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The Process of Social Stratification at Mycenae in the Shaft Grave Period: A Comparative Examination of the Evidence

GIAMPAOLO GRAZIADIO

Abstract

This paper discusses the evolution of grave form and the richness of the burials in the two Grave Circles at Mycenae, where a crucial phase of the process of social stratification in the Aegean Bronze Age is represented. In order to quantify the degree of wealth of each burial in Circle B, a multivariate analysis is used that takes into account the composition of grave assemblages in terms of total number and range of artifacts as well as the "value" of individual offerings, determined by comparing them with functionally equivalent objects. For Circle A, such criteria can only be applied to the one single burial, Grave II, but the more general grave wealth provides useful terms of comparison with Circle B burials.

The progressive separation of the elite members from the lower sectors of the community took place during the Circle B Early Phase and Late Phase I (late and final

Middle Helladic period). On the other hand, Late Phase II (i.e., Late Helladic I) Circle B graves show markedly regressive features, and burials are characterized by a lower degree of wealth than those of the preceding phase. This is clearly to be related to the fact that during this period, the highest sector of the ruling class chose another burial area, Circle A, for their more elaborate and far richer graves.*

THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE FROM GRAVE CIRCLES A AND B

There has been much discussion by archaeologists and anthropologists about the value of mortuary data in reconstructing the social organization of ancient societies.¹ Aegean prehistorians have repeatedly

* I am greatly indebted to M. Benzi, T. Cullen, C. Gates, G. Nordquist, J. Rutter, and J. Wright, as well as *AJA*'s two reviewers, for their very useful suggestions and perceptive comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I am entirely responsible for any remaining inadequacy and for the opinions here expressed.

The following abbreviations are used:

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| Dickinson | O.T.P.K. Dickinson, <i>The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation</i> (SIMA 49, Göteborg 1977). |
| Graziadio | G. Graziadio, "The Chronology of the Graves of Circle B: A New Hypothesis," <i>AJA</i> 92 (1988) 343–72. |
| Karo | G. Karo, <i>Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai</i> (Munich 1930–1933). |
| Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986 | I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, "Beobachtungen zu den Schachtgräbern von Mykenai und zu den Schmuckbeigaben mykenischer Männergräber," <i>JRGZM</i> 33 (1986) 159–98. |
| Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988 | I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, "Jewellery in Mycenaean and Minoan 'Warrior Graves,'" in E.B. French and K.A. Wardle eds., <i>Problems in Greek Prehistory</i> (Bristol 1988) 161–71. |
| Laffineur | R. Laffineur, "Mobilier funéraire et hiérarchie sociale aux Cercles des tombes de Mycènes," in <i>Transition</i> 227–38. |
| Matthäus | H. Matthäus, <i>Die Bronzegefäße der kretisch-mykenische Kultur</i> (Prähistorischen Bronzefunde 2.1, Munich 1980). |
| Mylonas 1957 | G.E. Mylonas, <i>Ancient Mycenae. The Capital City of Agamemnon</i> (London 1957). |
| Mylonas 1973 | G.E. Mylonas, 'Ο ταφικός Κύκλος Β |

τῶν Μυκηνῶν (Athens 1973).

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| Nordquist | G.C. Nordquist, <i>A Middle Helladic Village. Asine in the Argolid</i> (Uppsala 1987). |
| Schliemann | H. Schliemann, <i>Mycènes</i> (Paris 1879). |
| Transition | R. Laffineur ed., <i>Transition. Le monde égéen du bronze moyen au bronze récent</i> (Aegaeum 3. Actes de la deuxième Rencontre égéenne internationale de l'Université de Liège, 18–20 avril 1988. Liège 1989). |

¹ From the vast bibliography concerning these problems, see in particular: P.J. Ucko, "Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funeral Remains," *WorldArch* 1 (1969) 262–80; A. Saxe, *Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices* (Diss. Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor 1970); L.R. Binford, "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential," in J.A. Brown ed., *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices* (Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology 25, 1971) 6–28; R.W. Chapman, "Burial Practices: An Area of Mutual Interest," in M. Spriggs ed., *Archaeology and Anthropology* (BAR Suppl. Series 19, Oxford 1977) 19–33. For more recent discussions, additional references, and the state of research, see: V.A. Alekshin, "Burial Customs as an Archaeological Source," *CurrAnthr* 24 (1983) 137–50 (cf. also comments on pp. 145–48); K.M. Trinkaus, "Mortuary Ritual and Mortuary Remains," *CurrAnthr* 25 (1984) 674–79; B. D'Agostino, "Società dei vivi, comunità dei morti: un rapporto difficile," *DialArch* 3 (1985) 47–58; J.C. Wright, "Death and Power at Mycenae: Changing Symbols in Mortuary Practice," *Aegaeum* 1 (1987) 171–84, esp. 171–73; C. Jørgensen, "Family Burial Practices and Inheritance Systems. The Development of an Iron Age Society from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100 on Bornholm, Denmark," *ActaArch* 58 (1987) 17–18.

noted that information of great importance is provided by funeral contexts in spite of inherent limitations.² In this connection, the Mycenae Grave Circles, displaying a spectacular concentration of wealth, must be regarded as a unique phenomenon in the whole Aegean area. Some scholars have suggested that the two Circles could be taken as evidence of two royal lines ruling during the final Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I periods, but no general consensus has been achieved.³ Analysis of the main characteristics of the two Circles, however, reveals that the origins and the development of the "Shaft Grave phenomenon" are the result of a process of marked social stratification.

The two circumscribed areas of the Circles were no doubt chosen with a view to separating the shaft graves from the rest of the "dead community" and emphasizing the different social status of the burials in the shaft graves.⁴ The periboloi of the Circles⁵ and the stelae carved with "heroic" scenes clearly had a symbolic value as a visual expression of such a distinction.⁶ Although the rare walled burial-precincts

and MH grave markers may be regarded as forerunners of these features,⁷ the structure of the Circles reveals the use of formal elements to identify their location and importance. Moreover, in the funerary architecture of the period there is nothing exactly analogous to the general structure of the Circles. Only the tumuli, the only monumental tombs in the MH period, are comparable to the extent that they had a circular plan and contained burials of special status.⁸ Although the shaft grave was conceived and developed during the transitional period, however, there are no substantial differences in grave appearance and body posture between burials in the majority of the tumuli and MH traditional graves.⁹

The act of constructing the shaft graves is also significant from a social point of view. It is generally agreed that the amount of human labor and energy expended on the preparation of a burial is a good indication of the status of the deceased.¹⁰ In terms of expenditure of energy and time, a shaft grave is undoubtedly cheaper than a tholos tomb, but also far

² C. Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilisation. The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium B.C.* (London 1972) 370, 374; M.J. Alden, *Bronze Age Population Fluctuations in the Argolid from the Evidence of Mycenaean Tombs* (Göteborg 1981) 1–6; O.T.P.K. Dickinson, "Cist Graves and Chamber Tombs," *BSA* 78 (1983) 56; C.B. Mee and W.G. Cavanagh, "Mycenaean Tombs as Evidence for Social and Political Organisation," *OJA* 3 (1984) 61; Nordquist 12; P. Darcque, "Les tholoi et l'organisation socio-politique du monde mycénien," *Aegaeum* 1 (1987) 185–205.

³ For Circle graves interpreted as burials of a royal family, see S.P. Marinatos, "Περὶ τοὺς νέους Βασιλικούς τάφους τῶν Μυκηνῶν," in *Γέρας Α. Κεραμοποῦλλον* (Athens 1953) 83, 86; Mylonas 1957, 174–75; G.E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton 1966) 109; J.L. Angel, "Human Skeletons from Grave Circles at Mycenae," in Mylonas 1973, 392–93; J. Bintliff, "Settlement Patterns, Land Tenure and Social Structure: A Diachronic Model," in C. Renfrew and S. Shennan eds., *Ranking, Resource and Exchange: Aspects of the Archaeology of Early European Society* (Cambridge 1982) 110 n.5; Mee and Cavanagh (supra n. 2) 48. For different views, see Dickinson, 56–57; Alden (supra n. 2) 112–16, 318.

⁴ Although Circle B was not part of the Prehistoric Cemetery proper, it was part of the general formal area of burial and its isolated position on a small hillock may likewise be significant.

⁵ For the supposed circle-wall of Circle A, rejected by Gates, see C. Gates, "Rethinking the Building History of Grave Circle A at Mycenae," *AJA* 89 (1985) 265–67.

⁶ Wright (supra n. 1) 175.

⁷ Dickinson 34, 51, 59; E. Protonotariou-Deilaki, *Οι τύμβοι τοῦ Ἀργόυ* (Athens 1980) 160–68; Dickinson (supra n. 2) 58–59; O. Pelon, "L'architecture funéraire de la Grèce continentale à la transition du bronze moyen et du bronze récent," *Aegaeum* 1 (1987) 108–10.

⁸ Note, however, that, according to some scholars, the

two Circles originally were tumuli: O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires* (Paris 1976) 148–52 (with refs.); more recently, see S. Muller, "Les tumuli helladiques: où? quand? comment?" *BCH* 113 (1989) 21 fig. 10, 22 n. 100, 26, 30–31, 36 no. 21; contra: Dickinson 51. For social inferences from tumulus evidence, see: Dickinson 59; Dickinson (supra n. 2) 58–59; Mee and Cavanagh (supra n. 2) 47–48.

⁹ See, in general, Muller (supra n. 8) 27–33. In addition to some graves at Argos, listed by O.T.P.K. Dickinson ("The Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation' Revisited," *Transition* 132 n. 6), a shaft grave in a tumulus at Thorikos is a noticeable exception (H.F. Mussche et al., *Thorikos VIII: 1972/1976* [Ghent 1984] 61, 67).

¹⁰ See Binford (supra n. 1) 21; J.A. Tainter and R.H. Cordy, "An Archaeological Analysis of Social Ranking and Residence Groups in Prehistoric Hawaii," *WorldArch* 9 (1977) 96–97; J.A. Tainter, "Mortuary Practices and the Study of Prehistoric Social Systems," in M.B. Schiffer ed., *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 1 (New York 1978) 106–41; Wright (supra n. 1) 173–74; Nordquist 103–104. For general discussion, also see: E.-J. Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains* (BAR-IS 130, Oxford 1982) 60–62; L. Goldstein, "One-dimensional Archaeology and Multidimensional People: Spatial Organisation and Mortuary Analysis," in R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg eds., *The Archaeology of Death* (Cambridge 1981) 55–56. More specifically, in the Aegean area, a "grave expense index (added complexity of grave construction and value of grave-goods)" has been reckoned by G. Nordquist for Asine graves in order to define the social organization on the site: G.C. Nordquist, "Asine. A Middle Helladic Society," *Hydra* 3 (Spring 1987) 17–18, tables 2–4; Nordquist 101–103; "Middle Helladic Burial Rites: Some Speculations," in R. Hägg and G.C. Nordquist eds., *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (Stockholm 1990) 35–41.

more expensive than an MH cist grave. In fact, it has been reckoned that 10 men probably worked about 10 days to dig a shaft as big as Circle A Grave V;¹¹ moreover, several workers were involved in digging out and refilling the shafts during every phase of reuse. Therefore, even if the custom of multiple burial cannot be attributed *tout court* to the aristocratic class,¹² it seems likely that shaft graves were constructed with reuse in mind¹³ in order to assert publicly the ties of status and/or family, indicating that the expression of lineal descent was becoming more important to the community. In fact, the Mycenaean ruling class undoubtedly played an active role in the rapid development from single-burial graves to large shaft graves and from the contracted to the extended posture of the burial.¹⁴ The specific locus of burial was no doubt chosen on the basis of ties existing in life with other individuals: some Circle B graves were clearly reused within living memory of the previous deceased.¹⁵

Furthermore, the constant use of rather complex ceremonies—clearly shown by the traces of funeral meals in the fills of Circle B and, perhaps, Circle A shafts¹⁶—seems to distinguish shaft graves from most other contemporary types of tomb. The use of shrouds or wrappings richly decorated in gold is more

than likely, signifying an unusual body treatment;¹⁷ in this connection, the so-called “mummy” found in Circle Grave V might also indicate a particular care for that body.¹⁸ We can also infer more complex eschatological concepts from the funeral offerings found in the Circles than from those discovered in the common graves. The personal possessions of the deceased were nearly always more numerous and of higher quality than grave goods found in contemporary graves: they included precious objects as well as simple tools¹⁹ or other objects used in life, as for instance a fishhook, oddly associated with a female burial in Circle B.²⁰ On the other hand, the presence of vases containing traces of food may imply a belief in an afterlife;²¹ most of the clay vases may have been placed in the graves to satisfy the presumed needs of the deceased, in spite of the fact that the high number of liquid containers from Circle B has been differently interpreted.²² In any case, funeral offerings of the earlier burials were not completely removed from the graves on the occasion of the grave reopening.²³

The symbolic value of many objects must also be emphasized, since they can be regarded as “status symbols” or “symbols of authority,” i.e., prestige goods designed to signify the social rank of the deceased.²⁴ For instance, many decorated daggers, mainly from

¹¹ Wright (supra n. 1) 174.

¹² Dickinson (supra n. 2) 65.

¹³ Their large size enabled them to hold more corpses and funeral offerings, and their depth prevented them from being robbed (R. Hägg and F. Sieurin, “On the Origin of the Wooden Coffin in Late Bronze Age Greece,” *BSA* 77 [1982] 184; S. Hiller, “On the Origins of the Shaft Graves,” *Transition* 138).

¹⁴ In spite of the suggested Cycladic origin of shaft graves (Hiller [supra n. 13] 137–44), some graves at Argos are very similar in type to graves found within Circles A and B at Mycenae (see Dickinson [supra n. 9] 132 n. 6). To date, a gradual development from graves of the simpler type to more complex shaft graves can only be documented at Mycenae. For differences in the attitude to burials laid in a contracted position and burials laid in an extended position, see Muller (supra n. 8) 27–28.

¹⁵ This may be shown by the female burial in Grave Γ and perhaps by the earlier burial in Grave Ξ, displaced when the bones were still articulated (Mylonas 1973, 47, 177).

¹⁶ For Circle B, see Graziadio 346 (with refs.). For Circle A, see Mylonas 1957, 113. For traces of burnt deposits associated with other graves, see Muller (supra n. 8) 28–30.

¹⁷ Dickinson 50, 72, 75. For the possible use of shrouds or clothes in other MH graves, see Nordquist 39.

¹⁸ For refs., see infra n. 251. As suggested by J. Wright (pers. comm.), however, the “mummy” might have been the result of an unusual situation in which the mask preserved the details of the face and no special effort was made to preserve the body.

¹⁹ For a review of tools from Circle A, apart from knives,

see Dickinson 115, ch. III[5] n. 20.

²⁰ Mylonas 1973, 234, pl. 210β (Y-322). For another fishhook from the area of the Circle, see Mylonas 1973, 127, K-328, pl. 106β (cf. Dickinson 40). For fishhooks in more ordinary MBA and LBA contexts, see H.-G. Buchholz, G. Jöhrens, and I. Maull, *Jagd und Fischtang* (*ArchHom* 1, Göttingen 1973) J-172–173. For a representation of a woman with a fish, see V.E.G. Kenna, *Cretan Seals* (Oxford 1960) 129 no. 282 pl. 11, but cf. J.G. Younger, *The Iconography of Late Minoan and Mycenaean Sealstones and Finger Rings* (Bristol 1988) 163, 186 (fisherwoman).

²¹ They are I-96–98 (Mylonas 1973, 112–14, pl. 95). Some other cases of food offerings have been reviewed by G. Nordquist (Nordquist 1990 [supra n. 10] 40 n. 43).

²² Marinatos (supra n. 3) 63–66; Mylonas 1957, 169–70. Note that at least some vases can be proved to have been used in life (Mylonas 1973, 109, H-95). For a recent discussion concerning the use of pottery in MH and early LH burials at Lerna, see C. Zerner “Ceramics and Ceremony: Pottery and Burials from Lerna in the Middle and Early Late Bronze Ages,” in Hägg and Nordquist (supra n. 10) 23–34.

²³ For a discussion of the nature of grave goods, see Dickinson 53. For the custom of reuse of Circle B graves, see Graziadio 345–46.

²⁴ See, in general: J.A. Brown, “The Search for Rank in Prehistoric Burials,” in Chapman et al. eds. (supra n. 10) 29–30; G. Clark, *Symbols of Excellence* (Cambridge 1986). For prestige objects as indicators of rank, see also Chapman (supra n. 1) 28.

Table 1. Relative Chronology of Circle A and B Burials

	CIRCLE B								CIRCLE A											
Early Phase (late M H)	H	Ξ1	I:a	Λ2:a	Ξ:a	Φ	A1	Σ												
	Z	(P)	I:b	Λ2:b	Ξ:b	Θ	A2	T												
Late Phase I (end of M H)	B	Λ:a																		
	Y	Λ:b	Γ:a	Δ:a	A:a	E:a	N:a													
Late Phase II (L H I)	K	Π	Γ:b	Δ:b	A:b	E:b	N:b	O:a	II	III:a	III:b	III:c	IV:a	IV:b	V:a	V:b	I:a			
	Λ1	Γ:c	Γ:d	Δ:c	M:a	M:b	O:b	O:c	VI:a	VI:b	III:d	III:e	IV:c	IV:d	IV:e	V:c	I:b			
L H II	P																	I:c		

Circle A, are actually objets d'art and cannot be considered real weapons.²⁵ Metal vessels and even a large number of clay vases of high quality clearly denote a display of wealth. Symbolic value can also be ascribed to other well-known precious objects from Circle A as well as to other items of paraphernalia: in addition to the funeral masks, gold ornaments for dresses or shrouds along with jewelry, sometimes associated with single burials in redundant quantity, may be taken as evidence for a "status uniform," mainly intended to emphasize social differences.²⁶ The ornate staffs from both Circles as well as a "scepter" from Circle A Grave IV clearly must be considered very significant status indicators, whether they were insignia of rank or of office.²⁷

In this connection, other evidence of ostentation may be noted. Bronze hydriai were found inside krat-

ers both in Circles A and B;²⁸ metal jugs as well as other objects were wrapped in linen, sometimes silver-decorated, cloths;²⁹ some metal or alabaster vessels as well as wooden boxes were probably intended as containers for smaller objects;³⁰ unworked tips of exotic elephant tusks were placed in Circle A Graves IV and V.³¹ All these artifacts cannot be referred to any particular ceremony, and seem rather to have been deliberately stored up in order to stress the high rank of the deceased. In this light a pyxis of the Keros-Syros culture from Circle B Grave N may also be considered a prestige good, of "antiquarian value,"³² and it may have been a fortuitous finding at the time of the Shaft Graves in the Cycladic area rather than an heirloom handed down from a distant age.³³ Moreover, the assertion that groups of swords might represent a form of wealth seems to be well founded if we con-

²⁵ In addition to the famous inlaid daggers, the daggers decorated with the "chrissochentissi" technique are to be considered "emblems" or "insignia dignitatis" (A. Sakellariou, "Poignées ouvragées d'épées et de poignards mycéniens," in *Aux origines de l'hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce. Hommage à Henri van Effenterre* [Paris 1984] 128).

²⁶ For "status uniforms" in general, see S. Shennan, "The Social Organisation at Branč," *Antiquity* 49 (1975) 284 (with refs.); Pader (supra n. 10) 18–27.

²⁷ For Circle B ornate staffs, see Mylonas 1973, 121, I-514; 175, pl. 153γ (N-394–97). For other examples from Circle A Grave III and other Argive contexts, see Dickinson 84, 121 n.16. Cf. also A.F. Harding, *The Mycenaean and Europe* (London 1984) 114–15 fig. 31.4; J. Bouzek, *The Aegean, Anatolia and Europe: Cultural Interrelations in the Second Millennium B.C.* (SIMA 29, Göteborg 1985) 80–81. For the Circle A scepter, see K. Kilian, "The Emergence of Wanax Ideology in the Mycenaean Palaces," *OJA* 7 (1988) 294.

²⁸ Circle B Grave E and Circle A Grave IV provide clear evidence of such an arrangement: Mylonas 1973, 92; Mylonas 1966 (supra n. 3) 105; Matthäus 24 nos. 197, 224.

²⁹ Mylonas 1973, 172 (N-310). For other possible cases from the two Circles, see Nordquist 58 (with detailed bibliography). Note that even a spearhead from Grave N (N-

308) had been greased and wrapped in a linen cloth (Mylonas 1973, 172).

³⁰ A gold kyathos from Grave N as well as a gold cup from Grave Γ were in fact used as containers for smaller objects (Mylonas 1973, 162, N-389; 47, Γ-316). In Circle A an alabaster vase, associated with the southern burial in Grave V, contained 38 golden buttons and a gold funnel (Schliemann 390; C. Schuchhardt, *Schliemann's Excavations* [London 1891] 259); gold and silver vases and other objects including 100 gold-covered buttons were also found inside large copper vessels in Grave IV (Schliemann 295; C. Tsountas and J.I. Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age* [London 1897] 90; Dickinson 48).

³¹ O.H. Krzyszkowska, "Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age: Elephant Tusk or Hippopotamus Ivory," *BSA* 83 (1988) 231 (with refs.).

³² Mylonas 1973, 176, pl. 154δ (N-458). For comparisons, see Dickinson 45, 114 n. 21. Cf. also Renfrew (supra n. 2) pl. 6.3–6; J. Thimme ed., *Art and Culture of the Cyclades in the Third Millennium* (Chicago 1977) 104, fig. 85, 28–30, pls. 339–40; C. Doumas, *Cycladic Art: Ancient Sculpture and Ceramics of the Aegean from the N.P. Goulandris Collection* (Houston 1981) 89, no. 129.

³³ Mylonas 1973, 176 (interpreted as a possible heirloom). Although Iakovidis regarded a Cycladic kernos from Grave

sider that very large numbers of weapons (collections of 20 and 60) were found heaped in Graves IV and V.³⁴

Finally, as shown by Angel, the high-status individuals of the Circles enjoyed a far higher standard of living than their near-contemporaries at Lerna and Asine, although some of them died rather young.³⁵ They also stood out from the lower sectors of community because of their physical size.³⁶ Thus, physical anthropological evidence seems to suggest that the members of the ruling class shared a common status.³⁷ Because they isolated themselves from the rest of the community and stressed their family and/or status ties to give a united expression of their power, it seems therefore likely that a "class consciousness" was present among Mycenae's upper classes.

On the other hand, the period of use of the two Circles is rather short and many graves were concurrently used during every period and particularly during LH I (table 1).³⁸ Nevertheless, a general evolution from the beginning to the end of the period can be recognized and the development of social stratification at Mycenae can be considered gradual. A comparative analysis of the evidence, therefore, can now be attempted to clarify the distinct stages within this process.

GENERAL FEATURES

Circle B

Although a progressive increase in the degree of grave elaboration has already been suggested,³⁹ it is worth analyzing the architectural evolution of the graves as well as other factors, period by period. The

terms "Early Phase," "Late Phase I," and "Late Phase II" are here used to refer to the relative chronology of Circle B graves and burials, as defined in a former study.⁴⁰ In terms of Helladic chronology, they correspond respectively to a late but not final phase of MH, to the very end of MH, and to LH I.

Early Phase. With the exception of Grave I, clearly larger and deeper ($2.55 \times 1.30 \times 2.85$ m) than the others, most Early Phase graves (table 2) do not exceed 1.90 m in length at the level of the floor (Grave Z), and 1.15 m in width (the circular Grave A 2); the deepest grave (Grave Ξ) is 1.90 m deep, but other graves (H and Z) are notably shallower (max. depth 0.90 m). Therefore, since the amount of earth and bedrock required to be removed for their construction does not exceed 3 m^3 , the amount of human labor expended in their construction is relatively small. Of course, the measurements of Grave I, similar to those of later shaft graves, imply a greater expenditure of labor.

