

**Feasting Practices and Changes in Greek  
Society from the Late Bronze Age to  
Early Iron Age**

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## Abstract

In this thesis I offer a diachronic survey of feasting practices on the Greek mainland from c.1600 to c.700, covering the Early Mycenaean era, the palatial period, and the Early Iron Age. I focus upon three specific spheres of feasting activity in each period under discussion – sociopolitical, funerary and sanctuary-based – and employ multiple sources of evidence in order to create a comprehensive image of feasting styles and behaviour in each of these spheres. In particular, I direct my focus towards the association between feasting practices and sociopolitical changes and the ways that they impact upon each other, in order to increase our understanding of both phenomena. Feasts can be an active way of bringing about sociopolitical developments, for example if they are employed by leaders or members of the elite in order to attain, maintain or express authority over others; conversely, the types of sociopolitical *milieu* in existence can affect and alter the styles of feasting that people practise. For the Early Mycenaean period, I highlight the fluidity of feasting activities, as this is not only a unique characteristic of commensality in this era but also reflects the competitive sociopolitical environment. I then examine the palatial period and how far the palaces' influence can be said to have spread over their polities, by focusing on how much control they had over feasting activities. For the Early Iron Age, I deal with issues of change and continuity and how feasting could be both a reassuring continuum in times of uncertainty and a method mobilised by leaders to convey their authority. Finally, I offer a case-study of feasting in the poems of Homer and Hesiod and consider how these can inform us about late 8<sup>th</sup>-century mental perspectives on commensality, including codes of feasting behaviour.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

*'...for I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant than when festivity holds sway among all the populace, and the feasters up and down the houses are sitting in order...'*  
*Odyssey 9.5-7*

A feast is a sensory, sacralised and social occasion. Its multiple resonances and experiences extend far beyond the nutritive consumption of food and drink by a group of people. To reduce the act of feasting to functional terms overlooks the vivid tastes and smells, the bonds created and broken between fellow-participants, the awe induced by dining in the presence of the dead, the gods or a powerful leader, and the embedding of bodily memories in the diners to be recalled long after the event. Real, individual people consume feasts, and as archaeologists dealing with a remote era it is easy to disregard this fact and concentrate solely upon the tangible debris of vessels and food remains. To understand a feasting event more comprehensively, it is necessary to analyse the whole series of experiences that the original participant would have undergone during the course of a feast, and to trace the footsteps of the diner through each stage of what was presumably a major event in his/her calendar.

By taking this approach, one can explore the efficacy of the feast as a social tool, whether for engendering changes or maintaining stability.<sup>1</sup> Such effectiveness is due to the fact that the performative aspect of consumption is a mnemonic process, for as the body incorporates food the mind has a reference point to the event that is built not just of visual memories but of multiple sensory actions (Hamilakis 1998: 116-117). While I examine the totality of feasting occasions in this thesis, my principal focus lies on how feasts serve as an arena for social negotiations: the creation of obligations to a powerful host, the cohesion augmented between companions, the privileging of high-status individuals, the emphasised inferiority of those of lesser status, and the creation of new connections through shared emotive experiences. Feasting acts as both a passive and an active vehicle for social developments, a phenomenon that appears repeatedly in the case studies I examine. It can reinforce the *status quo* by emphasising the leader's authority and the guests' relative positions in the social matrix; however, it can also produce change by allowing would-be leaders to accrue power and by renegotiating participants' statuses in both directions. In this thesis therefore, my aim is to explore on a broad scale this multi-faceted use of feasting in mainland Greece by placing it in a diachronic perspective, commencing at the beginning of the Early Mycenaean period (MHIII/LHI) and continuing to the end of the Early Iron Age (EIA). This long-range study is given focus by viewing it specifically from the angle of social changes, developments and negotiations, in order

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<sup>1</sup> For my definition of a feast, used throughout this thesis, see chapter 2.



to analyse how sociopolitical events in Greece throughout the nine centuries under consideration both affected commensal events and were directly or indirectly produced by them.

Before expanding further upon the aims of this thesis, it is necessary to view the critical context. The topic of feasting in the Aegean, in both the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and EIA, was not systematically studied until the 1990s and so is relatively new.<sup>2</sup> Its adoption as a valid area for enquiry was initially due to the realisation that the Wu group of sealings from Thebes detailed supplies for feasts (Piteros *et al.* 1990), and was further influenced by developments in anthropology and other archaeological cultures (e.g. Dietler 1996; Hayden 1996), where it was recognised that feasting could and should be interpreted in terms that were not purely functional. Once interest in the feast commenced, its popularity as a subject for study increased rapidly and can be divided into two phases. The first, spanning the 1990s, concentrated on finding evidence for feasting and analysing the primary material data with relatively limited interpretative discussion. The data employed fell into three distinct categories: Linear B tablets (e.g. Piteros *et al.* 1990; Killen 1992; 1994), zooarchaeological remains (e.g. Hamilakis 1996; 1999a; Isaakidou *et al.* 2002), and vessels, particularly ceramic (e.g. Wright 1984; 1995b; Galaty 1999). However, following the turn of the millennium, the second phase of study on Aegean feasting has seen the adoption of more subtle and varied approaches, combining different spheres of evidence to attain a holistic viewpoint and more consistently placing feasting in its social context. Bendall's (2004) influential paper on feasting at the palace at Pylos is a prime example, as she incorporates all spheres of evidence from the site to present a more thorough understanding of the commensality occurring, as well as employing the anthropological concept of diacritical feasts to explain the social negotiations taking place. Furthermore, the recent publication of three major edited volumes, *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece* (2004), *The Mycenaean Feast* (2004) and *Dais: The Aegean Feast* (2008), indicates the high level of attention currently being paid to the feast in Aegean archaeology.

However, the majority of this attention is focused on the Mycenaean palatial period (LHIIIA2-LHIIIB), due to the amount of evidence for all spheres of commensality – at the palaces themselves, in smaller settlements, in tombs, and in sanctuaries. This period offers an opportunity to combine textual (Linear B) data with evidence drawn from animal bones and vessels, and in addition has one of the best preserved sites in Greek prehistory, Pylos, which provides a capsule-type assemblage ideal for the highly detailed study of feasting. In contrast, feasting during the EIA has been studied in much less detail, with the focus directed to locating

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<sup>2</sup> There were isolated earlier attempts to understand feasting in the Aegean, particularly in connection with the palace at Pylos, where the evidence from the pantries indicates large-scale commensality (Graham 1967; Säflund 1980). While both of these articles now appear somewhat dated in their conclusions, they were in fact remarkably prescient at their respective times for recognising the presence of feasting and trying to interpret how it may have occurred.

the existence of commensality rather than producing a more comprehensive analysis (e.g. Mazarakis Ainian 1997). The major exception to this is sanctuary feasting, which increases significantly in scale from the palatial period, and hence provides a suitable arena for studying social motives and negotiations (e.g. Morgan 1994; 1998; 1999; 2002). As for the Early Mycenaean period, poor evidence has ensured that feasting in this era has never been satisfactorily studied. Sites with clear evidence for commensality from the end of the period have been examined (e.g. LHIIIA Tsoungiza and LHIIIA2 Early Mitrou: Dabney *et al.* 2004; Vitale 2008), but in the earlier phases it has been merely been recognised that feasting occurred without detailed exploration of how it functioned or its impact upon other spheres of life (e.g. Wright 2004b; 2004c).

Given such varied contexts of previous scholarship, I therefore connect all three eras into a continuous chronological thread, in each period not merely finding feasts but discussing the whole occasion and its motives, experiences and effects. Such a long-range diachronic study has not yet been attempted, and hence I feel there is justification for performing it. However, while a diachronic view is of value in highlighting patterns of feasting practices and establishing the antiquity of certain styles of commensality performed in the historical period, its principal result is a survey of feasts in Greek prehistory. Therefore, I go beyond this and specifically consider the connection of feasts with social developments, a rewarding topic given the multiplicity of social bonds that can be formed (or broken) during a shared meal, and address such questions as: how did feasting styles alter following dramatic sociopolitical events, such as the palaces' collapse? how can feasting be employed to bolster the status of an elite individual or the authority of a leader? how did feasting directly maintain and reinforce the social matrix? how far did sociopolitical motivations affect feasts that occurred at the grave or in the sanctuary? By offering answers to questions such as these, I aim for greater understanding of how the feast can be interpreted holistically as an occasion incorporating more than just consumption, and how each stage of the entire event can be managed to impress social messages upon the attendees – in other words, how sociopolitical events or regimes can impact upon the performance of commensality. Furthermore, the perspective can also be reversed, by employing our understanding of feasting practices to illuminate sociopolitical developments and changes that occurred during this lengthy period; to take one example, if palatial feasting styles are emulated in smaller settlements, then this provides an insight into how relationships between sites were viewed and enacted. Therefore, by examining both feasting and sociopolitical developments, the two subjects simultaneously elucidate each other.

