

# Early Mycenaean Arkadia: Space and Place(s) of an Inland and Mountainous Region

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**Abstract:** The concept of space is an abstract and sometimes a conventional term, but places – where people dwell, (inter)act and gain experiences – contribute decisively to the formation of the main characteristics and the identity of its residents. Arkadia, in the heart of the Peloponnese, is a landlocked country with small valleys and basins surrounded by high mountains, which, according to the ancient literature, offered to its inhabitants a hard and laborious life. Its rough terrain made Arkadia always a less attractive area for archaeological investigation. However, due to its position in the centre of the Peloponnese, Arkadia is an inevitable passage for anyone moving along or across the peninsula. The long life of small and medium-sized agrarian communities undoubtedly owes more to their foundation at crossroads connecting the inland with the Peloponnesian coast, than to their potential for economic growth based on the resources of the land. However, sites such as Analipsis, on its east-southeastern borders, the cemetery at Palaiokastro and the ash altar on Mount Lykaion, both in the southwest part of Arkadia, indicate that the area had a Bronze Age past, and raise many new questions. In this paper, I discuss the role of Arkadia in early Mycenaean times based on settlement patterns and excavation data, and I investigate the relation of these inland communities with high-ranking central places. In other words, this is an attempt to set place(s) into space, supporting the idea that the central region of the Peloponnese was a separated, but not isolated part of it, comprising regions that are also diversified among themselves.

**Keywords:** Arkadia, Analipsis, Mount Lykaion, ash altar, Palaiokastro, mountainous habitation, hybrid tholos-chamber tombs

## Introduction

Arkadia was always and still is a less attractive region for excavations and surveys in comparison to the rest of the Peloponnese. Its mountainous and rough terrain complicates not only archaeological investigations but also the life of its inhabitants, which according to the ancient authors was “hard and laborious”.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the situation at the heart of the Peloponnese is obscure, especially for the transitional phase between the MH and early LH times. Few extensive or intensive surveys have been conducted, few excavations have been carried out, fewer have been published properly and the information provided by preliminary reports often raises more questions than it answers.<sup>3</sup>

## The Boundaries of Arkadia and its Mountainous Character

It has also often been a matter of debate whether our geographically oriented, seemingly objective perception of the Mycenaean ‘world’ had any meaning in later prehistory.<sup>4</sup> Whether the centre of the Peloponnese was a real, existent and separate geographical region during LH times and whether the boundaries of prehistoric Arkadia coincided with the boundaries of Arkadia of the

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<sup>2</sup> Pol. 4,21,1.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of earlier research in Arkadia, see Salavoura 2015, 17–22.

<sup>4</sup> Maran 2011, 282.

historical period are open questions. Even when written sources become available, many scholars often end up defining Arkadia not according to the land that belonged to it, but, in contrast, on the basis of what is left over from the other powerful Peloponnesian ‘states’.<sup>5</sup> Ancient Arkadia was limited to the mountains and the plateaus of the central Peloponnese and did not border the sea.<sup>6</sup> In the north it included a large part of the modern province of Kalavryta (modern southern Achaia), the region of ancient Kleitor (the valley of Kalavryta, Kleitoria and the Aroania Mountain range), as well as the region of Psophis and Mount Aphrodision. The basins of Pheneos and Stymphalos as well as Mount Kyllene in the modern region of western Corinthia also belonged to Arkadia, as did the southern regions of Skoteini and Alea. Moreover, the southwest part of Elis, the regions of Alipheira, Phigaleia and Vasses, with the well-known temple of Apollo Epikourios, Theisoa of Lykaion and the modern area of Andritsaina were part of ancient Arkadia. The modern province of Kynouria, the Thyreatis of antiquity, was, in early historical times, the border area between the two powerful states of Argos and Sparta and was a bone of contention between them for almost a millennium.<sup>7</sup> The important centre of Analipsis is located at a node where the borders of Kynouria, Arkadia and Lakonia met. Essentially, the geographical area defined as Arkadia is identical to the central mountains of the Peloponnese. There is no proof that this region corresponded to a real administrative unit of the Mycenaean world even in the Palatial period.<sup>8</sup> However, this conventional approach provides us with the framework to sum up the situation in the centre of the Peloponnese.

According to hydrological criteria, Arkadia can be divided into two different parts: in the eastern part a series of closed karst basins predominate, which were drained by sinkholes. In the western part of Arkadia the two main rivers, the Alpheios and the Ladon, and numerous other streams form small fertile valleys and constitute the natural routes facilitating communication with the western Peloponnese and the Ionian Sea.<sup>9</sup> A large percentage of the region lies at high altitudes (1000 m above sea level), where flysch basins lie between rugged limestone formations offering excellent summer grazing, whereas in winter they turn into harsh, inhospitable landscapes, forcing grazing animals to retreat to warmer lower altitudes.<sup>10</sup> Livestock raising has always been the backbone of the Arkadian economy that shaped the idea of an exemplary pastoral country.<sup>11</sup> Of course, many questions remain pending as regards the livestock breeding. The mountain pastures and the harsh winters presuppose the movement of the flocks to the lowlands, a practice exercised until today. The occasional flooding of the eastern basins in winter and spring might have constituted an additional reason for the transhumance of the flocks.<sup>12</sup> People coming to the uplands in the summer in order to herd their flocks would perhaps have lived in temporary, seasonal dwellings, which might have left no substantial archaeological remains. However, transhumance does not always mean lack of permanent settlements, but rather the careful choice of the location of the settlement.

Arkadia was never self-sufficient, because the natural resources were not adequate to feed the entire population, especially in times of population growth. The lack of some resources – the most

<sup>5</sup> Nielsen 2002, 22–23, 89–92, 109–112; see also Morgan 1999, 382–386.