All the Early Phase graves except H, Ξ1, and Θ⁴¹ had a roof enclosing the lower part of the shafts. Only Graves T and Ξ, however, had walls of mudbrick or rubble lining the sides to bear the weight of the roof beams; in the others the beams were supported by shelves cut into the bedrock and Grave Z had post-holes in the corners, probably once containing supports for the roof. All the Early Phase graves, including the simple earth-cut Grave Ξ1, had a floor covered with pebbles.

No stelae can be securely attributed to this phase, although a stele on Grave I was suggested by Mylonas.⁴² Stone perimeters have been shown to have marked some graves (H, Z, I, and Ξ), however, and

122 at Perati as contemporary with the late Mycenaean finds from the grave, this might also have been an "antique" from the Cyclades: S.E. Iakovidis, *Περατή. Τὸ νεκροταφείον* (Athens 1969, 1970) vol. A, 424 no. 866, pl. 126, vol. B 264–65.

³⁴ Dickinson 68; S. Hood, "Shaft Grave Swords: Mycenaean or Minoan?" in *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Διεθνoῦς Κρητολογικοῦ Συνέδριου* (Athens 1980) 242; O.T.P.K. Dickinson in E.B. French and K.A. Wardle eds., *Problems in Greek Prehistory* (Bristol 1988) 165.

³⁵ For the standard of living of the deceased in the Circles in comparison with that of MH people, see: Angel (supra n. 3) 386–89; J.L. Angel, *Lerna II: The People* (Princeton 1971) 89–90, 110; "Ancient Skeletons from Asine," in S. Dietz, *Asine II. Results of the Excavations East of the Acropolis 1970–1974, 1: General Stratigraphical Analysis and Architectural Remains* (Stockholm 1982) 107, 111; P. Halstead, "The Bronze Age Demography of Crete and Greece. A Note," *BSA* 72 (1977) 108, 110; Nordquist 21–22. For Angel's inferences about their age of death, see Angel (supra n. 3) 391–93; however, cf. Alden (supra n. 2) 114–16;

O.T.P.K. Dickinson's review of Mylonas 1973, in *JHS* 96 (1976) 236.

³⁶ On average, individuals from Lerna and Asine are 5 cm shorter than those from the Circles (Angel 1971 [supra n. 35] 110; Angel 1982 [supra n. 35] 107).

³⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 164.

³⁸ Note that 44 burials in Circle B have been listed by Laffineur (Laffineur 228–29, table on p. 232). In addition to burials without offerings not considered here (A1, A2, Θ, Σ [two burials], and T) that possibly belong to the Early Phase (Graziadio 362, table 5), he has also tabulated a possible burial in Grave I which did not leave any significant traces (Graziadio 348 n. 23) and the bones from the fills of Graves Δ and N, which, however, might belong to older MH graves (Graziadio 346 n. 18).

³⁹ Dickinson 42–46; Graziadio 359, 363, 369–71.

⁴⁰ Graziadio 362, table 5.

⁴¹ It should, however, be noted that Grave Θ was evidently damaged before excavations (Dickinson 42).

⁴² Mylonas 1957, 151.

Table 2. General Features of Circle B Early Phase Graves

Features	Early Phase Graves									
	A1	A2	Z	H	Θ	I	Λ2	Ξ	Ξ1	Σ
SIZE (in m)	— 1.50×0.80 ?	— 1.30×1.15 1.90	— 1.90×1.10 0.60	— 1.10×0.75 0.62–65	— ?×0.75 ?	— 3.20×2.05 2.55×1.30 2.85	— ?1.10×0.60 ?	— 1.58×1.02 1.90	— ?	— 1.65×1.40 1.50×0.84 1.25
GRAVE MARKERS	— — —	— — —	X — —	X — —	— — —	X — ?	— — —	X — —	— ?	— X —
ROOFING	X X —	X X —	X X —	— — —	— — —	X X —	X ? —	X X —	— — —	X X —
FLOOR	— X	— ?	— X	— X	— ?	— X	— X	— X	— ?	— X

X Present
— Absent

Table 3. General Features of Circle B Late Phase I and II Graves

Features	Late Phase I Graves							Late Phase II Graves			
	A	B	Γ	Δ	E	Λ	N	Y	K	Λ1	Π
SIZE (in m)	3.90×2.90 2.80×1.70	2.60×1.85 2.27×1.28	3.80×2.80 3.20×1.80	3.25×2.55 2.50×1.38	3.25×2.20 2.55×1.60–1.50	3.65 (3.15)× 2.71 (2.68) 2.55×1.73	3.90×3.10 2.60×1.80 (2.00×0.95) 2.30	— 1.85×1.30 0.80 (?)	— 2.22×1.55– 1.60 1.40	— 1.13×0.63 ?	— 2.90×2.08 2.40×1.50 3.50 0.80 (?)
GRAVE MARKERS	— — X	X X —	— — X	— — X	— — ?	— — X	X X X	X X —	— — —	— — —	— — —
ROOFING	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X —	X X X	X X X	X X ?	? ? ?	— — —	X X —	— — —
FLOOR	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X	— X

X Present
— Absent

this might be true of other graves as well.⁴³ The positions of Graves Ξ , Σ , and possibly $\Xi 1$ were also marked by a heap of stones, possibly indicating special status burials.⁴⁴

Like traditional MH graves, most of the early graves in Circle B contained only one burial, laid in a contracted position. A change from contracted to extended position first appears in the multiple-burial graves: although the earlier burial in Grave Ξ was in a contracted attitude, the children buried last in Graves $\Lambda 2$ and Ξ were in an extended position. A small pile of pebbles and earth supported the head of the later occupant of Grave I. The treatment accorded to earlier grave goods changed with time: in earlier multiple burials, the goods from previous burials were heaped along the sides of the tomb, whereas in later burials these goods were removed from the interior of the tomb. Such changes suggest that it took some time for the burial ritual associated with tomb reuse to become standardized.

Late Phase I. Shaft graves now appear fully developed, but the burials assigned to Late Phase I on the basis of the pottery number only half those of the Early Phase.⁴⁵ The construction of most of the larger and deeper Circle B shaft graves (Graves Γ , Δ , E, Λ , N, and perhaps A⁴⁶) implies a reuse governed by the status or family ties of the deceased (table 3). Their floor areas measure from 7 m² (Grave E) to 12 m² (Grave N) and, apart from the shallow Grave Δ , the shafts are always of considerable depth (up to 3.50 m in Grave Γ). The construction of Grave Γ , for example, required the removal of about 15 m³ of material, a little more than that necessary for other large graves of this phase. Therefore, the simple act of constructing such spacious graves must be regarded as an indication of the great social importance of the first individual interred, quite apart from the burial goods deposited with him.

Other significant features can be noticed: the use of rubble or mudbrick to line walls supporting the roof beams becomes virtually standard in this period; only Grave Δ has ledges cut out of the bedrock. Moreover, all the graves had pebble floors. Besides the multiple-burial graves, two single-burial graves

(Graves B and Y) can be assigned to Late Phase I. They also appear more developed than the corresponding Early Phase graves: Grave B is almost as large as multiple-burial Graves Δ and E, even if shallower, and had lining walls and a pebble floor; Grave Y is apparently smaller, but probably also had lining walls⁴⁷ and a pebble floor.

Another noteworthy development is the first well-attested use of a stele on Grave Γ . The absence of grave markers on multiple-burial Graves Δ and Λ may be accidental, since even single-burial Graves B and Y were marked by stone perimeters and central piles of stones. The extended posture was observed in all the preserved burials, including those from single-burial graves.⁴⁸ Moreover, in the only reused grave, Grave Λ , the funerary ritual corresponds to that in evidence in most Late Phase II graves: pottery accompanying the earlier burial was removed from inside the grave and at least three goblets were carefully placed on the roof.

Late Phase II. In contrast to the preceding phase, many regressive elements can now be noticed. Although twice as many burials are assigned to Late Phase II as to Late Phase I, only one shaft grave (O) is as large and deep as the earlier multiple-burial graves. Grave O corresponds perfectly to the Late Phase I large graves in the degree of architectural elaboration, and is also marked by a stele. On the other hand, another multiple-burial grave, M, is shallower than the Late Phase I single-burial Grave B; all the other new graves (K, $\Lambda 1$, and Π) are single-burial graves, and Graves $\Lambda 1$ and Π are as small as those from the Early Phase (table 3). They also appear less developed than the corresponding Late Phase I graves: Grave $\Lambda 1$ has a rocky floor and no lining walls; no traces of a roof were found in Graves K and Π . Furthermore, none of these graves had any grave marker.

Other regressive features can be noted in Grave M: although it was marked by a stone perimeter, the roof was supported by shelves and the floor was left uncovered by pebbles, which was never the case in the small Early Phase graves. Moreover, regardless of the limited available space in Grave M, the pottery of the

⁴³ According to Keramopoulos, Circle A graves were all marked by heaped earth and stones: A. Keramopoulos, "Περὶ τῶν Βασιλικῶν τάφων τῆς Ἀκροπόλεως τῶν Μυκηνῶν," *ArchEph* 1918, 58. Graves in Circle B might originally have been marked in the same way.

⁴⁴ Mylonas 1973, 177, 185, 226. For stone piles as possible indicators of status, see Dickinson 42.

⁴⁵ Graziadio 362, table 5.

⁴⁶ Although associations in Grave A are unknown, the

later burial (a man) undoubtedly can be attributed to Late Phase II (see *infra* n. 203). Therefore, the possibility that the earlier burial (a woman) belonged to the preceding phase cannot be ruled out.

⁴⁷ Mylonas 1973, 228.

⁴⁸ They are Γ :a, Λ :b, Δ :a (cf. Mylonas 1957, 140: "three skeletons were found in an extended position"), and the burials in Graves B and Y.

earlier burial was heaped along the walls as in the Early Phase multiple-burial graves. In contrast to the general tendencies of the previous period, individuals were buried in a contracted position in the small Grave A1 and in the large Grave E.

Circle A

Only the six shaft graves are here considered. Unfortunately, Schliemann's account of the excavations of Graves I–V, although valuable for its time, is sometimes rather undetailed and Stamatakis's excavations of Grave VI are only known from preliminary reports.⁴⁹ In analyzing the Circle evidence an almost philological analysis of Schliemann's various accounts (the *Tagebuch*, his correspondence with the *Times*, letters to Max Müller, and the final report) is needed,⁵⁰ but, as shown by A. Åkerström, the scarcity of details in the descriptions of the excavation diary is also characteristic of the final version, written some time after the excavations.⁵¹

There is no exact correspondence between the dimensions of the shaft graves as reported by Schliemann and Karo, but they clearly range from about 3.15×1.85 m at the floor (Grave VI) to 6.55×4.10 m (Grave IV).⁵² Schliemann measured the depth of the shafts from the surface at the time. Earth has since accumulated mainly on the sloping rock in the western sector of the Circle, and it would thus be better to start from the level of the rock surface shown in Wace's reconstruction, even if the upper rocky part of the shafts of Graves III and IV had probably collapsed in early times.⁵³ The depth from this level

ranges from about 1 m (Grave III) to more than 5 m (Grave V), but in some graves the prehistoric ground level probably was considerably higher.

The main characteristics of the graves were not completely understood by the excavators, but Dörpfeld's reconstruction now seems correct in the light of the Circle B evidence.⁵⁴ The presence of rubble lining walls can be inferred from the descriptions of four graves, whereas in the relatively small and shallow Graves II and VI, the wooden beams were probably supported by ledges carved out of the rock.⁵⁵ There is, however, clear evidence of pebbly floors in all the graves, although their function was misinterpreted by Schliemann.⁵⁶ A stele, the most outstanding grave marker, was found in place above almost every grave. Only Grave IV, although the largest and richest of the Circle A graves, had no stele.

There are few clear indications about the position of the skeletons in the single burials. According to some scholars, some skeletons were found in a contracted position.⁵⁷ The use of "high pillows" to lift the head seems to have been customary in Circle A,⁵⁸ however, which is more in agreement with the extended posture suggested by Karo.⁵⁹

As far as the ritual of reuse is concerned, only in Grave VI were the bones of the earlier skeleton found heaped along the walls of the grave, as in Circle B. There is no clear evidence that earlier adult interments in the other graves were pushed aside and remained unnoticed by Schliemann.⁶⁰ The rare displacement of corpses in Circle A graves was probably a consequence of the greater space available within

⁴⁹ Dickinson 46, 114–15, ch. III[3] n. 3, with detailed bibliography.

⁵⁰ See in particular: G.E. Mylonas, "Ο πέμπτος λαχκοειδής τάφος τοῦ Κύκλου Α τῶν Μυκηνῶν," *ArchEph* 1969, 125–42; Dickinson 46–50; A. Åkerström, "Mycenaean Problems," *OpAth* 12 (1978) 42–68; Matthäus 19–22; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 167–76.

⁵¹ Åkerström (supra n. 50) 42–43.

⁵² For Grave I (= Schliemann's Grave 2) cf. Schliemann 234 (6.37×3.50 m) with Karo 17 n. 2 (5.50×2.80 m); for Grave II (= Schliemann's Grave 5) cf. Schliemann 372–73 (3.45×2.90 m) with Karo 17 n. 2 (3.05×2.15 m); for Grave III (= Schliemann's Grave 3) cf. Schliemann 242 (5×3.05 m) with Karo 17 n. 2 (3.70×2.70 m); for Grave IV (= Schliemann's Grave 4) cf. Schliemann 293 (7.20×5.55 m) with Karo 17 n. 2 (6.55×4.10 m); for Grave V (= Schliemann's Grave 1) cf. Schliemann 230 (6.43×3.10 m) with Karo 17 n. 2 (5.77×2.85 m) and Åkerström (supra n. 50) 49 (6.35×3.45 m). For the measurement of Grave VI, see Karo 17 n. 2 (3.15×1.85 m).

⁵³ For Wace's reconstruction, see A.J.B. Wace, "Excavations at Mycenae," *BSA* 25 (1921–1923) pl. 17. Note that MH graves found by Schliemann near the mouth of Grave III were higher than what was probably the original rock

surface (Wace, pl. 17). For a discussion concerning the possibility that the upper part of the shafts of some graves could have collapsed, see Dickinson 46–47 (quoting Schliemann's *Tagebuch*). For a discussion concerning the original surface, also see Gates (supra n. 5) 268–70, 272–74; for the refurbishment of the area cf., however, E. French, "Dynamis' in the Archaeological Record at Mycenae," in M.M. Mackenzie and C. Roueché eds., *Images of Authority* (Cambridge Philological Society Suppl. 16, 1989) 125–26.

⁵⁴ Cf. Schuchhardt (supra n. 30) 161–62 fig. 144.

⁵⁵ Åkerström (supra n. 50) 68. Note, however, that in Schliemann's grave sections (Schliemann pl. BB) all the graves have stones suggestive of lining walls.

⁵⁶ According to Schliemann, they were used to air the funeral piles (Schliemann 244, 293, 373, 376), but cf. Mylonas 1957, 125–26.

⁵⁷ Mylonas 1957, 105, 122–23. For a discussion of the problem, see Åkerström (supra n. 50) 60, 63.

⁵⁸ Tsountas and Manatt (supra n. 30) 95 (they suggest a "half-sitting posture," however).

⁵⁹ According to Karo, skeletons were found "ausgestreckt" (Karo 36). Also see Åkerström (supra n. 50) 60 (with refs.).

⁶⁰ Dickinson 48.

the tombs and greater care for the very high-status individuals. On the other hand, because the fills of the shafts were badly disturbed during LH IIIB, it is difficult to determine whether or not the pottery of the earlier burials had been removed from inside the graves to the roofs and fills. To judge from the scarcity of clay vases reported by Schliemann and the presence of sherds of the Shaft Grave period in the area of the Circle,⁶¹ the pottery associated with the earlier burials might have been treated in the same manner as in Circle B. Metal vessels, found in large quantities in many graves, might have been preferred to clay containers as indicators of the high rank of the deceased, and as a rule they were not removed in the course of later burials.

THE STELAE

The stelae are considered status indicators of the utmost importance. This interpretation is reinforced by the symbolism of the scenes carved on them and their extreme rarity on poorer graves.⁶² The earliest example belongs to the first burial in Grave Γ (Circle B Late Phase I),⁶³ if the stelae were set up in the order suggested by Mylonas.⁶⁴ This had been transformed into a base for another stele of a later burial, in spite of being decorated with spirals and a figural composition with men, lions, and another large animal. A fragmentary, plain stele, possibly standing on that reused as a base, and another base, both uncovered in the fill, may be assigned to the two Late Phase II burials: the last burial was not marked, possibly because of its lower status.

All the other stelae from Circle B can also be assigned to Late Phase II. The example from Grave N, although fragmentary, was found in situ, standing on its original base, and clearly belongs with the later burial. Fragments of a decorated stele with its original

base discovered over Grave A may be associated with the later burial.⁶⁵ An unsculptured stele also stood over Grave O, but its original arrangement is unknown; it might belong with the latest female burial, if Schuchhardt was right in suggesting that plain stelae were placed over the graves of women, although there may be some doubt in the light of Stamatakis's account of Circle A Grave VI.⁶⁶ According to Mylonas, a stele also stood on Grave E, but no definite traces of it were found.⁶⁷

The list of the stelae from Circle A is far longer, including some examples found in place over the graves and many others, sometimes in groups, discovered in the fills of the shafts and even in the House of the Warrior Vase.⁶⁸ Only Grave IV apparently had no stele, although a plain example said to be from Grave II might originally be from this grave.⁶⁹ It should be noted, however, that the stelae were re-erected during LH IIIB. As a consequence of the great disturbance in the area some of the shafts are known to have been emptied and refilled in that period.⁷⁰ Therefore, the original relationship of the stelae to the graves cannot be definitively established⁷¹ and "it may be considered doubtful whether any of the stelae originally stood where they were re-erected."⁷² Nevertheless, a simple quantitative analysis might show that most graves, if not all, were originally marked by stelae. Moreover, supposing that some stelae were replaced early, some graves had far more than one stele, and this again would distinguish Circle A from Circle B, where only Grave Γ was provided with three stelae.

THE BURIAL GOODS

Information of the utmost importance about social organization and hierarchy of power can be obtained by correlating degree of grave elaboration with rich-

⁶¹ Dickinson 47–48.

⁶² The only examples so far comparable are from Argos (Protonotariou-Deilaki [supra n. 7] 164–68), although Circle examples are of higher craftsmanship. The iconography of the relief scenes on the stelae can also be associated with items in the graves that indicate "male burials with militaristic activity" (Wright [supra n. 1] 175).

⁶³ Whether a stele was present above the Early Phase Grave I is a matter for pure conjecture (see supra n. 42).

⁶⁴ Mylonas 1973, 50.

⁶⁵ It should be noted that E. Protonotariou-Deilaki (supra n. 7) 171 has suggested that this stele was repeatedly reused; in such a case, its first use during Late Phase I is probable.

⁶⁶ For Schuchhardt's theory, see Schuchhardt (supra n. 30) 168–69. Note, however, that according to Stamatakis, Grave VI, although containing two men, was marked by an "unsculptured" stele (Tsountas and Manatt [supra n. 30] 91).

Fragments of decorated stelae were assigned to this grave by Heurtley on the basis of the supposed early stylistic features (W.A. Heurtley, "The Grave Stelai," in Wace [supra n. 53] 136–37 nos. X, XI, 138, 144).

⁶⁷ Mylonas 1973, 91.

⁶⁸ Heurtley (supra n. 66) 126–46; pl. 17 (for the stratigraphical position of stelae). For other unpublished fragments, see Protonotariou-Deilaki (supra n. 7) 174–77 pls. 11–15. For a full discussion, see Dickinson 46–47; Gates (supra n. 5) 264–65, 270, 272–74.

⁶⁹ For the possibility of the plain stele belonging to Grave VI, see Wace (supra n. 53) 143 n. 1, 144; A.J.B. Wace, *Mycenae: An Archaeological History and Guide* (Princeton 1949) 60; cf. also Dickinson 47.

⁷⁰ Dickinson 46.

⁷¹ Mylonas 1957, 109; Dickinson 47.

⁷² Dickinson 47.

ness of grave goods.⁷³ It should be admitted, however, that social status and wealth are not always exactly commensurate.⁷⁴ Wealth in life and grave goods are not always metonymically related⁷⁵ and wealth is a matter of convention.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, when comparing the Circle A and B evidence to that of other contemporary graves, there is no doubt that the burials in the two Circles belonged to the upper classes of the society, who wished to differentiate themselves from the common people as much as possible. In such a context "artefact quantity and variety, especially exotic trade items," must be regarded as "symbolic designators of wealth,"⁷⁷ and disparities in wealth are clearly related to differences in rank.

CIRCLE B

To analyze differences in rank, the degree of wealth of the single burials must be preliminarily quantified, even if approximately. Among the methods devised for measuring the relative wealth of artifact sets, a quantitative analysis of the number of artifact types,⁷⁸ as well as an examination of the frequency of particular types of grave goods,⁷⁹ has often been carried out. Another method considers the degree of saturation of the grave assemblages with metal artifacts in terms of weight, in view of the value of metal in societies such as that of the Early Bronze Age in

Denmark.⁸⁰ S. Shennan, studying the social organization of the Branč cemetery, used a scale of units of wealth established "on the basis of distance and difficulty in obtaining raw materials and estimated time taken in producing the artifact."⁸¹ More recently, L. Jørgensen, analyzing an Iron Age society in Denmark, combined "type values" of grave goods to calculate the "grave value," i.e., wealth/social status of the deceased.⁸² In the Aegean, G. Nordquist has computed different values for clay, bone, bronze, and gold grave goods from MH graves at Asine; W.G. Cavanagh and C. Mee have recently analyzed funeral offerings from many Mycenaean chamber tombs in the Argolid, distinguishing four levels of wealth on the basis of the presence or absence within the tombs of 46 classes of non-pottery offerings; and P. Schuster Keswani has similarly discussed the social hierarchy in Late Bronze Age Cyprus by recording the presence or absence of a standard range of types and materials in the tombs at Enkomi.⁸³ In spite of their inherent limitations,⁸⁴ all these methods clearly provide a good deal of information, especially if the range of grave goods is not exceedingly wide.

Every Circle B grave assemblage can be considered a sum of various components, different in function, number, material, source, and quality, including the prestige goods of great symbolic significance.⁸⁵ There-

⁷³ Most recently, see Nordquist 97, table 8.4; Nordquist 1990 (supra n. 10) 36, figs. 6a–b; W.G. Cavanagh and C. Mee, "The Location of Mycenaean Chamber Tombs in the Argolid," in Hägg and Nordquist (supra n. 10) 57–58.

⁷⁴ J. Shephard, "The Social Identity of the Individual in Isolated Barrows and Barrow Cemeteries in Anglo-Saxon England," in B.C. Burnham and J. Kingsbury, *Space, Hierarchy and Society* (BAR-IS 59, Oxford 1979) 52.

⁷⁵ D'Agostino (supra n. 1) 51; Pader (supra n. 10) 54, 56–60; Chapman (supra n. 1) 20; R. Baldwin, "Intrusive Burial Groups in the Late Roman Cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester. A Reassessment of the Evidence," *OJA* 4 (1985) 101–102.

⁷⁶ Renfrew (supra n. 2) 370.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. O'Shea, "Social Configurations and the Archaeological Study of Mortuary Practices: A Case Study," in Chapman et al. (supra n. 10) 42 table 3.3, 44.