I have selected mainland Greece alone for consideration in this thesis, due to the fact that inclusion of Crete and the other Aegean islands would provide such a wealth of additional data that it would be impossible to attain detailed and meaningful conclusions in the space and time

available. The whole of the Peloponnese is included in my geographical research area, as is Euboea and the arc of land that runs above the Gulf of Corinth, incorporating Attica, Boeotia, Phokis, East Lokris and Aitolia; hence I have excluded northern Greece and Thessaly from consideration. This is due both to the need to retain a fairly limited area of study and to the local peculiarities that can be seen in certain northern Greek practices and customs. While these are of interest in themselves, it becomes more challenging to trace patterns of activity when major regional variations potentially affect the results. The marginal nature of northern Greece can be seen during the palatial period in particular, when the mainland appears most unified in terms of practices if not political control; although there are similarities between Dhimni and the southern palaces, the regional peculiarities of the northern site are highly evident and it is uncertain that the same conclusions can be drawn regarding its purposes and uses.

As for chronological limits, I have selected fairly standard boundaries. My upper limit is the beginning of the Early Mycenaean period, MHIII/LHI or the so-called Shaft Grave era. The sheer difference in societal structure between this period and the preceding Middle Helladic era makes it an effective starting-point; plus, it is unclear how much feasting MH people actually performed, as archaeological traces are scarce and small-scale when they are existent (cf. Nordquist 1999; 2002a). My lower limit is c.700, the end of the EIA; again, this is a widely accepted temporal boundary, given that it marks the approximate shift from protohistoric, small-scale, regional societies to a properly historical, coherent, *polis*-based societal structure. It would be of great interest to follow patterns of feasting down into the Archaic period; however, the wealth of evidence from this era, particularly textual and iconographic, would stretch the capacity of a single thesis.

The thesis is structured as follows. After this introductory chapter, chapter 2 contains my methodology, including the evidence that I use, the spheres of feasting I examine, and the terminology I employ. This is succeeded by three major chapters, each focused on a distinct chronological period; the specific division of chapters was decided on the basis of sociopolitical environs, as I believe there are fundamental links between the structure of society and how feasting is performed and I wished to deal with consistent datasets in each chapter. The decision to employ chronological/sociopolitical periods, as opposed to types of feasting or arenas of commensality, should prevent multiple repetition of data and assist in the construction of a diachronic viewpoint, from which I can view trends throughout my entire research period. Therefore, chapter 3 deals with the Early Mycenaean period, from MHIII/LHI down to LHIIIA1; chapter 4 contains the palatial period, limited to the palaces' *floruit* of LHIIIA2-LHIIIB; and chapter 5 examines the EIA, covering the entire era from the fall of the palaces in LHIIIC down to the end of the LG period. In each of these chapters, the same types of feasts

are explored to maintain continuity (sociopolitical, funerary, sanctuary-based<sup>3</sup>), although variation in quantity of data means that they receive different emphases in the different periods. Chapter 6 presents the final major study, that of the literary evidence for EIA feasting: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Hesiod's *Works and Days*. I have separated them from the main EIA archaeological evidence in order to maintain consistency in how the three chronological periods are examined and because the poems prompt a different series of issues from the material remains of feasting. Finally, chapter 7 summarises the discoveries made during the course of the preceding chapters and offers conclusions to the entire thesis.

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<sup>3</sup> These three feasting spheres are delineated in detail in chapter 2.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

*'A grave housekeeper brought in the bread and served it to them, adding many good things to it, generous with her provisions, while a carver lifted platters of all kinds of meat and set them in front of them, and placed beside them the golden goblets...' Odysseus 1.139-142*

Feasting is an activity that is simultaneously unifying and divisive, nurturing and aggressive, generous and obligating. Its sheer diversity makes it extremely difficult to define, in a way that sufficiently encapsulates every motivation, location or style. While I only investigate the three principal arenas of feasting that are archaeologically attested in LBA-EIA Greece, as defined below, the task of producing an adequate definition of feasting is still a challenge. How does one separate a feast from a quotidian, domestic meal? What features consistently mark out a feast as a special event? How many people are needed? What activities must be performed? What food should be consumed to make a feast?

Dietler and Hayden (2001: 3) asked the various contributors to their volume to provide a working definition of a feast in an attempt to theorise the topic. Reading through these classifications, it soon becomes apparent how elusive an activity feasting is. For example, Hayden (2001: 28) defines feasting as 'any sharing between two or more people of special foods...in a meal for a special purpose or occasion'. However, despite its emphasis on the 'special' or separation from the quotidian, I feel that this falls short of a satisfactory encapsulation of feasting. It firstly ignores the fact that feasts are ritualised events, embedded in traditions of etiquette. Secondly, feasts need not involve 'special foods', but can be identified through abundance of what one normally consumes. Dietler's (2001: 65) definition appears to acknowledge satisfactorily the role of ritualisation in feasting – 'forms of ritual activity that involve the communal consumption of food and drink' – but it excludes feasts that are not overtly religious in nature and are held for the host's personal gain. These two examples should clarify some of the difficulties one faces when compiling a comprehensive, effective definition of feasting.

I therefore propose the following definition as one that provides a working standard that is applicable throughout this thesis: feasting constitutes commensality between two or more people, in a form displaying heightened ritualisation and/or expressing social motivations that go beyond the nutritive benefits of the consumption occurring. In order to explain the decisions I made to construct this definition, I break it down into sections:

- 'Commensality'. This term usefully avoids an exclusive stress on food consumption, placing the emphasis instead on (literally) sitting at table together. This angle is essential for the period under consideration, as funerary drinking rituals are so integral in the Greek LBA-EIA that to avoid them would be to omit a major "feasting" arena.

- ‘Between two or more people’. While it may seem more natural to consider a feast as a large aggregation of people, it is impossible to draw a dividing line at any number. Why should 15 people be a feast and 10 only an everyday meal? Or to take smaller numbers, could one usefully say that five people constitute a feasting event, but if one did not attend, making the gathering only four people, this would no longer be a feast? It can be seen that this argument tends *ad absurdum* and therefore I adhere to the only obvious solution – one cannot feast on one’s own. Company of at least one other person is necessary to constitute a feast, providing that other defining features are also present.
- ‘In a form displaying heightened ritualisation’. This constitutes the first of two integral features, of which at least one must be present for a meal to be defined as a feast. All consumption events display ritualisation to some degree; consider the commonly accepted etiquette in England today of holding knife and fork in right and left hands respectively. Hence I have stressed that feasts must display *heightened* ritualisation in order to distinguish them from a quotidian meal. This is obviously more fundamental at feasts with greater religious motivations, such as consumption after a sacrifice or the kylix-based drinking rites in the palatial period.
- ‘Expressing social motivations going beyond the nutritive benefits of the consumption occurring’. This clause covers those feasts that are less overtly religious and have greater sociopolitical motivations, and is the second integral aspect that distinguishes a feast. Here a feast is separated from an everyday, domestic meal through the fact that eating for nourishment is not the primary objective; rather the underlying aims of the host lead to the feast’s occurrence and their fulfilment is considered the motive for holding it.

While this definition is designed around the evidence available from the Greek mainland during the LBA-EIA, it remains however relatively generalised. It is therefore necessary to focus more specifically upon the data I examine in this thesis and how I organise this evidence. While feasting can and does occur in a wide variety of contexts, three broad arenas are applicable in the temporal and geographical areas under discussion here: sociopolitical, funerary and sanctuary feasts.

### *1. Sociopolitical Feasts*

The first category constitutes a diverse and fluid group, whose unifying characteristic is the direction of the overlying motivations of the host(s) towards personal political benefits or

community-wide social goals.<sup>1</sup> Thus this category consists of a spectrum that includes competitive feasting between would-be leaders, large-scale palatial banquets, and community-focused solidarity meals. While religious elements can be a component of these feasts, as sacrifices often accompanied them, the defining factor of this category is the dominance of social and/or political impetuses. They are hosted directly for their sociopolitical consequences, such as accruing personal benefits to the host, setting in motion chains of obligations, expressing power and dominance, or uniting a disparate community.

It is extremely difficult to mark defining features of the sociopolitical category as it covers such a wide range of situations, sizes and locations. One characteristic is that the food provided often exceeds ordinary diet, whether in terms of quantity or quality. For example, while local agricultural produce and animals may be employed to feed the guests, it is likely to be on a greater scale than they would consume on a quotidian basis. This is because they would not be able to mobilise resources in such an effective manner, as the hosts of sociopolitical feasts are generally the leaders of the community and thus have the manpower, authority or land to gather a greater supply of comestibles. At other times, or for other guests, exotic food or dishes that have been prepared in special ways may be offered instead.

Another defining feature is that the host's motivations for sponsoring a sociopolitical feast are based on manipulation of the social order for his own benefit. This can take such a wide array of forms that it is impossible to provide a comprehensive description here. Politically, the host may aim to construct networks of alliances or allegiances; economically, it may be a method for him to mobilise and utilise surpluses; ideologically, he may wish to bind the community with closer ties, either to each other or to his authority. The host's conspicuous generosity and superiority will be clearly expressed and hence construct feelings of inferiority or indebtedness amongst the guests. It is unlikely that the guests will be able to repay in equal fashion (let alone surpass the host's generosity), yet hospitality requires reciprocity, so that they are obligated to respond in different ways – by providing labour, by supplying “taxes” of agricultural goods or animals, or by being bound to support the host in political alliances or military situations. While this may seem alien to our modern, capitalist eyes, which view contracts of obligations in a monetary perspective, Dietler and Herbich (2001: 240) have emphasised how important feasting is as a means of mobilising labour and creating allegiances in agrarian societies. If large “voluntary” work projects can be mobilised through a feast, it is equally possible to manipulate subtle personal benefits through the offering of large-scale commensality.

