ritual display utilizing wealth, prestige objects and ideological symbols is under constant pressure from competing aspirants. A competitive cycle is built into this form of political organization that is highly dependent on display of the exotic and foreign and is wholly focused on the individual. For chiefdoms in contact with other, especially more technologically sophisticated, societies, one solution to this problem is for the chief to utilize his resources to gain and monopolize access to these external sources. These sources may become a restricted resource for the acquisition of prestige items which can be used in consolidating the authority of the chief. Such a system has a strong impact on the formation of an economy, especially insofar as it creates a dependent relation between those seeking prestige items and those supplying them. Implications of this will be pursued later in this study.27

Prestige Exchange and Acquisition

It is at this point that the notion of prestige exchange bears discussion. Ethnographic studies have thoroughly documented prestige exchange.28 Typically the process involves the reciprocal exchange of objects with no intrinsic value between chiefs, but in many of the archaeologically demonstrated cases, the objects have great value as part of the system of “wealth finance” 29 This process is of more symbolic significance than economic in the sense that it is reserved for the chiefs, establishes their peer status, and affirms an exchange network. What is important for the argument in this study is that prestige exchange establishes the chief’s claims to access to individuals and to resources outside his societal group (PI. XXVIIa). Thus in an instance where a higher order society becomes involved in such a mechanism, the inequality in the relationship may establish a positive flow of objects, technological expertise and information from the primary source to the secondary recipient. Evidence of this system in action is found in the Aegean and has been mapped by Jack Davis, who recognized the “Western String” network from Crete through the Cyclades, especially active during the Neopalatial period, and by Jeremy Rutter and Carol Zerner, who documented the flow of goods from Crete to the coastal areas of the Peloponnesos during the early Middle Bronze

25 See for example the many cases of elaborate display documented by D. KERTZER, Ritual, Politics and Power (1988).
26 See HELMS (supra n. 13) 49-50, passim.
27 This point is consistently made by the contributors to EARLE, Chiefdoms.
28 HELMS (supra n. 13) 13-67 on “skilled crafting” thoroughly discusses the relationship between skilled craft production, power and ideology.
Mycenaean Chieftdoms

It is widely accepted today that different Middle Helladic centers evolved into chieftdoms over much of the mainland 32. Because of the widespread depopulation during the Middle Helladic period, it appears that there was room for chieftdoms to arise in many areas and, initially at least, for competing lines to flourish and expand into largely abandoned areas. In my view this would explain why there are so many sites with grandiose tombs, especially tholos tombs which appear epidemically over the Peloponnese and Central Greece during LH I and II 33. These emerging polities, however, though peers in the sense of sharing fundamentally similar cultural material, were not equals. The best evidence for this inequality is found in the grave goods at these centers. Spyros Iakovidis has pulled together much of the evidence from the wealthiest of these tombs in an article that argues for their similarity 34, but in fact a chart of the distribution of metal vessels from these locales (PL XXVIII) demonstrates the unequal distribution of one category of goods among different persons or groups. 135. What the goods do illustrate, however, is the common practice of marking status in all of these societies by artifacts manufactured of rare and exotic materials and largely manufactured in Neopalatial workshops or by Cretan craftsmen working in the islands or the mainland, possibly by special commission. This evidence neatly conforms to the notion of prestige exchange networks outlined above. By comparing several cases in detail even greater insight can be gained into the operation of this mechanism. In the case of metal vessels not only the number but also the kinds of vessels found in the rich Shaft Graves at Mycenae differ from those of other contemporary sites (Table II). The gross difference in numbers and types is a powerful argument that the items in the Shaft Graves were acquired by individuals or small groups of related individuals over a short period of time 36. This is consequently strong evidence that these items are not necessarily evidence of local mainland workshops as posited by Ellen 31.