<sup>6</sup> Strab. 8,8,1: “Ἀρκαδία δ’ ἔστιν ἐν μέσῳ μὲν τῆς Πελοποννήσου, πλείστην δὲ χώραν ὄρεινὴν ἀποτέμνεται” (Arkadia lies in the middle of the Peloponnesus, and most of the country which it includes is mountainous); Paus. 8,1,3: “...Ἀρκάδες, τὸ ἐντὸς οἰκοῦσιν, ἀποκλειόμενοι θαλάσσης πανταχόθεν” (...the Arkadians are shut off from the sea on every side and dwell in the interior).

<sup>7</sup> Faklaris 1990, 33–39.

<sup>8</sup> Hope Simpson 1981, 4: “There is, of course, no guarantee that any such geographical groupings reflect actual Mycenaean *political* combinations”, 216: “elsewhere (outside Pylos) there are few clues as to the identification of any further large units or ‘states’”.

<sup>9</sup> Philippson – Kirsten 1959, 294–296.

<sup>10</sup> The same is valid for the basins of northern Greece, see Bintliff 2012, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Hom. Il. 2,605.

<sup>12</sup> For the possibility of grazing on fallow fields in winter and the potential for extensive use of highland pastures in summer, see Halstead 1996, 32–33, 35.



Fig. 1: Map of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (E. Salavoura)

characteristic examples are metals and salt – and the deficiency of produce provided additional reasons for breaking the isolation and promoting the development of relations and contacts with other regions.

### The Early Mycenaean Sites in Arkadia

The degree of our ignorance concerning early LH Arkadia is also related to our difficulty in defining the pottery of the MH III and LH I periods, especially since the latter is notorious for its ‘low visibility’ in surveys.<sup>13</sup> It is widely accepted that the transitional phase MH III/LH I is not well understood and that the LH I material is in general restricted in number and difficult to identify.<sup>14</sup> This inability to distinguish MH II/III from LH I material at a particular site makes any assumptions about the continuous occupation of a site throughout these periods premature, since a possible occupational gap cannot be detected.<sup>15</sup> Thus, any attempt to understand the changes in the settlement pattern at the end of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the central Peloponnese is problematic. Well-stratified deposits coming from excavations and systematic studies are still missing. Moreover, upland communities used other materials for their

<sup>13</sup> Maran 1995, 67 (with further bibliography).

<sup>14</sup> Wright 2008, 230. We often cannot distinguish MH III from LH I and frequently refer to assemblages as MH III/LH I. Even in Messenia, characteristic types of the Mycenaean cultural *koiné* are fully adopted only in LH III, see Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

<sup>15</sup> For this problem, see also Maran 1995, 68.

|   | MH | LH I | LH II |   | LH III |   |   | Sub-Myc. | PG | G |
|---|----|------|-------|---|--------|---|---|----------|----|---|
|   |    |      | A     | B | A      | B | C |          |    |   |
| 1. Pheneos-Pyrgos/Ancient <i>Pheneos</i>                | *  |      |       |   | *      | * | * |          |    |   |
| 2. Pheneos-Ayios Charalambos                            | *  | *    |       |   |        |   |   |          |    | * |
| 3. Pheneos-Tsouka/Bouga                                 | *  |      |       |   | *      |   |   |          |    |   |
|   |    |      |       |   | (?)    |   |   |          |    |   |
| 4. Kandila-Bigiza                                       | *  |      |       |   | *      | * | * |          |    | * |
| 5. Chotoussa-Ayios Georgios                             | *  |      | *     |   |        |   |   |          | *  | * |
| 6. Vlacherna-Plessa                                     | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 7. Orchomenos-Acropolis/Ancient <i>Orchomenos</i>       | *  |      |       |   |        | ? |   |          |    | * |
| 8. Pikernis-Gortsouli/Ancient <i>Ptolis</i>             | *  |      |       |   | *      | * | * |          | ?  | * |
| 9. Nestani-Panigyristra/Ancient <i>Nestani</i>          | *  | *    | *     |   |        |   |   |          |    |   |
| 10. Loukas-Ayios Georgios                               | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 11. Merkovouni-Ayiolias                                 | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 12. Thanas-Stoyia/Megali Rachi                          | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 13. Alea-Temple of Athena Alea                          | *  |      |       |   | *      | ? | * | *        | *  | * |
| 14. Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos                           | *  |      | *     |   |        |   |   |          |    |   |
| 15. Vouno   | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 16. Alea-Palaiochori(a) or Synoikismos                  |    | ?    | *     |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 17. Alea-Sarantapotamos                                 |    |      |       |   | *      |   |   |          |    |   |
| 18. Psili Vryssi-Vationa                                | *  | *    |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 19. Vourvoura-Analipsis                                 | *  | *    | *     | * | *      | * |   |          |    | * |
| 20. Kato Asea-Paliokastro                               | *  | *    | *     |   | *      | * | * |          | *  | * |
| 21. Doriza-Ayios Athanasios                             | *  |      |       |   | *      |   |   |          |    |   |
| 22. Athenaion-Ayios Georgios                            | *  | *    |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 23. Phigaleia-Kourdoubouli                              | *  | *    |       |   |        |   |   |          |    |   |
| 24. Lykaion-Prophitis Ilias                             | *  | ?    | ?     | * | *      | * | * | *        | *  | * |
| 25. Palaiokastro-Palaiopyrgos                           | *  | *    | *     | * | *      | * | * | *        | *  | * |
| 26. Dimitsana/Ancient Teuthis                           | *  |      |       |   | *      | * |   |          |    | ? |
| 27. Karvouni-Sphakovouni                                | *  | *    | *     | * | *      | * |   |          |    |   |
| 28. Demetra-Troupes or Damari                           | *  |      | *     |   | *      | * | * |          | *  |   |
| 29. Ayios Petros/" <i>Aphrodite Erykina</i> " sanctuary | *  |      |       |   |        |   | * |          | *  | * |
| 30. Tourlada-Palaiopyrgos                               | *  |      |       |   | *      | * | * |          |    |   |
| 31. Kallithea-Philomati                                 |    |      | *     |   | *      | * | * |          |    |   |
| 32. Kastria-Kastro                                      | *  |      |       |   | *      |   |   |          |    |   |
| 33. Kastria-Spilaio Limnon (Cave of the Lakes)          | *  | ?    |       |   | *      |   |   |          |    |   |
| 34. Kandalos-Arnounga/Bouri                             | *  |      |       |   | ?      |   |   |          |    |   |
| 35. Layovouni-Asphakovouni                              | *  | ?    |       |   |        |   |   |          |    |   |

Tab. 1: Catalogue of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (comprising the subsequent periods of their habitation)

drinking and eating vessels apart from clay, such as leather and wood that are not visible in the archaeological remains. This may have created a misleading picture that may also be due to the dissimilarities provided by the data from field surveys and excavations. With this in mind, I shall sum up our knowledge to date.