⁷⁸ See, e.g., Renfrew (supra n. 2) 370–99; C. Haselgrove, "Wealth, Prestige and Power: The Dynamics of the Late Iron Age Political Centralisation in South-East England," in Renfrew and Shennan (supra n. 3) 81–83; K. Randsborg, "Burial, Succession and Early State Formation in Denmark," in Chapman et al. (supra n. 10) 113, table 8.7.

⁷⁹ Shephard (supra n. 74) 54–56, statistics 1 and 2 (with references). For a recent review of the frequency of some artifact types in Mycenaean tombs, see Darque (supra n. 2) 190–200.

⁸⁰ K. Randsborg, "Wealth and Social Structure as Reflected in Bronze Age Burials. A Quantitative Approach," in C. Renfrew ed., *The Explanation of Culture Change: Models*

in Prehistory (London 1973) 565–70; "Social Stratification in Early Bronze Age Denmark: A Study in the Regulation of Cultural Systems," *PZ* 49 (1974) 38–61.

⁸¹ Shennan (supra n. 26) 283–84, fig. 3.

⁸² Jørgensen (supra n. 1) 21–22 (with refs.).

⁸³ For MH graves at Asine see Nordquist 97 and table 8.4; Nordquist 1990 (supra n. 10) 36–37 fig. 6b; for Mycenaean chamber tombs see Cavanagh and Mee (supra n. 73) 55–59. For social hierarchy at Enkomi, see P. Schuster Keswani, "Dimensions of Social Hierarchy in Late Bronze Age Cyprus: An Analysis of the Mortuary Data from Enkomi," *JMA* 2 (1989) 49–86.

⁸⁴ Alekshin (supra n. 1) 141–42; Shephard (supra n. 74) 52–58, esp. 56–58. For a different view concerning the value of the scoring system—substituted by an analysis of age and sex, distribution of artifact types, and skeletal position—see Pader (supra n. 10) 56–62, 131–35, 170–72, 173, 192–97.

⁸⁵ According to Haselgrove, prestige-goods are objects that "require rare materials, considerable technical skills or a high labour investment, or are only available from outside the local system, e.g. foreign trade goods" (Haselgrove [supra n. 78] 81–82). For the concept of prestige-goods also fitting in the Aegean ambit, see J. Moody, "The Minoan Palace as a Prestige Artifact," in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm 1987) 235–36. Although "the recognition of prestige goods is obviously highly subjective" (Haselgrove [supra n. 78] 81), their importance especially in quantitative analyses has been emphasized by Renfrew (supra n. 2) 377–78.

fore, a multivariate analysis is needed that takes into account such variables, i.e., not only the composition of the grave assemblages in terms of total number and range of artifacts, but also the estimated "value" of individual offerings and the symbolic worth of prestige goods.⁸⁶ Because the relative value of objects of different functional groupings is unknown, however, it seems appropriate to evaluate each artifact by comparing it with objects that are functionally equivalent. Thus, every object from the Circle is first assigned to a functional category—containers, weapons/armor, tools, jewelry/ornaments—or to a miscellaneous group. Within each category various subcategories are subsequently distinguished. Containers are subdivided according to material (e.g., clay, bronze, silver/gold). Each vase can be evaluated in terms of value and symbolic worth by taking into account the following variables: 1) *place of manufacture*: distinguishing local products from imports; the latter can be differentiated in value according to the distance from Mycenae of the supposed place of production; 2) *quality*: distinguishing roughly from finely manufactured, plain from decorated, clumsily from carefully decorated wares; 3) *size*: distinguishing large from small examples, relevant in assigning value not only because of the time involved in production, but also because many vases were presumably intended as containers of perishable materials, sometimes of considerable worth. Despite the fact that some clay vases undoubtedly were prestige objects, metal vessels may generally be regarded as status indicators of greater importance; pottery is in fact the most common grave offering and is here considered as a rule of lesser value than metal containers on the basis of local availability of the raw materials employed and the required standard of specialization. Metal vessels are also differentiated in value according to the distance of the source of their constituent materials, their size (as indicative of the amount of metal employed and, possibly, of contents), and the degree of ornamentation (as indicative of the expenditure of labor for their manufacture). The funeral offerings in the other functional categories are similarly evaluated. Weapons/armor are divided into subcategories according to function/morphology (swords, daggers, spears, etc.), and differences in "value" are suggested on the basis of material and the time presumably consumed in their manufacture (distinguishing, for example, plain from decorated examples). Similar distinctions are made among tools. Jewelry/ornaments

are divided into three main functional subcategories (clothing ornaments, headbands, and personal ornaments). More elaborate distinctions are made within each subcategory according to material and degree of elaboration.

When evaluating individual offerings, in addition to differences in material, size, and hours required for manufacture, their possible symbolic meaning should also be taken into account. This is particularly true in the case of the prestige goods intended to emphasize the social importance of the deceased such as, for example, the ornate staffs regarded as insignia of rank or office: they should be evaluated for their symbolic worth rather than strictly for the small quantity of precious material employed in their manufacture. Leaving aside all other considerations, weapons and armor (in male burials) and jewelry and ornaments (in female burials), as well as some tools and "miscellaneous" items, are major status indicators and their symbolic meaning is clearly greater than that of offerings such as the commonly found pottery. Moreover, when considering objects of these categories more specifically, it should be remembered that swords as well as other weapons intended for show probably had a particular symbolic value; the same is true of funeral masks and other ornaments. From the point of view of symbolic meaning, therefore, a ranking can also be assigned within the individual functional categories.

A range of "units of wealth" can therefore be assigned to different categories and, within them, to different subcategories, attributing a value score to each item on the basis of all these considerations. The aim of this scoring is not to assign an absolute value to each object—which is, of course, impossible—but to establish a ranking within each functional category, differentiating the most precious (in terms of source, material, production time, and/or symbolic meaning) objects from average examples, without neglecting, however, a scale of value for the intermediate items. Thus "value" scores assigned to containers range from 1 (local and small clay vases) to 25 (prestige items, e.g., gold vessels). Excepting the arrows, scores of weapons/armor range from 10 (plain daggers) to 25 (decorated swords). The units of wealth assigned to tools, apart from simple tools (e.g., fishhook, whetstone), vary from 5 (stone axe, plain razors, and tweezers) to 15 (knives embellished with additional materials). Turning to jewelry and ornaments, a more complex range of scores appears as a result of the

⁸⁶ As indicated by Brown (supra n. 24) 37 "investigators must be particularly alert to emblems of rank such as cos-

tume (particularly headdresses), elaborate weapons and other artifacts with ritual connections of great power."

differences in the degree of ornamentation; a great variety of scores (up to 100) can be assigned to single items such as headbands and/or sets of clothing and personal ornaments as indicators of the degree of ornamentation of the burials. Finally, the scores attributed to the category of "miscellaneous," which includes precious objects, range from 15 to 25. More detailed value distinctions will be made in the sections concerning each functional category.

To compare the degree of wealth of individual burials, the artifact assemblages are arranged by chronology and the deceased's sex in "three-dimensional" histograms showing, for every functional category, the number of items, the distinguished subcategories, and the relative value of each object (figs. 1–4). Each histogram only includes assemblages containing objects of single functional categories, but the funeral kits are placed in the same order in all the histograms for easy reference. The comprehensive arrangement of all the assemblages, showing the constituent categories and their relative scores (fig. 5), may offer useful terms of comparison. Finally, given the nature of the "value" scales, it should be kept in mind that the resulting histograms are useful only in relative, not absolute, terms. If systematically applied, however, the system may give a reliable picture of the differences in wealth—and ultimately in status—among the Circle B burials.

Before we proceed to an analytical discussion of Circle B grave goods, some comment is needed on general as well as more specific problems. Any plundering of the grave during later burials could invalidate estimates of the wealth of earlier burials. Actually, no clear evidence of such looting was found: in Circle A, no marked disparities in grave goods between burials in the same graves were noted. The disturbed central burial in Grave V may well be explained as the result of casual looting on the occasion

of the rearrangement of the area in LH IIIB.⁸⁷ In Circle B, later burials are sometimes poorer than previous burials. Moreover, since earlier grave goods—even smashed pottery—were not completely removed from the graves,⁸⁸ any despoiling of the previous burials by the members of the same family or social class was probably regarded as an act of great impiety. Some details suggest in fact that the goods of the previous burials were well respected: precious objects belonging to the earliest burials have been found in many graves, and in Circle B Grave N, on the occasion of the later burial, the gold ornaments of a leather sword scabbard and of a spearhead, as well as other gold ornaments belonging to the earlier burial, were carefully placed in a gold cup near its displaced bones.⁸⁹

Some grave goods are difficult to attribute to specific burials. For example, according to an earlier review of pottery associations, there are various "heterogeneous pottery groups," i.e., groups including vases belonging to two or more burials.⁹⁰ They consist of vases from Grave A, the fill of Grave Γ (from the three earlier burials), the fill of Grave Δ (from two earlier burials), the north sector of Grave M (from both burials), the west side of Grave Ξ (perhaps from both burials), and the roof and southwest corner of Grave O (from two earlier burials).

In spite of the useful reviews by I. Kilian-Dirlmeier and R. Laffineur,⁹¹ the following attributions are particularly controversial. 1) Grave goods of female burial in Grave Γ: Only the ivory comb Γ-510 can safely be attributed to this burial.⁹² A wooden box from the north sector containing various objects was in fact assigned to the central male burial by Mylonas and Laffineur,⁹³ but it might also belong with the female burial.⁹⁴ If so, the goods of the central burial only included objects found behind its head, on the northern side of the grave, in addition to the weapons near

⁸⁷ For the awe inspired by Circle A burials, see French (supra n. 53) 123. For the central burial in Grave V, see Dickinson 49; for a different view, see Mylonas 1957, 116; Mylonas (supra n. 50) 128. On the other hand, Gates (supra n. 5) 264 regards the date of the plundering as "uncertain."

⁸⁸ Graziadio 345.

⁸⁹ Mylonas 1973, 162, 175 (N-394–99).

⁹⁰ Graziadio 346–50. For a different view concerning some fill deposits, see Laffineur 229 n. 18.

⁹¹ For a summary of Kilian-Dirlmeier's attributions of grave goods to single burials, see in particular Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, tables 2–6; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, figs. 1–5. Also see the tables in Laffineur 232–33 attributing specific grave goods to individual burials. With the exception of three grave assemblages extensively discussed in the text (Graves Γ, Δ, and Λ), few other differences in attribution of single objects are significant. The main discrepancies seem to be the result

of differences in terminology or functional interpretation of weapons (contrast esp. Laffineur's burials 6, 8, 11, 12 [tables, Laffineur 232–33] with burials Γ:a, Γ:c, Δ:b, and Δ:c, in fig. 3 here) and ornaments (contrast Laffineur's burials 14 and 31 with burials E:b and N:b, in fig. 4 here). Differences from Kilian-Dirlmeier's attributions are limited to the bronze vase E-288, here ascribed to burial E:b (see Laffineur 230 n. 20), and the silver cup I-327, here assigned to burial I:a. Grave Θ, said to be empty of grave goods when excavated (Mylonas 1973, 109), is not here considered, although Laffineur attributes a knife to it (Laffineur 232–33).

⁹² See table on Laffineur 232 (burial 7).

⁹³ Mylonas 1973, 47; Laffineur 232 (burial 8). The box contained the gold cup Γ-357, the bronze cup Γ-316, the alabaster pommels Γ-440, 441, the amethyst sealstone Γ-443, and the beads Γ-444–45.

⁹⁴ Dickinson 45.

it.⁹⁵ On the other hand, Kilian-Dirlmeier has suggested that a fifth individual, whose skeleton completely disappeared, was buried in this grave; in addition to weapons, a knife, and a funeral mask, she has also ascribed to this burial the objects contained in the wooden box.⁹⁶ In light of this, other objects from the north sector of the grave, gold cup Γ-358 and ornaments Γ-359, 360, and 361, are equally difficult to attribute, even if their position closer to the earliest burial, heaped along the eastern side of the grave, might also suggest that they belonged with it.⁹⁷

2) Grave goods of central burial in Grave Δ: Mylonas thought that this was the last burial, and identified the deceased as a woman.⁹⁸ According to Dickinson, however, the nature of the grave goods and the poor state of preservation of the skeleton suggest that it was a male burial belonging to an intermediate stage.⁹⁹ In the latter case, the goods of this burial might have been partly removed to make room for the last burial, placed along the eastern wall; the silver cup Δ-326, from the fill, along with the sword Δ-277, by the left shoulder, might belong to this central burial. Fill materials also included a fragment from this sword confirming the partial removal of the goods of the central burial. However, the objects found in the nearby northwest corner (a LH I vase, a bronze phiale, a set of arrowheads, and a whetstone) could be assigned to this burial.¹⁰⁰

3) Grave goods of the central burial Grave Α: Mylonas suggested that only the vases from the southwest corner of the grave belonged to this later burial; other goods might have been stolen at the time of the construction of Grave Α1.¹⁰¹ It is possible, however, that the weapons found in the northwest corner belonged to this burial rather than to the earlier burial, heaped along the eastern side of the grave.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ On the northern side, in addition to objects from the above mentioned wooden box (supra n. 93) and the objects presumably belonging to the earliest burial, there were the weapons Γ-262, 266, the electrum mask Γ-362, and the vases Γ-18, 20, 24–26 that were probably part of the pottery of this central burial. Moreover, besides the weapons Γ-265, 267, 270, found near it, the bronze object Γ-274, from the “western side of the grave” (Mylonas 1973, 73), might also belong to this burial. It should be noted, however, that perhaps the weapons found in the northwest corner originally included another Type A sword not published by Mylonas (Mylonas 1973, 44 fig. 5).

⁹⁶ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, tables 2, 3; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, figs. 1, 2 (burial Γ, e).

⁹⁷ Laffineur (table on Laffineur 232, burial 6) has also attributed them to this burial.

⁹⁸ Mylonas 1973, 81–82.

⁹⁹ Dickinson 44–45.

¹⁰⁰ Cf., however, Laffineur 232, burial 10 (where those objects are ascribed to the earlier burial).

Although all these controversial attributions must be taken into account when considering the histograms, they do not seem to affect the general picture significantly.

Containers

Pottery. Because clay vases are the most common grave goods, they are arranged in a separate, detailed histogram (fig. 1) that can be examined independently from the histogram tabulating containers of all other materials (fig. 2). In addition to pottery and metal vessels, wicker, leather, and wooden containers probably were also deposited in the graves, but no evidence of them was found.¹⁰³

Containers for food or liquids are most commonly found. Most burials were equipped with goblets and/or cups of various types, mixing pots, and/or other containers for liquids; there is a similar proportion of open to closed shapes throughout.¹⁰⁴ Cooking pots are remarkably rare. Differences in quality among the pottery assemblages clearly mirror disparities in social rank and differential access to prestige goods by the members of the upper classes of society.¹⁰⁵

Generally speaking, apart from imports, the value of a vase mainly depends on the degree of elaboration and complexity of decoration, i.e., the time consumed in its manufacture.¹⁰⁶ In evaluating Circle B examples, however, it should be taken into account that they are mostly of the MH tradition, even in burials dated to LH I (Late Phase II).¹⁰⁷ Since no consistent evidence is available for MH pottery from different sites, in this case the basic evidence can be found in the 237 vases from the Circle itself.

The following distinctions can therefore be made: 1) MH pottery of local (or Argive) production. In addition to the few household vases, many varieties

¹⁰¹ Mylonas 1973, 130–32.

¹⁰² Dickinson 43–44. One arrowhead was found together with the earlier skeleton, whereas others come from the southwest corner (Mylonas 1973, 140, Α-450).

¹⁰³ For a possible use of these materials in other sites, see H.B. Lewis, *The Manufacture of Early Mycenaean Pottery* (Diss. Univ. of Minnesota 1983) 101–102, 157.

¹⁰⁴ In Grave II and among the pottery of Α:a, however, goblets and/or cups prevail over closed shapes.

¹⁰⁵ For Kamares and Marine Style pottery as prestige-goods, see Moody (supra n. 85) 238.

¹⁰⁶ For time expenditure connected with the different stages in ceramic production, see Lewis (supra n. 103) 31–32. For a recent study on labor investment in the production of Cycladic pottery, see J.L. Davis and H.B. Lewis, “Mechanization of Pottery Production: A Case Study from the Cycladic Islands,” in A.B. Knapp and T. Stech eds., *Prehistoric Production and Exchange: The Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean* (Los Angeles 1985) 79–92.

¹⁰⁷ Graziadio 354–68 (pottery of categories B and C).

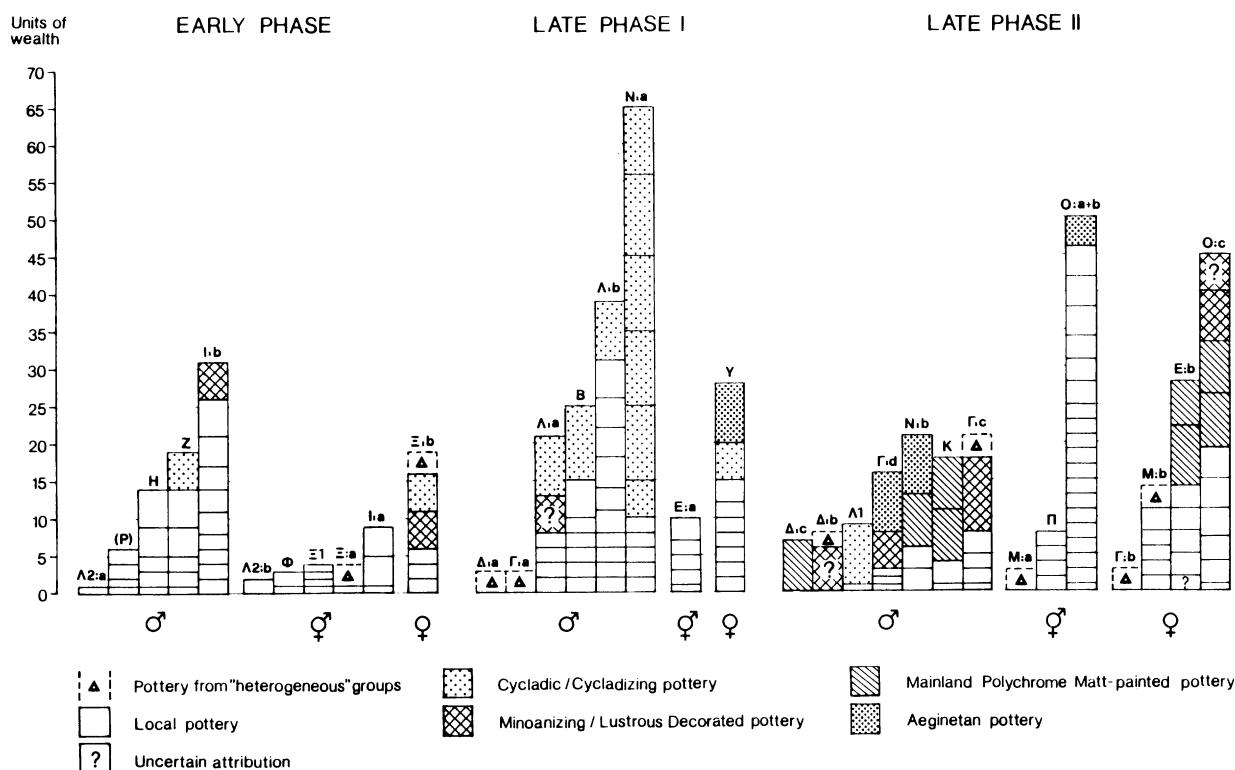


Fig. 1. Histogram showing richness in pottery of Circle B burials

can tentatively be considered to be of local production. Yellow and (to a lesser extent) Gray Minyan and some of the Matt-painted wares, including the so-called Oatmeal (Zerner's Dark-tempered fabric group),¹⁰⁸ are in fact the most common examples in the Circle B repertoire. Yellow Minyan goblets, commonly found in all the graves, are generally regarded as eating vessels, but they might also have been used to store small quantities of food.¹⁰⁹ Since there are no marked differences in quality among these ordinary vessels, the main distinctions involve size. Fine Matt-painted examples, i.e., Yellow Minyan vases with neatly executed Matt-painted decoration, might also have been produced locally; if so, they must have been fairly valuable artifacts, even if differences in size are not neglected.

2) Mainland Polychrome Matt-painted pottery. This group includes mainly large jars or other large liquid containers, presumably imported from outside the Peloponnese. Technically, this ware is the most developed and carefully manufactured mainland Matt-painted production, constituting primarily large vases of high market value, sometimes with figured decoration.¹¹⁰

3) Aeginetan pottery. At least four Matt-painted examples and one cooking pot were imported from Aegina and can be regarded as vases of a certain value.¹¹¹

4) "Minoanizing"/Lustrous Decorated pottery. This is a relatively diverse group. In addition to two Fine Minoanizing examples,¹¹² some large Oatmeal Minoanizing jars and amphorae were found. Probably

¹⁰⁸ For Zerner's Dark-tempered fabric group, see C.W. Zerner, "Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I Pottery from Lerna," *Hydra* 2 (Spring 1986) 60–61. For their presumable Argive origin, see Nordquist 48.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis (supra n. 103) 91. A bird in a Minyan goblet from the roof of Grave E might also confirm this (Graziadio 346, with refs.).

¹¹⁰ Analytical investigations show that Mainland Polychrome examples from Ay. Stephanos and Mycenae were

produced outside the Peloponnese (J. Crouwel, "Pictorial Pottery from Mycenae at the Time of the Shaft Graves," in *Transition* 159 n. 11, with refs.).

¹¹¹ They are Γ-17, Γ-38, N-160, and Y-236 (Cf. C.W. Zerner, "Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I Pottery from Lerna: Part II, Shapes," *Hydra* 4 [Winter 1988] fig. 16.48) and O-205 (cf. J.B. Rutter, "A Ceramic Definition of LH I from Tsoungiza," *Hydra* 6 [Spring 1989] 9 no. 17 fig. 6).

¹¹² Graziadio 352, 354 (Γ-55, cat. no. 555).

but, apart from a small number of vases recognizable as Theran and Melian imports,¹¹⁹ the exact place of manufacture cannot be recognized for most of them and they can only be attributed to some undefined Cycladic center or centers. In any case, given their large size, lavish decoration, and presumably valuable contents, they were undoubtedly objects of great value.

6) Askoi. The askoi deserve special attention, since they were probably of particular value. In addition to the fact that they were generally uncommon in the Shaft Grave period and most examples from Circle B are Minoan or recall Minoan prototypes,¹²⁰ they must also be considered precious luxury objects on account of their contents (unguents or perfumes).¹²¹

A differential "value" (up to 10 "units of wealth") can be attributed to each vase from the Circle B graves on the basis of the above distinguished pottery groups, taking also into account differences in size and peculiarity in function (askoi).