33. CAVANAGH and MEE (supra n. 32).
35. Metal vessels were selected because of their easy comparability from site to site and the likelihood that they would be representative of the prestige exchange network. P. DARQUE has explored in detail the variation among grave goods in tholoi as opposed to chamber tombs: “Les Doloi et l’organisation socio-politique du monde mycénien”, in R. LAFINEUR, ed., Thanatos. Les coutumes funéraires en Égée à l’âge du Bronze, Actes du colloque de Liège (21-23 avril 1986) (Aegaeum 1 1987) 190-200.
Davis 37. The problem is more complicated, as has been recognized by various scholars. Hartmut Matthäus has argued for a workshop in Messenia, though the numbers of vessels seem exceptionally few to verify that theory 38. Other possibilities include the existence of itinerant smiths or craftsmen in service to Mycenaean chiefs. 39. Hood has argued that some of the centers of bronze production were first established on Crete 40. I think this argument can be expanded by noticing the consistency with which much of the material from the Shaft Graves (notably graves Gamma, III, IV, and V) can be compared to that from palace sites like Knossos and Zakros, which suggests a strong, if not direct, connection of the owners of that material to persons of high rank and authority in the Minoan palaces. I believe that this connection was a central stimulus to the creation of Mycenaean palatial states and the institution of kingship, which I prefer to rename for this discussion as the wazonx-kingship. It provided a conduit for prestige goods that could be redistributed by chiefs at major emerging mainland chieftdoms.

In addition to traffic in luxury items of display, other more utilitarian ones presumably flowed along these routes, notably weapons, which had the sole purpose of controlling human populations by force, and also tools and vessels, which were useful in developing and maintaining this chiefly economy 41. But by and large the majority of the items found in these rich graves, especially again at Mycenae, were of a symbolic nature, from the scepter discussed by Palaima in this volume, to the embossed gold plate peak sanctuary from Grave IV 42. These represent some of the very numerous conceptual and ideological borrowings from the Minoans.

If the purpose of the prestige network is to differentiate the chief and his lineage from other lineages by demonstrating the former's access to external resources, this argument can be equally applied to cognitive resources. As has already been described, a characteristic of chieftdoms is the capacity of the chief to maintain the societal system through the proper execution of rituals. This responsibility is claimed as a right through lineage ties to ancestors. As it is common for ancestors to act as intermediares to the supernatural forces of a society 43, the dominant lineage will assume a major role of authority in the officiating of ritual. This special relationship gives the chief authority that complements his physical and economic power. Just as the chief acquires powerful practical knowledge through his proprietary access to the artifacts of the prestige exchange network, he also acquires powerful conceptual knowledge through his access to the differently constructed belief systems and rituals of foreign societies. Insofar as he is able to appropriate these for his own use, he may also impose them on the ritual structure of his own society. This introduces another level of separation between him, his followers and contemporaries as illustrated in the following diagram

42 KARO: Grave IV, 74-75, pl. 38; 242-244; Grave III, 438, pl. 27: 26.
By performing these foreign rituals he may further legitimate his authority. In the case of a Mycenaean chief introducing Minoan rituals and beliefs to his society, it is not hard to imagine that these would be readily accepted as authentic signs of authority, since it is highly likely that since at least the Middle Bronze Age knowledge of the Minoans and their palace society was widespread. For example, the Neopalatial period finds from the Maleatas sanctuary at Epidaurus -- the steatite relief vessel, the double axes -- or the diverse assemblage from the cit in the Vaphio tholos -- the many signet seals, the rings, the Ianate "Syrian" bronze ax head, the figure-eight embossed ax-adze, the golden repoussé cups, to name a few -- are easily understood from this perspective.