The presence of MH pottery has been recorded at 32 sites in the region defined as Arkadia (Tab. 1 and Fig. 1). Only nine of them produced evidence of LH I pottery (nos. 2, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27), extremely few, considering also that in the same area 44 LH IIIA–B sites have been identified.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, these nine LH I sites bear traces of habitation in MH times, thus we cannot exclude the possibility that they belong to the transition between MH and LH I. LH IIA–B is also represented at only ten sites (nos. 9, 14, 16, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31).

All sites which were inhabited in LH I or II also have a MH past, but more than twice as many, at least 19, were abandoned after the MH period and were populated again only in LH III. Therefore, a reduction in the number of settlements is observed and probably also of the population in LH I and II. This is interesting in connection with James Wright's remark that in the valleys of Longopotamos, Nemea and Asopos resettlement began in MH III, suggesting a possible movement of population from Arkadia to other regions.<sup>17</sup>

### Eastern Arkadia

The northern sites of eastern Arkadia, where continuous habitation from MH to LH I and/or II exists, include the following: Pheneos-Ayios Charalambos (no. 2), which has no LH II material,<sup>18</sup> and Nestani-Panigyristra (ancient Nestani, no. 9),<sup>19</sup> which lies on the road from Sparta to Tripolis and Corinth just before the Artemision mountain pass. The site of Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos (no. 14) near ancient Tegea must correspond to a long-lived settlement, with material from FN/EH until LH IIIA, however LH I seems to be absent.<sup>20</sup> A fragment of a LH II Vapheio cup and the lower body of an unpainted LH II–III A goblet are exhibited in the new Museum of Tegea.<sup>21</sup> The survey by the Norwegian Institute collected MH and LH I material from the site of Psili Vryssi-Vationa (no. 18) at the southeastern end of the Tegean Plain.<sup>22</sup> The site at Alea-Palaiochori(a) or Synoikismos (no. 16) seems to have been used in LH II and possibly in LH I, but without a MH past,<sup>23</sup> so this may well represent a newly established hamlet connected to Analipsis. The fact that the site seems to have been abandoned within LH IIIB,<sup>24</sup> like Analipsis, forms an additional element confirming their connection. Vourvoura-Analipsis (no. 19), which is the unrivalled centre of the wider region with a long and continuous life from late MH until LH IIIB1, features the one and only tholos tomb of Arkadia (with a diameter of 8.65 m).<sup>25</sup> Next to it, on the same low hill, Konstantinos Rhomaïos excavated eight small built tombs imitating tholoi.<sup>26</sup> The tholos provided LH IIA/B–IIIB1 material, while a child burial in a cist grave contained MH–LH I pottery<sup>27</sup> as

<sup>16</sup> Salavoura 2015, 245, 247, fig. 3, and tab. II.

<sup>17</sup> Wright 2015, 214.

<sup>18</sup> Erath 2000, 111–116; Salavoura 2015, 76–78.

<sup>19</sup> Howell 1970, pl. 29c nos. 7–12, and fig. 5 nos. 1–2, 29. Cf. p. 113, where he notes that these sherds may also be dated to LH II–III A1.

<sup>20</sup> Howell 1970, 91, no. 24; Anaskafiko Ergo 2000–2010, 123–124; Salavoura 2015, 124–127.

<sup>21</sup> Salavoura 2015, 126. Unpublished, exhibited in the Tegea Museum (visited on 13.9.2014).

<sup>22</sup> Bakke-Alisøy 2016, 146, fig. 2. Psili Vryssi-Vationa was identified as a LH IIIA–B site by Howell 1970, 93, no. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Howell 1970, 93–94, no. 32.

<sup>24</sup> Salavoura 2015, 130–131.

<sup>25</sup> Rhomaïos 1957, 272–275; Pelon 1976, 186–187, pls. 83.3, 161.1–2; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 9–16.

<sup>26</sup> Rhomaïos 1961, 185; Rhomaïos 1962, 111; Pelon 1976, 186–187; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 17–23, 79–83, pls. 5, 6a–c, especially p. 81 (the diameter of the chambers varies from 2.48 m to 3.20 m). It also remains an open question whether the eight small tombs were contemporary or successive constructions (Kalogeropoulos 1998, 21, 79).

<sup>27</sup> Rhomaïos 1961, 185; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 23–24, 39–40, 42, 84, pls. 15 (nos. 64–66), 22c–g.



did a burial in a tomb of ambiguous type near the Alpheios.<sup>28</sup> Analipsis lies on the route which leads through the Eurotas Valley and northern Lakonia to the plain of Tegea and consequently to the northeastern Peloponnese. It thus seems natural that the architecture of the tombs and the pottery combine influences from the northeastern as well as from the southern Peloponnese. The three LH IIA palatial jars (FS 15) – at least one of them of local clay<sup>29</sup> – and an elaborately decorated ring-handled cup (FS 237) with spirals on the exterior and a rosette on the interior suggest that the area was incorporated into the mainstream of the Mycenaean world.<sup>30</sup> An oval-mouthed amphora showing Minoan influence (FS 71) and decorated with rows of retorted spirals,<sup>31</sup> is similar to finds from Lakonia and Messenia (Monemvasia-Ayios Ioannis, Ayios Stephanos, Routsis and Nichoria).<sup>32</sup> Although robbed, the tholos tomb held fragments of a boar's tusk helmet, two ivory combs, small finds made of gold, silver and amber, as well as bronze and flint arrowheads.<sup>33</sup> This larger tholos would serve the leading family, while the other more modest, smaller tombs were used by other members of the community.

