PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS:
EARLY MYCENAEAN MORTUARY TRADITIONS IN MESSEnia AND LACOnIA

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ABSTRACT In this contribution we summarise the archaeological data on mortuary practices in the regions of Messenia and Laconia from the late MH to the LH II period (ca. 1700–1400 BC). We argue that the differences and similarities in the traditions can best be understood in the context of a model of identity creation in the prehistoric Aegean that stresses the process of creation, rather than its (seemingly homogeneous) end result, often termed 'Mycenaeanisation'.

KEYWORDS Mortuary archaeology, early Mycenaean period, Messenia, Laconia, regional diversity, identity.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1981, Oliver Dickinson gave a seminar in Oxford on the topic of regional variability in the early Mycenaean world (published as Dickinson 1982).1 One of us, now a senior academic, was at that seminar; the other, at the beginning of his career, is approaching the question of tholos-tomb burial as part of his doctoral research in Oxford. Drawing on his monograph The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation (Dickinson 1977; briefly updated in Dickinson 1989) and a then recently completed gazetteer of mainland prehistoric sites to which he contributed (Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979), Oliver’s paper helpfully highlighted the diversity of the early Mycenaean world, a world that was neither ever-present, nor created in an instant, but was built from disparate units by living agents at the time. Both authors of this contribution feel that Oliver’s pioneering vision of cultural diversity may not have been given sufficient emphasis in discussions of the Mycenaean world over the past 20 years, partly because much scholarly interest in the Mycenaean world has focused on the (more culturally homogeneous?) 14th and 13th centuries BC. I. Galanakis, in particular, has been struck by the diversity in local traditions that has emerged in his study of funerary behaviour for his doctoral thesis. In addition, there has been an increasing interest in questions of identity in the ancient Greek world as a whole (e.g. Morgan 1991; Hall 1997; 2002; McInerney 1999; Malkin 2001; Sherratt in press) and in the prehistoric Aegean in particular (e.g. Bennet 1999A; Davis & Bennet 1999; Renfrew 1998; Wright 2004). To the extent that material culture is one way in which identities are created and contested, the very diversity sketched out by Oliver over 20 years ago is acutely relevant to the issue of the construction of a Mycenaean ‘palatial’ identity in the 14th and 13th centuries (e.g. Davis & Bennet 1999; Wright 1995; 2004; Broodbank 2004).

We are therefore delighted to offer this small contribution, focusing on two of Oliver’s ‘favourite’ regions of the Aegean. We hope that this paper will offer a review of the current ‘state of play’ in funerary practices in Messenia and Laconia. We begin by reviewing the funerary landscapes in each province from the MH to the LH II period and follow this with a brief conclusion suggesting the nature of funerary traditions in the two provinces and highlighting the major similarities and differences.

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1 We both extend our thanks to A. Dakouri–Hild for the initial invitation to contribute, and to her and S. Sherratt for their patience and care in editing the volume, as well as J. Davis for last–minute comments. I. Galanakis would like to thank in addition M. Zavadil, S. Sherratt and P. Haarer, for information and comments. As always, we retain all responsibility for errors of fact and/or judgement.
II. THE MESSENIAN FUNERAL LANDSCAPE IN THE LATE MH–LH II PERIOD

In the EH III and MH periods, tumuli and pithos burials—almost always combined—are predominant in (western) Messenia (Korres 1981: 457–9). Pithoi are often large in size, housing both adult and child burials. The latter stands in contrast to the rest of the Aegean, where pithoi are predominantly destined for child burials (Taylour 1973: 150, n. 92), with few exceptions.2 In Messenia, in the MH III–LH I period pithoi are also used for bones removed from previous inhumations.3 The greatest concentration of tumuli (Müller 1989; Zavadil 1995) discovered to date lies around the Englianos ridge and the area of Koukounara, while they are more generally prevalent west of Mounts Aigaleon and Lykodimon (Voutsaki 1998: 50; Boyd 2002: 36–46) [PL I].4