In an article on the role of wine consumption in the formation of Mycenaean society, I present a case study of the process of ritual transference by investigating ceremonies of drinking among the Mycenaean elite. I show that such an act, though part of the common chiefly activity of ritual feasting, was part of the process of elevating the elite above others by appropriating a ritual action and its etiquette from Minoan society, where it was an important part of the ceremony of the nobility. My model for this argument is derived from a study by Michael Dietler on the role of wine in the transformation of Celtic society. This kind of transformation takes place in the context of an existing set of beliefs and values. The recipients, whether the Mycenaean chief or his commoners, must be able to construct a relationship to a new conceptual framework in terms of their own world view. Thus the appropriation of Minoan customs and beliefs by Mycenaeans was neither a wholesale transferral nor an adoption; rather, it was a selective adaptation of elements appropriate to an emerging Mycenaean society.

Robin Hägg has established the outlines of this argument in his articles on Mycenaean religion. The process of adapting elements from the Minoans, he suggests, accounts for the syncretistic nature of Mycenaean religion as seen particularly in its iconography. As has just been demonstrated, such appropriation is natural for chieftains in proximity to more highly organized societies. It remains to be emphasized, however, that the formation of a religion is best understood in evolutionary terms, for it begins as early as the end of the Middle Helladic period and continues until the foundation of the first palaces during LH IIIA1. Since the origins of the palatial society lay in a localized events, the outcome of which...
above -- resulted neither from a linear trajectory nor was predictable, the formation of a Mycenaean religion (one that claimed adherents throughout the geography of an area of Mycenaean culture that was probably not politically unified), was likely the result of a collection of cult institutions and rituals from various regions that were bound together by the homologous nature of core Helladic social institutions 51. As I have argued in a forthcoming paper 52, the process of consolidating these practices into a coherent religion was occurring during the palatial period and was disrupted by the fall of the palaces at the end of the Bronze Age. Parallel to this development of a Mycenaean religion is the formation and consolidation of Mycenaean political authority. Thus the successful chief became a paramount chief, or king, in those areas where the convergence of economic, political and ideological forces were creating central places, namely Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes, Orchomenos, Athens, and Pylos, to name the most obvious.

The restricted access to external resources enjoyed by a chief and his followers resulted not just in an alienation between the chiefly group and the commoners; it also created an arena of competition among different chiefly groups, some no doubt neighbors on the Greek mainland, others only distantly related 53. Presumably a chief would want to keep both local and distant competitors away from his sources if at all possible, and he could attempt to accomplish this by instituting monopolistic practices. In the case at hand, the primary source, neopalatial Crete, presumably had as many points of access as there were palaces (unless Knossos truly had achieved hegemony during the Neopalatial period) and there must have existed numerous secondary sources as well 54. As a result there may be in the archaeological record distributions that actually reflect the activities of different chiefly groups attempting to gain access to different palatial centers on Crete. This scenario might account for the different assemblages apparent in different chiefly tombs, e.g. Mycenae, Peristeria, Vaphio among other closely contemporary instances. The superiority in quantity and quality of the material at Mycenae, however, suggests a degree of access unequaled elsewhere, and, as Oliver Dickinson has suggested 55, it bespeaks a "special relation" between Mycenae and Knossos, or, as suggested here, the success of the chiefly families at Mycenae in securing exclusive, or nearly exclusive, access to Knossos and other centers in Crete. This is particularly well illustrated by observing the close relationship between objects found in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae and at special locales in the palaces and major villas on Crete, most notably material from "sacred" contexts in the palaces of Knossos and Zakros (Table I).

So far this is a picture of various competing chiefly groups on the mainland of Greece traversing the Aegean to Crete to acquire a variety of prestige goods to use in various fashions as instruments for controlling the people of their home territories 56. Access among these groups may not be equal as reflected in the unequal distributions of goods found in burials at the home sites. Since competition is fundamental to this model it is likely that these groups were always entangled in conflict. Again we must seek archaeological evidence that supports