Bronze/copper vessels. In comparison with clay vases, remarkably few bronze/copper vessels are found, mainly occurring in Late Phase II burials (fig. 2).¹²² They were undoubtedly valuable objects, since comparable examples are exclusively from burials of pre-

sumably high status individuals.¹²³ Moreover, most of the examples from the Shaft Graves were large containers of copper presumably mined at Laurion, the main source of lead, silver, and copper for the entire Aegean during this period.¹²⁴ In this light, a different "value" can be suggested according to their size, since smaller bronze/copper vases may be of lesser value than larger ones in terms of the amount of metal employed. Although small gold and silver vases undoubtedly are the most precious utensils for eating and drinking, in some burials large bronze/copper vessels might have served as containers of valuable materials, substituting for cheaper large clay vases; bronze/copper basins, however, have no precise equivalents in terracotta and might have been made for special purposes. It has been suggested that some vessels from the two Circles were from the same workshop,¹²⁵ confirming, if so, that relatively few workshops produced metal vessels of high quality for the ruling class.¹²⁶

Precious vessels. On the one hand, silver cups and small jugs were part of the grave repertoire of every phase;¹²⁷ on the other, only three gold cups—one belonging to Late Phase I, two of less certain attribution—were found (fig. 2).¹²⁸ The silver used in most

¹¹⁹ They are: Γ-27 (Theran production), B-14, N-168, N-169, A1-114 (connected with Melian Black and Red Style), N-165, N-166 (decorated in Melian Naturalistic Style). Also see Graziadio 352–53; S. Dietz, "Some Notes on the Pattern of Foreign Influences in the B-Circle at Mycenae (The Ceramic Evidence)," *Kolloquium zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte, Mannheim, 20–22.2. 1986. (Schriften des deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes 9, 1987)* 114–15; M.B. Hollinshead, "The Swallows and Artists of Room Delta 2 at Akrotiri, Thera," *AJA* 93 (1989) 344–45. Another possible import from Thera has recently been added by Crouwel (supra n. 110) 157 no. 9, 161 (Γ-28).

¹²⁰ See esp. Graziadio 352, 354 (M-146, 148, 154; Y-235). Only the askos O-188 recalls EH prototypes (Graziadio 371 n. 186).

¹²¹ I am very grateful to J. Rutter for this suggestion.

¹²² For a review of Circle B examples, see Matthäus 27–31. (Add also Matthäus 202 no. 305A.) Note that only two vases from Grave I (Mylonas 1973, 119, pl. 101α, under I-294) and N-310 (Mylonas 1973, 172, pl. 151γ) are earlier than Late Phase II.

¹²³ In addition to examples from Circle A, also see other Early Mycenaean bronze vessels from the Grave Circle at Pylos and the Vapheio tholos tomb (Matthäus 31–33). For their importance as status indicators, see Darcque (supra n. 2) 198–200.

¹²⁴ For the preponderance of the larger items in the Circles see H. Matthäus, "Minoan Influence on the Greek Mainland during the Sixteenth Century B.C. and the Origins of Mycenaean Civilization," *TUAS* 5 (1980) 38. Note, however, that small bronze vases come from Circle B (Mylonas 1973, 73–74, pl. 59β [Γ-316], 119 [under I-294], 172, pl. 151γ [N-

310]). For the prevailing use of copper see Schliemann 475–76; Mylonas 1957, 109. For the source of copper see N.H. Gale and Z.A. Stos-Gale, "Bronze Age Copper Sources in the Mediterranean," *Science* 216 (1982) 11–19; "The Minoan Thalassocracy and the Aegean Metal Trade," in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Minoan Thalassocracy. Myth and Reality* (Stockholm 1984) 59–63; J.L. Davis, *Keos V. Ayia Irini: Period V* (Mainz 1986) 103.

¹²⁵ Matthäus (supra n. 124) 39.

¹²⁶ Matthäus (supra n. 124) 38–39.

¹²⁷ For reviews of Circle B examples, see E.N. Davis, *The Vapheio Cups and Aegean and Silver Ware* (New York 1976) 126–29, nos. 28–30; R. Laffineur, *Les vases en métal précieux à l'époque mycénienne* (Göteborg 1977) 108–109 nos. 66a, 66d, and 67. Add also the fragmentary silver jug Ξ-330 (Mylonas 1973, 182, pl. 160β). Two examples, the jug Ξ-330, and I-327 (Mylonas 1973, 119, pl. 101β), are here ascribed to the Early Phase; two vases from Grave N (Mylonas 1973, 176 pl. 154α [N-329] and another one from Grave Δ (Mylonas 1973, 88, pls. 63β, 71α [Δ-326]) are respectively attributed to Late Phase I and Late Phase II. Another example was found in Grave A (Mylonas 1973, 31 pl. 16α, γ, A-325).

¹²⁸ Davis (supra n. 127) 119–26, nos. 25–27; Laffineur (supra n. 127) 108–109 nos. 66b–c, 68. Two examples, Γ-358 and N-389 (Mylonas 1973, 74–75, pl. 58β2, γ; 173, pl. 152, respectively), and here attributed to Late Phase I burials (Γ:a and N:a), since they are very similar (Matthäus [supra n. 124] 39–40, variant A). Another gold vase from Grave Γ, Γ-357 (Mylonas 1973, 74, pl. 58α, β1), may belong to Γ:b (Late Phase II).

analyzed vessels from both Circles has been shown to have come from Attica,¹²⁹ but the sources of gold are still under discussion.¹³⁰ Although there are differences in frequency of silver and gold vases between the mainland and Crete¹³¹ and the discrepancy in number between the two Circles is very marked,¹³² they must be regarded as prestige goods and clear status indicators. They were surely placed in the graves mainly to display the wealth and social status of the deceased, even if they had originally been intended for use.¹³³ Moreover, regardless of the absence of a local tradition, most of the precious vases from the shaft graves could have been produced by local workshops profiting from the experience of Minoan artisans.¹³⁴

Other containers. The following three other containers must be regarded as prestige goods: a faience cup from Grave A, imported from Crete; the famous rock-crystal duck vase from Grave O, clearly a unique item of high craftsmanship, and a stone pyxis from Grave N valued, as suggested above, as an "antique."¹³⁵

A wide range of scores thus results from the differences in value between clay and metal vases (cf. figs. 1–2). In contrast to the relatively low score of the more common pottery, a high score (25) can be attributed to prestige goods such as gold vases and other

precious containers; small bronze/copper vases (10 points) can be distinguished from large bronze/copper vessels with the same value as silver vessels (20 points).

Weapons and Protective Armor

Weapons, generally regarded as symbols of prestige,¹³⁶ were found in association with most male burials in Circle B. A strong correlation between weapons and social rank can also be suggested, since more complete sets of weapons have been proven to belong to richer burials.¹³⁷ Some weapons were no doubt only intended for show, whereas others could have been used in either battle or hunt.¹³⁸ Moreover, in both Circles more weaponry sometimes belongs to single burials than could possibly have been used on a single occasion.¹³⁹ All weapons do not have equal symbolic value, however, and there are differences in the degree of elaboration and the use of additional valuable materials. A differentiated scale of "value" can therefore be suggested (fig. 3).

Swords. Swords, rarely found in Minoan and Early Mycenaean graves, are clearly prestige goods, having a more symbolic value than other weapons.¹⁴⁰ Swords are often represented in "heroic" scenes such as those in which men fight lions and that carved on a stele from Grave Γ;¹⁴¹ moreover, in a seal from Kakovatos

¹²⁹ Gale and Stos-Gale 1984 (supra n. 124) 118.

¹³⁰ Laffineur (supra n. 127) 72–73; J.B. Rutter and C.W. Zerner, "Early Hellado-Minoan Contacts," in Hägg and Marinatos (supra n. 124) 79, ns. 22, 23 (with detailed references). For the sources of gold, see also E. Davis, "The Gold of the Shaft Graves. The Transylvanian Connection," *TUAS* 8 (1983) 32–38; J.D. Muhly, "On the Shaft Graves at Mycenae," in M.A. Powell, Jr., and R.H. Sack eds., *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979) 321–23; "Gold Analysis and the Sources of Gold in the Aegean," *TUAS* 8 (1983) 1–14; Nordquist 65–66; C. Gates, "Iconography at the Crossroads: The Aegina Treasure," *Transition* 217. For a discussion of the sources of silver used during the Shaft Grave period, see also N.H. Gale and Z.A. Stos-Gale, "Cycladic Lead and Silver Metallurgy," *BSA* 76 (1981) 185–221.

¹³¹ Davis (supra n. 130) 32–33.

¹³² Only eight precious vessels come from Circle B, while 64 examples from Circle A have been reviewed by E. Davis (supra n. 130) 33, 36.

¹³³ Laffineur (supra n. 127) 86–87.

¹³⁴ Davis (supra n. 127) 120–226, 288, 305; Dickinson 81–82; Matthäus (supra n. 124) 41–42; J.D. Muhly, "Metals and Metallurgy in Crete and the Aegean at the Beginning of the Late Bronze Age," *TUAS* 5 (1980) 26–27; O.T.P.K. Dickinson, "Cretan Contacts with the Mainland during the Period of the Shaft Graves," in Hägg and Marinatos (supra n. 124) 116; T.A. Papadopoulos, "The Greek Mainland and Its Aegean Neighbours during the Transitional Period from MBA to LBA: The Evidence of Metalwork," *Transition* 184.

¹³⁵ For the faience cup, see Mylonas 1973, 27, pl. 17β, δ (A-240) (cf. also Dickinson 44; K.P. Foster, *Aegean Faience of the Bronze Age* [New Haven 1979] 123; "Faience from the

Shaft Graves," *TUAS* 6 [1981] 9). For a possible origin of the rock-crystal vase O-459, see Mylonas 1973, 203–205, pls. 183–85; Hood (supra n. 34) 280 (with refs.). For the pyxis, see supra n. 32.

¹³⁶ Dickinson 68. For the Minoan ambit, see Moody (supra n. 85) 237.

¹³⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 185–86; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 162–63.

¹³⁸ Mylonas 1957, 170; Dickinson 68.

¹³⁹ Supra n. 34.

¹⁴⁰ For the rarity of swords in Minoan and Early Mycenaean funeral contexts, see Dickinson 68. Note that a Type A sword has been found in a very early grave at Aegina: H. Walter, "Ανασκαφή στὸ λόφο Κολῶνα, Αἴγινα, 1981–1982," *AAA* 14 (1981) 185, fig. 6. For a detailed discussion concerning the functions and the use of swords, including non-military functions, see I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, "Remarks on the Non-Military Functions of Swords in the Mycenaean Argolid," in Hägg and Nordquist (supra n. 10) 157–61.

¹⁴¹ In addition to the scenes of combat cited by J. Driessen and C. MacDonald, "Some Military Aspects of the Aegean in the Late Fifteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries B.C.," *BSA* 79 (1984) 58, 66, others with a possible "symbolic" meaning—such as men fighting lions—can be cited: *CMS* I, nos. 9 (Circle A Grave III), 228 (Vapheio), 290 (Pylos); vol. XI, no. 272 (Péronne ring); also see I. Pini, "Zur 'Richtigen' Ansicht minoisch-mykenischer Siegel- und Ringdarstellungen," in *CMS Suppl. 3: Fragen und Probleme der bronzezeitlichen ägäischen Glyptik* (Berlin 1989) 209–15. For the carved motif on a stele from Grave Γ, see Mylonas 1973, 50–51 pl. 40.

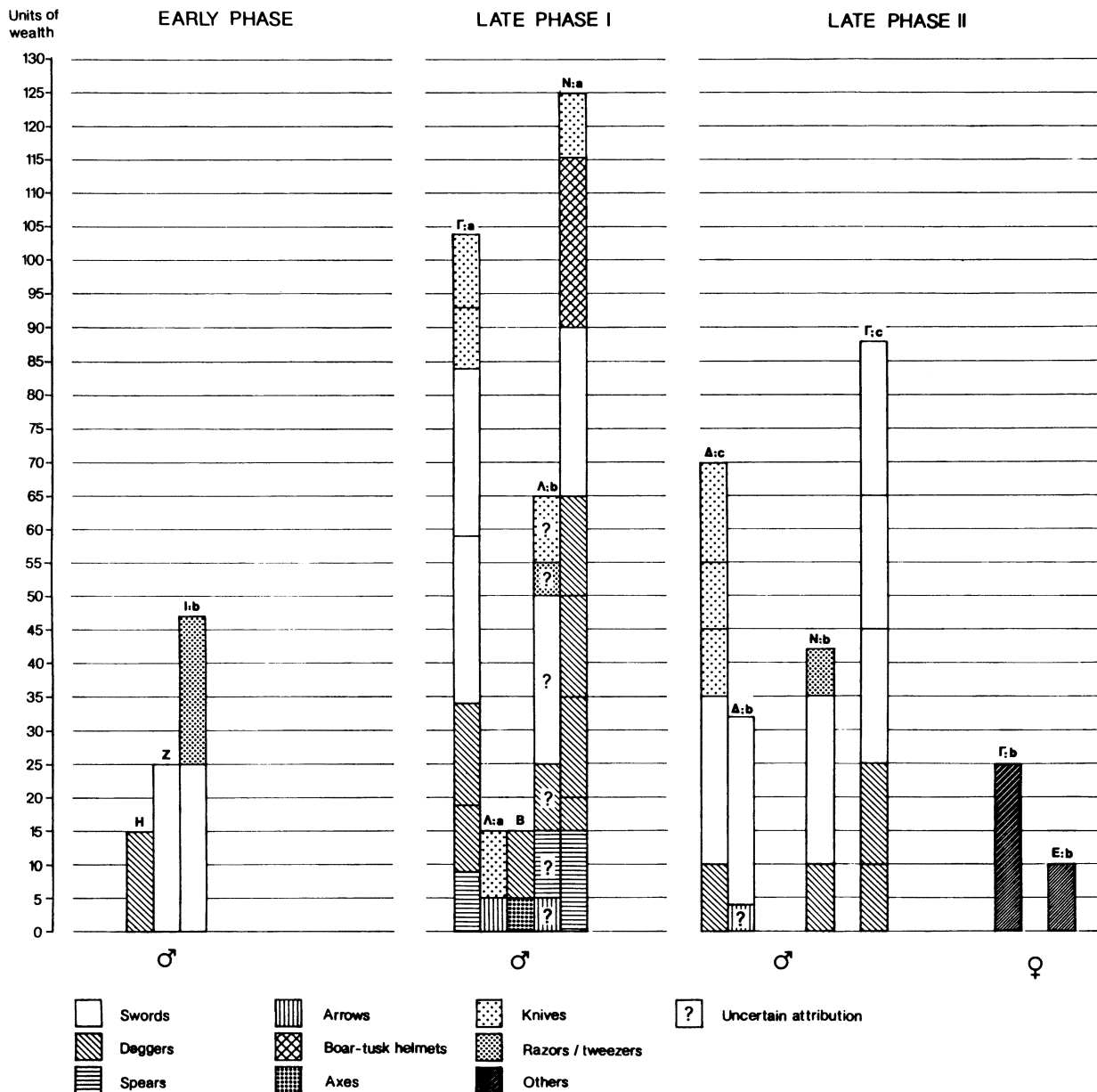


Fig. 3. Histogram showing richness in weapons/armor and tools of Circle B burials

a clear religious significance is given to the scene by a “genius” assisting a man with a sword.¹⁴² Type A swords are undoubtedly of Minoan origin,¹⁴³ whereas

the first specimens of Type B were produced at Mycenae for the ruling class,¹⁴⁴ confirming that they were also regarded as objects of great intrinsic value.

¹⁴² CMS XI, no. 208.

¹⁴³ N.K. Sandars, “The First Aegean Swords and Their Ancestry,” *AJA* 65 (1961) 18–22, 25; Mylonas 1973, 315, 419; Hood (supra n. 34) 237; Driessen and MacDonald (supra n. 141) 64; Dickinson (supra n. 134) 116.

¹⁴⁴ Sandars (supra n. 143) 22–25; Dickinson 68; S. Dietz, “Kontinuität und Kulturwende in der Argolis von 2000–700 v. Chr. Ergebnisse der neuen schwedisch-dänischen Ausgrabungen in Asine,” in H.-J. Weisshaar, S. Dietz, and C. Pod-

zuweit, “Zur ägäischen Frühzeit,” *Kleine Schriften aus dem Vorgeschichtlichen Seminar Marburg* 17 (1984) 37. For a different view, see Hood (supra n. 34) 237–42; S. Hiller, “Pax Minoica versus Minoan Thalassocracy. Military Aspects of Minoan Culture,” in Hägg and Marinatos (supra n. 124) 27 (with detailed bibliography; see also discussion on p. 31). Note that Circle B swords A-253, Γ-266, and Δ-278—listed by Mylonas (1973, 311) as παραξιδίδες—must be regarded as Type B swords (cf. Dickinson 117 n.14).

Some value distinctions can be made between plain and decorated examples (or those with additional materials), not only in consideration of the different craftsmanship involved, but also because the richly ornamented swords were mainly intended as ceremonial weapons.¹⁴⁵ Only a few swords are plain; in addition to the famous, richly decorated Δ-277, most examples were embellished with exotic ivory or alabaster pommels and silver caps on the rivets, and many swords had blades bearing incised decoration;¹⁴⁶ moreover, some were sheathed in gold-decorated scabbards, traces of which were found in Graves Λ and N.¹⁴⁷

Daggers. Both broad daggers and daggers of a shorter type are often associated with swords.¹⁴⁸ In the context of the Circles, however, most of them must be considered auxiliary weapons of local tradition and of a lesser symbolic value than swords,¹⁴⁹ although elsewhere they are sometimes the only or

main weapons associated with burials, presumably of high ranking individuals.¹⁵⁰

Value distinctions can also be made for daggers, but ornamented examples comprise less than half of the total, confirming the minor importance of this weapon as a status item; only one of these was embellished with an alabaster pommel, whereas all the other decorated examples only had silver caps on rivets.¹⁵¹ It should be noted, however, that the dagger N-304 shows an archaic inlay possibly antecedent to the famous examples inlaid in the niello technique with scenes of symbolic value from Circle A.¹⁵²

Spears. Although in tombs elsewhere in the Aegean spears have been more commonly found than swords, only three examples at Mycenae can be related to Late Phase I burials and one to the warrior in Grave A.¹⁵³ Although Aegean representations often show spear-men fighting animals, the spear probably was the most effective weapon in battle.¹⁵⁴ It has been noted, how-

¹⁴⁵ Cf. the Type A swords from Old Palace contexts at Mallia (F. Chapouthier, *Deux épées d'apparat découvertes en 1936 au palais de Mallia* (EiCret 5, Paris 1938).

¹⁴⁶ For ivory pommels from the Circles, in general, see Krzyszkowska (supra n. 31) 230–31. The following swords from Circle B were embellished with ivory pommels: Δ-277 (Mylonas 1973, 85–86, pls. 67–68), Z-289 (Mylonas 1973, 105, pl. 90ε1), I-291 (Mylonas 1973, 118, pl. 98ε). Λ-295 (Mylonas 1973, 139, pl. 121α); N-302 (Mylonas 1973, 170, pl. 147α2, β2); cf. also J.-C. Poursat, *Catalogue des ivoires mycéniens du Musée National d'Athènes* (Paris 1977) 67 no. 236; (?) Γ-263 (Mylonas 1973, 70–71, pl. 54α2); Γ-264 (Mylonas 1973, 71, pl. 54α3); N-301 (Mylonas 1973, 170, pl. 147α1, β1). Other pommels have been listed by Laffineur (Laffineur 229 n.18). The sword Δ-278 (Mylonas 1973, 87, pl. 64β, 69α) had an alabaster pommel. In addition to A-251 (Mylonas 1973, 28, pl. 17α3) and A-253 (Mylonas 1973, 28–29 pl. 18), the above listed swords I-291, Γ-263, Γ-264, and Δ-278 also had silver caps on the rivets. In addition to Δ-277, the swords A-251, A-253, Λ-295, N-302, Γ-264, Γ-265, and I-291 have incised decoration. Symbolism is apparent in some incised as well as inlaid decoration on some Shaft Grave swords and daggers (R. Laffineur, "Mycenaeans at Thera: Further Evidence?" in Hägg and Marinatos (supra n. 124) 135–36; "Iconographie minoenne et iconographie mycénienne à l'époque des tombes à fosse," in P. Darcque and J.-C. Poursat eds., *L'iconographie minoenne* (BCH Suppl. 11, Paris 1985) 248–49.

¹⁴⁷ Traces of leather scabbards were found on Λ-295, N-301, N-302 (Mylonas 1973, 139, 170) and two of them (Λ-295 and N-302) also had gold ornaments.

¹⁴⁸ For broad daggers, see Dickinson 69, fig. 8.6. Examples from Circle B include Γ-267–68 (Mylonas 1973, 71–72, pls. 55γ and β2, respectively), Λ-296 (Mylonas 1973, 139, pl. 122α), and N-303 (Mylonas 1973, 170, pl. 148α), listed by Mylonas as παραξίφιδες (Mylonas 1973, 311). For daggers of a shorter type, see Dickinson 69, figs. 8.7, 9. Examples from Circle B include A-257, B-261, Γ-270, Δ-279, H-290, N-305, and N-306 (for refs. see the catalogue on Mylonas 1973, 323 under the name γλωσσοειδὴ ἀμφίστομοι μάχ-

αιρά, but exclude I-292 and Λ-297 (razors) Cf. infra n. 164. Also see J.R. Weinstein, "Hafting Methods on Type B Swords and Daggers," *TUAS* 6 (1981) 48–55.

¹⁴⁹ For the secondary value of these weapons in some contexts, see Driessen and MacDonald (supra n. 141) 58–59.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. G.E. Mylonas, "Προϊστορική Ἑλευσίς," in K. Kourouniotis, *Ἑλευσινιακά* (Athens 1932) 147, fig. 121 (from Grave 6, along with a boars'-tusk helmet); S. Marinatos, "Ἀνασκαφαὶ ἐν Πύλῳ," *Prakt* 1964, pl. 91β (Volimithia Kephallavryso Grave 1); Å. Åkerström, "A Mycenaean Potter's Factory at Berbati near Mycenae," in *Atti e memorie del primo congresso internazionale di micenologia I* (Rome 1968) 48.

¹⁵¹ The following examples are plain: A-257 (Mylonas 1973, 29–30, pl. 19γ); B-261 (Mylonas 1973, 42, pl. 28β2); Γ-268 (Mylonas 1973, 72, pl. 55β2); Γ-270 (Mylonas 1973, 72, pl. 56α2); Δ-279 (Mylonas 1973, 87, pl. 69β2); Λ-296 (Mylonas 1973, 139, pl. 122α); N-303 (Mylonas 1973, 170–71, pl. 148α). The following are embellished with silver caps on rivets: Γ-269 (Mylonas 1973, 72, pl. 56α1); H-290 (Mylonas 1973, 109, pl. 92ε); N-304, 305, 306 (Mylonas 1973, 171, pl. 149α–γ). The dagger Γ-267 (Mylonas 1973, 71–72 pl. 55γ) probably had an alabaster pommel (Γ-442?).

¹⁵² Mylonas 1973, 171, pl. 149β; also see Graziadio 360 (with refs.). For the symbolic value of the scenes inlaid on some daggers from Circle A, see Laffineur (supra n. 146).

¹⁵³ For spears on the mainland, in general, see Dickinson 70. For spears in LM Crete, see Driessen and MacDonald (supra n. 141) 58 n. 63; D. Doxey, "Causes and Effects of the Fall of Knossos in 1375 BC," *OJA* 6 (1987) 309. For the examples from Circle B, see Mylonas's list (1973, 325).

¹⁵⁴ For the representations see, e.g., *CMS* I, nos. 112, 227; vol. II, 3, no. 14. For spear as weapon for hunting see C.E. Morris, "In Pursuit of the White Tusked Boar: Aspects of Hunting in Mycenaean Society," in Hägg and Nordquist (supra n. 10) 150, 151 figs. 2–4. For the use of the spear in battle, see N.K. Sandars, "Later Aegean Bronze Swords," *AJA* 67 (1963) 128.

ever, that spearmen "in military terms belong to the lower levels of ranking," which might explain why men equipped only with a spear are absent from the Shaft Graves.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, Circle B spears, including gold-decorated examples,¹⁵⁶ may especially be regarded as complements of the panoply.