Although there is some variation, the tumuli that dominate the central-west Messenian funerary landscape share four consistent features (Korres 1976A: 199; 1996: 23–4; Pelon 1976: 99–152; Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 30). First, they had a peribolos (or retaining wall) built or marked by a circle of stones.5 Second, there was a platform of earth and/or stones amassed within the peribolos. Third, a central feature is attested (often termed a ‘cenotaph’; Korres 1981: 458–9), whether in the form of a built grave, a pit, a cist or a pithos. Finally, there were earthen or stone mound(s) in consecutive layers over the structure. Related to the tumulus is another distinctive Messenian mortuary structure, the so-called complex tumulus: a mound in which built tombs of tholoid form have been inserted (‘tumuli containing very small, rudimentary tholoi’, Voutsaki 1998: 43). Some of these tholoid tombs can be regarded as ‘canonical’ in their plan (round chamber) and component elements (dromos, stomion, chamber).6

Built chamber tombs (or built graves, as they are often called) are also attested in MH–LH Messenia.7 The tomb in Room 97 at the Palace of Nestor, sometimes described as a shaft grave would better be regarded a cist (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 312–4; Boyd 2002: 149, 151; Zavadil 2001, II: 147–8).

Pits and cists are attested in MH–LH Messenia in relatively few sites and in rather small numbers: approximately 40 are known, as against almost 140 in Laconia (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 181, fig. 4.1; Lewartowski 2000). However, in the MH period, pits and cists form the most prominent intramural burial type. The fact that they are associated with settlements might partly explain their rather limited number, as very few MH settlements have yet been excavated in Messenia, Vasiliko: Malithi being a notable exception. On the other hand, the limited number of pits and cists in this particular region might be related to the prevalence of extramural tumuli. Voutsaki, for example, argues that the “dense distribution of tumuli in western Messenia suggests that here at least a sizeable segment of society, if not everybody, was buried in tumuli” (Voutsaki 1998: 50; contra Benett 1995: 596). She compares the dense distribution of the Messenian tumuli to that in the Argolid and she juxtaposes it with the later distribution of tholos tombs. Although it is an attractive suggestion, we should be cautious in assuming which sectors of society were entitled to a tumulus burial, since very few settlements are known and it is there where MH intramural pits or cists would presumably have been located.

Tholos tombs first appear, most likely, in central–west Messenia (Korres 1976A: 366–8; 1993: 236; Dickinson 1977: 61). However, the site of Rizomylo: Nichoria near the Gulf of Petalidi has also provided early evidence (Choremis 1973: 30–2, 39–45).8 Shortly after, Kato Kremmydia: Kaminia, English: Vavenas (Tholos V) and some of the Koukounara region tholos tombs come into use, followed by Tomb IV at Englianos (Korres 1976A: 346). At the beginning of LH I many new tholos tombs come into use in a wider area from central Messenia and Triphylla to southern Elis9, although not yet in Laconia, or anywhere else in the Aegean.10 It is

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3 As, for example, at South Tholos 1 at Mirou: Peristeria, Tholos V or so-called Grave Circle at Ano Englianos: Vavenas, the tholos tombs in Tumulus β at Koukounara: Gouvalari, and elsewhere (Korres 1993: 236). Note that, where possible, we refer to sites using the convention established by Oliver and Richard Hope Simpson in their Gazetteer (Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979), still enormously valuable a quarter century after its publication: sites are listed by the nearest village, followed by the specific toponym in italics. In our view this convention offers the easiest way to locate sites, particularly to those unfamiliar with the specifics of Aegean prehistoric archaeology.

4 For two recently discovered MH I mounds at Antheia: Kastroulia, see Rambach in press.

5 See Protonotariou–Delaki 1980: 133–8, who, in our judgement, perhaps overemphasises the significance of the peribolos in her classification.