52 J. WRIGHT (supra n. 50).
53 Comparable instances cited by FRIEDMAN and ROWLANDS (supra n. 12) 204-206; STEPHANAITIS (supra n. 24) 225-227; EARLE (supra n. 13) 7; KRISTIANSEN (supra n. 30) 27-32, 38-39.
55 DICKINSON (supra n. 36).
56 The emphasis here is on acquisition, as defined by HELMS (supra n. 13) rather than on exchange. She cites (p. 94) as an example TCHERRINA ("Italian Wine in Gaul at the End of the Republic"); by P. GARNEY, K. HOPKINS, and C.R. WHITTAKER, eds., Trade in the Ancient Economy 99) as follows: "The (Italian) merchants did not set off for Gaul for the purpose of selling an amphora of wine but in order to bring back a slave".
the notion of conflict developing, and we can reason that such evidence would be manifest only when it assumed a magnitude that would leave a visible clue in the archaeological record. Such conflict would result, for example, when chiefs attempted to consolidate territories that impinged on the borders of another chiefdom 57. The date of this development I believe corresponds to LH IIIB-LH IIIA:1. This period is marked by the so-called warrior tombs and a shift in the construction of tholos tombs such that large monumental ones are constructed at palatial centers 58. Most important, however, is this is the period when the first monumental edifices are established at the major centers of Pylos, Mycenae, Tiryns, and probably also Thebes, Orchomenos, Athens and the Menelaion. About other sites we are less certain, but they may be measured by another criterion, namely the construction of fortifications in LH IIIA:1 (Mycenae, Midea, Tyrins, Argos?, Geraki?, Teichos Dymaiston, Knosos?, Thebes and Athens) 59.

How did this process relate to the evolution of kingship? To ask this question is to ask how the position of the chief is transformed into the position of paramount chief and king, or, for this study, warak-king. Traditionally the answer is found in studying the process of the political transformation of a chiefdom into a state, but this focus should not overshadow the importance of ideology in this transformation, because, as I have been arguing in this paper, the ideological evolution of a complex society has a distinct role in the formation of the structure of its head 60. Henry Wright has suggested that an important part of this transformation is the recognition among peer paramountcies that competition among chiefdoms is principally destructive since it causes cyclical conflict and warfare, and that cooperation among peers can create a larger, more complex and more productive political and economic entity (though perhaps not necessarily more stable). Naturally there must be a basis for such cooperation. Here, Renfrew’s notion of peer polity interaction is especially useful for it posits the existence of inter-polity homologies 51. In the process of the formation of the Mycenaean state we can identify these as language, belief, and social organization, which go back to the core institutions of Indo-European Greek speakers inhabiting much of mainland Greece 62. The uniformity of the evidence at early Mycenaean centers (generally uniform craft traditions, building forms, and the development of grandiose funerary facilities richly furnished with individual interments) illustrates the obvious archaeological correlates of these homologies.

57 Thus the success of Mycenae in consolidating a large territory cannot solely be explained as an example of “wealth finance” (the use of items of material wealth) but must also be due to the successful management of local labor and land holdings around Mycenae, an example of “simple finance” (the use of consumable commodities; see D’ALTOY and EARLE [supra n. 30]; T. EARLE, “Property Rights and the Evolution of Chiefdoms,” in EARLE, Chiefdoms 71-99). Recent research around the area of Mycenae seems to bear out the importance of land holding and intensive agriculture to the palace: see J. WRIGHT, “An Early Mycenaean Harriot on Tsoungazi at Ancient Nemea”, in P. DARQUE and R. TREUL, eds., L’habitat égén préhistorique (BCH Suppl. XIX: 1990) 357. B. WELLS, C. RÜNNELS, and E. ZANGGER, “In the Shadow of Mycenae”, Archaeology 46 (1993) 54-62.

58 P. DARQUE (supra n. 35) 200-205; O. FELON, Tholoi, Tombes, et cérémonies funéraires (1978) 390-391. Gribas IV.

59 For most of these sites, see S. IARVINDES, Late Helladic Citadels on Mainland Greece (1983); IDEM, “Vormykienische und mykenische Wohnbauten”, Archaeologica Helvetica (1972); for a discussion of the chronology including Argos, Geraki, and Knosos see: J. WRIGHT, Mycenaean Masonry Practices and Elements of Construction (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College 1978) especially 162-179. It is available at Bryn Mawr College and the American School of Classical Studies, Athens.