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<sup>1</sup> Like Dietler and unlike Hayden, who have expressed their different theoretical standpoints on several occasions, I do believe that feasts can have strong sociopolitical aims and are not hosted purely for economic purposes (Dietler 1996; 2001; Hayden 1996; 2001; Dietler & Hayden 2001).

As well as negotiating host-guest relationships, a further aim of these feasts is often to affirm, recreate or manipulate connections between the body of guests – to divide them by creating hierarchies or to unify them by spreading a façade of equality amongst them. In this context, Dietler's (2001: 85-88) now familiar discussion of diacritical feasting is key, where hierarchies are subtly generated through such differential factors as vessel material, style of cuisine, areas of seating or time of serving. These create tiers of guests, either echoing the social hierarchy already in place or renegotiating it to the host's advantage. Conversely, if unification is the aim of the feast, then the opposite approach will be taken, so that each guest feels their equality with the others emphasised in order to create bonds of solidarity and to draw the community closer together.

There are two features that all these sociopolitical feasting types have in common; the first is the fact that the guests are invariably drawn from a social grouping larger than the domestic unit. Because the aims of all sociopolitical feasts are to reaffirm or renegotiate the present social order in some way, this involves inviting guests from the surrounding community who are not bound through kinship to the host – whether household heads of a large polity, every inhabitant of a small village, or selected members of certain social groupings.

Secondly, and very simply, all these feasts occur in a location that is settlement-based. Once again, this encompasses an array of contexts depending on the host, the social milieu and the reason for the feast, ranging from palaces to huts. This context-based distinction is easier to understand when set against the other categories of feasts, which are more specifically located.

## *2. Funerary Feasts*

Although the category of funerary feasts may seem more specific than the sociopolitical grouping, it still encompasses a range of practices and motivations. I concentrate purely on those that occur in a cemetery context, as the state of our evidence makes it impossible to identify feasts held in a settlement location during the funerary process. While it is likely that funerary feasts occurred in domestic contexts also, they cannot be distinguished as such from other consumption events held in a settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Funerary feasts can be held in the chamber of the tomb itself, around the tomb, or occasionally elsewhere in the cemetery if a suitable structure is present. They can be part of the actual funeral ceremony to commemorate the passing of the recently deceased or a repeated ritual performed to remember someone who had died in previous years. It is also important to note that this is the only category of feasting under consideration in this thesis that does not

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<sup>2</sup> Funerary rituals, including feasting, that are held in the deceased's home or village are attested across the world, with examples including the Nyakyusa of Tanzania, the Bara of Madagascar, and modern Irish/Americans (Huntingdon & Metcalf 1979: 34-42, 105, 191, 202).



necessarily involve food consumption. Drinking rituals, particularly during the palatial period, were so integral to funerary rites that I believe it would be unwarranted to omit them, especially as they can still be classified under communal consumption. When food consumption is involved in the context of funerary behaviour, the emphasis on abundance or special foods that is a feature of sociopolitical feasting is less apparent. This is undoubtedly partially due to the fact that all food to be consumed during the rites had to be transported from the settlement to the graveside.

Numbers of participants could vary dramatically in funerary feasts. However, it seems safe to say that attendees would be expected to have some link with the deceased in whose honour the rituals were performed. This exclusivity contrasts with the apparent inclusiveness of sociopolitical feasts, where all members of a settlement could be invited, or where people who were not well-known to the host were feasted in order to create new alliances and networks. In the smaller-scale funerary feasts, no doubt kinship ties to the deceased were the requisite for attending; in the larger ones, presumably the deceased's supporters or those who were considered to have had a connection with him in life were permitted to partake in the rites.<sup>3</sup>

Funerary feasts of all types were highly ritualised affairs, with emphasis falling more on the sequence of actions performed throughout the entire ceremony than on the actual consumption itself (highlighted by the fact that drinking rituals alone could constitute a funerary "feast"). The dining was part of a series of experiences and, while it served to bond the celebrants together, it was only as integral as the other actions that composed the funerary ceremony. The role of the funerary rituals as a whole, in which feasting played a part, was to unite the network of attendees, to emphasise the importance of the deceased, to renegotiate the role of his kin and/or supporters in the community thenceforth, to face the threat of death and to defeat the liminality that it posed to those who remained.

### *3. Sanctuary Feasts*

I have deliberately termed my third category sanctuary feasts, as opposed to religious feasts, because commensality and religious activity cannot be separated in ancient Greece, both in the periods under consideration in my thesis and in Archaic/Classical times. The two categories already discussed had religious aspects to a greater or lesser degree: sociopolitical feasts could involve sacrifices preceding the dining (as the zooarchaeological evidence at Pylos suggests) or control of religious installations (such as the "altar" in Unit IV-1 at Nichoria); while funerary feasts were clearly religious in orientation, focusing upon chthonic powers. I also include under

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<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to measure attendance at extremely large-scale "royal funerals", for which the largest tholoi serve as material reminders. A much wider grouping of guests may have been required in order to emphasise the grandeur of the event. However, these should be seen as a notable exception throughout the periods under consideration and do not affect the general rule of more restricted participation.

the term sanctuary feasting instances of ancestor cult commensality, performed in/around various installations and structures in cemeteries during the Early Mycenaean and EIA periods, and held in honour of a long-deceased individual. This appears more cultic than funerary in nature to me, and therefore warrants inclusion with feasting that occurred directly in a sanctuary.

Unquestionably, one distinguishing feature of this category is that feasting was held overtly in honour of a supernatural power or deity, and this motivation surpassed any others of social or political nature. It is also possible to state that it is discriminated from the other categories by its location in a sanctuary or at a specifically cultic installation. The religious basis to all ancient Greek feasting, and indeed to the killing of all animals for meat (Durand 1989 [1979]: 87), means that the clearest way of formulating a category of “sacred” feasts is to highlight those that occurred in sanctuaries or at cultic structures. This becomes more useful when the sheer diversity of sanctuary feasting is noted. It could focus on solidarity, bypassing the social hierarchies of the world outside the sanctuary, and emphasising equality with all celebrants seated together and dining on the same fare obtained from the same sacrifice. Equally, other ceremonies or sanctuaries placed an emphasis on retaining and reaffirming the social status that one had in daily life, separating off bounded areas for the elite to perform their rites in, or allowing them into a sacred chamber or building while everyone else performed their rites in a hypaethral space. Restriction of non-elite celebrants could take the form of limiting what rites they partook in, or even how much they were permitted to observe. As for ancestor cult rituals, they tended to be particularly small-scale and exclusive in nature, allowing participants to highlight their association (real or fictive) with the favoured lineage or individual.

Heightened ritualisation was as much a feature of sanctuary feasting as it was of funerary feasting. However, here a major focus was placed on the killing and preparation of the meat, which was as integral to the rites as the actual consumption. The meat to be consumed was first sacrificed and could be subject to ritual requirements, such as being of one particular species or colour (cf. Killen 1994: 79). The preparation of the meat was also likely to be ritually controlled, and certain cuts may have been available to selected tiers of celebrants only. While we know much less about prehistoric sacrificial practices than for later historic eras in Greece, it is safe to assume that there was a heightened sense of what was ritualistically appropriate during a sacred feasting occasion. Where people dined could be subject to specific requirements, such as a bounded area in the sanctuary grounds or a particular room of the sacred complex. Finally, there may also have been ritualistic disposal of the feasting debris after the consumption event, such as leaving the remains in one precise area.

I have set out above how I divide the various spheres of feasting that are evidenced on the LBA-EIA Greek mainland. It must of course be emphasised that these categories are my own reading of the evidence in order to make it comprehensible and may not reflect the classifications that the ancient Greeks thought in, or their emic division of feasting categories. As we have almost no way of setting out explicitly and indubitably how the Greeks distinguished the kinds of feasting they partook in,<sup>4</sup> it is necessary to rely on our own categorisations and to create an etic framework. It is indeed possible that the ancient Greeks saw all feasts as religious ceremonies in one large, flexible grouping, or that they divided up feasting occasions by typologies that we would not necessarily consider as operative. The variety of ontological classifications is broad: the host's identity, the guests invited, the location, the overall aim/motivation/purpose of the host, the amount of ritual input, the type of food served, the date/time of year, the scale (of guests and/or food), the formality involved – to name just some of the more obvious groupings. There is perhaps no way of telling which ones the ancient Greeks applied and therefore I rely on two broad, etic categorisations that I feel are most helpful in defining and classifying feasting from the LBA-EIA.

Firstly, and principally, I separate feasts by location, as has already been described above. This is because the majority of our evidence is feasting debris, and therefore it is necessary to rely on *where* this is found in order to decipher what consumption events were occurring. It is also relatively objective; if archaeological consumption deposits are found in a sanctuary or a cemetery, then it is fairly safe to assume that feasting activities were occurring in that sanctuary or cemetery, although further interpretation would be required. To employ categories such as scale or amount of ritual input, we would have to know in what terms the ancient Greeks themselves thought and the criteria that they employed, whereas by using location as a category it is easier to rely simply on the surviving archaeological evidence.