6 Such as the tombs at Kato Kremmydia: Kaminia and some of the tombs at Koukounara: Gouvalari Mound α.


The origin of the tholos tomb has been much debated, not least by Oliver Dickinson himself (e.g. Dickinson 1977: 61–3; cf. Pelon 1976: 433–53; Voutsaki 1998: 42–3; Dakouri 1998: 60–7; Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 44–6). Perhaps the most forceful advocate of a local, Messenian origin is Korres, who has argued that the concept appeared first in late MH Messenia (Korres 1976a: 365–9; 1979: 69–79; 1984: 148–9; 1993; 1996; Dickinson 1984: 117). He has also pointed out that tholos tombs are sometimes found near tumuli (Korres 1993: 233). However, more important than the ultimate origins of the type for the purpose of this paper is the clear priority of its appearance in Messenia as opposed to Laconia.

Chamber tombs are also attested early in Messenia in comparison with other Aegean regions, with the exception of Laconia. A possibility here is that the practice of creating rock-cut tombs, already attested from MM times on Kythera and Crete, was adopted in those areas of the mainland at greatest proximity; this is one aspect of the Minoan ‘influence’ summarised by Hägg (1982). In Messenia, the type appears to have come into use in late MH–early LH (Zavadil 2001, II: 100) in all probability after the development of the tholos tomb type. The tholoid form of some of the early chamber tombs has been explained as an attempt to imitate the tholos tomb form (Schachermeyr 1957: 103; Iakovidis 1966; cf. Kontorli–Papadopoulou 1987: 145–7; Tomasel 1997: 193–215; Danielidou 2000). Other features found in early Messenian chamber tombs like those at Chora: Volimidia (e.g. stepped dromoi) are also attested elsewhere.

Although chamber tomb cemeteries did exist in Messenia in general, they are attested only in the vicinity of a few sites and their number is rather limited in comparison to other Aegean regions, such as the Argolid, Attica, Boeotia and even Crete. Most of the attested chamber tombs cluster around important LH III centres. Of the close to 100 chamber tombs attested so far in Messenia, most concentrate in two regions: around the Englarios ridge and in the Pamisos valley. New discoveries may, of course, change this pattern, as in the case of Kardamyle: Proastio (Arapoyanni 1995) and Aristomenes: Trani Sykia (Arapoyanni 1996).


At Koukounara: Gouvalari, seven mounds have been observed, of which only three have so far been excavated. The first included ten small tholoi or tholoid tombs; the second a single tholos; and the third three tholos tombs. ‘Canonical’ tholos tombs (nine in total) have also been excavated in the vicinity of Koukounara along with more mounds and possible tombs. If Kato Kremmydia: Kaminia, situated only 1.5–2 km away, is taken into account, approximately 30 tombs have been discovered in the area around Koukounara (excluding a number of unexcavated ones). A similar case can be made for the prominence of the Karpophora–Nichoria–Rizomylo region, where more than 26 tombs dating to the MH–LH period have been investigated.

One difference between the two regions is in the timing of their prominence: Koukounara is more prominent in the late MH–early LH periods, while Nichoria stands out between MH and post–Mycenaean times (with tholos tombs, built graves, chamber tombs etc.). The corresponding settlements reinforce this picture. The possible MH–LH I LH II(?) settlement at Katarrachaki situated at the west side of the Rema/Potami tou Arapi (also known as the Gouvalari stream) is often associated with the tombs in the Koukounara region (Marinatos 1958: 188–9; 1959: 174; Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979: 139; Korres 1987: 105; Syriopoulos 1994: 689). Apart from the Palaiochoria tholos tomb which lies 2–3 km to the west of Koukounara village, only the tholos tombs at Akones are situated to the west of the Gouvalari