Arrows. The rarity of arrows, found only in Graves Δ and Λ, can likewise be explained. The bow was probably mainly used for hunting, although some of the few representations of archers show that it was also used in battle. The vast weaponry from Circle A only includes some arrowheads from Grave IV. Apart from the use of the bow by some heroes, in the *Iliad* archery plays a very small part and none of the individual archers is a hero of the first rank.¹⁵⁷

Boars'-tusk helmets. Traces of boars'-tusk helmets were found only in Graves A and N, but others might have been removed when the perishable cap faded, given that there were few boars'-tusks in situ and some of them were discovered in the fill of Grave N.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, they were clearly prestige objects.¹⁵⁹ No traces of other protective armor were found, probably on account of their perishable material.

In scoring weaponry (fig. 3), decorated swords or swords embellished with additional materials and boars'-tusk helmets can be highly scored (25) on the basis of the above considerations; plain swords must be considered of lesser "value" (20). Decorated daggers and spears (15), including the inlaid dagger N-

304 (20), can be distinguished from plain examples (10). A comparatively low score can be ascribed to arrows (5).

Tools

In accordance with the special status of the deceased, genuine tools of little value are rare, including only a fishhook and a whetstone; a single stone axe of Neolithic type (B-496) may have been of greater value on account of the time required to produce it. On the other hand, an ivory needle and a gold-plated bone needle must be regarded as prestige objects.¹⁶⁰ In this connection, knives may also be mentioned because their main use was probably not as weapons, although they frequently accompany weapons in Circle B male burials.¹⁶¹ In any case, they are to be considered status indicators, as proved by their invariable occurrence in high-ranking burials¹⁶² and, in an example from Grave Δ, by the precious handle decoration.¹⁶³

The same is also true of personal objects associated with male burials, such as a bronze razor with an ivory handle from Grave I and finely decorated bronze tweezers found along with plain examples.¹⁶⁴ An elephant ivory comb from Grave Γ is the only personal object associated with women, but, even if locally made, is clearly a prestigious good on account of its exotic material of Egyptian, or more probably, Syrian origin.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁵ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 186; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 163. For the lesser importance of spear than sword, see H.L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London 1950) 256; Driessen and MacDonald (supra n. 141) 66.

¹⁵⁶ They are A-299 (Mylonas 1973, 140, pl. 123β) and N-308 (Mylonas 1973, 172, pl. 150α, β; 162, 175, pl. 153γ, for gold ornaments N-394-97).

¹⁵⁷ For a hunting scene, see the famous inlaid dagger from Circle A Grave IV (Karo 95-96 no. 394, figs. 25-27, pls. 93-94); for scenes of battle, see the silver Siege Rhyton (Karo 106-108, fig. 35, pl. 122) and a fragment of steatite rhyton from Knossos: *PM* III (London 1930) 106, fig. 59. For the limited importance of archery in the *Iliad* and in earlier representations than those on Late Geometric vases, see Lorimer (supra n. 155) 289-90, 299-300.

¹⁵⁸ Mylonas 1973, 33, pl. 22γ (A-508); 176, pl. 154β (N-488). For the boars'-tusks from Grave N, see also Mylonas 1973, 158, 163; Graziadio 346.

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion of boars'-tusk helmets and a possible mainland origin, see L. Morgan, *The Miniature Wall Painting at Thera. A Study in Aegean Culture and Iconography* (Cambridge 1988) 109-15; for a suggested Minoan origin, see Hiller (supra n. 144) 29 n. 17. For a list of Shaft Grave period examples, see M. Kasimi-Soutou, "Μεσοελλαδικός τάφος πολεμιστή από τη Θήβα," *ArchDelt* 35 (1980) A' 98-99. For the construction of the helmets, see A.P. Varvarigos, *Τόδοντόφρακτο μυκηναϊκό κράνος. Ως προς την τεχνική*

της κατασκευής του (Athens 1981). For the symbolic meaning of boars'-tusk helmets see Morris (supra n. 154) 154-55.

¹⁶⁰ For the fishhook, see supra n. 20; for the whetstone Δ-448 see Mylonas 1973, 89, pl. 72α. For needles, see Mylonas 1973, 101 pl. 84β (gold-plated, E-512α); 33, pl. 22α (ivory, A-507); also see Poursat (supra n. 146) 65 n. 226.

¹⁶¹ For Circle B knives, see the examples listed by Mylonas as *μονόστομοι μάχαιραι* (1973, 323, catalogue B). Also see Laffineur 229 n. 14. For their main use, see Dickinson 70.

¹⁶² Dickinson 70.

¹⁶³ Mylonas 1973, 87, pl. 69β3 (Δ-281, with the ivory handle Δ-512).

¹⁶⁴ For bronze razors, see Mylonas 1973, 118-19, pl. 100γ,β (I-292); 139-40, pl. 122β-δ (Λ-297), both considered daggers by Mylonas (1973, 323, catalogue B), but cf. Dickinson 68, 118, ch. V[2] n. 17. For tweezers, see Mylonas 1973, 119, pl. 100γ (I-293); pl. 101γ (I-294); 172-73, pl. 150γ (N-311). For metal objects as luxury items see Nordquist 46.

¹⁶⁵ For the comb, see Mylonas 1973, 78, 79 pl. 62β (Γ-510). For ivory as a status indicator in the Mycenaean age, see Darcque (supra n. 2) 194-95; Krzyszkowska (supra n. 31) 230-31. For the provenance, see H.J. Kantor, "Ivory Carving in the Mycenaean Period," *Archaeology* 13 (1960) 14-15. For a recent full discussion of the Greek prehistoric ivory sources, see Krzyszkowska (supra n. 31) 226-28. For the diffusion and possible local working of ivory in the LH I

Therefore, except for simple tools, all objects for use seem to be of relatively great "value" (fig. 3), ranging from 5 (stone axe, plain razors and tweezers) through 10 (plain knives and precious needles) to 25 points (ivory comb). Decorated pieces or items embellished with additional materials are given a higher score than plain ones (15 knives, 10 for razors and tweezers).

Jewelry and Ornaments

As shown by Kilian-Dirlmeier, with the exception of funeral masks, breastplates, and perhaps diadems, there is a general correspondence between ornaments from graves and ornaments in Aegean representations of men and women.¹⁶⁶ Exclusively funerary ornaments, made of flimsy gold leaf, were mainly intended for displaying the burial wealth; many other ornaments, probably used in life on the occasion of particular ceremonies, may also be regarded as status emblems, and were probably part of the personal possessions of the deceased.¹⁶⁷ Hence a strong correlation between the number of ornaments and the social rank of the deceased can be assumed, considering also the intrinsic value of ornaments and their redundancy in some burials.

Clothing ornaments. Gold "stars," half-bands, strips, spirals, and button or roundel covers can be interpreted as ornaments for funeral dresses or shrouds.¹⁶⁸ "Garters" can also be referred to this class as embellishments for belts or short leggings.¹⁶⁹ To judge from

the position in which they were found, a gold band from Grave N and an electrum band from Grave B were used as ornaments for male funeral dresses,¹⁷⁰ in spite of the fact that in other male burials similar objects were no doubt employed as headbands.¹⁷¹ Funeral masks can also be added, although their ornamental value is clearly far less significant than their symbolic meaning; the evidence from Circle A seems to indicate that they were worn, possibly attached to shrouds, exclusively by very high-ranking men, thus perhaps explaining why they were uncommon in the later Circle B assemblages. In addition to such gold ornaments, most pins are here considered shroud or shawl fasteners, even if some can better be interpreted as hair pins.¹⁷² Some differences in value among bone pins similar to MH examples,¹⁷³ bronze pins, often with valuable rock-crystal heads,¹⁷⁴ and silver examples frequently decorated with gold-plated heads¹⁷⁵ can, however, be suggested.

Headbands. In female burials silver and golden bands seem to have been mainly used as diadems, as shown by their position near the skulls in Graves Ξ , O, and Y.¹⁷⁶ Similar gold bands were also found in association with displaced male burials, but, as shown above, it is preferable to consider some of them clothing ornaments.¹⁷⁷ Although headbands from shaft graves are closely linked to the rare MBA examples,¹⁷⁸ they clearly belong to high-status individuals. Their "value" apparently varies according to material and degree of elaboration.¹⁷⁹

period, see J.-C. Poursat, *Les ivoires mycéniens. Essai sur la formation d'un art mycénien* (Paris 1977) 179, 188.

¹⁶⁶ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 186–88.

¹⁶⁷ For an exclusively funerary use of some ornaments, see Mylonas 1957, 170; for discussion concerning the possible utilization in life of other examples, see Dickinson 75. Repaired or reused ornaments are listed in Dickinson 119 n. 37 (for the diadem from Asine, see S. Dietz, *Asine II*, pt. 2: *Results of the Excavations East of the Acropolis 1970–1974*. Fasc. 2. *The Middle Helladic Cemetery. The Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean Deposits* [Stockholm 1980] 30 no. 20, 78). For ornaments as "status emblems" among other peoples, see Brown (supra n. 24) 32, 34 table 2.1 and Gates (supra n. 130) 216 (with refs.); for the Aegean, see Moody (supra n. 85) 237.

¹⁶⁸ See supra n. 17.

¹⁶⁹ See Dickinson 75. Examples from Circle B are A-350, Γ -360, I-378, and I-379 (Mylonas 1973, 30, pl. 20 γ , 75–76 pl. 59 α 2, 120 pl. 102 α .1, 2).

¹⁷⁰ Mylonas 1973, 42, pl. 28 β 1 (B-356), 173–74, pl. 153 α (N-390); 38, 161 (for their position in the graves).

¹⁷¹ For headbands associated with male burials in single-burial graves, see Dickinson 48; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 181 fig. 14 (Circle A Grave II); Dietz (supra n. 167) 30 figs. 20–21, 78 (Grave 1970-12 at Asine); R. Higgins, "A Gold Diadem from Aigina," *JHS* 107 (1987) 182 (grave of the late MBA at Aigina). Note that gold headbands can be associated with

Γ :a and N:a.

¹⁷² For a full discussion of Shaft Grave pins, MH forerunners, and their usage, see Dickinson 73–74 (with refs.).

¹⁷³ Mylonas 1973, 157, pl. 136 β (M-517–19). Also see Harding (supra n. 27) 135 fig. 36.6, and see 147 n. 54 (for their occurrence in other contexts).

¹⁷⁴ For pins with rock-crystal heads, see Mylonas 1973, 30, pl. 20 α (A-259), 203, pl. 182 (O-312–14), 234, pl. 208 γ (Y-320). The rock-crystal object O-463 (Mylonas 1973, 205, pl. 186) has a similar shape, but no perforation.

¹⁷⁵ Mylonas 1973, 182, pl. 159 α (Ξ -331), 202, pl. 182 β , 1–2 (O-434–35), 233 pl. 209 β (under Y-332).

¹⁷⁶ Mylonas 1973, 178 (Ξ -404), 188 (O-410–11), 228, 233 (Y-439).

¹⁷⁷ Supra n. 171.

¹⁷⁸ For a full analysis of headbands, see Dickinson 74–75; B. Kling, "Evidence for Local Style on the Shaft Grave Diadems," *TUAS* 6 (1981) 29–38. For refs., see Papadopoulos (supra n. 134) 185–86. To the examples listed in Dickinson 119 n. 29, add also headbands from Asine (supra n. 171). Argos (Protonotariou-Deilaki [supra n. 7] 111, pl. E10.5) and Keos (J.C. Overbeck, *Ayia Irini: Period IV. Part 1: The Stratigraphy and the Find Deposits* [Mainz 1989] 199, 202, pl. 22c).

¹⁷⁹ The headband belonging to Ξ :a is the only silver example; the diadems of Ξ :b and Y feature added gold stars.

Personal ornaments. Only armlets can be referred both to female and male burials.¹⁸⁰ In Circle B earrings and necklaces were found in association with female burials only, but they have elsewhere also been found in male burials.¹⁸¹ In any case, they are clearly prestige-goods. Earrings, including a pair from Grave O considered by some a Balkan import, were made of silver and gold.¹⁸² Except for a necklace of clay and stone whorls and another of gold from Grave O, all the others had metal and semiprecious stones, the latter perhaps imported from Egypt.¹⁸³ Amber and lapis lazuli beads may be taken as evidence of contacts with Northern Europe and Afghanistan, respectively.¹⁸⁴ Among the centerpieces, the faience rectangular plaques from Graves Ξ and Y are likely to be Near Eastern, while the "talismanic stones" from Graves M and O undoubtedly are Minoan imports; in this connection, the famous seal from a wooden box in Grave Γ , with the portrait of a bearded man, should also be mentioned.¹⁸⁵

On the other hand, rings, belonging only to female burials, can be distinguished according to different materials (bone, bronze, and silver), presumably implying differences in value.¹⁸⁶ Finally, gold circlets and a gold strip from Grave Y were probably used as hair

ornaments.¹⁸⁷

When evaluating jewelry and ornaments, a change in the scoring system is needed (fig. 4): because an analytical scoring of every object might result in an overemphasis of such a category at the expense of others, sets of ornaments for shrouds or dresses as well as sets of personal ornaments may more profitably be compared as indicators of the degree of ornamentation of single burials. Thus, headbands can be scored individually according to material and degree of elaboration (from 10 to 20); on the other hand, a wider score range appears in the field of clothing and personal ornamentation, since single objects as unique ornaments can be distinguished from more or less complete sets. Single shroud or dress ornaments, however, although representing the lower degree of ornamentation, not only include relatively common items such as the clothing ornaments of B and N:b (10), a silver pin of Ξ :b (5), and a bone pin from Grave M (2), but also a prestige object such as the electrum funeral mask of Γ :c (25). The greater "values" assigned to larger numbers of gold ornaments and/or valuable pins, associated with Y (15), I:b, N:a, and O:c (20), signify more complex decoration.¹⁸⁸ The highest degree of ornamentation is re-

¹⁸⁰ Mylonas 1973, 41–42, pl. 28 α (B-354–55) (belonging to a male burial), 199–200 pl. 178 β (O-413, 413 α , belonging to a female burial). The armlet A-351 (Mylonas 1973, 31 pl. 21 α , 332) cannot be safely assigned to a specific burial in Grave A.

¹⁸¹ For earrings associated with male burials, see Dietz (supra n. 167) 78. For necklaces interpreted as "insignia of their rank" in later Minoan warrior graves, see M.R. Popham et al., "Sellopoulo Tombs 3 and 4, Two Late Minoan Graves near Knossos," *BSA* 69 (1974) 255; also Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 164.

¹⁸² Mylonas 1973, 200–201, pl. 180 α (O-428–29); see Davis (n. 130) 35; Bouzek (supra n. 27) 53–54; however, cf. Dickinson 73 (considered "of the traditional hoop-type").

¹⁸³ The two necklaces from Grave O are O-430 and O-526 (Mylonas 1973, 201, pl. 181; 207, pl. 189 β). For the provenance of the semiprecious stones, see Dickinson 77; Harding (supra n. 27) 58; Gates (supra n. 130) 218; D. Kaza-Papa-georgiou, "An Early Mycenaean Cist Grave from Argos," *AM* 100 (1985) 19.

¹⁸⁴ For amber objects from Circle B, see Mylonas 1973, 121, pl. 102 β 1 (I-331); 206, pl. 186 β (O-332). For recent discussions about the provenance of amber (with previous bibliography), see Harding (supra n. 27) 58–60; Bouzek (supra n. 27) 54–58. For lapis lazuli beads, see Mylonas 1973, 78 pl. 62 δ (Γ -444). For the provenance of lapis lazuli found in the Aegean area, see Foster 1979 (supra n. 135) 5; Harding (supra n. 27) 58; Gates (supra n. 130) 218. Because lapis lazuli objects have been found in Minoan Late Palatial contexts (*PM* II, 373–74; vol. IV, 934; H.-G. Buchholz, "The Cylinder Seal," in G.F. Bass, *Cape Gelidonya: A Bronze Age Shipwreck* [Philadelphia 1967] 155 no. 26), the possibility that lapis lazuli from the two Circles (see also Karo 82, 198 no. 294 pls. 87–88) came from Egypt or Near East with Crete

as an intermediary cannot be ruled out.

¹⁸⁵ For faience plaques, see Mylonas 1973, 82, pl. 159 α (Ξ -241), 235–36 pl. 209 β (Y-243–45). Cf. Dickinson 43, 77. For a suggested local working of faience (including the Circle B plaques), see Foster 1979 (supra n. 135) 123–30, 143 fig. 93, 155–56; Foster 1981 (supra n. 135) 10–11, 12, fig. 1. For the talismanic stones, see: Mylonas 1973, 156–57, pls. 135 β , 136 α (M-453), 205–206 pl. 187 (O-464); V.E.G. Kenna, *The Cretan Talismanic Stone in the Late Minoan Age (SIMA 24, Lund 1969)* 24–25. For seals as luxury objects, see G. Touchais, "Le passage du Bronze moyen au Bronze récent en Grèce continentale: état de la question," *Transition* 116–17; Laffineur 230 n. 18. For the seal from Grave Γ , see Mylonas 1973, 77, pl. 60 β . For its attribution to the Minoan "Group of the Chanting Priest," see J.H. Betts, "The Seal from Shaft Grave Gamma. A 'Mycenaean Chieftain'?" *TUAS* 6 (1981) 2–8; J.C. Younger, "Bronze Age Aegean Seals in Their Middle Period (ca. 1725–1550 B.C.)," in *Transition* 58. For the later seal from Grave P, see Mylonas 1973, 224–25 pl. 201.

¹⁸⁶ Bone rings: Mylonas 1973, 33, pl. 22 α (A-506 and another unpublished example from the same grave). Bronze rings: Mylonas 1973, 234 pl. 209 β (Y-315–17). Silver ring: Mylonas 1973, 182, pl. 160 β , under Ξ -330; cf. Dickinson 43. A gold object associated with Ξ :b (Mylonas 1973, 184, pl. 159 α , Ξ -409) may be a ring (Dickinson 43) and, according to Mylonas (1973, 202, pl. 179 γ , O-436), other gold objects from Grave O might be rings.

¹⁸⁷ For gold circlets, see: Mylonas 1973, 184 pl. 159 α (Ξ -408), 201, pl. 180 β 2, γ (O-432); Dickinson 73. For the gold strip, see Mylonas 1973, 233, pl. 207 γ (Y-439); Mylonas (supra n. 3) 104.

¹⁸⁸ Bronze pins, including one with a rock-crystal head, and two silver pins belong to the burial in Grave Y (Mylonas

served for the sets, including many half-bands, "stars," and gold ornaments for sword scabbards, associated with E:b and A:a (50).¹⁸⁹ The same is true of personal ornaments. A lower degree of personal ornamentation is evident in the burial in B and E:a, given that only a single armlet and some silver rings are associated respectively with them (10); on the other hand, necklaces with a Minoan "talismanic" stone as a centerpiece belonging to M:b and, perhaps, to Γ:b are clearly to be considered prestige goods (25). Finally, apart from the sumptuous set of personal ornaments associated with O:c (100),¹⁹⁰ other female burials, such as E:b and Y, had remarkable amounts of personal ornaments, including hair ornaments, earrings, faience and semiprecious stone necklaces, and rings (50 and 30, respectively).¹⁹¹

Miscellaneous Objects

Even miscellaneous objects are status indicators in the funerary context of Circle B. This is particularly true of ornate staffs, which are probably to be regarded as symbols of authority. Only one of these can safely be ascribed to N:a, however, whereas another, found in Grave I, cannot be attributed certainly to either burial.¹⁹² Other valuable commodities, i.e., boxes containing personal ornaments and other precious objects, can be inferred from traces of wood and gold pieces in Graves Γ and A, and a gold object, associated with the little girl buried in Grave E has

been interpreted as a possible "rattle."¹⁹³ The purpose of other fragmentary objects—including ivory items made from elephant and hippopotamus tusks—is unclear, and therefore they cannot be meaningfully evaluated except in terms of their material.¹⁹⁴

All of the miscellaneous objects receive high scores (fig. 4) on the basis of the above considerations: from 15 (gold object from Grave E) to 25 points (ornate staffs and wooden boxes).

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE HISTOGRAMS

We can now discuss the data presented in the histograms, beginning with the ceramic assemblage (fig. 1). First of all, significant variation can be seen in the course of time: in the Early Phase fewer than half of the burials had more than four vases; in Late Phase I the vases per burial increase to the extent that the poorest ceramic assemblages, E:a and A:a, have five or six vases respectively, the richest ones, A:b and N:a, 11 vases; in Late Phase II there are marked differences between the great majority of the burials, provided with few vases, and three rich ceramic assemblages (E:b, O:c, O:a+b), even allowing for the uncertainty of attribution of vases in the "heterogeneous groups."

Most of the Early Phase assemblages have low scores (less than 10) since local pottery markedly prevails: in addition to two Cycladic vases, only two Oatmeal Min-

1973, 234 pl. 208β, γ, Y-318–20). "Garters" (Mylonas 1973, 120 pl. 102α1, 2, I-378–79; Mylonas 1957, 152; Mylonas [supra n. 3] 103; Dickinson 119 n. 31) and dress ornaments (Mylonas 1973, 119, pl. 102α, I-374–77; but some may belong to an armlet, see Dickinson 119 n. 31; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, figs. 1, 2, 4) belong to I:b. Clothing ornaments (Mylonas 1973, 175 pl. 153γ, N-397) and gold buttons (Mylonas 1973, 175 pl. 153γ, N-398–400) belong to N:a. A bronze pin (Mylonas 1973, 203 pl. 182α2, O-313), two gold-headed silver pins (Mylonas 1973, 202 pl. 182β1, 2, O-434–35), a "star" (Mylonas 1973, 199 pl. 178α, O-412) and a gold disc or roundel (Mylonas 1973, 202 pl. 182γ; also Dickinson 119 n. 48) belong to O:c.

¹⁸⁹ E:b was provided with five half-bands (Mylonas 1973, 99 pl. 85β, E-365–69) and two "stars" (Mylonas 1973, 100–101 pl. 87α, E-370–73), and A:a had various clothing ornaments (Mylonas 1973, 141–42 pl. 124α, β, A-380–84; also Dickinson 119 n. 31) as well as gold ornaments for a sword scabbard (Mylonas 1973, 142–43 pl. 125, A-385–87).

¹⁹⁰ This set includes two armlets (Mylonas 1973, 199–200 pl. 178β, O-413, 413α), earrings (Mylonas 1973, 200–201 pl. 180α, O-428–29), hair fasteners (Mylonas 1973, 203 pl. 182α1, 3, O-312, 314; also Dickinson 73, 118 n. 11), hair ornaments (Mylonas 1973, 201 pl. 180β2, γ, O-432), a semiprecious stone necklace (Mylonas 1973, 200 pl. 179β, O-426–27, 464; 205 pl. 186, O-460–62), an amber necklace (Mylonas 1973, 206 pl. 186β, O-332), a gold necklace (Mylonas 1973, 201 pl. 181, O-430), and another one of clay and stone whorls (Mylonas 1973, 207 pl. 189β, O-526).

¹⁹¹ Personal ornaments belonging to E:b include: a gold

ring (Mylonas 1973, 184 pl. 159α, E-409), hair ornaments (Mylonas 1973, 184, pl. 159α, E-408), ornaments for temples (Mylonas 1973, 184–85 pl. 160α, E-455, 455α), earrings (Mylonas 1973, 184 pl. 160α, E-407), and a necklace (Mylonas 1973, 182 pl. 159α, E-241–42; 184–85 pls. 158β, 160, E-455–57). The set of ornaments in Grave Y includes silver earrings (Mylonas 1973, 233 pl. 209β), a necklace (Mylonas 1973, 234–36 pls. 209–10, Y-243–45, Y-467–71). For a synthetic review of the ornaments belonging to these burials, see Mylonas (supra n. 3) 104, 105.