Secondly, I employ to a certain extent the category of overall motivation, as I believe this corresponds satisfactorily with location, as far as it is possible to tell. While I am not relying on this as my overall discriminator, I believe that it may help to shed more light on the feasts and how they operated than mere location can. To expand, there seems to be a correspondence between sociopolitical feasting (in settlement contexts) and the aims of the host in furthering his political position or reinforcing the social structure, between funerary feasting (in cemetery contexts) and the aims of commemorating the deceased, and between sanctuary feasting (in cultic or sanctuary contexts) and the aims of connecting with a supernatural power.

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<sup>4</sup> As discussed in 4.1, there are hints in the Linear B tablets that feasting occurred on occasions of royal appointments and initiations, which would suggest a category of commensality that marked major changes of leadership. There also seems to be a subtle division in the texts between state-sponsored feasting and elite obligations, which may also reflect some kind of emic categorisation.

Throughout this thesis, I take a particularly synthetic approach, such as has not often been a feature of Aegean feasting studies. As mentioned in chapter 1, while there has been a move towards synthetic studies since the turn of the millennium (e.g. Bendall 2004; Wright 2004b), most discussions of feasting in the prehistoric Aegean have tended to concentrate on one specific field of evidence, whether zooarchaeological (e.g. Halstead & Isaakidou 2004), textual (e.g. Killen 1994) or ceramic (e.g. Galaty 1999a). This has created a strong base of well-researched discussions on feasting evidence, but it has also led to a certain division between the various classes of data and a frequent omission to consider how feasting may have impacted socially, or how it was part of the wider social *milieu*. Therefore, I wish to address this lacuna in my thesis, by drawing together different classes of evidence to give a fresh perspective on how feasting operated and interacted with social structures and changes on the LBA-EIA Greek mainland. Only by unifying our evidence into a synthetic approach and looking beyond the minutiae is it possible to begin to understand the wider processes transpiring and to take the study of feasting beyond recognition of its occurrence into a consideration of how it functioned – its aims, its impacts, its relationship with social changes.

The various classes of evidence that I employ fall into four categories, as follows:

### *1. Feasting equipment*

This covers all the material remains for commensality that survive in the archaeological record, including vessels, furniture and cooking equipment. It principally comprises ceramics (cooking, serving or consumption vessels), due to the material's high rate of survival in archaeological contexts. While we have ceramic vessels from all eras under consideration, the data are richest for the palatial period, due to the exceptional wealth of pottery excavated from the palace of Nestor at Pylos (comprehensively studied several times: e.g. Wright 1984, Galaty 1999a, Hruby 2006). Survival of ceramic equipment is perhaps the most effective way of enlightening us about the various processes occurring during consumption events, as the information that vessels can provide is broad, including whether dining was involved as well as drinking, whether food was prepared *in situ* or brought from another location, what types of cuisine were prepared, the scale of the guest list, or whether diacritical features were in operation. However, due to their usefulness for archaeologists, ceramic vessels raise the hazard of tempting one to over-interpret ordinary consumption equipment as evidence of feasting activities (cf. Dabney *et al.* 2004).

Vessels of other materials have also survived, such as gold, silver, bronze, faience or electrum. These are more likely to be found as drinking sets buried in tombs than in specific feasting contexts (cf. Davis 1977; Wright 2004c); however they are still informative about underlying

social beliefs and structures and can sometimes give glimpses of their use-life if they were buried in a used condition. The precious metal vessels interred in graves evidence the fact that there was a much wider spectrum of feasting equipment being used than has come down to us today.

Beyond the vessels, other examples of feasting equipment that can be informative are apparatus for cooking processes, such as spits or cauldrons, which can suggest types of cuisine. Furniture can also evidence the occurrence of feasting. While very little has survived in settlement contexts (though there are hints in the PY Ta tablets as to what it may have looked like: Palaima 2004: 114-115), the presence of stone benches can be an indicative feature for feasts occurring in funerary or sanctuary contexts. They indicate the potentiality of a gathering of people and, when accompanied by feasting debris and vessels, suggest clearly that consumption events took place *in situ*. In certain datasets, such as Early Mycenaean funerary evidence and EIA funerary and sanctuary evidence, the presence of benches can be valuable in confirming the incidence of feasts.

While not strictly equipment, it should also be noted that architectural remains can indicate the presence of feasting, when used alongside the direct presence of debris. In the Early Mycenaean period and EIA in particular, these are valuable for identifying where commensality occurred; for example, a large hall with a central hearth in the EIA is an ideal location for feasting, and the existence of megaron-style designs in the Early Mycenaean period may reflect a use as a dining locale that is comparable with the palatial era. Obviously, further evidence is required in these cases, but the suitability of a structure for feasting is often an additional criterion that can support our interpretation of commensal remains.

## *2. Bioarchaeological evidence*

This category principally comprises zooarchaeological deposits, as bones often survive well. As in the case of ceramics, faunal data can be both extremely beneficial and a potential hazard to the archaeologist. They can serve to distinguish between a place where unknown ritual activity was occurring and one where a consumption event was definitely taking place. They are also informative about types and quantities of meat consumed, as well as butchery processes if carefully analysed (Halstead & Isaakidou 2004). Even if deposition of faunal debris occurred in a different location, it is possible to infer feasting activities in the vicinity, as practicalities would ensure that rubbish was not carried too far. However, it is also very easy to over-interpret and to take the presence of animal bones as evidence of feasting every time they appear, as opposed to quotidian dining. In sanctuary and some funerary contexts, it is also possible that only a small proportion of the meat was consumed and the majority of the sacrificial animal was simply burnt. It is essential that the faunal data are considered in their

context along with the other categories of evidence to make an assessment of feasting valid; for example, they should be concurrent with suitable amounts and types of vessels and a viable location for the performance of commensality.

Other bioarchaeological data include organic remains of non-faunal products, such as grains or seeds, and organic residue from vessels. The latter is still a field in its infancy in the prehistoric Aegean (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999; McGovern *et al.* 2008) and much of the information is still subject to major uncertainties; therefore, it is infrequently used in this thesis.

### *3. Iconographical representations*

This is a small category in the periods under discussion, but one that has the potential to shed light on the ephemera of practices that cannot be traced in the archaeological record and/or to suggest contemporary attitudes to feasting activities. The earliest useful depictions are wall-paintings from the palatial period. Those in rooms 5-6 at Pylos not only suggest what may have occurred in a consumption event in those very rooms, but they may have also acted in a performative manner, becoming the backdrop to the feasting activities that took place in front of them. Representations in the minor arts are almost non-existent, which in itself raises the question of whether feasting was viewed as an activity intrinsically connected with the palaces and their authority. During the EIA, there are limited representations on pictorial vessels, although the connection between large feasting vessels and scenes of elite activities is informative of a particular ideology surrounding commensality.

### *4. Textual evidence*

Our textual evidence is extremely rich and informative, provided it is used cautiously. It falls into two categories, covering the LBA and the EIA respectively. The first group comprises Linear B tablets and sealings. These have limitations in that they are administrative accounts, recording only what the palatial authority saw fit to document, and dating from a very restricted period shortly before the palaces' collapse; however, if these issues are borne in mind, then they can illuminate much about palatial period feasting practices. These include issues such as how feasting supplies were requisitioned and who contributed, the scale of the feasts being held, some of the fare available, some indication of their purposes and occasions on which they were held, and some of the equipment/furniture used. There are also glimpses of sanctuary feasting in texts such as PY Un 718, which documents supplies for a feast held in honour of Poseidon. Interestingly, funerary feasts are not mentioned at all in the textual evidence, suggesting that they may have been out of the palace's jurisdiction and thus inherently private affairs.

For the EIA, a completely different textual situation exists in the form of epic: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Hesiod's *Works and Days*. While the Linear B documents provide

administrative details about the processes of hosting large-scale feasts, they do not reflect the attitudes held by Mycenaeans towards consumption events. Conversely, our EIA textual evidence must be employed cautiously, but it reveals the mindsets that the poets' contemporaries had towards feasts, and a code of how such events were expected to operate. My understanding of the epics' value for illuminating the EIA attitude towards feasting practices is explained in much more detail in chapter 6, where I argue for neither slavish reconstruction of the details nor for dismissal of their archaeological relevance.

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As this study spans a lengthy period, there are inevitably variations in the amount and quality of evidence within it and different feasting spheres are prominent in different eras. However, despite this, I attempt to maintain continuity through employment of the same two approaches in each chapter: firstly, to find examples of feasts and to delineate their styles and nature; secondly and more importantly, to offer interpretation of the feasts and how they interrelate with the social *milieu* that they occurred in. This allows for the perception of long-term patterns that extend across and between eras, and also for the analysis of specific phenomena that are related to the societal structure of each period. Through this diachronic, synthetic study, covering multiple time periods and spheres of data, it is possible to address numerous issues surrounding the connection between commensality and society, how they impact upon, influence and interrelate with each other.