At the site of Kato Asea-Paliokastro (no. 20) the plateau on the top and the slopes of the hill were used continuously from EH to LH IIIC. This seemingly remote site was part of exchange networks since the Middle Neolithic and EH periods.<sup>34</sup> Although in MH I and II the settlement flourished and imports from Aigina and the northeastern Peloponnese arrived, there were hardly any traces of MH III material, and the site seems to have been abandoned for a few decades showing no signs of destruction.<sup>35</sup> However, good quality LH I and II pottery has been found in a mixed layer along with MH and Hellenistic pottery.<sup>36</sup> We cannot exclude the possibility that some of the 29 burials in pits, cists and pithoi unearthed in the MH settlement may have belonged to the LH period.<sup>37</sup> The Hellenistic habitation on the top of the hill destroyed the Mycenaean layers, but the intensive survey by the Swedish and Finnish Institutes identified LH III material on the eastern and western slopes of the hill. Thus, it is also probable that the settlement moved to a lower level and the plateau continued to be used as a burial area<sup>38</sup> judging from a LH III askos found in one of the tombs.<sup>39</sup> At nearby Athenaion-Ayios Georgios (no. 22), about 5 km southwest of Asea, a few sherds may also indicate human presence in MH and LH I. LH II material is missing, but there are again LH IIIA–B sherds.<sup>40</sup> The existence of a land route across the Asea Valley,

<sup>28</sup> K. Rhomaios did not specify the exact location of this tomb. Kalogeropoulos 1998, 24, 84 and pl. 3a, D, locates the tomb on the northeast slopes of the hill, where the settlement of the Classical period lies. For the pottery see Kalogeropoulos 1998, 25, 40–41, pls. 15 (nos. 67–70), 22a–d; RMDP, 296; Waterhouse – Hope Simpson 1961, 130.

<sup>29</sup> Rhomaios 1957, 275; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 15–16, 28–33, pls. 9–10, 17, 18d–e.

<sup>30</sup> Rhomaios 1957, 280, figs. 8–9; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 15–16, 28–33, pls. 9–10, 17, 18d–e; RMDP, 296–297.

<sup>31</sup> Rhomaios 1957, 276, fig. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Kalogeropoulos 1998, 35; RMDP, 296–297.

<sup>33</sup> Rhomaios 1957, 281–286, figs. 11–18; Kalogeropoulos 1998, 64–72, pls. 7–8, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Dickinson 1977, 89; Forsén J. 1996, 44, 46, 71–72.

<sup>35</sup> Holmberg 1944, 1220; Forsén J. 1992, 200–203.

<sup>36</sup> Holmberg 1944, 110–112, fig. 108a, b, h; Dickinson 1977, 89. For a few LH I–II finds from the eastern foothill of the plateau, see Forsén et al. 2003a, 96, 98–99, 101.

<sup>37</sup> Maran 1995, 70. We have to be sceptical whenever cist graves with burials of adults are found in the immediate vicinity of houses, particularly when several such burials appear in the same stratigraphic horizon. The chronological relationship between the architecture and the graves can often not be clarified, and thus the archaeological circumstances can suggest contemporaneity, while in reality we are dealing with the results of chronologically distinct events. For a similar situation in the Argolid, see Milka 2010, 434–439. Examining data from Barbouna, Aspis and Lerna, Eleni Milka concludes that only a few of the excavated graves in the MH III Argolid were contemporary with the associated houses and even fewer were actually opened inside houses, when they were still in use.

<sup>38</sup> Forsén et al. 2003b, 197.

<sup>39</sup> Holmberg 1944, 111, figs. 108g, 109.

<sup>40</sup> Forsén et al. 2003a, 108 (only one MH/LH I handle of a cooking pot was identified, all the other material dates to LH III); Salavoura 2015, 147–148.

which connected eastern Arkadia with Messenia and Elis has been postulated in order to explain the status of Asea as a ‘central place’ even during the later EH phase.<sup>41</sup>

### Western Arkadia

The westernmost site of early Mycenaean Arkadia is that of Phigaleia-Kourdoumbouli (no. 23), where trial trenches under and north of the later sanctuary of Athena and Zeus Soter brought to light walls of a MH and part of a LH I building, as well as a child burial of the same time (MH/LH I).<sup>42</sup> Mount Lykaion (no. 24) provides us with the most important finds of the last decades in Arkadia that prove how poorly known and underestimated this region is. The excavation of the ash-altar on the top of Prophitis Ilias (1382m), brought to light material from Final Neolithic until Hellenistic times, albeit the earlier material comes from mixed layers and there is a possible absence of LH I and LH IIA finds.<sup>43</sup> However, LH IIB and later material comes from well-stratified layers, a fact that demonstrates continuous use of the altar for over a millennium.<sup>44</sup> The examination of the bone fragments revealed that the sacrificial animals (mainly goats and sheep) as well as the specific parts (femurs, patellas, and tailbones) that were selected for dedication remained constant over the centuries. This suggests that the cult practice was part of an ancient ritual associated with offerings and most probably with the in situ consumption of food and wine.<sup>45</sup> Radiocarbon dating showed that the burnt bones from the lowest bedrock level might in fact belong to the early Mycenaean phase.<sup>46</sup> If future research confirms this result, this will be the first example of this practice attested on a mountaintop shrine without architectural remains and in a Prepalatial context.<sup>47</sup>

Along a small fertile valley of the Alpheios, 10 km north of the Mount Lykaion altar, lies the large cemetery of Palaiokastro-Palaiopyrgos (no. 25) (Fig. 2), a thriving centre in LH IIIC with more than a hundred chamber tombs. Few of these tombs were used in the early Mycenaean period. The material, although still unpublished, is exhibited in the Tripolis Museum, and few but very characteristic finds prove that the first chamber tombs were cut in LH II, while the cemetery was in use even in MH times, judging by a Yellow Minyan kantharos and a jug with cutaway neck.<sup>48</sup> Five small globular or straight-sided cups/jars with a ring handle on the rim, a typical shape of the Shaft Grave period, also belong to the late MH/LH I phase,<sup>49</sup> and have good parallels from many sites of the Peloponnese and from the site of Demetra, also in western Arkadia.<sup>50</sup> Among others, a MH III/LH I dagger<sup>51</sup> and a LH IIA–B alabastron (FS 80) decorated with double

<sup>41</sup> Forsén B. 2003, 63–75; Forsén et al. 2003b, 198; Forsén J. 2010, 59–60.