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12 These works discuss tholoid tombs in the Aegean in general; all three, however, have incomplete catalogues.
13 Mainly in Laconia (e.g. Epidaurus Limera, Boyd 2002: 207); Kythera (e.g. Kastri Tomb E, Coldstream & Huxley 1972: fig. 75); and Crete (e.g. Mavro Spileo, Alberti 2001; Poros Katsambas, Demopoulos 1999).
Finally, because southern Elis shares many similarities in burial practice (McDonald & Hope Simpson 1961: 258–9; Papadimitriou 2001: 45; Galanakis 2003: 45) with Tripolyne and Messenia—particularly in the late MH–early LH periods—we regard the area south of the Alpheios River as part of the same ‘cultural zone’. The tholos tombs at Kakovatos: Nestora, Kato Samikon: Kliki and Makryasia: Ayios Elias are all of an early date (LH I–LH II). Tumuli and pithoi (the latter hosting burials of both adults and children) are also attested, though not with the same intensity as in south–west Messenia. Pits and cists are also found, with cists being the predominant type in the Kato Samikon tumuli (Boyd 2002: 186–9). Built graves are rare. Only two examples have been reported so far, one at Babes: Arnikatakharcho and the other at Kato Samikon: Kliki (Papadimitriou 2001: 43–5; Boyd 2002: 191). Chamber tombs do not appear prior to the late LH II period and even then they are not as popular as in the region north of the Alpheios. We should note, however, the extensive cemetery (over 87 chamber tombs) at Palaiopyrgos in Gortynia, north of the Alpheios (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 99; Demakopoulou & Crouwel 1998: 269–70), with its tholoid rock–cut chamber tombs that are similar in shape—and date?—to those at Pellana in Laconia.

Turning to Laconia (Cavanagh et al. 1996; see also Banou 2000), the mortuary record shows some notable differences. So far no MH tumulus has been found, although possible EH tumuli have been reported at Orchomenos in Arcadia (Spyropoulos 1996) and Pellana in Laconia (Spyropoulos 1998; 2002). Furthermore, pithos burials are rare, although they are attested (e.g. Ayios Stephanos). This picture strikingly contrasts with the situation in Messenia and southern Elis. In Laconia, on the other hand, pits and cists along with a few built graves appear to be the exclusive components of the mortuary landscape. At the beginning of the LBA, rock–cut chamber tombs make their appearance (Dickinson 1977: 63–4, n. 34). Interestingly, it is in the early LBA, after the appearance of the tholos type in Messenia, that most of the round–chambered, tholos–like, rock–cut tombs appear (not only in Laconia, but also in Messenia). Those at Pellana23 and Epidauros Limera24 are the most striking examples, comparable with those at Chora: Volimidia in Messenia. A few chamber tombs, like those on the island of Kythera, follow the same late MM–early LM chamber tomb tradition (Dickinson 1994: 233). Although the most distinctive feature of Neopalatial rock–cut tombs on Kythera and Crete is their multiple chambers, single–chamber examples also exist. This observation led Dickinson to suggest different sources of inspiration for the formation of the chamber tomb type in the Aegean (Dickinson 1983: 64–5; 1984: 116–7; 1994: 223–4; cf. Boyd 2002: 58–61). It should be noted, however, that most of the 70 or more attested chamber tombs in Laconia date from the LH III phase.

Again in contrast to the situation in Messenia, tholos tombs are rare in LBA Laconia. They do not appear until LH IIA; after this time, they are only attested at two sites: Vapheio: Palaiopyrgi (Tsountas 1888; 1889) and Vourvoura: Analipsis (on the boundary between the prefectures of Arcadia and Laconia; Kalogeropoulos 1998). More tholos tombs are built in LH IIIA, some in remote, upland areas. For example, Arna: Arkines occupies an important position in the Laconia–Messenia route over Mt. Taygetos, a route also noted in the historical period (Tsountas 1889: 134).25 Among the other possible LH III tholos tombs,