## Chapter 3: Feasting in the Early Mycenaean Period

*'Here you will find the kings whom the gods love busy feasting...' Odyssey 7.49-50*

The Early Mycenaean period is very much an under-studied era in any field, let alone that of feasting activities. While the MH Argolid Project is currently engaging with the early part of this era (Voutsaki *et al.* 2005; 2006), and Wright (2004c; 2004d; 2006a) has recently produced several papers on Early Mycenaean vessels and architecture, these are notable exceptions. This paucity of study is undoubtedly due to the fact that, in comparison with the succeeding palatial period, our evidence is in general strikingly poor and it is an unsettled era of major sociopolitical changes. Consequently, potentially little can be said about each individual stage within the Early Mycenaean period. However, I here aim to confront such preconceptions and to draw together the disparate strands of evidence that do exist to consider feasting during this era – where it took place, what styles it demonstrated, what aims it had, what purposes it served, how it changed, and how it interrelated with the dramatic shifts in social structure that were occurring. In a sense this is very much a preliminary work, as a synchronic assessment of Early Mycenaean feasting has not yet been attempted (although for specific studies cf. Wright 2004c; 2004d); however, despite this, I aim to engage with the same types of issues that arise in the much better documented and studied palatial period.

In discussing the Early Mycenaean period, I take a slightly broader temporal framework than is usual. I conventionally begin at the end of MHIII (the so-called Shaft Grave era), as this point appears to represent a significant break with Middle Helladic sociopolitical structures, customs and behaviour, and has been traditionally associated with the beginnings of Mycenaean culture. However, in this chapter I continue down into LHIIIA1, as I feel that in terms of my evidence it has more in common with the preceding era than with the palatial period that follows. The lack of textual evidence and the associated level of palatial bureaucracy during MHIII–LHIIIA1 unite this period and differentiate it from what was occurring during LHIIIA2–LHIIIB. While the LHIIIA1 proto-palaces clearly had similarities with their successors and exercised a certain amount of power over their hinterlands (Kilian 1987; Barber 1992; Bennet 1995), the scale of control over their polities and their administrative scope appears to have been quite different.

Unlike the palatial and EIA periods, there is no contemporary textual evidence for the Early Mycenaean era, thus removing a major source of data for feasting activities. Moreover, there is not sufficient iconographic evidence to identify what forms feasting may have taken. I am therefore reliant on three areas of evidence:

- A range of vessels: ceramics and precious metal, grave-goods and those that had been in use, those that bear actual evidence of feasting and those that reflect changes in societal structures during the period.



- Zooarchaeological remains, principally in and around tombs, that testify to the consumption of animals in feasting contexts.
- Informed inferences that can be drawn about where feasting may have occurred from architectural remains, such as cultic installations in cemeteries or the predecessors of the megaron.

The bulk of our Early Mycenaean data (for both feasting and other topics of study, such as sociopolitical developments, warfare and external contacts) comes principally from funerary evidence, and hence this chapter has a strong emphasis on the mortuary sphere. It is here moreover that we can trace clearly the sociopolitical changes that were occurring, as mainland Greece moved from social structures based on villages to palatial polities. I therefore concentrate on this arena first in considerable detail in the first two sections, examining the feasting activities that were occurring around the tombs, what inferences we can draw from them about feasting in other areas of life, and how they are embedded in sociopolitical developments. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of my evidence comes from the Mycenae Shaft Graves themselves, a product of their informative contents and of the amount of study that has been dedicated to them. Following this, I turn to the sociopolitical sphere to consider what feasting occurred there, what it was employed for, and how it related to the current social *milieu*. The chapter concludes with a consideration of sanctuary feasting, a topic that has as yet yielded very little data for this period, and I attempt to offer some explanations for the paucity of evidence in this arena.

### *1. Tombs and Feasting – Funerary Dining*

Funerary feasting represents the richest area of study for commensality in the Early Mycenaean period, although this may be due more to excavation bias and survival of material than to a genuine phenomenon. However, it is also possible that the funerary sphere was in fact the principal arena for sociopolitical expressions of competition, emulation and negotiation of status. Without a politically dominant authority at this period, social position had the potentiality for greater fluidity and the funerary sphere was one area where investments in status or power seem to have been made, particularly during the earlier stages of the Early Mycenaean era. This is an issue that I return to in 3.2. Here, I firstly concentrate on what funerary feasting rituals were occurring during this period in order to have a base against which more abstract discussions of sociopolitical change and rivalry for power can be juxtaposed. After surveying the evidence for funerary feasting, I also examine in this section how mortuary rituals offer an effective ground for negotiations of status.

While the evidence for funerary feasting in the Early Mycenaean period may not be abundant, it is however varied and informative. It is worth briefly digressing to examine what preceded it

during the MH era to see how much feasting rituals appear to have developed alongside the sociopolitical changes of late MHIII-LHI. Evidence for any kind of cult performed around tombs during the MH period is very scarce indeed, although it is unclear whether this is due to its non-occurrence, practice on a smaller scale that left ephemeral traces, or focus on intangible rites. As for funerary feasting specifically, the rare example does suggest that it may have been a feature of mortuary ritual, such as the burnt animal bones found on and in a MH cist grave at Ayios Stephanos in Laconia and near several MH graves at Kirrha in Phokis (Nordquist 1990: 39; Lindblom 2007: 123). However, the scarcity of such examples, plus the comparable paucity of suitable ceramics found in and around graves, suggest that it was not a practice to have occurred at many funerals in MH Greece. The most common grave-good of the period, a single ceramic cup, may perhaps reflect actions that occurred pre-interment (Nordquist 2002a: 120-121), but this appears to have been on a very small scale and is by no means universal.<sup>1</sup> While Nordquist (1990: 40; 1999: 572; 2002a) suggests that the greater investment in funerary dining from the Shaft Grave era onwards may be a monumentalisation of customs that were already familiar and that drinking rituals were a feature of MH life, it has also been proposed that feasting at tombs was *newly* adopted by a greater proportion of the population (Voutsaki 1998: 44). Another possibility is that MH funerary feasts were based on daily fare, such as grains and legumes, that are unlikely to leave many traces in the archaeological record, and hence the consumption of animals on these occasions was a new feature. There certainly seems to have been a gradual increase in drinking-related funerary activities near the end of the MH period, as the appearance of ceramic “sets” in tombs, consisting of at least one pouring and one drinking vessel, attest the ritualisation of this practice at the dawn of the Early Mycenaean period (Nordquist 1999; 2002a: 121-123, 130).

In the Early Mycenaean era itself, the range of practices appears to be wider than in the subsequent palatial period. Most noticeably, feasting *per se* and drinking rituals seem to have been equally important, with a combined emphasis on libations and the consumption of liquid, probably wine, and on the eating of food, particularly meat. Such practices are first clearly documented in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, where combinations of animal bones and pottery in the fills of the shafts or on top of the graves attest the performance of feasting rituals at the time of inhumation. Throughout the whole of its use, Grave Circle B (GCB) shows the first consistent evidence for the regular incorporation of dining in funerary rituals (Table 3.1). Animal bones were found in conjunction with tombs A, B, Γ, Δ, I, K, N, Ξ, O and P,<sup>2</sup> with those from tomb O mixed with charcoal (Mylonas 1973: 22, 38, 45, 80, 110, 125, 158, 177, 187, 211). Compared with the scanty data from the rest of the MH period, this is a particularly high

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<sup>1</sup> Another explanation for the interment of a single cup might be that it was symbolic of activities performed during the deceased’s lifetime, which also supports the lack of MH funerary feasting rituals.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that tomb P is a later addition to the Circle in LHII, and therefore while it supports continued Early Mycenaean funerary feasting it is not so indicative of the first phases of the practice.

proportion of graves to have had funerary feasting occurring around them (10 out of 25), increased by the fact that nearly all the graves from GCB had a number of stemmed goblets found in and around them (Dickinson 1977: 52). Of course, the Mycenae Grave Circles have been exceptionally well studied, yet the amount of evidence for funerary dining there seems to represent a real shift in practices. The investment in funerary feasting in GCB is perhaps seen in the hypothesised use of stone slabs as “tables” for those dining around the tombs (such as at graves I, K and N: Mylonas 1973: 158; Graziadio 1988: 346; Dietz 1991: 117, 120, 126-126; Gallou 2005: 123).

Graziadio's phase	Tombs					
Early Phase (late MH)		I		E		
Late Phase I (end of MH)	B					
Late Phase II (LHI)	K	Γ	Δ	A	N	O
LHII	P					

**Table 3.1: Simplified version of Graziadio's chronology for GCB, portraying only those tombs that have evidence for funerary feasting (cf. Graziadio 1991: 406, table 1)**

A few of the graves have yielded further information to illuminate what types of feasting were occurring. Grave Γ had sherds from about 40 vessels mingled with the animal bones, principally cups and pouring vessels such as jugs (Mylonas 1957: 134; 1973: 53-70), which perhaps gives some rough indication of the scale involved in the funerals there, and also suggests that drinking occurred concurrently with meat consumption. The presence of seashells along with animal bones in graves I and N (Mylonas 1973: 110, 158) reveals a relatively varied feast.<sup>3</sup> This is supported by the variety of species consumed where the faunal remains have been identified: a small bird inside a cup in E, lambs and goats from I and O, and cattle teeth in N (Mylonas 1973: 91, 110, 158, 187). There was clearly no set menu that was considered to be appropriate for funerary dining, but rather a recognition that the act of consumption itself was a suitable way of marking the deceased's inhumation.