60 H. WRIGHT (supra n. 11) 47-49; EARLE (supra n. 13) 7, 9-10; STEPONAITIS (supra n. 24) 213-215, 226-27.

61 C. KENFREW (supra n. 8) 4-5; Renfrew refers to these as “structural” in the context of architecture, but they are better understood, I think, as structures in the sense of P. BOURDEAU, Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) 72-87; and A. GIDDENS, The Constitution of Society (1984) 16-34.

62 See BENVENISTE (supra n. 51).
The appearance in LH III of successful palatial centers with similar architectural forms and plans and iconographic and craft traditions, largely traceable to the architectural evidence from the early Mycenaean era, shows the outcome of this process. Whether these qualify as states is not at issue here; rather the point is that the successful centers maintained their cooperative arrangements during the period of the establishment of the palatial centers and that each was ruled by an individual, who continued somehow the dominant chiefly lineage of his region while simultaneously establishing balancing (reciprocating) ties with the heads of the other palatial centers. Archaeologically the best evidence of this arrangement is the economic exchange system of the inscribed stirrup jars. It also characterizes the nature of the change from one of competitive display of prestige objects among competing chieftains to one of cooperative productive activities. No doubt there continued from the early Mycenaean period many customs of display, such as feasting, among the heads of the Mycenaean palaces, but the ideological role of the woman-king, I would argue, now was oriented towards displays that consolidated the mutually agreed territory of the palace as much as, if not more than, towards the mere maintenance of a coterie of nobles in the chief’s party. The existence of religious officials documented in the Linear B tablets, the holding of sacred lands, and probably the management of a sacred calendar illustrate not only the extra distance between the woman-king and his subjects that had existed previously, but also the concern with managing a more complex organization and maintaining its productivity and coherence. The similarity of this organization of religion at all the palatial centers represents the foundation of a Mycenaean religion that encompassed a syncretistic cosmology of Minoan and Helladic components. The role of the woman-king in this religion was perhaps similar to that of the elites during the formative period of the historic poleis where again a common cosmology was affirmed for all Greeks. The elites acted to maintain local cults and to efficaciously the ideological relations of each city to pan-Hellenic cults. The position of the woman-king was now formally sanctified through complex iconography linking Minoan and Mycenaean ideologies. The power and authority of the woman-king was probably largely directed toward public displays, in contrast to the private nature of chiefly demonstrations. Although the textual evidence for such displays is lacking, the architectural organization of Mycenaean and Tiryns is particularly clear: large ramways lead up to the palace, or link Cult Center and palace; the grand staircase and elaborate propyla emphasize the entrance to the palace court; the courts before the megaron are large, open areas, suitable for large gatherings. These displays represented a totality of political, religious and ancestral power in their use of architectural monuments and symbolism.

This study has presented a model for the evolution of some early Mycenaean chieftains to centralized palace-states. The role of the chief and the transformation of his postition to the hereditary position of kingship is instrumental to this process and characterizes our conception of Mycenaean society and much of the archaeological evidence we have for it. L. Vance Watrous has argued that the institution of kingship was acquired by the Minoans in the Near East, but this is a problematic perspective since kingship is not clearly manifested in the