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19 Compare the early prominence of Mirou: Peristeria and Kakovatos: Nestora with the possible late prominence of Vasiliko: Malthi, etc.
21 At Palaiokastro: Palaiopyrgos they are attested from the LH IIB period onwards, according to Mountjoy (1999: 296).
we may note the miniature tholoi at Analipsis (Kalogeropoulos 1998: 17–23), and those at Ayios Efstratios: *Stratigos*26 (Bintliff 1977: 462; Banou 1996: 57–8) and Leonidi: *Makros* (Faklaris 1990: 130, fig. 48a). Tholoid built graves27 are found at Vaskina: *Kotroni* (LM III date) and Palaiochori: *Mikri Tourla* (as early as in date as LH II; Papadimitriou 2001: 31–4; Zavvou 1996: 135–7; Waterhouse & Hope Simpson 1961: 131–5; Faklaris 1990: 138–9, 145–53). In both cases, tholoid graves probably formed part of extensive cemeteries. For example, up to 30 graves might have existed around Mikri Tourla (I and II) at Palaiochori in Kynouria (Waterhouse & Hope Simpson 1961: 134; Papadimitriou 2001: 34).

It is also worth noting that, according to O. Dickinson, the MH coarse ware popular in Messenia, west Arcadia and Elis is not attested in Laconia (Dickinson 1977: 90).28 Elsewhere, he points out that local Minyan “seems to follow the Argive standard quite closely, in this respect contrasting with Messenia” (Dickinson 1992: 110). Laconia (at least its southern part),29 by contrast, shows a comparatively closer relation to LM I Crete perhaps mediated through Kythera (Dickinson 1992: 110–1; Hood 1992). The exploitation of *lapis lacedaemonius*30 and *rosso antico* should be taken into consideration as a possible reason for exchange contacts between southern Laconia and Crete, but not without caution (Higgins & Higgins 1996: 54–5, 57; Warren 1969: 132–3; 1992).31

IV. PROPOSITION 4 REVISITED

O. Dickinson has stated that “although very similar phenomena appear in different regions, there is no

26 Dickinson (1992: 113) suggests that this tomb might actually have been ‘a stone–built equivalent of an ordinary chamber tomb’.
27 The often elliptical form of these graves has prevented scholars from identifying this type as a ‘tholos’ or even a tholoid built grave (see Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 47; Papadimitriou 2001: 31–34). These tombs, however, possess a dromos–like access, have a stomion–like formation and are corbel–vaulted. Thus, the fact that they appear to cluster in numbers suggests that small, rudimentary built graves alluding to tholos architecture not only existed but also formed ‘cemeteries’. In support of this suggestion, see the recently discovered (canonical) LBA tholos tomb cemeteries in Thessaly at Veleslino: *Aerino* (Arachoviti 2000: 367–68) and Kanalia Karla: *Rema tou Arapi* (Adrymi–Sismani et al. 2003).
28 He also implies closer relations for Laconia with Crete and the Argolid.
29 At Epidauros Limera, Ayios Stephanos, Palaiochori and probably Pavlopetri, for example.
30 The former was quarried at Psephi between Krokeai and Ayios Stephanos; the latter near the abandoned village of Profitis Elias, close to Cape Matapa–Tainaron.
31 O. Dickinson has expressed scepticism about the extent of the exploitation of *lapis lacedaemonius* during the MH–LH periods and its impact on the local economy (Dickinson 1992: 111). homogeneous early Mycenaean culture” (Dickinson 1989: 133). We could argue that an examination of the mortuary record in late MH–early LH Messenia and Laconia brings to light more contrasts than parallels. Examples of the tumulus, the most characteristic mortuary feature of Messenia, albeit predominantly in the central–west section, have not yet been found in Laconia. Furthermore, pithos burials are rare and are restricted to child internments, as in other regions at the same time. Tholos tombs appear later than they do in Messenia and even then they are limited in number. Complex tumuli are equally not attested in Laconia. Instead, cemeteries of tholos or tholoid tombs have been found, some in rather upland areas (probably from as early as LH II). Intramural burials (pits and cists) are found in both Laconia and Messenia, although it should be stressed that their discovery largely depends on the number of excavated MH settlements, which unfortunately still remains small. The tumulus in Messenia, an extramural burial type, suggests that the funerary landscape extended beyond (though probably in close association with) the settlement itself.