The patterns seen in GCB are also apparent in Grave Circle A (GCA), although the remodelling of the Circle in LHIIIB makes the issue more complex and it is not always clear whether the feasting debris dates from the original use of the Circle or from after its refurbishment. The fills regularly comprised black earth intermingled with pottery sherds, often of 'goblets'

<sup>3</sup> Oysters are specifically mentioned at the bottom of the shaft of N (Dietz 1991: 126-127).

(Schliemann 1878: 152-153, 161, 212, 285, 330), and Mylonas (1966: 94) also records animal bones found over and in the shaft fills, although the presence of sherds dating right up till the end of the LH period induces caution that the animal bones could be of later age also. While Schliemann (1878: 283, 332) did not pay attention to the faunal remains, he did however note the presence of large quantities of oyster shells in graves I and IV and, as he distinguishes a few unopened ones, it is very likely that the remainder were consumed along with the meat in the funerary feasts. There were plain stone slabs like those found in GCB, and it is possible that those in GCA were used in a similar way as serving table functions (Dickinson 1977: 47). The contemporary hollow between graves I and IV containing sherds and ashes testifies to some formalised ritual occurring in GCA (Mylonas 1957: 112-113; Laffineur 1995: 90). The use of this hollow is still not fully understood and it may not be directly connected with feasting; however, it does support the increased ritualisation of funerary practices around this period. Therefore, what we appear to see as we move from GCB and MHIII into GCA and LHI is a much greater investment in and elaboration of funeral rites. This took several forms but consistently included feasting activities, as the funeral meal becomes more archaeologically visible and undoubtedly also of larger scale.

The Shaft Graves are not only unique in the amount of study that has been dedicated to them but are also atypical in representing the funeral rites of a particularly high elite sector of Mycenae's population, probably the ruling group(s). Because of this, it is necessary to examine evidence from elsewhere during the Early Mycenaean period to see if similar developments were occurring in tombs of other social statuses and in other areas of the mainland. I do not intend to provide a comprehensive record of feasting debris in cemetery locations,<sup>4</sup> but rather to select relevant examples in order to illustrate the issues that I discuss. Drinking rituals are well attested in the Early Mycenaean period, although these take a variety of forms and differ from the kylix-based palatial customs.<sup>5</sup> Quantities of pottery, mostly plain kylikes, were found associated with nearly all the chamber tombs in the Kalkani cemetery at Mycenae, normally in front of the *stomion* (Wace 1932: 131). Around 1,000 examples of LHI ceramic vessels, with an emphasis on pouring and drinking shapes, were found in the fills from shaft graves I and II at Lerna (Lindblom 2007: 120; 2008). Ceramic Vapheio cups found just outside the *stomion* of the LHI-III A tholos II at Routsis, in Messenia, suggest drinking and libation ceremonies there (Boyd 2002: 154-156). There was drinking equipment of precious material inside the slightly later (LHIIB-III A1) tholos tomb at Kokla in the Argolid (Demakopoulou 1990: 119), again indicating drinking rituals, although of a possibly different form. As for non-elite graves,

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<sup>4</sup> This has already been achieved with impressive thoroughness by Cavanagh and Mee (1998), Boyd (2002) and Gallou (2005), all of whom have provided detailed studies of funerary practices and their archaeological remains, and whose work has been invaluable for what follows in this section.

<sup>5</sup> The smashing of drinking vessels did not appear regularly in funerary practices until the end of the Early Mycenaean period.

ceramics are a common feature in and around simple tombs, with drinking vessels forming up to 42% of funerary pottery assemblages in LHI, although this figure decreased by LHIII (Lewartowski 2000: 28).

However, drinking rituals are only part of the overall scenario, and feasting activities appear to have been a relatively prominent feature of the funeral rites. While it is impossible to say whether feasting was practised at every funeral, whether it was specific to certain groups, or even whether it was personal choice, there is evidence that it was occurring on a fairly regular basis. The fact that Lewartowski (2000: 43) records animal bones from tomb assemblages in his study of 'simple graves' indicates that feasting was not confined to the elite sectors of society, but was a funerary ritual that could be practised by anyone if they had the resources. At the other end of the spectrum, the tholoi at Berbati and Kokla both reveal evidence for feasting activities: at Berbati there were two deposits of ash and charcoal covering pits of animal bones, one at the end of the *dromos*, one in front of the *stomion* (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 54; Gallou 2005: 124); and at Kokla there were ovicaprid remains outside the *stomion* (Demakopoulou 1990: 122). Similarly, in Pylos tholos III there were cattle and ovicaprid bones inside the chamber (Blegen *et al.* 1973: 76-77), and bones of the same species were found in a pit inside the 'cenotaph' at Dendra, along with what was termed a bronze sacrificial knife (Persson 1931: 80). The remains of a whole ox were found in the LHI tholos at Voidhokilia (Boyd 2002: 126-128). Finally, in the two shaft graves at Lerna, there was a large quantity of animal bones, with a range of species including ovicaprids, pigs and cattle (Lindblom 2008).

The variety seen in the faunal remains from GCB can likewise be noted in tombs elsewhere; the examples just given comprise various combinations of ovicaprids, cattle and pigs, and indeed other species were found in smaller numbers at Lerna, including red deer (Lindblom 2008). A MHIII-LHI cist grave from the Lower Town of Asine has yielded fish vertebrae (Lewartowski 2000: 43), broadening out the spectrum of food consumed at funerary feasts. Likewise, as mentioned, shaft graves I and IV from GCA both held a large quantity of oyster shells, and shellfish remains were also found in the fills of the shaft graves at Lerna (Schliemann 1878: 283, 332; Lindblom 2008). There does not appear to have been a recognition of certain foods as appropriate for consumption in a funerary context, but rather it may have been that the food was supplied according to the deceased family's means, the local availability of comestibles, or perhaps even the time of year.

Alongside variety in what was consumed, there also seems to have been disparity in practices, although the diversity of our evidence may be due to a whole range of reasons – regional variations, temporal shifts in practices, archaeological recovery of different stages of rituals – as opposed to a genuine variation in what was occurring. In GCB, it appears that the debris of

funerary feasts was left over the grave itself (to be swept into the fill if the tomb was re-used for subsequent burials), as is evidenced in cases such as tomb I (Mylonas 1957: 151). At Lerna, the remains were found inside the fill (Lindblom 2007: 123; 2008).<sup>6</sup> Shaft graves are structurally different from tholoi or chamber tombs, and thus we might expect a difference in *post-festum* behaviour; however there was also variation amongst the larger tombs. As already mentioned, in Pylos tholos III, the tholos at Voidhokilia, and the Dendra 'cenotaph' the bones were kept inside the chamber (Blegen *et al.* 1973: 76-77; Boyd 2002: 126-128; Persson 1931: 80), although in the 'cenotaph' they appear to have been deposited in a pit rather than just left on the chamber floor. In Kephlovryso tomb 6 at Volimidhia (a chamber tomb), the remains of bones and ashes were instead left just outside the *stomion* (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 55). This was also the case at the Kokla tholos (Demakopoulou 1990: 122). At the Berbati tholos, there was a *stomion* deposit, but also an identical one at the end of the *dromos* (Gallou 2005: 124). In this case, the animal bones had been placed in a dug pit, as opposed to left in a heap. Such subtle variations around one practice may well be related to the sociopolitical fluidity of the period, without a central authority to control or influence behaviour, a point that is returned to in more detail below.

As a further example, those tombs where feasting (as opposed to just drinking rituals) occurred often show a disparity as to where the cooking of the meat took place. In chamber tomb 524 at Mycenae, there is evidence of a large fire in the centre of the chamber itself (Wace 1932: 141). At Pylos, tholos III bore a stratum of fire-touched earth along the side of the chamber, and tholos IV in the *dromos* 1.7m away from the entrance to the tomb (Blegen *et al.* 1973: 77, 100-101). At Routsis, there was a hearth at the outer end of the *dromos* of tholos II (Boyd 2002: 154-156). The 'cenotaph' at Dendra had an actual hearth installation inside the chamber, possibly used a number of times due to smoke discolouration on the wall behind it, plus a quantity of charcoal just inside the *stomion* and another heap of ashes just outside in the *dromos* (Persson 1931: 78-79, 91). This last deposit contained fragments of a coarse cooking pot, thereby clearly attesting food preparation at the tomb itself (Persson 1931: 91). Despite this diversity of practices, what is central to the above evidence is the fact that the cooking of meat *in situ* appears to have been part of the funerary rituals, whether the reason was practical (requirement for food to be hot) or symbolic (including the deceased in their final meal with the living).