¹⁹² See supra n. 27. Mylonas (1973, 121) suggested I-514 was "Ἰσως ἐκ τοῦ σωροῦ τῶν συσσωρευμένων ὀστέων." I:a may be a relatively important burial, as a silver vase was associated with it. Because I:b was the richest Early Phase burial, provided with a sword, an object of such high symbolic value would more probably have been associated with it.

¹⁹³ Mylonas 1973, 47 (wooden box from Grave Γ), 143, pl. 124γ, 126 (A-388, gold ornaments from a box). For the object interpreted as a "rattle" see Mylonas 1973, 184 pl. 159α (E-405); Mylonas (supra n. 3) 105.

¹⁹⁴ Ivory objects: Mylonas 1973, 32 pls. 22α, β (A-501, 501α and β), 79 pl. 62γ (Γ-511), 207 pl. 188 (O-520: identified as hippopotamus ivory by Krzyszkowska [supra n. 31] 231, n. 73); Poursat (supra n. 146) 65 no. 225, 66 no. 230, 67 no. 237; Laffineur 229, n. 16. Bone objects: Mylonas 1973, 32–33 pl. 22α, β (A-504–506); 121 (I-515). Bronze objects: Mylonas 1973, 73 pl. 56γ2 (Γ-274), 234 pl. 210β (Y-321). Alabaster pommels: Mylonas 1973, 77 pl. 61α1, 3 (Γ-440–41); Laffineur 230 n. 18.

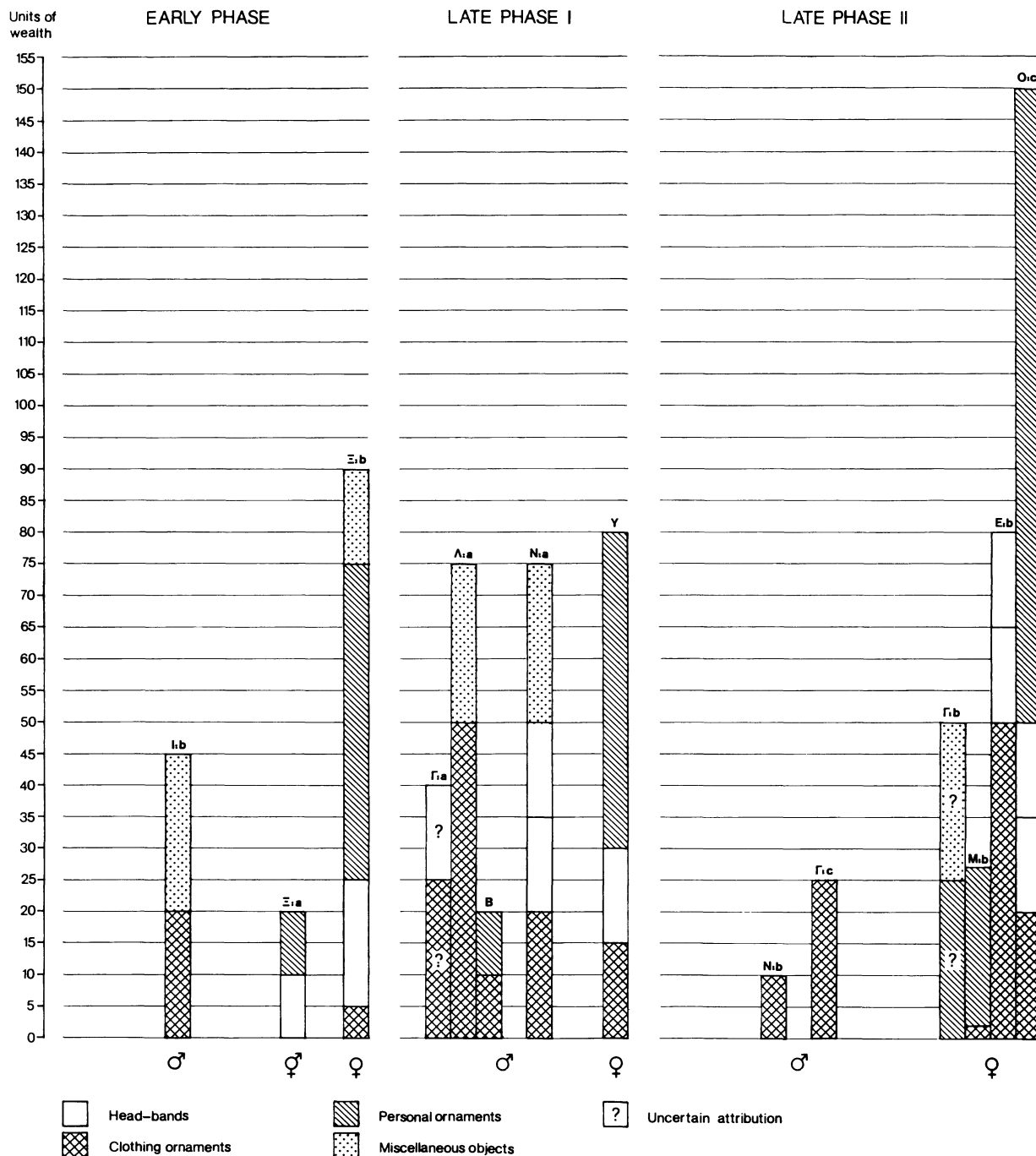


Fig. 4. Histogram showing richness in jewelry/ornaments and miscellaneous objects of Circle B burials

oanizing examples can be assigned to this phase, but it is worth noting that they are restricted to the assemblages richest in quantity of vases (Z, I:b, Ξ:b). On

the other hand, the majority of imports (pottery from outside the Peloponnese) belong to Late Phase I: most of the burials (six out of eight)¹⁹⁵ had Cycladic imports

¹⁹⁵ In addition to the five burial assemblages with Cycladic imports shown by the histogram, a single vase from the fill of Grave Δ (Δ-65) can be attributed to Late Phase I. It is

similar to N-170, belonging to N:a (Graziadio 359, with refs.), and clearly belongs to the earliest burial in Grave Δ.

and the richest in overall number of vases (N:a) had six of those. Among the local (or Argive) pottery of this period, the presence of several fine Matt-painted vessels in B and A:b, showing Aegean influence in shapes and/or decoration, should also be noted. As a result, most scores exceed 20. Turning to Late Phase II, the range of the pottery perfectly corresponds with other well-known LH I assemblages.¹⁹⁶ Although local pottery of the MH tradition again markedly prevails, the appearance of the Mainland Polychrome Matt-painted and Mycenaean patterned wares must be emphasized. The scores of Late Phase II burials, however, are generally lower than those of Late Phase I. Imports from outside the mainland, in fact, are fewer than during the preceding phase: from the pottery from "closed groups" only a small jug can be regarded as a Melian import and, regardless of the strong Minoan influence on the new Lustrous Decorated Mycenaean production, only three askoi from Grave M and a jug from Grave Γ date to LM IA.¹⁹⁷ A good deal of pottery, however, including a Thera jug, a Fine Minoanizing cup, and other vases showing Cycladic influence,¹⁹⁸ is from the "heterogeneous group" of the fill of Grave Γ, but no vase can safely be ascribed to Late Phase II, as the material from the fill presumably also included the pottery of the first Late Phase I burial. Certain Aeginetan imports, elsewhere occurring in LH I deposits,¹⁹⁹ are also few. Even Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated examples are few. Taking into account the vast quantity of pottery from the "heterogeneous groups," the vases belonging to Late Phase II are altogether far more than the 66 from the "closed groups." Only five of these are Mycenaean.²⁰⁰ Considering that Mycenaean patterned ware is everywhere rare in LH I, this is not surprising. Apart from "parochial" cultural assemblages,²⁰¹ however, some settlement deposits show a larger ratio of Mycenaean to the other wares than in Circle B burials.²⁰² Nevertheless, a general, strong correlation between quantity and quality of vases can be established in the Circle B burials. More particularly, comparing pottery per period, the largest pottery assemblages also generally have more vessels of higher "value." Moreover, all burials securely identified as female have a relatively high score in terms of both total vases and valuable vases.

The amount of perishable goods stored in clay vases per burial might be another status indicator, but this can only be roughly evaluated. In the Early Phase many large vases (stamnoi, amphorae, and a hole-mouthed jar) were associated only with I:b, whereas poorer sets include only a few, small closed shapes along with a few open shapes, mainly Yellow Minyan goblets. The substantial increase in the quantity of stored goods recognizable in Late Phase I assemblages seems to be the result not only of the increase in vases per burial, but also of the greater frequency of larger closed shapes, as shown particularly by the richest pottery assemblages of A:b and N:a. Finally, the scarcity of large vases in the poorest Late Phase II pottery assemblages (A1, II, Γ:d) may be emphasized, although some relatively low scoring assemblages such as K and N:b include large closed shapes.

Turning to containers other than pottery, bronze and silver vases occur in all phases of Circle B, but gold vases only first appear in Late Phase I, presumably signifying the same increase in wealth suggested above in terms of pottery (fig. 2). As for sex distinctions, only male burials apparently had metal vessels in the Early Phase and Late Phase I, but two Early Phase burials of undefined sex (I:a and E:a) also had silver vessels. Most Late Phase II female burials, however, were equipped with containers other than pottery. Most noteworthy is the remarkable group of large bronze vases, including three big examples and a small jug, belonging to E:b. As a result, their global score is higher than the scores of most of the contemporary male burials, which all together were only provided with two small bronze phialai and a silver cup. Moreover, the comprehensive arrangement of pottery and other containers (fig. 5) shows that metal and precious vessels mostly appear in association with high-scoring pottery assemblages (I:b in the Early Phase; N:a in Late Phase I; E:b and O:c in Late Phase II). In other burials with metal vessels (E:a, Γ:a, Δ:b, Γ:b), the makeup of pottery assemblages cannot be evaluated because in every case they consist of vases from "heterogeneous groups." The burials richest in pottery always have bronze and precious vessels, however, whereas low-scoring pottery assemblages are not generally associated with metal containers, which confirms that the main function of metal plate was to

¹⁹⁶ Graziadio 350 (with refs.).

¹⁹⁷ Graziadio 352 (with refs.).

¹⁹⁸ Graziadio 352, 357 (with refs.): Γ-27, Γ-55, Γ-31, Γ-31α, Γ-35.

¹⁹⁹ For refs., see J.L. Davis, "Late Helladic I Pottery from Korakou," *Hesperia* 48 (1979) 241–43, 258–59. Also see Dietz (supra n. 167) 139; Zerner (supra n. 108) 64–66; Zerner (supra n. 111) 1 fig. 3 nos. 18–20, 2 fig. 8 nos. 22–

23, 4 fig. 15 nos. 46–48, 5 fig. 23 nos. 18–20; Nordquist 49; Rutter (supra n. 111) 4–5 no. 4, 9 no. 17, 11–12.

²⁰⁰ Graziadio 350–51 (with refs.).

²⁰¹ J.B. Rutter, "Middle Helladic Pottery from Tsoungiza (Archaia Nemea): A Brief Report," *Hydra* 1 (Fall 1985) 35–37, esp. 36; Rutter (supra n. 111) 1–19.

²⁰² For a brief discussion, see Graziadio 350 n. 29.

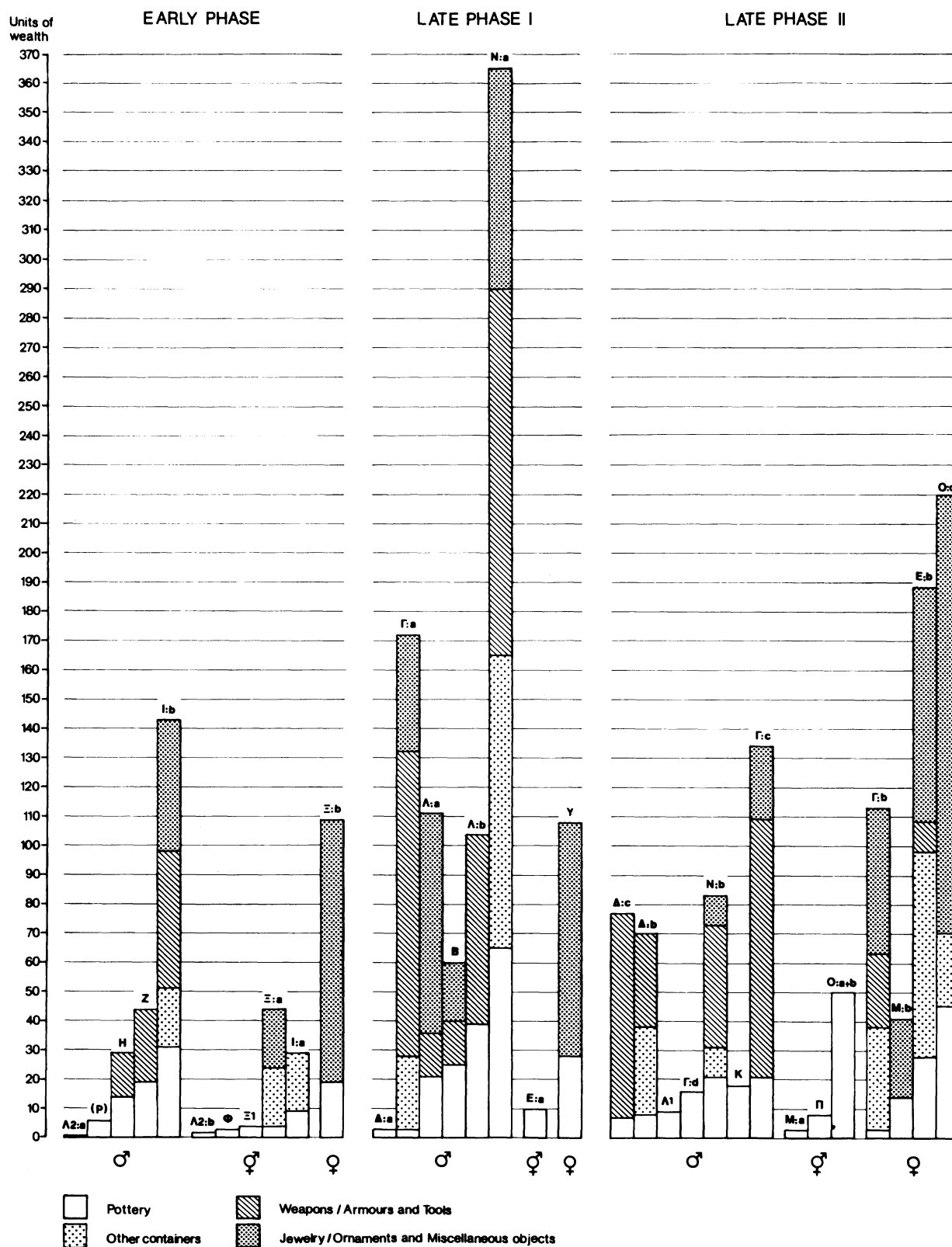


Fig. 5. Histogram showing the comprehensive arrangement of the functional categories per burial

designate rank. As shown above, in fact, at least some bronze vases associated with E:b were not actually

used as containers. The highest global score of all can be assigned to N:a, the burial of this period richest in

pottery, as a result of the full range of valuable metal containers present. In Late Phase II, metal vessels also occur in association with the richest ceramic assemblages, although pottery of Γ :b and Δ :b cannot be exactly quantified. Generally speaking, however, a correlation between the degree of wealth represented by pottery and metal vessels can be suggested.

Only three weapons can be ascribed to Early Phase burials (fig. 3): the two richest male burials (Z and I:b) were equipped with valuable swords, and another relatively rich burial (H) only had a dagger. Despite the fact that in Late Phase I there are fewer male burials than in the following phase, a considerable number of weapons can be assigned to this phase, which perfectly matches the general increase in overall wealth already noted. Although all male burials were provided with weapons, the two poorest assemblages (B and Λ :a) only include secondary weapons (a dagger and some arrows, respectively), whereas complete sets of weapons (sword, dagger, and spear) belong to the three richest burials (Λ :b; Γ :a and N:a). The presence of adjunctive weaponry in two of these burials (two daggers in N:a, and a sword and dagger in Γ :a) and gold-decorated scabbards for two valuable swords of this phase should also be noted. The very high rank of N:a is also confirmed by the boars'-tusk helmet.

Only a small part of the pottery found in Grave A has been published and associations are unknown, but at least the central, later burial may be assigned to the Late Phase II on the basis of diagnostic goods.²⁰³ It was richly provided with weapons including two swords (two decorated and two plain), a dagger, a spear, and a boars'-tusk helmet. A good number of weapons, including two daggers and three swords, can also be assigned to Γ :c, indicating that this was a high ranking individual. Despite these two burials, some regressive features also appear in Late Phase II weaponry. Aside from the later burial in Grave A (perhaps), no other man was equipped with a complete set of weapons: Δ :b was furnished with arrows along with a sword, lacking the dagger and the spear; two others (Δ :c and N:b), like Γ :c, only had daggers and swords. The most striking feature, however, is the presence of three certain male burials without weapons (Γ :d, K, Λ 1).

A general correlation between weapons and precious vessels has already been pointed out.²⁰⁴ More

generally, the cumulative histogram (fig. 5) shows that the two categories of containers (pottery plus other containers) and weaponry have a close shared relationship: apart from the single exception of Γ :c, weapons occur in every period in association with the assemblages richest in containers of all kinds and the "value" of weapons is often proportional to that of the containers.

Tools appear exclusively in association with rather rich burials (fig. 3). Apart from razors and tweezers in the richest artifact kit (I:b), no tools or objects for use can be associated with Early Phase burials. On the other hand, all Late Phase I male burials except B were equipped with knives, and a strong correlation between knives and complete sets of weapons can be established in this phase. This might be true also of the warrior, rich in weapons, buried in Grave A during the following phase, given that three knives come from this grave. In Late Phase II, however, only two other burials with weapons were furnished with knives. Finally, it should be noted that two high-score female assemblages of Late Phase II (Γ :b and E:b) also included valuable objects of this functional category.

The histogram for jewelry and ornaments (fig. 4) shows a progressive increase from the Early Phase to Late Phase II. Whereas female burials are always richly arrayed, this is not the case for male burials. In fact, in the Early Phase only the richest male burial, I:b, had some clothing ornaments; similarly, among Late Phase II burials, only two individuals (N:b and Γ :c) wore clothing decorated with gold. In contrast, all Late Phase I artifact assemblages, except for Λ :b, include objects of this category and, in N:a, Γ :a, and Λ :a, the relative value is higher than in the case of any other male burials. Therefore, the most marked, regular increase in the frequency of clothing and/or personal decoration in male burials seems to appear in Late Phase I, in accordance with evidence from other functional categories. Turning to female assemblages, although no clear differences in the general degree of ornamentation among the Early Phase and Late Phase I burials (Ξ :b and Y) can be noticed, the total score of O:c (Late Phase II) is by far the highest, implying a substantial increase in richness. To a lesser extent, the same is probably true of E:b, while the two other Late Phase II female burials seem to have been less richly arrayed.

²⁰³ For burial goods from Grave A, see Graziadio 346, 371 and n. 187. The pottery from this grave includes two small jugs with light-on-dark decoration very similar to vases found elsewhere in deposits contemporary with Circle B Late Phase II (cf. an example from an LH I context at Tsoungiza: Rutter [supra n. 111] 3–4 no. 1 fig. 3). Weapons

include a Type B sword, mainly occurring in LH I contexts (infra n. 215). It should be noted that an earlier male burial has been suggested by Kilian-Dirlmeier (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 165 fig. 5, 166, 170), but cf. Laffineur 230 n. 20.

²⁰⁴ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 177–80; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 162–63.

Miscellaneous objects (fig. 4) are connected with rich artifact assemblages in Early Phase (I:b) and particularly Late Phase I (Λ:a and N:a) male burials and Early Phase (Ξ:b) and Late Phase II (Γ:b) female burials.

The following general observations can now be made by considering all the histograms: 1) Excluding nine burials of uncertain sex, mostly of children (Λ2:b, Ξ1, M:a, O:a, and Π²⁰⁵), far more male than female burials (19:7) have been tabulated. The Early Phase and Late Phase I ratios are, respectively, 5:1 and 6:1 (or 6:2, if the earlier burial in Grave A belongs to this period); female burials increase in Late Phase II, with a ratio of 8:4, if we include the male burial in Grave A. It should, however, be noted that at least seven other burials without offerings—most of which possibly belong to the Early Phase—may be added.²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, only two women (Graves Α1 and Θ) and one man (Grave Σ) have been identified and it cannot be determined if all these burials modify the picture substantially.

2) As clearly shown by a comparative analysis of the histograms for the individual functional categories (figs. 1–4) and the cumulative histogram (fig. 5), the funeral assemblage components are strongly correlated in terms of number and value. In other words, valuable objects of different functional categories are interconnected, mostly appearing in association with other items of high “value”; moreover, they only occur in burials rich in number of goods, while more meager funeral assemblages include only average items. From a social perspective, this confirms that the number and quality of grave goods correlate with the deceased’s social status.

3) There is also a general correlation between degree of grave elaboration and burial richness. In fact, the degree of wealth of assemblages from single-burial graves is always remarkably lower than that of almost all the burials in the multiple-burial graves. The same is also true for the variety of grave goods: in the Early Phase metal vessels and jewelry are represented only in multiple-burial graves; in Late Phase I there is a marked contrast between the single-burial Grave B and all the other male burials in terms of range and “value” of grave goods; single-burial graves of Late Phase II contained only pottery.

4) There is no correlation between the deceased’s age and degree of wealth, as also noted by Kilian-

Dirlmeier.²⁰⁷ In the Early Phase, the coexistence of rich (Ξ:b) and poor (Λ 2:b, Ξ1) child burials can be noticed. The richest Early Phase burial (I:b) is a 42-year-old man, but the richest of Late Phase I burials is younger (28); both younger and older adults had relatively rich funeral assemblages in Late Phase II. Therefore, wealth was not achieved, but hereditarily ascribed, which may be taken as evidence for an aristocratic society.²⁰⁸

5) The degree of wealth within burials varies remarkably not only according to chronology, but also within the same phase. Thus, there were differences in rank mainly among men; wealth scores assigned to female burials, in fact, are usually high, indicating that most women were high-ranking individuals, even if there were at least two apparently poor female burials. On the other hand, by comparing the total wealth score of male funeral assemblages across periods (fig. 6), the following remarkable variations appear: a) except for I:b, the degree of wealth of the Early Phase burials is low, not exceeding 50; b) most Late Phase I assemblages exceed 100, and the wealth of N:a in particular is remarkably high (365); c) the average score of Late Phase II assemblages is as low as that of the Early Phase burials. Three of them (Γ:d, K, Α1), in fact, have remarkably low scores, not exceeding 20; three others (Δ:c, Δ:b, and N:b) do not exceed 100, and the highest score of this phase (Γ:c, 134) is lower than that of the two richest Late Phase I burials.

Therefore, generally speaking, the picture of Circle B shows a noticeable increase in grave elaboration and richness in grave goods from the Early Phase to Late Phase I, whereas many regressive features characterize Late Phase II, the following period of use.

CIRCLE A

Before we consider the Circle A evidence, let us examine the chronological relationships between the two Circles. Kilian-Dirlmeier has recently suggested that the two Circles began to be used contemporaneously and that their development was parallel.²⁰⁹ To Phase 1 she has ascribed the Circle B burials here assigned to the Early Phase (= Late MH) as well as some burials without offerings or with MH pottery only, found by Schliemann, Stamatakis, and Papadimitriou in simple graves cut in the rock in the area of Circle A.²¹⁰ To Phase 2 she has attributed Circle A

²⁰⁵ For the child burial in Grave II, see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 171 n. 36.