If we wish to stress a parallel, particularly within the broader Aegean framework, then the early appearance of chamber tombs in both regions is notable. Chamber tombs appear in Laconia and Messenia sometime in late MH III–early LH I. The rock–cut tombs on Kythera and Crete predate these examples. It has already been argued that the inspiration for the formation of the chamber tomb type need not be common. In the case of Messenia, chamber tombs could have constituted an alternative to tholos tombs, while in Laconia rock–cut tombs might represent a feature appropriated from the Cretan (or Kytheran) tradition. Interestingly enough, however, rock–cut chamber tombs with a tholoid form appear quite early both in Laconia (Pellana: *Palaiokastro* and Messenia (Chora: *Volimidia*), as noted above, suggesting parallels between the two regions, at least in funerary architecture.

In general, grave goods are considerably rare during early MH times and architectural sophistication is limited to that required for the construction of tumuli (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 31–3). From the late MH (MH III) period, however, conspicuous display of grave goods appears, together with greater complexity in mortuary practice. An investment in quality, quantity and diversity of grave goods now appears (Dickinson 1977; Voutsaki 1995; 1998; 1999; Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 49–55). Tomb form starts to constitute an important parameter in funerary practices with its architectural sophistication, in terms of size, masonry quality and so forth, culminating in LH I–LH II (Zavadil 2001, I: 182–90). It is particularly in late...
LH I–LH IIA that we can observe a peak in size, wealth, and architectural sophistication in Messenian tombs. It is within this broader chronological period that tholos tombs start to proliferate in the wider Aegean. From the LH III period, grave goods and tomb architecture continue to play a prominent role, although this time across a wider spatial and chronological framework (Galanakis 2003: 86–8). In certain regions, tombs may have acquired a specific symbolism (as early as LH IIB–LH IIIA1), associated with an emerging centralised administration (e.g. Voutsaki 1998; 1999; Bennet 1999B).

CONCLUSION

This brief examination of the mortuary traditions in Messenia and Laconia underlines the importance of the MH period in shaping LBA funerary architecture and practices in both regions. It appears that each area followed different ‘funerary trends’. In Messenia tumuli, pithoi, and horseshoe-shaped structures suggest a prominent factor in the formation of Messenia’s late MBA–LBA funerary record was a tendency to ‘monumental’, extramural burials. In Laconia, on the other hand, we seem to observe greater affinities with practices current on Crete and Kythera (from where the rock–cut chamber tomb type might have been appropriated). The MH III to LH IIA period would have spanned the MM IIIA to LM IB period in Cretan terms (including, we might note, the eruption of Thera/Santorini). The role of Kythera in this mediation between Crete and Laconia is likely to have been important. Indeed, we should probably think not of traits arriving from Crete via Kythera, but simply from Kythera itself. Rutter (1979: 468), for example, has argued that Laconian Minyan shapes might have been influenced by clay imitations of Minoan stone vessels made or found on Kythera (cf. Rutter & Rutter 1976; Jones & Rutter 1977). Although Korres (1993) has strongly argued that relations between Crete and Messenia might have been less ‘intense’ because they were ‘limited’ to trade contacts, it seems equally likely to us that we are simply seeing the selection of different elements by societies in the two regions of Messenia and Laconia. The different ‘cultural choices’ made in the two regions highlight the fact that—although we are accustomed to identify similar material culture traits (such as tholos and chamber tombs, for example) mainly on the basis of their form—their meaning and, above all, their ‘life–cycle’ need have been neither identical nor similar in nature in whatever spatial or chronological context in which they occurred. The introduction, adoption, adaptation and use of tholos and chamber tombs in Messenia need not have had the same cultural ‘value’ and ‘meaning’ as they did in Laconia (or anywhere else in the Aegean). What we are accustomed to identify as a process of ‘Mycenaeanisation’—through an emphasis on the end product and apparent convergence in material culture—need not have been based or formed on similar grounds. This view presupposes a preexisting ‘Mycenaean’ culture from which each region drew its ‘Mycenaean’ qualities. The view that we subscribe to is that ‘Mycenaean culture’, if it ever existed at all, was created through a process of negotiation and interaction by various societies in late MH and early LH southern Greece.