63 H. CATLING, I. CHERRY, R. JONES, and J. KILLEN, “The Linear B Inscribed Stirrup Jars and West Crete”, BSA 70 (1980) 49-113. Perhaps the best evidence that this was an exchange at the highest level of the society is the use of the adjective woman-royal on some of the jars.
64 HÄGG (supra n. 49).
65 FERGUSON (supra n. 7) 172, 181, 190-192.
66 KILIAN (supra n. 1) 294, J. WRIGHT (supra n. 40).
67 J. WRIGHT, “Death and Power at Mycenae”, in Phanakos (supra n. 35) 176-182.
68 WRIGHT (supra n. 67).
evidence from proto- and neo-palatial Crete, nor is it necessary that the notion of kingship be adopted from a foreign culture. As this study has made clear, the *wanax*-king evolves naturally and organically from the process of attempting to consolidate political and religious authority at a variety of Mycenaean centers and can only be described as uniquely Mycenaean. Its relationship to Near Eastern kingship is best understood by returning to Kilian’s analysis of the mature kingship of the Mycenaean centers, namely that the *wanax*-kings achieved a level of economic and political might such that they could conceive of themselves on equal terms with Near Eastern potentates and initiate (or respond to opportunities of) correspondence with the Hittite and Egyptian kings, among others. Viewed in this manner the Mycenaean *wanax*-kings continued the process of emulation begun by the chieftains who first ventured to Crete during its palatial era and pulled themselves up another rung of the ladder of stratification as they began to participate in the international economic and political arena of the late 14th and 13th centuries B.C. This was as far as it went, however, and the subsequent disruptions in the Eastern Mediterranean forced a collapse of the system supporting the *wanax*-kings. When the system collapsed, local settings again asserted themselves, and the evolutionary process of political formation began again following different trajectories with different results.

James C. WRIGHT


70 See CHEREY (supra n. 14); DABNEY (supra n. 6); E. DAVIS, this volume; T. PALADMA, this volume with other sources.

71 Thuc, KILIAN (supra n. 1) 294, 296. The evidence for such contact is perhaps debatable at best, but as a hypothetical notion is worth entertaining here as a way of contrasting the role of the king with that of the chief.
### TABLE I

**Similar Items from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae and Neopalatial Centers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Mycenae</th>
<th>Knossos</th>
<th>Mallia</th>
<th>Zakros</th>
<th>A. Triadha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bull Rhyta</td>
<td>SiGr IV: silver</td>
<td>Steatite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion Rhyta</td>
<td>SiGr IV: gold</td>
<td>Marble</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triton Rhyta</td>
<td>SiGr III: faience</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>termos</td>
<td></td>
<td>obsidian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphoriskos</td>
<td>SiGr IV: stout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jugs</td>
<td>SiGr IV: li, f, silver</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>asbestos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Chalices</td>
<td>SiGr IV, V</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Type A Swords</td>
<td>SiGr IV</td>
<td></td>
<td>ubiqitous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Knots</td>
<td>SiGr IV, V</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Sources:
Knossos: Tri-Columnar Hall Treasure, Temple Repositories, Central Treasury; South House Pillar Crypt; Mallia: Residential Area III 1; Bastion E; Zakros: Treasure Room; Agya Triadha: NW Residential Quarter, Room 13 and area of main rooms.