²⁰⁶ See *supra* n. 38.

²⁰⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 163.

²⁰⁸ For social inferences from inherited goods, see Shennan (*supra* n. 26) 284–85 (with refs.); Nordquist 1987 (*supra*

n. 10) 20.

²⁰⁹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 159, 197. For some modifications to Kilian-Dirlmeier’s chronology, see A. Xenaki-Sakellariou, “Problèmes chronologiques des tombes du Cercle A de Mycènes,” *Transition* 179–82.

²¹⁰ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 159 n. 9 (with refs.).

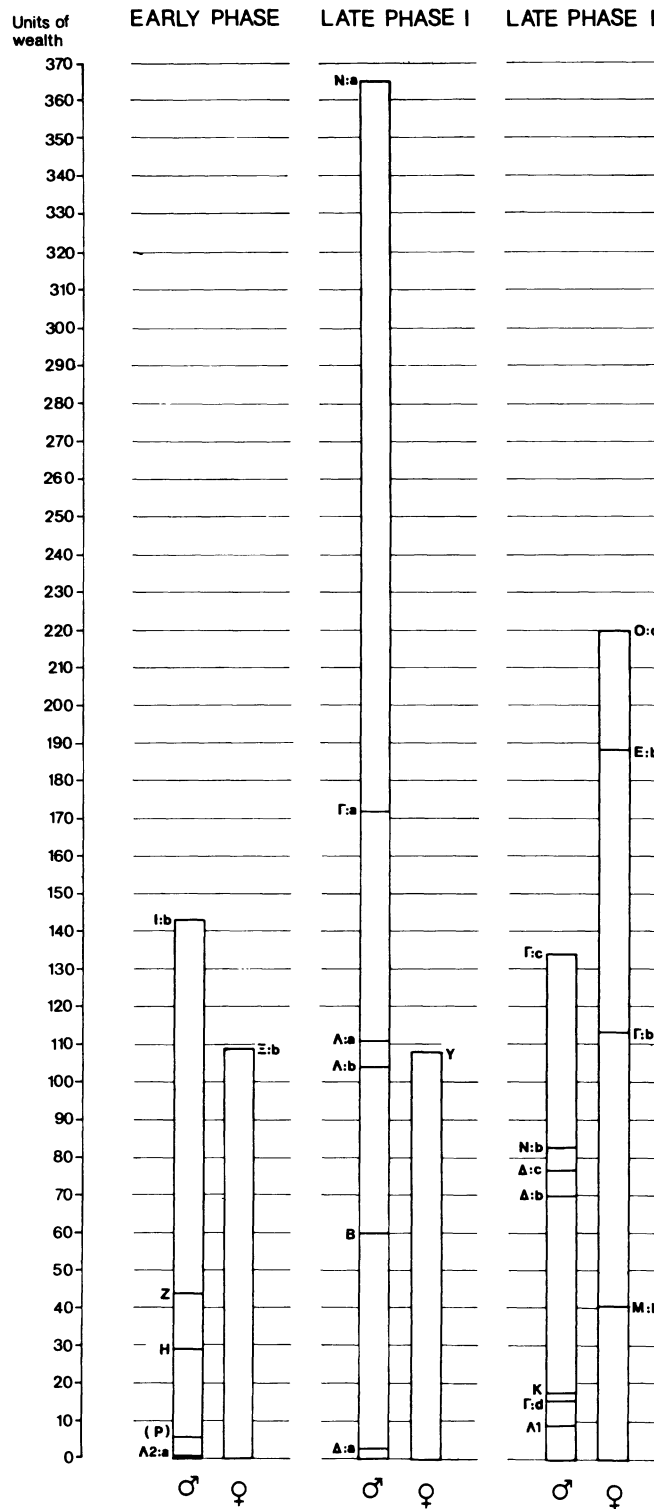


Fig. 6. Diagram showing the relative wealth of male and female burials in Circle B through time

Graves II and VI and most of the burials here assigned to Late Phase I (= end of MH); to Phase 3 she has ascribed Circle A Grave III and two male burials

in Grave IV as well as the remaining burials in Circle B shaft graves, here assigned to Late Phase II (= LH I); finally, to Phase 4 she has attributed the remaining

Circle A burials and Grave P in Circle B.²¹¹ Apart from the simple MH graves of Kilian-Dirlmeier Phase I, it is generally agreed that Graves II and VI are the earliest Circle A shaft graves. There is adequate evidence, however, to indicate that both of them belong to LH I. In addition to a Yellow Minyan goblet without incised rings on the lower part of the stem and MM IIIB and LM IA vases,²¹² Grave VI contained several Mainland Polychrome bird jugs and other Mainland Polychrome Matt-painted vases which can safely be ascribed to LH I.²¹³ Moreover, both type A and B swords may be assigned to the earlier burial;²¹⁴ available evidence points to LH I for the use of Type B swords.²¹⁵ Grave II can be regarded as contemporary with Grave VI not only because it contained an LM IA vase,²¹⁶ but especially because two gold Vapheio cups from the two graves are very similar,²¹⁷ perhaps representing a slightly later version than an example from Circle B;²¹⁸ weapons are also comparable.²¹⁹ The two earliest Circle A shaft graves are therefore clearly contemporary with Circle B Late Phase II, fitting better into Kilian-Dirlmeier's Phase 3.²²⁰ Only burials attributed to Phase 4 may belong to a slightly later period.

As a result, in Circle A we do not find an uninterrupted sequence from the simple burials believed to be contemporary with the Circle B Early Phase to the latest burials in shaft graves, as Dickinson has already pointed out.²²¹ Thus, the simple MH graves are more probably not connected with the Circle, being part of the Prehistoric Cemetery, as already suggested by

various scholars.²²² Other similar MH graves, in fact, were found near the Circle under the Ramp House²²³ and perhaps outside the Circle between Grave VI and the West Basement of the Granary.²²⁴ Moreover, there is no general consensus about the suggested earlier peribolos of the time of the Shaft Graves. The course of the wall hypothetically drawn by C. Gates cuts off Graves VI, III, and IV, excluding the eastern area of the later Circle, where most of the simple MH graves were found.²²⁵ Conversely, if Laffineur's reconstruction of the original circular wall is right, its course coincided roughly with that of the later peribolos.²²⁶ In such a case, the empty eastern sector—where there is indeed harder rock²²⁷—might have been reserved for other shaft graves that were never constructed, because graves of that type, superseded at Mycenae by tholos tombs after LH II, went out of fashion.

If the earliest burials in Circle A belong to LH I, many others may be considered little later, if at all, in spite of the disparities in the relative sequence suggested by various scholars (table 4). The range of the relatively few vases found in the graves, in fact, corresponds perfectly to that of Circle B Late Phase II and other LH I ceramic assemblages, given that only two vases from Grave I have been assigned by Dickinson to early LH IIA.²²⁸ The similarities between objects from different graves seem to confirm that a short time span was involved.²²⁹ On the other hand, by comparing grave goods from Graves III, IV, and V, a development in gold ornaments and metalwork has been suggested, although scholars do not agree

²¹¹ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 161–76.

²¹² For the Yellow Minyan goblet, see Karo pl. 175, no. 955 (cf. Graziadio 354–55, with refs.). For Minoan pottery, see Karo pl. 175, no. 956; pl. 175, no. 945 (cf. Dickinson 112 n. 53).

²¹³ For the bird jugs, see Karo 164 nos. 946–47, 952 fig. 80/1; 165 nos. 950–51, pl. 174. For other Mainland Polychrome vases, see Karo 163, 165 nos. 941, 943–44, 954, pl. 173; 165 no. 948, pl. 174. For their chronology, see J.L. Davis, "Polychrome Bird Jugs: A Note," *AAA* 9 (1976) 82–83; Davis (supra n. 199) 256–58.

²¹⁴ Karo 161 nos. 905, 906, pl. 95 (Type B); 162 no. 925 (Type A). Also see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 161 n. 17.

²¹⁵ Graziadio 360 n. 97 (with refs.). Moreover, Circle B examples A-253, Γ-262, Γ-266, Γ-267, and Δ-278 (also see supra n. 144) were part of Late Phase II assemblages (male burial in Grave A, Γ:c and Δ:c).

²¹⁶ Karo pl. 170, no. 221 (also see Dickinson 112 n. 53). For a beaked jug possibly belonging to Mainland Polychrome Matt-painted, see *infra* n. 244.

²¹⁷ Karo pl. 170, no. 220 (Grave II). 161 no. 912 fig. 48 (Grave VI). Also see A.J.B. Wace (supra n. 53) 120; Dickinson 48; Matthäus 19.

²¹⁸ Matthäus (supra n. 124) 40 (variant C).

²¹⁹ Matthäus 19.

²²⁰ Although the earlier burial in Grave VI has been ascribed to MH by Matthäus (30, 31 fig. 4), an early LH I date cannot be excluded (Matthäus 18).

²²¹ Dickinson 46, 50.

²²² Karo 16; Wace (supra n. 53) 118; "Excavations at Mycenae, 1939," *BSA* 65 (1950) 206; Marinatos (supra n. 3) 82; Dickinson 46, 50; implicitly. Gates (supra n. 5) 268. Contra: Mylonas 157, 113–14; I. Papadimitriou, "Ανασκαφαὶ ἐν Μυκῆναις," *Prakt* 1957, 107; Mylonas (supra n. 3) 94–95; Pelon (supra n. 8) 121, 139; Alden (supra n. 2) 86–88.

²²³ Wace (supra n. 53) 76, 94, 118, pl. 1.38–40 (also see Graves 44 and 58 a bit farther from the Circle).

²²⁴ Wace 1950 (supra n. 222) 206–207.

²²⁵ Gates (supra n. 5) 266 ill. 1 (dashed line).

²²⁶ R. Laffineur, "Le Cercle des tombes de Schliemann: cent dix ans après," *Aegaeum* 1 (1987) 118–19, pl. 29; Laffineur 231 n. 23. For a discussion concerning the later history, see R. Laffineur, "Grave Circle A at Mycenae: Further Reflections on Its History," in Hägg and Nordquist (supra n. 10) 201–205.

²²⁷ Dickinson 46.

²²⁸ For a review of pottery from Circle A, see Dickinson 48.

²²⁹ For a comparison between objects from different graves, see Dickinson 48; Matthäus 21, 26, 30.

Table 4. Proposed Relative Chronologies of Circle A Burials

	Dickinson (1977)		Matthäus (1980)		Kilian-Dirlmeier (1986)
<i>Early</i>	Graves VI and II	<i>MH</i>	earlier burial in Grave VI	<i>Phase 1</i>	MH graves
<i>Later</i>	earliest burials in Graves IV and V	<i>Early LH I</i>	later burial in Grave VI; Grave II; earliest burial(s) in V	<i>Phase 2</i>	Graves VI and II
	latest burials in Graves IV and V; Grave III	<i>Middle LH I</i>	latest burial in Grave V; earliest burial(s) in IV and III	<i>Phase 3</i>	Grave III; two men in Grave IV
<i>Mature LH I – early LH IIA</i>	earliest burial in Grave I (?); latest burial(s) in I	<i>Late LH I</i>	latest burial(s) in Graves III and IV; earlier burial(s) in I	<i>Phase 4</i>	a man and two women in Grave IV; Graves V and I
		<i>LH II</i>	later burial(s) in Grave I		

about the chronological implications.²³⁰ Moreover, certain links between grave goods other than pottery from Late Phase II graves in Circle B and Circle A graves can be seen,²³¹ providing further evidence that the two Circles overlapped in LH I. Therefore, the effective period of use was LH I and, apart from the latest burial(s) in Grave I, few other burials might be assigned to LH II, if at all.²³² If so, most graves were concurrently used. Seen from this perspective, any relative sequence of burials is not of great importance.

Turning to the grave goods, as outlined above, the undetailed excavation reports sometimes prevent a precise attribution to single burials. Moreover, even in the case of recognizing objects clearly associated with particular individuals by comparing Schliemann's reports and Karo's detailed inventory, large numbers of objects not precisely listed at the time of excavations are very difficult to assign to single burials, particularly in the richest Grave IV and to a lesser extent in Grave III. For instance, apart from unspecified and unidentifiable examples in the excavator's account, the total number of swords listed by Karo is considerably less than the total found by Schliemann.²³³ Furthermore, despite the careful study by Matthäus, the precise attribution of bronze vases is sometimes uncertain: some examples were not drawn

when uncovered, and sets from the richest graves (IV, III, and V) cannot be reconstructed with any certainty because many pieces in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens are unlabeled.²³⁴ Some gold objects reported by Schliemann from specific burials but missing in Karo's list of finds from the corresponding graves might have become mixed with grave goods from other graves.²³⁵ The large amount of metal vessels might explain the relative scarcity of pottery, but, as shown by Circle B evidence, vases belonging to the penultimate burials might also have been removed to the fill or roof; if so, no traces of them remained after the disturbance of the fills in LH IIIB. Finally, given the large quantities of grave goods per burial, frequent reuse of the graves probably resulted in the displacement of some objects inside the graves.²³⁶

Even the exact number and sex of individuals buried in the Circle A graves can be debated. The existence of other burials, completely decayed and unnoticed by excavators, has been suggested by Kilian-Dirlmeier.²³⁷ Even if, as has been supposed,²³⁸ we have all the original adult burials, the sex of many individuals remains uncertain, since only a few skeletons were studied by Angel.²³⁹ According to Schliemann's final evaluations the ratio of male to female

²³⁰ Both Dickinson 48 and Matthäus 26, 30 regard Grave III as later than the other two. On the other hand, Kilian-Dirlmeier ascribes Grave III to Phase 3, while most burials in Graves IV and V are assigned to Phase 4 (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 167, 174–76). According to E. Davis "the metalwork . . . indicates that V preceded IV" (Davis [supra n. 127] 158).

²³¹ Graziadio 360.

²³² In addition to Grave I, some other burials have been ascribed to Kilian-Dirlmeier's Phase 4, corresponding to LH II (see infra table 4). More recently, some objects from Graves IV and V, as well as grave goods of the later burial in Grave III, have been regarded as later than LH I (Xenaki-Sakellariou [supra n. 209] 179–82). Note, however, that at

least the earliest burials in Graves III, IV, and V must be assigned to LH I because the pottery from these graves is exclusively LM IA and/or LH I (Dickinson 48).

²³³ Sandars (supra n. 143) 23 n. 56.

²³⁴ Matthäus 21–22, 24–26.

²³⁵ Such might be the case of gold discs from Grave I (Dickinson 50).

²³⁶ Dickinson 49; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 169.

²³⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 161 n. 17; 167 n. 29, 176–77. Also see Schuchhardt's discussion (supra n. 30, 215) of child burials assumed by Schliemann to have disappeared.

²³⁸ Dickinson 48.

²³⁹ Angel (supra n. 3) 384.

burials could be 14 to 3,²⁴⁰ but he changed his mind several times before his last report.²⁴¹ The differences in the number of female burials suggested by various scholars may possibly be due to this,²⁴² but in any case there seem to have been more than three.

In these circumstances, as Laffineur has also observed recently,²⁴³ an analytical examination of each artifact assemblage is impossible; therefore, the degree of wealth of individual interments can only be treated generally in relation to the more general grave wealth.

Grave II

Because Grave II is a single-burial grave, a comparison with the corresponding Circle B graves is possible. Grave goods belonging to all the above functional categories occur. Although there are only three clay vases, including a LM IA rhyton and a Polychrome Matt-painted beaked jug, bronze fragments, probably belonging to five bronze vessels, and two valuable prestige vessels, a gold Vapheio cup and a faience vase, were associated with the man buried here.²⁴⁴ He was also equipped with a complete set of weapons including a sword, a dagger, and a spear. Tools include four knives, including two with precious additional materials such as an ivory handle (Karo no. 216a) and gold caps on the rivets (Karo no. 216b), and a razor with silver caps on the rivets (Karo no. 225c). The relatively high rank of the deceased is also shown by the gold headband that he wore.

In comparison with some other warrior burials in Circle A, this burial is relatively poor, corresponding to Circle B evidence in which individuals in single-burial graves are generally poorer than those in multiple-burial graves.²⁴⁵ If we compare the Grave II assemblage with those from single-burial graves in Circle B, however, this is clearly the richest, in terms of both number and "value" of grave goods, and certainly it is far richer than those of Late Phase II in Circle B (fig. 7). The total score of the burial in Grave

II (253) is higher than the scores of *all* contemporary Late Phase II burials in Circle B; only Late Phase I N:a, the richest burial in Circle B, is richer than Grave II.

Grave VI

Insufficiently detailed excavation reports prohibit a precise reconstruction of the artifact assemblages of the two individuals buried here. Nevertheless, a hypothetical distribution of the funeral offerings found in the grave has been suggested by Kilian-Dirlmeier.²⁴⁶ According to this reconstruction, both men were equipped with complete sets of weapons; a remarkable group of five swords of Type A and B might belong to the earlier burial, including examples embellished with ivory handles (Karo nos. 937, 939) and sheathed in gold-decorated scabbards (Karo nos. 913–18). As far as tools are concerned, both warriors were furnished with knives; a razor and a pair of tweezers might belong to the earlier burial. A large number of clay vases (17), including the famous Mainland Polychrome bird jugs, were also found, but, despite the fact that many of them were reported to lie at the feet of the skeletons,²⁴⁷ their associations are unknown. In contrast to the relative frequency of pottery, the range of metal vessels is limited, including only three bronze vases, a gold Vapheio cup, and a silver jug. Although a stele apparently marked the grave, the absence of major status indicators such as funeral masks is noticeable.

The available evidence suggests that there was no substantial difference in the degree of wealth (and social status) between these two burials and that of the other warrior in Grave II.

Grave V

The construction of this grave probably dates back to the same period as Grave II and VI, or a bit later.²⁴⁸ The man placed in the central position was the first to be buried in this grave, which was unfortunately plundered in early times.²⁴⁹ To judge from the scat-

²⁴⁰ Schliemann 420–21 mentions 12 men and three women from the five graves that he excavated. Two men from Grave VI (Angel [supra n. 3] 384) must be added. At least two bodies from Grave IV assumed to be men by Schliemann (293) were rightly identified as women by Schuchhardt (supra n. 30, 216–24).

²⁴¹ For a full discussion, see Dickinson 48.

²⁴² Dickinson 48, and Alden (supra n. 3) 83: eight women. Cf. Mylonas 1957, 106 n. 6; G.E. Mylonas, *Mycenae Rich in Gold* (Athens 1983) 31: five (including the so-called mummy in Grave V, but cf. Dickinson 57–58); Mylonas (supra n. 3) 91 n. 13, French (supra n. 53) 123: nine.

²⁴³ Laffineur 231–35.

²⁴⁴ To the clay vases published by Karo (70–71, nos. 221–22, pl. 170), add the example cited by A. Furumark (*The Chronology of Mycenaean Pottery* [Stockholm 1941] 46, B III a/5) and Matthäus 19, "kugelige Schnabelkanne mit Spiral-

bemalung"). For the bronze vessels, see Matthäus 282, no. 423, pl. 50, 423a; 317, no. 524, pl. 59, 524; 319–20 no. 580, pl. 61, 580a, b; 320 no. 582, pl. 61, 582; 321 no. 593, pl. 61, 593. For the gold Vapheio cup, see Karo 70 n. 220 pl. 72. For the faience cup, see Karo 71 n. 223, pl. 170.

²⁴⁵ Xenaki-Sakellariou (supra n. 209) 178 (une "richesse moyenne").

²⁴⁶ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 161 n. 17; 179 table 3; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 167 figs. 2, 4.

²⁴⁷ Schuchhardt (supra n. 30) 270; Tsountas and Manatt (supra n. 30) 91.

²⁴⁸ See infra table 4 (Dickinson and Matthäus); Davis (supra n. 127) 158. For a review of finds from this grave, see Dickinson 49. For references to Karo's catalogue, see Matthäus 20–21; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 174–76 fig. 11.

²⁴⁹ See supra n. 87. Also see Mylonas (supra n. 50) 128–29.

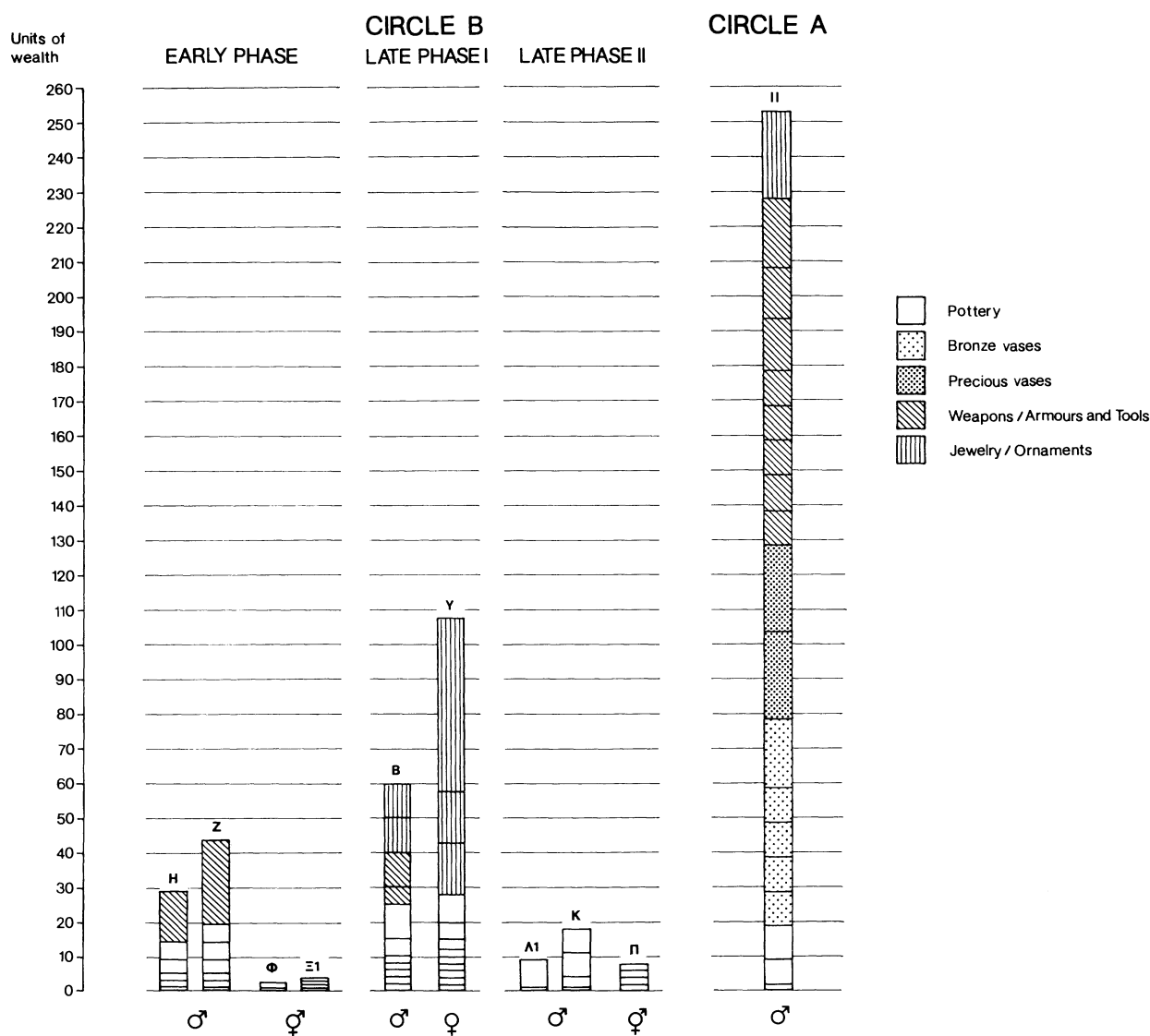


Fig. 7. Histogram comparing degree of wealth of single-burial graves in Circles A and B

tered goods from the fill of the shaft and other objects conjecturally assigned to him, including some weapons, he was richly provided.²⁵⁰ The following burial was the northern burial, the so-called “mummy.” There has been discussion about its sex, but Dickinson has convincingly argued that it was a man.²⁵¹ In that case, many grave goods might have belonged to him, even if a precise reconstruction of his funeral assemblage is impossible. In fact, a heap of weapons between

him and the central burial is not only of uncertain attribution, but also only partially accounted for in Karo’s inventory;²⁵² moreover, a gold Vapheio cup (Karo no. 627) and the “garters” (Karo nos. 652, 653), which provide links with Graves II and VI, have been assigned to different burials,²⁵³ and the attribution to this burial of many other valuable objects is only conjectural.²⁵⁴ The list of offerings unanimously assigned to the “mummy,” however, includes a gold

²⁵⁰ For a list of finds from the fill of the shaft see Schliemann 231–33 figs. 224–30, 377. For other objects presumably belonging to this burial, see Dickinson 49.