In contrast to the radical social developments taking place in Messenia and the Argolid during the transition from the MH to the LH period, Laconia appears only to have experienced small–scale changes (Cavanagh 1995). It is possible that an intensification of connections between Crete and Laconia in the late MH–early LH transitional period might have allowed a local élite to distance itself socially within southern Laconia (Cavanagh et al. 2002: 141–2, 148–50), building the power that, by LH II–LH III, facilitated the emergence of a three–tier settlement hierarchy similar to that reconstructed for the Pylos polity (Bennet 1995). It is not until the LH IIA period, however, that certain sites become significant (in terms of size, burial numbers or architectural sophistication). During LH IIA–LH IIIA1, Vapheio: Palaiopyrgi, the Menelaion, and Vourvoura: Analipsis might have constituted important regional centres. Their floruit, however, seems to have been short–lived. Already by LH IIIA1, the aforementioned sites, instead of being transformed into major, large scale centres, as one might have expected, show no such signs. On the contrary, Pellana—although it might have been important at a regional level during LHIIIA2–LH IIB—has not yet produced evidence to suggest that it might actually have acted as an extensive, regional, administrative centre (Dickinson 1992: 112). So far, a ‘super–centre’ of the size and complexity of Pylos (ca. 15 ha) and Mycenae (ca. 30 ha) is lacking in Laconia. And yet the settlement at Vapheio: Palaiopyrgi might have covered some 20 ha in early Mycenaean times (Cavanagh et al. 2002: 146).

Whether we can trace the differences between Messenia and Laconia in socio–political developments in LH III, back to the differences in funerary practices of the late MH–early LH period is not only difficult to

32 Although results from future excavations are much anticipated, since the excavated area on the slope of the hill probably represents only a small part of the LBA settlement.

33 It could be argued that the notion of a ‘unified’ (and ‘Mycenaenised’) heroic Greece owes a great deal to the Homeric tradition. For philological approaches to socio–political developments in Messenia, Elis and Laconia, in which Homer and the Linear B documents are mixed, see, for example, Hope Simpson 1957; 1967; Sergent 1978A; 1978B; 1980, etc.
establish, but forces us into the teleological trap of assuming that all parts of the southern Aegean are ‘Mycenaenised’ by the 14th century BC and ‘Mycenaenised’ in the same way. What we hope to have demonstrated, however, in this short contribution, is that the externally identified and often claimed ‘Mycenaenisation’ of Laconia need not have been identical or even similar to the ‘Mycenaenisation’ of Messenia (or of any other region in the southern Aegean). In the sense in which we assume Oliver intended the terms in that Oxford seminar, therefore, we hope to have sketched out more clearly the ‘parallels and contrasts’ between Messenia and Laconia in their funerary traditions and to have made the point that differences in tradition can tell us as much as similarities about what it meant to become ‘Mycenaean’ in the Aegean Bronze Age.

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Pl. 15. The southern Peloponnese: mortuary sites in Messenia and Laconia in use in the MH period.