<sup>42</sup> Arapogianni 1999, 116, 119, pls. 66–68; Arapogianni 2000, 127–128, pl. 71a–b; Arapogianni 2001, 304.

<sup>43</sup> Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 581–582, 589, 628–629.

<sup>44</sup> Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 628–629.

<sup>45</sup> Romano – Voyatzis 2010, 14–15; Starkovich et al. 2013, 502–503, tab. 1; Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 590, 628–629 and 644–648 (B. M. Starkovich, Appendix 5: Preliminary faunal report).

<sup>46</sup> Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 614–615: “The results of this project to date have yielded calibrated dates of 1527 ± 97 B.C., 1468 ± 54 B.C., and 1332 ± 52 B.C. from the lowest bedrock level”. However, Mary Voyatzis notes that the pottery associated with these burnt bones consists mainly of LH IIIA2–LH IIIB broken kylikes. Starkovich et al. 2013, 510–511, tab. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Evidence for burnt animal bones is limited and it includes a few sites such as Eleusis, Apollo Maleatas, Pylos, Methana-Ayios Konstantinos, Asine, Phylakopi and possibly Mycenae, Tiryns, Kalapodi: Hamilakis – Konsolaki 2004, 144–145 (with the relevant bibliography); Whittaker 2006/2007, 184–188; Cosmopoulos – Ruscillo 2014, 263–270; Weilhartner 2016, 394–396.

<sup>48</sup> Unpublished, exhibited in the Tripolis Museum.

<sup>49</sup> Unpublished, exhibited in the Tripolis Museum. Salavoura 2015, 194, n. 707–708. For indicative parallels, see Dietz 1991, 159, 162, fig. 48 (nos. AB-7.1, 7.2, AB-12); 199, 201, 202, fig. 61 (no. BA-2) (from Mycenae, B-Circle); 212, 213, fig. 66 (no. FA-2) (from Argos); Mylonas 1975, 222, pl. 403β (from Eleusis).

<sup>50</sup> Syriopoulos 1973, pl. 47c (no. 18).

<sup>51</sup> Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 2000, fig. 16. The dagger belongs to Thanasis Papadopoulos’ category IA (Papadopoulos 1998, 4–6); Salavoura 2015, 505–506, fig. 5.

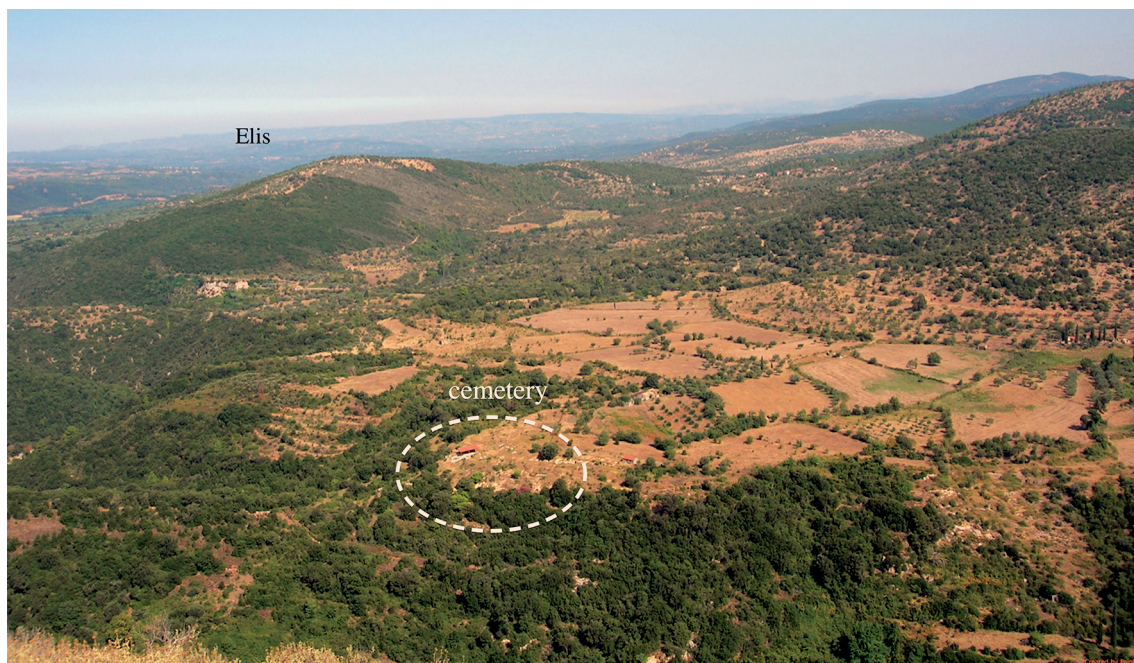


Fig. 2: The valley of the Palaiokastro cemetery (photo: E. Salavoura)