(Aside from the Shaft Graves similar items are found in other contexts on the Mainland, as, for example, a chalice from a tomb at Nauplion and a jug from Mycenae, chamber tomb 102. See J. Sakellarakis, "Mycenaean Stone Vases", *SMEA* 17 [1976] 185, pl. XII, 34, 35.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Vessel Shape</th>
<th>frag?</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Biblio.</th>
<th>Museum</th>
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<td>LH II</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Asine</td>
<td>Th 1, 5</td>
<td>basin, 2 handles</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>LH II-IIIA</td>
<td>LH II</td>
<td>NMA</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Tholos</td>
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<td>LH II</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dendra</td>
<td>Th 8</td>
<td>lamp</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>LH II</td>
<td>LH II</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>LH I</td>
<td>NMA 950</td>
<td>G</td>
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Key: Matt. = Matthäus (supra n. 38); Davis (supra n. 37 [1977])
Metals: Baburenze, Ciscoppe, Gagold, Snailver
46 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 057 NMA 333 G
47 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 058 NMA 392 G
48 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 059 NMA 393 G
49 Myceneum ShGr IV khentos no LH I Davis 060 NMA 440 G
50 Myceneum ShGr IV anthropos no LH I Davis 061 NMA 390 G
51 Myceneum ShGr IV rhythm, ban no LH I Davis 062 NMA 273 G
52 Myceneum ShGr IV Nestor Cup no LH I Davis 063 NMA 412 G
53 Myceneum ShGr IV rhyton, bull no LH I Davis 064 NMA 384 SG
54 Myceneum ShGr IV jug no LH I Davis 065 NMA 480 G
55 Myceneum ShGr IV jug, sprouted no LH I Davis 066 NMA 475 SG
56 Myceneum ShGr IV cup, 1 piece no LH I Davis 068 NMA 320 S
57 Myceneum ShGr IV cup, deep no LH I Davis 067 NMA 509 S
58 Myceneum ShGr IV cup, 1 piece yes LH I Davis 069 NMA 480 S
59 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 070 NMA 517+476 S
60 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 071 NMA 518 S
61 Myceneum ShGr IV Yes LH I Davis 072 NMA 479 S
62 Myceneum ShGr IV jar, miniature no LH I Davis 073 NMA 479 S
63 Myceneum ShGr IV yes LH I Davis 074 NMA 510 S
64 Myceneum ShGr IV handle yes LH I Davis 075 NMA 469 S
65 Myceneum ShGr IV handle yes LH I Davis 076 NMA 608c S
66 Myceneum ShGr IV handle yes LH I Davis 077 NMA 472 S
67 Myceneum ShGr IV/V handle yes LH I Davis 078 S
68 Myceneum ShGr IV handle yes LH I Davis 079 NMA 474 S
69 Myceneum ShGr IV handle yes LH I Davis 080 NMA 378 S
70 Myceneum ShGr IV jug? no LH I Davis 081 NMA 327+473 S
71 Myceneum ShGr IV handled goblet no LH I Davis 082 NMA 25l G
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73 Myceneum ShGr IV handled goblet no LH I Davis 084 NMA 480 G
74 Myceneum ShGr IV handled goblet no LH I Davis 085 NMA 520 S
75 Myceneum ShGr IV crater no LH I Davis 086 NMA 605+686 S
76 Myceneum ShGr IV rhyton, conical no LH I Davis 087 NMA 473+504 S
77 Myceneum ShGr IV rhyton, figured no LH I Davis 088 NMA 608+686 S
78 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A no LH I Davis 089 NMA 721 S
79 Myceneum ShGr IV Vaphio A? yes LH I Davis 090 NMA 151a S
80 Myceneum ShGr III jug yes LH I Davis 091 NMA 511 S
81 Myceneum ShGr III handled goblet yes LH I Davis 092 NMA 127,355b S
82 Myceneum ShGr III cylinder, pyxis no LH I Davis 093 NMA 72 G
83 Myceneum ShGr III cylinder, pyxis no LH I Davis 094 NMA 88 G
84 Myceneum ShGr III anthropos no LH I Davis 095 NMA 83 G