Such variations certainly create a challenge when one attempts to reconstruct what constituted an Early Mycenaean funerary feast (cf. Boyd 1994: 94; Lewartowski 2000: 56-59). Without contemporary textual or iconographic data, it is practically impossible to trace what may have occurred prior to activities around the graveside, although undoubtedly there were additional

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted however that there was LHIII activity at the graves, when the fills were emptied and then re-filled again (Lindblom 2007: 117). It is therefore possible that the feasting debris had been left above or beside the graves prior to this point.

rituals. Once at the cemetery, after the body was laid in the grave and its grave-goods placed beside it, there seems to have been a farewell meal held by the mourners in or around the tomb (depending on the grave's form), probably accompanied by sacrificial slaughtering of the animals to be consumed and by libations. The presence of low meat-bearing bones, such as mandibles, amongst the higher meat-value parts in the two shaft graves at Lerna supports the proposal that slaughter indeed occurred *in situ* (Lindblom 2008). As 14% of the pottery assemblage there comprised cooking pots (Lis 2008: 142), it appears that the cooking of the food was likewise performed in the same location.<sup>7</sup> There appear to have been variations in whether the feast was held before or after the tomb was filled in/blocked up. In the Mycenaean Shaft Graves, it was consumed *after* the shaft had been filled and therefore was eaten around the tomb. In tholoi and chamber tombs, it seems to have been eaten *before* the *stomion* was blocked up and the *dromos* filled, and thus would have taken place in the chamber itself (depending on size), in the *dromos* and possibly around the tomb if more space was required. Following the meal, the debris was swept up and usually ritually disposed of, whether in a pit or left tidily over/in/by the tomb. Despite the presence of broken drinking vessels, the ritual smashing of pottery does not seem to have been a feature of the Early Mycenaean period, and the broken ceramics can be accounted for by contemporary accidents or taphonomic processes.

Having presented what Early Mycenaean funerary feasts were composed of, I now broaden the perspective and view in theoretical terms how they operated. I link funerary evidence specifically with the sociopolitical events and structures of the period in 3.2; here I take a more generalised view of how consumption in a mortuary context can be embedded in social negotiations. Funerals are inevitably times of high emotion due to the collision of death with everyday life, and pain, sorrow, shock, fear and anger may all be heightened – yet often combined with pleasure at the bringing together of people related by blood or common interest (Huntingdon & Metcalf 1979: 2, 23; Hayden 2009: 37-39). When a tomb is opened to receive a body, the cemetery is transformed from its everyday appearance as a feature of the landscape into a heterotopic location outside the bounds of quotidian life (Boyd 1994: 86-87). Every action thus becomes intensified and memorable; human bonds are strengthened due to the proximity of crisis; normal emotional stability is undermined (Hayden 2009: 39). A funeral therefore creates an ideal ground for the conveying of social messages, including the following:

- It can increase group cohesion, as a tightly bonded group of people united in their kinship to the deceased (or their friendship with/support of him) are brought together to partake in a highly emotional ritual. This is especially efficacious in smaller-scale social structures, i.e. in a small settlement where people are familiar with each other and are controlled by an indigenous leader as opposed to an outside authority.

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<sup>7</sup> 14% of sherd count; 10.5% of estimated vessel count (Lis 2008: 142).

- It can emphasise the deceased's social status in order that the living will be impressed by his wealth/power/nobility and remember him as such. This also serves to promote his relatives' social status by proxy and can be an effective way of negotiating for increased social capital.
- It can re-negotiate the deceased's social status so that it improves upon what it was during his lifetime. As in the previous example, this principally benefits his relatives as they employ the death of one of their members in a competitive manner, by building a more lavish tomb than expected or by filling his grave with luxurious grave-goods that will impact upon those who view them during the funeral rites.
- It can emulate what is known to occur at similar rites performed by those of higher status, in order to project a required image. This can be the case both in times of social transition and competition (when contestation for power or position is at issue) and when a powerful central authority has influence over the people in its polity (when conformity is the accepted way of acting).

While they are not comprehensive, the above scenarios hopefully provide an indication of the principal ways in which funerary rites can negotiate and display social positions. I conclude this section by examining the effectiveness of Early Mycenaean funerary feasts as arenas for impacting social messages upon attendees.

Funerary feasts are highly intimate occasions, a fact that was particularly the case in the earlier part of the Early Mycenaean period. At such occasions, it is customary to have a specific interest in the deceased, whether blood kinship, friendship or political alliance. Hence there was a very particular set of requirements in order to be able to partake in one, and only certain people would have fitted these. I would suggest that the increase in tomb size over the Early Mycenaean period accompanied a change in rites whereby the feast moved inside the tomb, highlighting the intimacy and restrictive nature of the funerary rituals. The small LHI chamber tomb 517 at Mycenae was only 6m<sup>2</sup> (Wace 1932: 67-74), and some of the smaller tombs at Volimidhia have been estimated to have held only one or two adults at a time (Boyd 1994: 94), so that one can be certain that feasting would not have occurred directly in these graves. Indeed, the abandonment of shaft graves may support a shift in practice, as rites by necessity had to take place outside the tomb. On the other hand, the average size of a LHII tholos chamber was 38.5m<sup>2</sup>, which could have held perhaps 30 people comfortably, allowing for the body and tomb furniture.<sup>8</sup> This is still not a large figure however and suggests a restricted number of people attending. Moreover, tholoi were the most substantial tomb type of this

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<sup>8</sup> The figure is based on an average diameter of 6-8m in LHII tholoi as recorded by Boyd (2002: 83). It is worth noting that this increase in space and hence in how many people could have been catered for continues the pattern seen since the MH period, when the amount of pottery suggests that drinking rituals were restricted to very minimal numbers, perhaps only 2-6 people (cf. Nordquist 2002a: 132).



period; the largest early chamber tomb from Mycenae whose size can be reconstructed (518) is only 19m<sup>2</sup> (Wace 1932: 75-87). This constraint on space could tighten social bonds, if cohesion and unity were the aim of the deceased's family, or ensure that those permitted to enter the tomb were able to comprehend clearly any statement or negotiation of social status that was occurring.

In this context, however, it is worth mentioning the recent analysis of funerary feasting debris from shaft graves I and II at Lerna. The tightly homogeneous LHI pottery indicates one major event or several in a relatively short period. The sheer quantity of provision is unlike anything else seen in a funerary context from the Early Mycenaean era. As mentioned earlier, there were c.1,000 vessels, with an emphasis on pouring and drinking forms, and estimates of guests range from 250-1,000 – exceptional even at the smaller end of the scale (Lindblom 2007; 2008; Lis 2008: 143). The faunal remains agree with these estimates and, despite varying zooarchaeological analyses, comprise well over 1,000kg of meat (Lindblom 2008).<sup>9</sup> If indeed the feasting debris was the result of one occasion, then the presence of several hundred guests takes the evidence from Lerna completely out of the range of any other contemporary data and the destruction of so many vessels is a truly exceptional display of wealth. As we at present await full publication of the graves, I wish merely to note that this may change our understanding of Early Mycenaean funerary rituals, although the possibility that Lerna was an anomaly is equally viable and would indeed be appropriate given the fluidity of practices during this period.

A change in emphasis in the rituals from outside to inside the tomb can also be supported by the presence of feasting debris directly in some chambers (e.g. Pylos tholos III), indicating that consumption activities were occurring in the tomb itself by this point (from LHIIA).<sup>10</sup> Such activities within the tombs are supported by further features, such as benches inside the chamber, presumably to cater for the participants (e.g. Mycenae chamber tombs 518 and 529, the Kokla tholos tomb: Wace 1932: 78, 136; Demakopoulou 1990: 119), and permanent installations such as the built hearth in the Dendra 'cenotaph'. Other unique features attest the practice of rituals occurring directly in the tomb, for example in the Dendra 'cenotaph' were two "table"-type structures which, whatever they were actually used for, indicate that the tomb was a space not merely for the deposition of the dead but also for the use of the living (Persson 1931:

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<sup>9</sup> Recent analyses have suggested 1,360kg; however there have been two dramatically different sets of zooarchaeological studies performed on the faunal remains and not too much weight should be placed on the exactitude of this figure (Lindblom 2008).

<sup>10</sup> The gradual monumentalisation in the architecture of tholoi and chamber tombs is concurrent with their increase in size, with ashlar masonry and gabled roofs (Galanakis 2009). It is as if parallel spaces were being created for the dead and the living, whereby feasting in tombs echoed feasting in non-mortuary halls.

77-78).<sup>11</sup> Finally, the presence of lamps in tombs (the Dendra 'cenotaph', chamber tomb 518 at Mycenae: Persson 1931: 79; Wace 1932: 75-87, 136) likewise support the probability of activities occurring in the chamber itself.<sup>12</sup>

Performing funerary rites within tombs could work in two ways. Firstly, by bringing the guests who were consuming the feast into a confined chamber, lit only by small lamps and in an atmosphere proximate with death, the unity of the attendees would be emphasised. Even the newly deceased may have been viewed as partaking in the feast due to its presence in the chamber, an ideology supported by cases where the corpses hold cups, such as a MHIII-LHI pit grave in Asine: Barbouna, several graves in late MH Lerna, and the Vapheio tholos tomb (Lewartowski 2000: 31; Zerner 1990: 23; E. Davis 1977: 1).<sup>13</sup> Group solidarity would thus be produced, and the uniting of the living with the dead would no doubt impress the occasion memorably upon the minds of the guests. Secondly, it was an opportunity for the hosting family's wealth or control of resources to be displayed, in order to maintain their previous sociopolitical roles, threatened by a kin-group member's death (Hayden 2009: 40). If we envision feasting activities to have occurred in the chambers of larger tombs, then it would be a prolonged occasion for those present to have viewed not only the tomb's impressiveness but also any valuable or eloquent objects laid alongside the corpse. This, combined with the bodily memory formed through an emotive meal eaten in heterochronic circumstances, would mean that the social statements thus conveyed about the deceased and his kin would be remembered after the rites were concluded. The liminal, heterotopic space of the cemetery was a place where everyday rules and statuses need not apply or could be altered; moreover, by being separated from quotidian life, there was a strong chance that the events and messages conveyed through the funerary activities would remain vivid in the participants' minds when they returned from this demarcated zone into their ordinary lives.