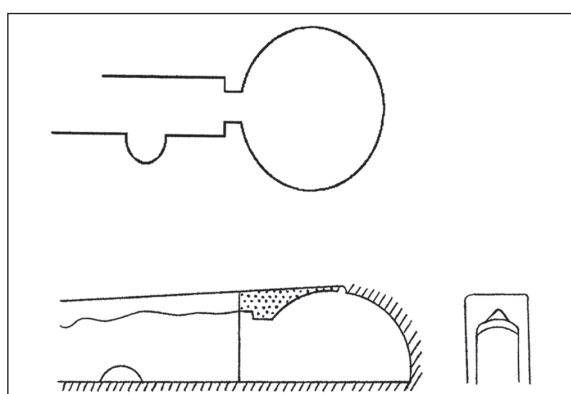


Fig. 3: The hybrid Tholos-Chamber Tomb 6 at Palaiokastro (after Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, fig. 5)



Fig. 4: The central cavity on the roof of Tomb 62 at Palaiokastro (photo: E. Salavoura)

axes and with a rosette in place of the usual wheel pattern on its base<sup>52</sup> are exhibited in the Tripolis Museum. The alabastron was found in Chamber Tomb 62, which imitates the roof of a tholos with a central cavity at the top,<sup>53</sup> indicating the existence of a small, but flourishing community, which was aware of the main trends in terms of pottery production and tomb architecture (Figs. 3–4).

### Northern Arkadia

Two more remote settlements, which are situated in higher altitudes, are Karvouni-Sphakovouni (no. 27) and Demetra-Troupes or Damari (no. 28). Sphakovouni is a settlement with a long life

<sup>52</sup> Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, 280, pl. 56f; RMDP, 297; Salavoura 2015, 426–427.

<sup>53</sup> Blackman 1996/1997, 33; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 23–24; Salavoura 2015, 341–342, fig. 6.



from Final Neolithic until LH IIIB times.<sup>54</sup> The finds show that it was never isolated. MH matt-painted, Minyan and Adriatic pottery is exhibited in the Tripolis Museum along with a typical LH IIB Vapheio cup decorated with a foliate band and a small alabastron decorated with an ivy band.<sup>55</sup> Demetra is also insufficiently known from an old survey by Konstantinos Syriopoulos. It is another long-lived site with a variety of MH pottery (matt-painted, Adriatic, Grey Minyan),<sup>56</sup> and a significantly smaller amount of LH I and/or II as well as LH IIIA–C sherds.<sup>57</sup> A short excavation at Kallithea-Philomati (no. 31) has also revealed the existence of a small (?) LH I–II settlement without a MH past, which also continued into LH III A–C.<sup>58</sup> A LH I seal-stone engraved with a flying fish, now in the Ashmolean Museum, allegedly comes from the wider region of Kleitoria. However, its origin is doubtful.<sup>59</sup>

Two other sites in the Kalavryta region, the Cave of the Lakes (Spilaio Limnon) at Kastria (no. 33) and Layovouni-Asphakovouni (no. 35), also have pottery of the transitional phase from MH to LH I (?).<sup>60</sup> The Cave of the Lakes seems to have been a burial ground in LH times.<sup>61</sup>

### Conclusion: The Role of Arkadia in the Early Mycenaean Peloponnese

The general picture seems to justify John Bintliff's view that "slow development or little evidence of complex societies seems to typify both the prehistoric and ancient historic periods in these mountainous landscapes with low agricultural potential".<sup>62</sup> Most of the aforementioned settlements were situated on low hills or on their slopes providing full or partial supervision of the surrounding area (Figs. 5–6). They are located close to water supplies and good agricultural land. Thus, most sites control a wider region, a valley or a basin, as well as the passages leading from one region to another.

The differences in geographical conditions between eastern and western Arkadia also influenced the organisation of habitation and the burial architecture. The basins of eastern Arkadia were sparsely populated during the LH I–II period compared to LH III (Tab. 1). This can partly be explained by the fact that these areas may have suffered the devastating effects of flooding, and their population increased only after the construction of drainage works (dykes, ditches).<sup>63</sup> Solving the problem of flooding is not only related to settlement, but also to the protection of valuable farmland in an otherwise mountainous area.

In MH and early LH Arkadia there is no information about tumuli,<sup>64</sup> large cist graves, deep shaft graves and tholoi. Status and rank differentiation within communities is currently not clear, and it remains doubtful whether a ruling elite existed there even in Palatial times. The tholos tomb of Analipsis forms the only exception. Judging by its finds, the site seems to have become

<sup>54</sup> Howell 1970, pl. 34c; Spyropoulos 1989, 116; Spyropoulos 1990, 5; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 2–5; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 2000, 8–10; Salavoura 2015, 209–216.

<sup>55</sup> RMDP, 297; Salavoura 2015, 215.

<sup>56</sup> Syriopoulos 1973, 197–198, 203–204, pls. 47c (no. 17), 47d (no. 5), 48a.

<sup>57</sup> Syriopoulos 1973, 204, pl. 48b (nos. 1–2); Salavoura 2015, 220.

<sup>58</sup> Alexopoulou 2002, 296, pl. 117a–e; Alexopoulou 2005, 296–297; Alexopoulou 2009, 211–212; Salavoura 2015, 229–230.

<sup>59</sup> CMS VI.1, 7, no. 462; CMS VI.2, XLV (Index V), no. 462. According to Athanasios Rhousopoulos, who sold this piece to Arthur Evans, the sealstone was bought together with another black lenticular sealstone, a small white Egyptian scarab, two fibulae and a bronze vase, which all came from two graves in Kleitoria.

<sup>60</sup> Sampson 1997, 309–310, 361, 364; Salavoura 2015, 234–235, 237. The coarse ware and some sherds of pithoi from Layovouni are most probably MH and not LH.

<sup>61</sup> Sampson 1997, 337.

<sup>62</sup> Bintliff 2012, 799.

<sup>63</sup> See Kalcyk – Heinrich 1986, 2–14. Cf. Salavoura 2015, 278–290.

<sup>64</sup> The existence of EH tumuli, which have been reported at Orchomenos in Arkadia (Spyropoulos 1996), is extremely doubtful (Salavoura 2015, 87–97). The absence of tumuli is also characteristic for Lakonia, cf. Bennet–Galanakis 2005, 149.