Key*

1. Kato Samikon: Klidi (B92)  34. Chandrinou: Kissos and surroundings (D32, D33)
2. Mirou: Peristeria (D200)  36. Mesochori: Gdit Rachi (D76)
14. Vasiliko: Matlhi (D222)  37. Evangelismos
15. Loutrou: Karatsades (D209)  38. Methoni: Nisakouli
17. Gargalianoi: Kanatos (D15)  44. Rizomyl: Nichoria (D100)
18. Gargalianoi  45. Aritha: Ellinika (ancient Thuria) and Antheia: Rachi
19. Pyrgos: Tsouka (D18) and Kastroula (D137)
20. Chora: Vomida (D20)  47. Vourvourea: Analipsi (C58)
22. Chora: Englianos (D1)  49. Pellana: Palaiokastro (C56)
23. Papoulia: Ayios Ioannis (D52)  50. Sparta
24. Myrsinochori: Routsi (D54)  51. Kouphovouno (C6)
25. Tragana: Viglitsa and Kapourela (D11, D13)  52. The Menelaion (C1)
26. Koryphasion: Chourassari (D5)  53. The Amyklaion (C3)
27. Petrochori: Voidokilia (D8) and Divari  55. Vaphio: Palaiopyrgi (C4)
28. Gialova: Palaiochori (D42)  57. Krokes: Karneas (C14)
30. Gouvalari Mounds (D35)  58. Ayios Stephanos (C17)
locations (D35, D36)  62. Kythera: Kastri (C50)
32. Vletri: Kaminia (D34)  63. Kythera: Lioni (C51)
33. Pyla: Vigles (D41)

* Each dot represents a mortuary location, not an individual tomb (except for tholos tombs). The numbers in parentheses are those assigned by Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979 (where appropriate).
Pl. 16. The southern Peloponnese: mortuary sites in Messenia and Laconia in use in the LH I–II periods.

Key*

1. Kato Samikon: Kaldi (B92)
2. Makrysia: Ayios Ilias (B86)
3. Babes: Arnokataracho (B88)
4. Kakovatos: Nestora (B94)
5. Palaiokastro: Palatopyrgos (B32)
6. Psari: Metziki
7. Chalkias: Krokharnou
8. Kamari: Gouva (tholos tomb?) (D236)
9. Ano Kopianaki: Styliari, Akouthei and Ferete (D233, D234)
10. Vasiliko: Xerovrysi (D220)
11. Mandra: Chazna (tholos tomb?) (D217)
12. Mirou: Peristeria (D200)
13. Polythea (near Aetos; tholos tomb?)
14. Kephalovryso: Palionylos
15. Chora: Volimida (D20)
16. Chora: Englianos (D1)
17. Myrinoschori: Roussi (D54)
18. Tragan: Viglitsa and Kapourela (D11, D13)
19. Koryphasion: Charatsari (D5)
20. Petrochori: Voidokilia (D8) and Divari
21. Iklaina: Gouvites and Panagia (tholos tombs?) (D47, D50)
22. Gouvalari Mounds (D35)
23. Koukounara: Katarrachi, Gouvalari and other locations (D35, D36)
24. Kato Kremmydia: Kaminia (D34)
25. Chandrinou: Kissos and surroundings (D32, D33)
26. Soulinari: Tourlidakitsa (D29)
27. Kaplani: Vigla
28. Charokepeio: Demotic School (D109)
29. Diodia: Pournaria
30. Strephi: Galavovouni (D115)
31. Dara: Pithos Burial(s)
32. Rizomylos: Nichoria (D100)
33. Anthia: Elitikia (ancient Thouria) and Antheia: Rach and Kastroelia (D137)
34. Kolomvata: Zarnata (D146)
35. Tourvioura: Analipsi (C58)
36. Pella: Palaiokastro (C56)
37. Vaphio: Palaiopyrgi (C4)
38. Paleaichori: Mikri Touela I and II (C62)
39. Ayios Stephanos (C17)
40. Sykea
41. Ancient Epidaurus LImera (C35)
42. Ay. Georgios and Pavlopetra: Elaphonisi (C42)
43. Kythera: Kastri (C50)
44. Kythera: Lions (C51)

* Each dot represents a mortuary location, not an individual tomb (except for tholos tombs). The numbers in parentheses are those assigned by Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979 (where appropriate).