85 Myceneum ShGr III anthropos no LH I Davis 096 NMA 84 G
86 Myceneum ShGr I cup, broad rim yes LH I Davis 097 NMA 221 S
87 Myceneum ShGr I cup, 1 piece no LH I Davis 098 NMA 317 S
88 Myceneum ShGr V cauldron no LH I Mat. 005 NMA 948 B
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90 Myceneum ShGr III cauldron no LH I Mat. 007 NMA 173 B
91 Myceneum ShGr IV cauldron no LH I Mat. 008 NMA 584 B
92 Myceneum ShGr cauldron no LH I Mat. 009 NMA 595 B
93 Myceneum ShGr cauldron yes LH I Mat. 010 NMA 589 B
94 Myceneum Trench H cauldron yes LH I Mat. 012 NMA 588 B
95 Myceneum ShGr V cauldron no LH I Mat. 017 NMA 580 B
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97 Myceneum ShGr cauldron no LH I Mat. 019 NMA 174 B
98 Myceneum ShGr cauldron no LH I Mat. 020 NMA 582 B
99 Myceneum ShGr cauldron no LH I Mat. 021 NMA 850 B
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157. Mycenae ShGr. spouted cup...yes LHI...Matt. 346 NMA B
158. Mycenae ShGr. Vaphio B...no LHI...Matt. 355 NMA 8701 B
159. Mycenae...ShGr. Vaphio...yes LHI...Matt. 356 NMA 8788 B
160. Mycenae...ShGr. bowl...no LHI...Matt. 420 NGA B
161. Mycenae...ShGr. pot...yes LHI...Matt. 423 NM 2344/215b B
162. Mycenae...ShGr. krater...yes LHI?...Matt. 200 NMA B
163. Mycenae...ShGr. krater...yes LHI?...Matt. 201 NMA B
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169. Mycenae...ShGr. cup, pedestal...yes LHI?...Matt. 366 NAM B
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172. Mycenae...ShGr. basin, 2 handles...yes LHI A...Matt. 127 NMA 211 B
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174. Mycenae...ShGr. basin, 2 handles...yes MH-LH I...Matt. 130 NMA 211 B
175. Mycenae...ShGr. basin, 2 handles...yes MH-LH I...Matt. 111 NMA 211 B
176. Mycenae...ShGr. krater...no...MH-LH I...Matt. 217 NMA 9665 B
177. Mycenae...ShGr. krater...yes LHI-I...Matt. 259 NMA 9660 B
178. Mycenae...ShGr. shallow bowl...no...MH-LH II...Matt. 321 NMA 9669 B
179. Mycenae...ShGr. handle, Vaphio...no...Davis 132 S
180. Patron...Phoral...goebiotic...no...LHI-I?...Davis 135 S
181. Peristera...Tholos III...Vaphio A...no...LHI A...Davis 099 Chora G
182. Peristera...Tholos III...Vaphio A...no...LHI A...Davis 109 Chora G
183. Peristera...Tholos III...cup, shallow...no...LHI A?...Davis 101 Chora G
184. Prosavvasia...Tholos X...kanon...no...Davis 039 NMA B
185. Roussat...Tholos 1...pan...no...LHI-I?...Matt. 172 Chora 2747 B
186. Roussat...Tholos 2...couldron, tripod...?...LHI I...Matt. 100 ? B
187. Roussat...Tholos...Vaphio B...no...Davis 102 NMA 8364 G
188. Thelas...Polychora 28...basin, 2 handles...yes LHI-I?...Matt. 346 Thelas B
189. Vaphio...Tholos...Vaphio B...no...LHI I...Davis 101 NMA 1759 G
190. Vaphio...Tholos...Vaphio B...no...LHI A...Davis 194 NMA 1758 G
191. Vaphio...Tholos...Vaphio B...no...LHI I...Davis 105 NMA 1888 S
192. Vaphio...Tholos...Vaphio B...no...LHI I...Davis 106 NMA 1887 S
193. Vaphio...Tholos...cup...no...LHI I...Davis 107 NMA 1875 GS
194. Vaphio...Tholos...cup, spouted...yes...LHI I...Davis 108 NMA 1901 S
195. Vaphio...Tholos...movable handle...yes...LHI A...Matt. 428 NMA 1840 B
196. Vaphio...Tholos...movable handle...yes...LHI A...Matt. 428 NMA 1840 B
197. Vaphio...Tholos...ladle...no...LHI A...Matt. 447 NMA 1872 B
198. Vaphio...Tholos...brazier...no...LHI A...Matt. 468 NMA 1891 B

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Pl. XXVIIa Model of Prestige Exchange Mechanism (after FRIEDMAN and ROWLANDS in The Evolution of Social Systems (1977)).
Pl. XXVIIb Diagram of Ideological Structure in Early Mycenaean Society.
Pl. XXVIII Chart of the Distribution of Early Mycenaean Metal Vessels.