Fig. 5: The hill of Sphakovouni (view from the east) (photo: E. Salavoura)



Fig. 6: The site of Demetra-Troupes or Damari (view from the south) (photo: E. Salavoura)



less important after LH II, a fact that has been attributed to a possible attack responsible for the LH IIB destruction layer at the so-called *prytaneion*.<sup>65</sup> However, in the case of Analipsis we face once more the problem: that we know almost nothing about the corresponding settlement, which is essentially unexcavated. The wealthy but not spectacular finds at Analipsis indicate a more modest register of ostentation in comparison to the spectacular finds from other tholos tombs of the southern Peloponnese (such as Routsis, Tholos 2; Pylos, Tholos V; the tholoi at Peristeria, Epia-Antheia, Kakovatos and Vapheio).<sup>66</sup> This display of wealth and power demonstrates the emergence of a leader or a leading family in this region that may have been based on their prowess as hunters as well as on their key role in the overland trade from the southern to the northeastern Peloponnese.<sup>67</sup>

The emergence of Analipsis remains a mystery and its abandonment is also enigmatic. The rise of major palaces had some consequences in peripheral regions; some early principalities seem to have declined or were destroyed and then were replaced by a new social order. According to the available data, Analipsis was not replaced by another centre in its immediate vicinity, but was totally abandoned. Pellana, about 15–20 km from Analipsis, is the only known prominent site of the wider region. It is also strategically located on the route which connects Lakonia with southern Arkadia and Messenia as well as Lakonia with the Tegeatic plain and the Argolid. Although the chamber tombs of Pellana, which imitate tholoi, have been looted since antiquity, the pottery found in the large dominant tomb certifies that it was used from LH IIA until the Submycenaean period.<sup>68</sup> Analipsis and Pellana are included among the early principalities of the Peloponnese. The reason why Pellana, although closer to the palatial centre of Ayios Vasileios in Lakonia, has survived and Analipsis has not, is not obvious. The plain of Tegea is the largest and most fertile part of Arkadia and the Homeric tradition locates the seat of Agapenor, the leader of the Arkadians in the Trojan war, here.<sup>69</sup> It is plausible that a successive centre, which remains unidentified for the time being, lies in the wider region of Tegea. The existence of three LH III sites (Stadio-Ayios Konstantinos, Episkopi, and the sanctuary of Athena Alea) close to each other, i.e. within a radius of nearly 1 km, offers a first indication that the historical centre may have had a long history.<sup>70</sup>

Five graves in the region of Alea, on the east bank of the Sarantapotamos gorge, one of which was excavated by K. Rhomaïos, are considered to be similar to the small vaulted tombs of Analipsis.<sup>71</sup> The presence of small vaulted tombs, the absence of chamber tombs and the rarity of other types of tombs (cists, pits, burials in pithoi) in the wider region of Analipsis and in eastern Arkadia generally is remarkable. It may not be a coincidence that in the region of Asea, which has been systematically investigated, no chamber tomb cemetery has yet been detected. We cannot overlook the fact that hard limestone dominates eastern Arkadia that prevented the cutting of chamber tombs. The construction of built tombs of small dimensions with circular or elliptical plan prevails in the neighbouring cemeteries of Kynouria (Vaskina-Kotroni: LH IIIA–C; Palaiochori-Mikri Tourla: LH I/IIA–IIIB)<sup>72</sup> and they may have also inspired those of Analipsis and Alea-Sarantapotamos. Recently, a LH II–IIIA2 small circular stone-built tomb or small tholos (diameter 3.15 m) was excavated at Sparta-Polydendro.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>65</sup> LH IIB pottery is illustrated from a burnt layer, see Schachermeyr 1962, 262, fig. 49 (centre); Dickinson 1977, 89; RMDP, 297.

<sup>66</sup> Cavanagh 2010, 636.

<sup>67</sup> Wright 2008, 243.

<sup>68</sup> Cavanagh 2010, 636.

<sup>69</sup> Hom. Il. 2,603–611.

<sup>70</sup> Salavoura 2015, 254 and n. 38.

<sup>71</sup> Rhomaïos 1955, 171; Howell 1970, 94, no. 32; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 47; Bakke 2008, 262–266; Salavoura 2015, 132–133.

<sup>72</sup> Waterhouse – Hope Simpson 1961, 131–135, pl. 23c; Dickinson 1977, 64; Faklaris 1990, 138–139, 145–152, figs. 83–88, pls. 55, 64–67; Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 66; Papadimitriou 2001, 31–34.

<sup>73</sup> Vasilogamvrou et al. 2016, 511; Anaskafiko Ergo 2000–2010, 95, fig. 6.

Even in LH III A–C, chamber tombs remained rare in Arkadia and – according to the current data – they are found only in the western part ‘looking’ towards Elis and Achaia.<sup>74</sup> The earliest chamber tombs were cut at Palaiokastro in LH II, and two of them belong to the type of hybrid tholos-chamber tombs with a circular and vaulted roof bearing a central cavity at the top (Figs. 3–4).<sup>75</sup> This type has been known since LH I at Volimidia,<sup>76</sup> but a triangular cutting above the entrance of Tomb 6, excavated by Chrysanthos Christou, is reminiscent of the similar tombs of LH II at Pellana (Fig. 7).<sup>77</sup>

In Lakonia and Messenia chamber tombs appeared sometime in late MH III/early LH I,<sup>78</sup> while in Achaia they appeared at the latest in LH II almost throughout the whole region,<sup>79</sup> suggesting the rise of a new type of political order: At that time local elites began displaying their high status through this ‘new’ kind of tomb.<sup>80</sup> The same phenomenon seems to be visible at Palaiokastro since LH II suggesting that the site followed the trends of the northwestern Peloponnese from the early Late Bronze Age onwards.