²⁵¹ Mylonas (*supra* n. 50) 129–41; Dickinson 57–58. Also see Matthäus 20; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 176.

²⁵² Thirteen “swords” (probably including some daggers, Dickinson 49) have been assigned to this burial by Dickinson

(49, 57–58); according to Kilian-Dirlmeier, they may belong to the central burial (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 175).

²⁵³ Dickinson 49 (perhaps central burial); Matthäus 21 (northern burial).

²⁵⁴ For a list of these objects (with references to Karo’s catalogue), see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 175–76 and fig. 11 (nos. in parentheses).

mask, a large number of gold ornaments, gold cups, and weapons, providing unambiguous evidence that he was a very high-ranking individual.²⁵⁵

The male burial found in the southern sector of the grave was buried last. He wore a mask, a breastplate, an armband, and a necklace and was provided with a huge number of weapons. A great heap of 60 weapons was in fact found between the feet of the central and the southern burials, probably including some weaponry from the earliest central burial;²⁵⁶ however, only a few swords were illustrated by Schliemann and can easily be recognized.²⁵⁷ According to Schliemann, another 15 swords were placed at his feet and near the body, confirming the high military rank of the deceased. In spite of the fact that the two silver vessels and numerous gold buttons reported by the excavator as being associated with this skeleton cannot be identified precisely, some other objects of late appearance, such as the silver cup (Karo nos. 786–87), might have belonged to this latest burial.²⁵⁸

By emphasizing the differences in number of copper vases, Dickinson has rightly pointed out that this grave is not as rich as IV. The differences in the total weight of gold objects found in Graves II, VI, and V are even more striking (2300–2400 g for V, 34.5 g and 35.9 g, respectively, for II and VI),²⁵⁹ probably also indicating that there were marked disparities in rank among the members of the upper sector of the community, buried in Circle A.

Grave IV

Given the lack of details in Schliemann's reports, there is no consensus about the exact position in which the burials originally lay: it is generally agreed that two burials were oriented north–south, and three east–west, but there are different opinions about the sector in which the former had been placed.²⁶⁰ In any case, the two interments oriented north–south are unanimously assumed to be the earliest.²⁶¹ Many of

the burial goods from Grave IV were found heaped near them, but the possibility that they had been disturbed cannot be excluded.²⁶² According to a very partial reconstruction of their assemblages, however, each of them was at least provided with a gold mask, two armbands, a belt, and a vast quantity of amber beads.²⁶³ They were no doubt also equipped with weapons, which were probably displaced and mixed in the bulk of weapons on the eastern side of the grave. Many of those, however, might also have belonged to another male oriented east–west, who wore a gold mask, a breastplate, an armband, and a necklace with amber beads.²⁶⁴ On each side, another burial, assumed to be female, was found. A gold crown, a diadem, and two gold rings clearly belonged to them.

Apart from a few valuable objects,²⁶⁵ the vast majority of precious goods cannot be safely ascribed to particular burials: such is the case, e.g., of numerous gold ornaments (including headbands, buttons, earrings, pins, discs, etc.) and of silver and gold cups. Moreover, as many as 32 copper vessels were found along the inner walls of the grave.²⁶⁶ Although no clear association with particular burials can be recognized, most of them were probably used as large containers in substitution for pottery and possibly belonged to all these sumptuous burials. The richness of the individuals buried in this grave is also reflected in the weight of most gold objects (those weighed by Karo) found there (6900–7000 g).

Grave III

Apart from the objects reported as strongly associated with the three adult burials (a gold crown, a diadem, some pins, and a gem), not many other precise details are available from Schliemann's account. We know, however, that the three corpses, assumed to be women from the absence of weapons, were very richly arrayed. Moreover, although no child bones

²⁵⁵ Dickinson 49. For a list of the objects attributable to this burial, with reference to Karo's catalogue, see Matthäus 20–21; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 175; Laffineur 237.

²⁵⁶ Schliemann 388. Cf. Dickinson 49.

²⁵⁷ Matthäus 20. For these recognizable weapons, see also Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 175 fig. 11.

²⁵⁸ For a list of the objects found in association with this burial see Schliemann 261, 389–90. Cf. Dickinson 49. Other possibly late objects are listed by Xenaki-Sakellariou (*supra* n. 209) 179–81.

²⁵⁹ Karo 166–68, however, only gives the weight of some of the gold finds.

²⁶⁰ Mylonas (*supra* n. 50) 133, 134 fig. 3: two men oriented north–south in the southern part and the other three burials oriented east–west on the northern side (also Dickinson 48–49). Schuchhardt (*supra* n. 30) 222 fig. 222; Karo 38; Åkerström (*supra* n. 50) 47 fig. 7; Matthäus 22 fig. 2; Kilian-

Dirlmeier 1986, 167: two skeletons oriented north–south on the northern side and three others oriented east–west in the southern part.

²⁶¹ Matthäus 23; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 167. These two burials are also regarded as the earliest by Dickinson 48–49.

²⁶² Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 167.

²⁶³ For references to Karo's catalogue, see Matthäus 22; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 169, fig. 7; Laffineur 236 (Grave IV: burials 1, 2).

²⁶⁴ For references to Karo's catalogue, see Dickinson 49; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 169; Laffineur 236 (Grave IV: burial 4).

²⁶⁵ They are the "objets d'art" belonging to one or both burials oriented north–south mentioned by Dickinson 49.

²⁶⁶ For the arrangement of metal vessels in the grave, see Matthäus 22 fig. 2; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 169 fig. 7.

were reported, the grave probably contained two other rich burials of children: enough gold wrapping has in fact been identified for one child, and there are some apparent duplications in material, such as two masks,²⁶⁷ that suggest the existence of another. Despite the lack of details, Kilian-Dirlmeier has proposed a sensible, although hypothetical, distribution of many of the goods from this grave to the female burials, since many objects are attested in triplicate.²⁶⁸ In that case, each burial was provided with very rich sets of ornaments, including diadems, earrings, necklaces, armlets, rings, and many gold dress cutout ornaments, in addition to a gold box and a small gold balance. According to this reconstruction, the weight of the gold ornaments supposed to belong to the richest burial, i.e., that with the crown, amounts to over 800 g; only some of the other gold ornaments were weighed, but the degree of wealth of the two other burials is no doubt also enormously high. Moreover, a set of gold toilet-vases has been shown to belong to the central or southern burials,²⁶⁹ but the range of containers, including pottery and metal, faience and alabaster vessels is more restricted than in contemporary male burials,²⁷⁰ and no attribution of them can be made to specific burials. The particular treatment of the two child burials accords with the sumptuous character of the adult interments, indicating that all were members of the highest status families in Mycenae.

Grave I

In view of the absence of weaponry and the appearance of gold ornaments, the three burials in this grave are also assumed to be women. Despite the great detail in Schliemann's reports,²⁷¹ we know with precision only that each burial was arrayed according to a certain standard (a gold headband, four half-bands, and five "stars"), and other objects were associated with the southern burial.²⁷² Other grave goods cannot be assigned to particular interments: the precious containers are relatively few, including only two silver cups, two bronze vessels, fragmentary faience vases and an ivory pyxis; on the other hand, clay vases are proportionally more numerous than those found in other graves, even if, according to Dickinson, two vases of MH type might have been misplaced from other contexts.²⁷³ In any case, at least the latest burial, proven to be the southern,²⁷⁴ may be assigned to LH

IIA. Thus, as also shown by the weight of gold ornaments presumably belonging to each burial (from about 160 to 180 g), these burials are clearly less rich than other female burials in Circle A.

CONCLUSIONS

An attempt can now be made to set the data against the cultural background to define distinct stages in the process of social stratification at Mycenae during the 60–100 years here surveyed. The Circle B Early Phase—belonging to the late, but not final, MH period—marks the beginning of the entire Shaft Grave sequence. Evidence for social differences now appears: the elite group selects a reserved burial area and begins to require grave goods adequate to rank. Many features seem to be in the embryonic stage, although they herald a significant development. With the exception of Grave I, all the graves are small and similar to the traditional MH cist graves, even if they had roofs, generally supported by shelves in the rock, and pebbly floors. Most of them were clearly intended to contain a single burial, in a contracted position, as was customary in the MH period. The extended position of the later individuals buried in the few multiple-burial graves foreshadows later burial customs. In spite of this, the ritual of reuse is still not standardized. No clear evidence of stelae was found, but at least some graves were marked by stone perimeters and/or heaps of stones, indicating the social importance of the burials.

In most graves the quantity and quality of grave goods are on a level with those from ordinary late MH burials. Most ceramic assemblages, in fact, include just a few vases; local pottery prevails and only a few vases from Grave Z, and burials I:b and E:b, can safely be recognized as imports from other sites. Moreover, the quantity of stored goods per burial seems to have been small (burial I:b is an exception). No gold vase can be ascribed to any Early Phase burial, but funeral assemblages of I:b, I:a, and E:a included bronze or silver vessels.

The range of weapons is also very limited, including only two valuable swords (Z and I:b) and a dagger (H). Although no complete set of weapons can be associated with any male burial, the fact that weapons only appear in the richest funeral assemblages can be taken as evidence of increasing correlation between military activity and wealth. No tools have been found

²⁶⁷ Tsountas and Manatt (supra n. 30) 99.

²⁶⁸ For references to Karo's catalogue, see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 167 n. 30. Also see Laffineur 236 (Grave III: burials 1–3).

²⁶⁹ Dickinson 49.

²⁷⁰ E. Davis points out that "perhaps elaborate drinking vessels . . . were objects of prestige for the men" (Davis [supra

n. 127] 222).

²⁷¹ For the detailed analysis of various reports, see esp. Dickinson 50. Also see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 176 n. 56.

²⁷² Dickinson 50; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986, 176; Laffineur 237.

²⁷³ Dickinson 50.

²⁷⁴ Dickinson 50.

in the Early Phase graves, but an ornate staff, a clear symbol of authority, comes from Grave I, indicating the social importance of the man buried there. Finally, a remarkable number of ornaments was found in Grave Ξ , mostly belonging to the later burial, a young girl; the warrior in Grave I (I:b) also had clothing ornaments.

To sum up, Grave I stands out from the other graves not only for its size and degree of elaboration, but also for its contents, being in every respect a harbinger of the graves of the following periods. From a social perspective, this probably implies that the grave was intended for very high-ranking individuals. The burial assemblages of two other men (H and Z) and, to a greater extent, the female burial Ξ :b show significantly higher scores than other contemporary burials and presumably mark individuals of some intermediate status. Kinship was probably an important determinant of status and the privileged location of other Early Phase burials may have been determined by family relationships rather than a particular access to wealth.

Although the following period of use of Circle B—corresponding to the very end of MH and, in Minoan terms, to early LM IA—was short,²⁷⁵ the Late Phase I burials have many features suggesting that the apex of the Circle B development was reached at that time. Most of the larger, deeper, and more developed shaft graves, intended to be reused, were in fact constructed in this phase, probably signifying a consolidation of power by the elite members of the community. By constructing them, the ruling class clearly also intended to preserve or emphasize family and/or status ties. Consequently, apart from burial offerings, the tomb forms provide solid grounds for believing that the first occupants of Graves Γ , Δ , E, Λ , N, and possibly A were high-status individuals.²⁷⁶ Even the only two single-burial graves (B and Y) show developed features such as the large size of Grave B and the use of rubble and mudbrick walls to support roofs in both of them. Another socially relevant innovation is the use of a stele to mark Grave Γ in which a warrior was buried.

Burial customs developed fully during this period, since the extended position became customary and a specific ritual of reuse becomes standardized in Grave Λ . A corresponding improvement can be noticed in the field of burial offerings. Not only does the number of vases per burial markedly increase, but most burials (particularly N:a) were provided with precious imports from outside the Peloponnese. The increase in

the number of vases and in large closed containers in general also shows that a larger quantity of perishable goods was stored for the presumed needs of the deceased. Bronze vessels are associated with Γ :a and N:a and gold vases were first part of the funeral assemblages of N:a (along with silver vases) and perhaps Γ :a.

Large quantities of weapons can also be assigned to this phase and it is also worth considering their frequency per burial. Whereas all men were equipped with weapons, Γ :a, Λ :b, and N:a in particular were provided with complete sets, which can be regarded as a clear indicator of their higher rank; Γ :a and N:a also had additional secondary weapons. On the other hand, the men buried in Graves B and Λ , equipped only with secondary weapons, are apparently of a lower military rank. With the exception of B, all male burial assemblages also included knives; clothing ornaments, clearly intended to signify the deceased's social importance, are associated with nearly all male burials, and particularly with N:a and Λ :a.

As also shown in figure 6, the differences in wealth between the Early Phase and Late Phase I male burials are very marked. The maximum number and quality of grave goods can be ascribed to Late Phase I: a display of wealth seems to characterize all the burials, although in different ways. This is clearly to be related to a very marked separation of the highest sector from the rest of the community; even a lower member of the ruling class, such as the man buried in the single-burial Grave B, enjoyed the general increase of wealth. The funeral assemblage of N:a stands out distinctly from all the others, however, and undoubtedly was the richest of all Circle B male burials. The degree of wealth of the other warriors is nevertheless very high, indicating that the ruling class was made up of members of a military aristocracy. On the other hand, the woman in Grave Y and perhaps the woman in Grave A were also richly arrayed, suggesting that their social standing was as high as that of some contemporary men, who were probably their husbands or relatives.

Plentiful evidence for LH I, a short period, is provided both by Circle B Late Phase II burials and most burials in Circle A. Noticeable differences between the two reserved burial areas appear. In comparing Circle B Late Phase II graves with those of the preceding period, many regressive features are found. Building activity is limited: among the new graves, concentrated in the already exploited sectors, only Grave O is large; three other single-burial graves (K,

²⁷⁵ Graziadio 360–61, 372.

²⁷⁶ Laffineur's reluctance to interpret the social status of earlier burials (pp. 230–31) seems unjustified in view of the importance for those burials in particular that can be at-

tached to features of grave design and construction. Moreover, at least the earliest burials in Graves Γ , Λ , and N are richer in grave goods than the last burials.

Δ1, and II) as well as the multiple-burial Grave M are small and less developed than the corresponding Late Phase I graves. Therefore, in Late Phase II many individuals (at least eight out of 17) were buried in the previously constructed graves and some of them, lying in the largest graves (A, Γ, E, and O), were marked by stelae like almost all Circle A burials. Grave M was reused in an obsolete manner and some individuals were buried in the old-fashioned MH contracted position in Graves E and Δ1.

In contrast to this, all the Circle A graves were constructed and concurrently used in LH I, even if some of the latest burials belong to LH II. By selecting a new area and regarding the Circle B as a secondary cemetery area, a particular sector of the ruling class clearly intended to distinguish itself further. Therefore, the true climax in the development of the Shaft Graves was reached in Circle A: the smallest (and earliest) Circle A graves (II and VI) are as large as the largest Circle B graves, and Graves I, IV, and V are far larger. A larger amount of human labor was expended in their construction, clearly involving a larger sector of the community. As a consequence of more available space, there was no need to displace the corpses nor, perhaps, to remove burial offerings from inside the graves, so that the earliest burials were more respected. A use of wooden coffins or biers in some graves has been suggested;²⁷⁷ if so, this could indicate a particular treatment of the body, no evidence of which was found in Circle B. In any case, the generalized use of stelae is even more important from a social point of view, as they were clearly intended to show and remind the community of the particular status of the deceased.

Differential access to wealth among different sections of the ruling class can also be suggested by comparing grave goods from the two Circles. As shown above, the degree of wealth of Circle B Late Phase II male burials is generally less than that of Late Phase I burials. In comparisons of individual categories, regressive elements also appear and, in any case, the increase in number and quality of grave goods is less than expected. Most Late Phase II burials, for example, were provided with few, not particularly valuable vessels, and the quantity of perishable goods stored in some graves appears to have been smaller than in preceding phases. Only two male burials (N:b and Δ:b) were furnished with special indicators of wealth such as bronze and silver vessels, but no gold vase can be assigned to these burials. This situation

very markedly contrasts with that of the contemporary Circle A burials and, to a far lesser extent, with Late Phase I burial assemblages.²⁷⁸ Only one funeral mask, although characteristic of Circle A male burials, was found in association with a Late Phase II man (Γ:c). The fact that a complete set of weapons can only be ascribed to one Circle B burial (the man in Grave A) also seems to be significant. Another burial (Γ:c) was provided with many weapons, but it is incomparably poorer in weaponry than nearly all Circle A burials. The same is true for tools and jewelry/ornaments because only a few male assemblages included them. The later burial in Grave N, far poorer than the previous Late Phase I burial, may be considered a significant example of this regressive tendency. Furthermore, the occupants of single-burial Graves K and Δ1, as well as the last burial in Grave Γ, were provided with only a few vases, and no weapons, clearly being relatively low-ranking individuals. To judge from weapons, only the warrior in Grave A and the third burial in Grave Γ were particularly high-status individuals, as also proved by the fact that Γ:c was the only man in Circle B wearing a funeral mask. There is good evidence to indicate that the individuals in Grave Γ were probably connected by family ties,²⁷⁹ however, which might explain why a relatively high ranking man was buried here in this period. Nevertheless, the subsequent male burial, the only one in this grave not marked by a stele, was remarkably poorer in grave goods.

The degree of wealth of Late Phase II female burials is high: they were richly arrayed and had either as many as or more burial goods than their counterparts of the preceding phases (figs. 5–6). The increase in the number of rich female burials in Circle B during this period, including the particularly rich E:b and O:c, might explain why a gradual increase of wealth in the Circle B sequence has been suggested and the latest phase has commonly been regarded as the richest one.²⁸⁰

The differences between contemporary LH I burials in the two Circles is even more marked. Because an exact reconstruction of Circle A funeral assemblages is impossible, precise terms of comparison can only be found in the only single-burial grave (Grave II). It was one of the earliest and poorest burials in terms of number, variety, and quality of goods, but it should be noted that it was provided with some prestige goods such as bronze, faience, and gold vases, along with a complete set of weapons. The same is

²⁷⁷ Åkerström (supra n. 50) 38–67. For this problem also see Hägg and Sieurin (supra n. 13) 178–80.

²⁷⁸ For differences in precious vessels between the two Circles, see supra n. 132. For their widespread occurrence

in male funeral assemblages, see supra n. 270.

²⁷⁹ Angel (supra n. 3) 389.

²⁸⁰ See, for example, Dickinson 44; Graziadio 370; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988, 162, 164.

true of the two warriors in Grave VI, who were also equipped with complete sets of weapons, supplemented by swords, as well as metal vessels and numerous clay vases. The absence of funeral masks from these three burials can also be interpreted as evidence that they were lower in social status than other Circle A males, which agrees with the relatively less developed appearance of the graves. Nevertheless, their degree of wealth seems to be higher than almost all male burials in Circle B, confirming Dickinson's statement that "while the largest and richest graves of Circle B closely parallel the poorer graves of Circle A, Graves III, IV and V are far richer than any of the others, containing the great bulk of the Shaft Grave treasures."²⁸¹ Despite the limitations of the evidence, it is clear that all the men in Graves IV and V, except the central burial in Grave V, wore gold masks as insignia of rank. They were also provided with astounding quantities of other precious objects such as gold ornaments and metal vessels; the weight of gold objects from Graves IV and V (containing six men and two women altogether) amounts to more than 9000 g. The very high military rank of the men can be inferred from the huge quantities of weapons heaped in Graves IV and V, which at the same time represent another form of wealth. The large number of objets d'art are clearly deliberate collections of precious items.

As also shown by the Circle B evidence, female burials are always rich, but the degree of wealth seems to be in proportion to the general standard of the Circle. The individual burial assemblages of the two women in Grave IV can by no means be reconstructed, but, to judge from the richness of the grave and the objects safely attributable to them, they were very richly provided. The same is true for the three female burials in Grave III, who were probably sumptuously arrayed, indicating that they clearly belonged to the upper class at Mycenae. In contrast to these, the funeral assemblages of the three women in Grave I, although "still rich in comparison with the women's burials of Circle B,"²⁸² contained far fewer gold and precious objects. One or two of them were probably the last burials in the entire Shaft Grave sequence, however, and their limited richness heralds the less marked display of wealth of the following periods.

Considering the Circle A burials as a whole, we can not fail to notice a ratio of men to women roughly corresponding to that of Circle B Late Phase II burials. Excluding the LH IIA burial(s) in Grave I, LH I

female burials number six (or five) and contemporary male burials nine. Therefore, broadly speaking, the number of LH I female burials in the two Circles is more than half the number of men. This proportion markedly contrasts with the ratios in the preceding periods (1:5 in the Early Phase, and 1 or 2:6 in Late Phase I), if they are substantially right in spite of the burials of uncertain sex. If so, from a social point of view, this might be a result of a more marked interest in lineage, connected with the ramifications and status distinctions in the ruling class during this period.

In contrast to the apparent increase in wealth, the fact that the first use of Circle A coincides with the relative decadence of the other Circle should indeed be emphasized. When comparing grave evolution and burial goods, however, a direct development from Circle B Late Phase I rich burials to the sumptuous LH I burials in Circle A can be suggested. The social inferences seem to be clear: in LH I a new group—*primi inter pares*²⁸³—broke away from the elite that had used Circle B during the Early Phase and Late Phase I, intending to differentiate themselves from the lower members of the ruling class. They chose a burial area closer to the place where the settlement was presumably located, among the other graves of the cemetery, rather than the peripheral zone where Circle B was situated. This may represent an indication of a very conscious opposition among competing elite groups attempting to gain the allegiance of as many commoners as possible.²⁸⁴ In this process, Circle B remained in use as a secondary burial area, mainly reserved for middle- if not low-ranking men and for some women of relatively high rank who could not be buried in Circle A. Hence, the declining importance of the Circle B burial area in Late Phase II may explain why memory of those buried there, i.e., the earliest members of the local aristocracy, was lost so early, in the late Mycenaean Age, in spite of the presence of the stelae over the most important graves. During the construction of the Tomb of Clytemnestra, the Circle was no longer respected, but the act of constructing a tomb into the shaft of Grave P in LH II might also indicate that interest in the burials in Circle B had been completely lost even earlier, as early as the time when the last women were buried in Circle A.

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²⁸¹ Dickinson 40.

²⁸² Dickinson 50.

²⁸³ French (supra n. 53) 123–24.

²⁸⁴ I am very grateful to J. Wright for this suggestion.