In Arkadia we have only extremely limited evidence of settlement finds at our disposal that still remain unpublished.<sup>81</sup> However, those sites close to natural routes were not separated from the main developments and participated in the trade networks of the early LH Peloponnese. Sites such as Asea, Sphakovouni and Demetra-Troupes or Damari, with a very long life from the Neolithic to the Late Mycenaean period, undoubtedly owe much more to their location at nodes connecting the interior with the Peloponnesian coasts than to the potential for economic growth provided by the land (Tab. 1; Figs. 1, nos. 20, 27, 28; 5–6). Palaiokastro and Mount Lykaion lie on the diagonal axis running across the Peloponnese from the southeast to the northwest, broadly speaking



Fig. 7: Pellana, Tomb 2 with the triangular upper part of the entrance (photo: E. Salavoura)

<sup>74</sup> Salavoura 2015, 332.

<sup>75</sup> Blackman 1996/1997, 33; Spyropoulos – Spyropoulos 1997, 23–24; Demakopoulou – Crouwel 1998, 273–274, fig. 5; Salavoura 2015, 339–348.

<sup>76</sup> Danielidou 2001, 165–170; Boyd 2002, 144; Vlachopoulos, this volume.

<sup>77</sup> Cavanagh – Mee 1998, 66; Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 147; Salavoura 2015, 347–348; Boyd 2002, 196, considers it likely that the tombs at Pellana were also carved in LH I.

<sup>78</sup> Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 149.

<sup>79</sup> Arena 2015, 18 and n. 93.

<sup>80</sup> Arena 2015, 18–19.

<sup>81</sup> Maran 1995, 67. There are no architectural remains of this period, not to speak of settlement plans, a phenomenon which until recently characterised the majority of mainland Greece.



connecting Sparta with Olympia. The existence of an open-air sanctuary at the top of Prophitis Ilias on Mount Lykaion, which has been active even since LH IIB times, indicates that there were more, still unidentified, flourishing communities in southwestern Arkadia.

Mount Lykaion lies at a point where the territories of Arkadia, Messenia and Elis meet. The southwest part of Arkadia and the northernmost area of Messenia still remain a *terra incognita*. The Megalopolis region is largely unknown, although its western part (the passages through Derveni and Leondari) forms the access route to the Messenian Valley. It may not be coincidental that we do not possess a clear picture of settlement in historical times either.<sup>82</sup> Shrines in fixed and unchanging locations within the landscape are considered to constitute meeting points for more than one community, and the case of Mount Lykaion proves that feasting took place here on the occasion of religious celebrations. They probably effected the strengthening of the links between the populations of the wider region.<sup>83</sup> However, other early LH sites apart from Palaiokastro are still unknown and the LH I–III A1 material from the altar is extremely limited.<sup>84</sup> On current evidence, the assumption that the same framework also applied to the early Mycenaean phases must therefore remain speculative.<sup>85</sup> The existence of tholos tombs in Triphylia at a close distance to each other (Psari, Malthi, Chalkias, Peristeria, Kopanaki-Akourthi) demonstrates that this region was probably also densely populated,<sup>86</sup> but much work must still be done in order to identify settlements closer to Mount Lykaion. However, it is interesting to note that in MH and early LH we can locate more upland and remote sites than in LH III, when most sites lie in lowland terrain, where the cultivation of olives prevails.<sup>87</sup> This is the general impression resulting from the petrographic and chemical analyses of the pottery from the altar on Mount Lykaion that suggests a shift from the highlands to the lowlands. The fabrics of the Neolithic pottery reflect highland sources and use of primary, non-calcareous and coarse clays, whereas the fabrics of the LH and Early Iron Age pottery are associated exclusively with secondary calcareous clays (and at least some with Neogene formations) from lowland areas.<sup>88</sup>

In conclusion, this article is an attempt to delineate the situation in a multifaceted and largely unknown region based on data that have inevitable gaps. Arkadia has no impressive tholoi, valuable finds, luxuries or exotic items, but it seems to be an organic part of the Peloponnese and was never isolated from general trends in other regions. Its local centres seem to have played a secondary role, complementary to the early principalities. However, they acted as intermediaries and transporters for the dissemination of the main trends from the southern to the northern and the eastern to the western Peloponnese and contributed to the formation of the later Mycenaean *koiné* of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The LH II finds on the summit of Mount Lykaion are humble, but given that a very small part of the ash altar has been excavated (about 5%), future research is promising, if we also keep in mind that a lot of finds are also kept in the storerooms of the museums in Arkadia, waiting to be studied. Even if the process of ‘Mycenaeanisation’ is not discernible in the whole region of the central and mountainous Peloponnese,<sup>89</sup> former views that regard it as an isolated area, which did not adopt Mycenaean material culture until the 13<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>90</sup> need to be revised.

Arkadia may be poor in natural resources and inhabited by acorn-eating brave warriors, but it lies in a central position of the Peloponnese. That is why the Delphic Oracle a few centuries later answered to the Spartans “You ask me for Arkadia? You ask too much”.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Roy 2013, 6–9, 17–19.

<sup>83</sup> For the same phenomenon in the Iron Age, see Morgan 1999, 55, 57; Lemos 2002, 224.

<sup>84</sup> Romano – Voyatzis 2014, 590: “there seems to be a preponderance of LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB kylikes”.

<sup>85</sup> See also Weilharter 2016, 398 and n. 34.

<sup>86</sup> Hope Simpson 2014, 27–28 (tab. 2) and maps 4–5.

<sup>87</sup> Salavoura 2015, 262–263, figs. 1–3, tab. II.

<sup>88</sup> Kordatzaki et al. 2016, 528–529.

<sup>89</sup> Bennet – Galanakis 2005, 149.

<sup>90</sup> Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

<sup>91</sup> Hdt. 1,66,2.

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### Illustrations

Fig. 1: Map of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (E. Salavoura)

Fig. 2: The valley of the Palaiokastro cemetery (photo: E. Salavoura)

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Fig. 7: Pellana, Tomb 2 with the triangular upper part of the entrance (photo: E. Salavoura)

### Table

Tab. 1: Catalogue of the Middle and early Late Helladic sites in Arkadia (comprising the subsequent periods of their habitation)