## *2. Vessels and Feasting – The Eloquence of Grave-Goods*

Thus far, I have concentrated on the actual funerary feasting rituals occurring in and around the tomb space, and have not moved beyond them to more subtle analysis. In this section however, I examine the vessels deposited in tombs as grave-goods, to discover what they can inform us about their past use-life in feasting contexts (if they had one) and their role as status markers, bearing in mind the sociopolitical changes occurring during the Early Mycenaean period and the concurrent negotiations for social position. The funerary sphere was paramount in this era, not solely because it has provided us with the majority of our archaeological evidence, but also in

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<sup>11</sup> They were termed a 'slaughtering table' and a 'sacrificial table' by Persson (1931: 77-78).

<sup>12</sup> The fact that lamps were found in tombs with chambers, where rites could occur within, and not in pit-type graves likewise suggests that they had an actual role to play in rituals (Lewartowski 2000: 43).

<sup>13</sup> Earlier in the MH period, a skeleton from the Prehistoric Cemetery at Mycenae (PCE'52 Grave XXV) had a cup directly over its face (Alden 2000: 26), as if it was drinking from it.

its role as an arena for status display and negotiation. The vessels interred in graves act as a starting-point, through which I explore the highly complex web of social interactions between feasting, elite display and sociopolitical developments. Thus this section forms a bridge between the funerary and sociopolitical spheres of feasting (discussed in 3.3), as the evidence that has survived in the funerary arena is often most informative about non-mortuary feasting practices and the sociopolitical changes that characterised this era.

While ceramic vessels, especially drinking cups, can often be revealing about the rituals surrounding an interment, it is those of more valuable material that tend to inform beyond the tomb-side activities. The deposition of metal vessels alongside the deceased is a relatively common feature of the most well-appointed Early Mycenaean graves (cf. E. Davis 1977). Shaft grave IV from GCA is undoubtedly the best example of this phenomenon with one gold rhyton, nine gold cups, one gold amphoriskos, three silver rhyta, two silver jugs, 10 silver cups, 11 bronze cauldrons, seven bronze hydriae, one bronze krater and one bronze cup shared amongst its five interments (Karo 1930: 71-121).<sup>14</sup> In grave III there was one gold cup, a gold jug, four gold lidded vessels, two silver cups, a bronze cup, four bronze cauldrons and two bronze pans around the five bodies (Karo 1930: 43-66). Grave V, with three bodies, contained five gold cups, eight silver cups, a silver jug, a bronze jug, three bronze cauldrons and three bronze hydriae (Karo 1930: 121-155).<sup>15</sup>

The practice of burying metal vessels seems to have developed around MHIII/LHI, as there is a sudden burst of wealth deposited in tombs at this time (Dickinson 1977: 79). While I concentrate upon vessels, due to their inherent connection with feasting, it is well known that they were excavated along with an impressive quantity of other metal artefacts, including jewellery and weapons, and were therefore part of a wider phenomenon. The beginnings of this practice can be seen in GCB, with two bronze and two silver vessels from A (including a jug); a bronze cup and two gold cups from Γ; a silver cup and bronze phiale from Δ; a bronze lekane, krater and two jugs from E; a silver cup from I; and a bronze phiale and jug and a gold cup from N (Mylonas 1973: 22, 31-32, 47-48, 73-75, 81, 88, 92, 95-98, 112, 119, 161-162, 172-173). Although the Shaft Graves contain perhaps the most familiar examples of precious metal vessels in tombs, the trend was not restricted to them and extended both geographically and chronologically. Other examples include the Dendra tholos tomb with two gold cups, two silver cups, two silver and gold cups, and a bronze vessel (Persson 1931: 14, 16-17, 38); the Dendra

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<sup>14</sup> Schliemann's (1878: 215, 231-237, 239-243, 274-277) original excavation figures differ slightly: 13 bronze cauldrons, 14 bronze jugs, seven bronze bowls/basins, a bronze tripod, 10 gold cups of various forms, a gold jug, a silver cup and a silver jug. As Karo's figures are now seen to be canonical, these are the ones that I employ in this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> While I have put the number of bodies in each grave in order to give some perspective to the proportions of vessels interred, it does not greatly affect the overall conclusion – that the bodies in GCA were buried with exceptionally rich grave-goods.

'cenotaph' with four bronze hydriae, three bronze jugs, six bronze bowls of various shapes and four bronze tripod-cauldrons (Persson 1931: 76); Tholos V (the 'Grave Circle') at Pylos with two bronze cauldrons, a bronze bowl and a silver cup (Blegen *et al.* 1973: 156, 158-160); the tholos tomb at Kokla with seven silver cups (Demakopoulou 1990: 119); tholos 3 at Peristeria with one silver and three gold cups (Boyd 2002: 154-156); and the Vapheio tholos with two silver cups, two gold cups, a silver jug, a bronze cup and a bronze ladle (Wright 2004c: 98).

What is significant is that these metal vessels are overwhelmingly for drinking and pouring purposes (cf. Table 3.2 and Appendix I). Therefore, there appears to be an association between precious metal as a form of elite display and the practice of drinking rituals. I believe it is not an etic judgement to see these metal vessels as highly valued in their own time, due to the investment it would take to commission or to acquire one – a result of the vessel's inherent material worth and of the craftsmanship regularly applied to them (many of the cups have extremely fine *repoussé* or inlay decoration, such as the krater and rhyton from shaft grave IV with battle scenes on). Hence the act of depositing them in a tomb would not only ensure that a participant in the funerary rituals would view them and recognise the deceased's actual or projected status (especially if, as I argued in 3.1, there were extended rites held in the chamber itself), but it would also halt the circulation and employment of the objects and metaphorically destroy them in a display of conspicuous consumption (cf. Voutsaki 1997: 38; 1998: 46). Rather than being kept as heirlooms or exchanged for other valuable commodities, these precious metal vessels were taken out of the cycle of use in a demonstration that the deceased and/or his relatives could afford to give them up in a non-reciprocal exchange.

As well as the value of the materials used, the variety of vessels is striking. Certainly amongst the earlier tombs (LHI-II), there is no accepted "drinking set"; while almost all the vessels are related to the act of drinking, they comprise different components in every assemblage and the cups are exceptionally varied in form. Wright (2004b: 17-25; 2004c; Figure 3.1) has explored this topic in detail and, to avoid repetition, I here summarise the conclusions he draws. There is no standardised form, such as the kylix becomes during the palatial period, and instead there is considerable experimentation, blending shapes and motifs from both the mainland and Crete to create new varieties (Wright 2004c: 97-98). Because the owners of the tombs had the wealth and the ability to acquire these fresh ideas and to experiment with them, they did so, in an act that was an expression of elite display. Likewise, the lack of a standardised "drinking set" reflects the desire to incorporate a different range of vessels from those in other tombs around in an effort to make the deceased prominent for posterity (Wright 2004c: 97).

Tomb	Drinking (e.g. cup)	Pouring (e.g. jug)	Mixing (e.g. krater)	Storage (e.g. amphora)	Cauldron	Other
GCB A		X				X ('αγγεῖα') <sup>16</sup>
GCB Γ	X					
GCB Δ	X					X (phiale)
GCB E		X	X			X (lekane)
GCB I	X					
GCB N	X	X				X (phiale)
GCA I	X					
GCA II	X					
GCA III	X	X		X		X (pyxides, alabastron, pans)
GCA IV	X	X	X	X	X	X (bowls, rhyta)
GCA V	X	X				
GCA VI	X	X				X (bowls)
Dendra Tholos	X					X (pyxis)
Dendra 'Cenotaph'		X			X	X (bowls)
Dendra, ch. tomb 2	X					
Dendra, ch. tomb 10	X		X			
Dendra, ch. tomb 12	X					
Kazarma Tholos	X					
Mycenae, ch. tomb 24	X					
Mycenae, ch. tomb 78	X					
Pharai Tholos	X					
Pylos, Tholos V	X				X	X (bowl)
Kokla Tholos	X					
Peristeria, Tholos 3	X					
Routsi Tholos	X					
Vapheio Tholos	X	X				X (ladle)

**Table 3.2: Presence/absence of metal vessel forms in selected Early Mycenaean graves**<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Unspecified, cf. Mylonas 1973: 22.

<sup>17</sup> I have chosen to make this table presence/absence only due to the discrepancy between presentation of data amongst different scholars (particularly for the Grave Circles, where I have relied on Mylonas (1973) and Karo (1930)), and the potential of some less than canonical vessel forms serving multiple purposes. Its aim is merely to show general trends of forms, not to be a quantitative analysis.

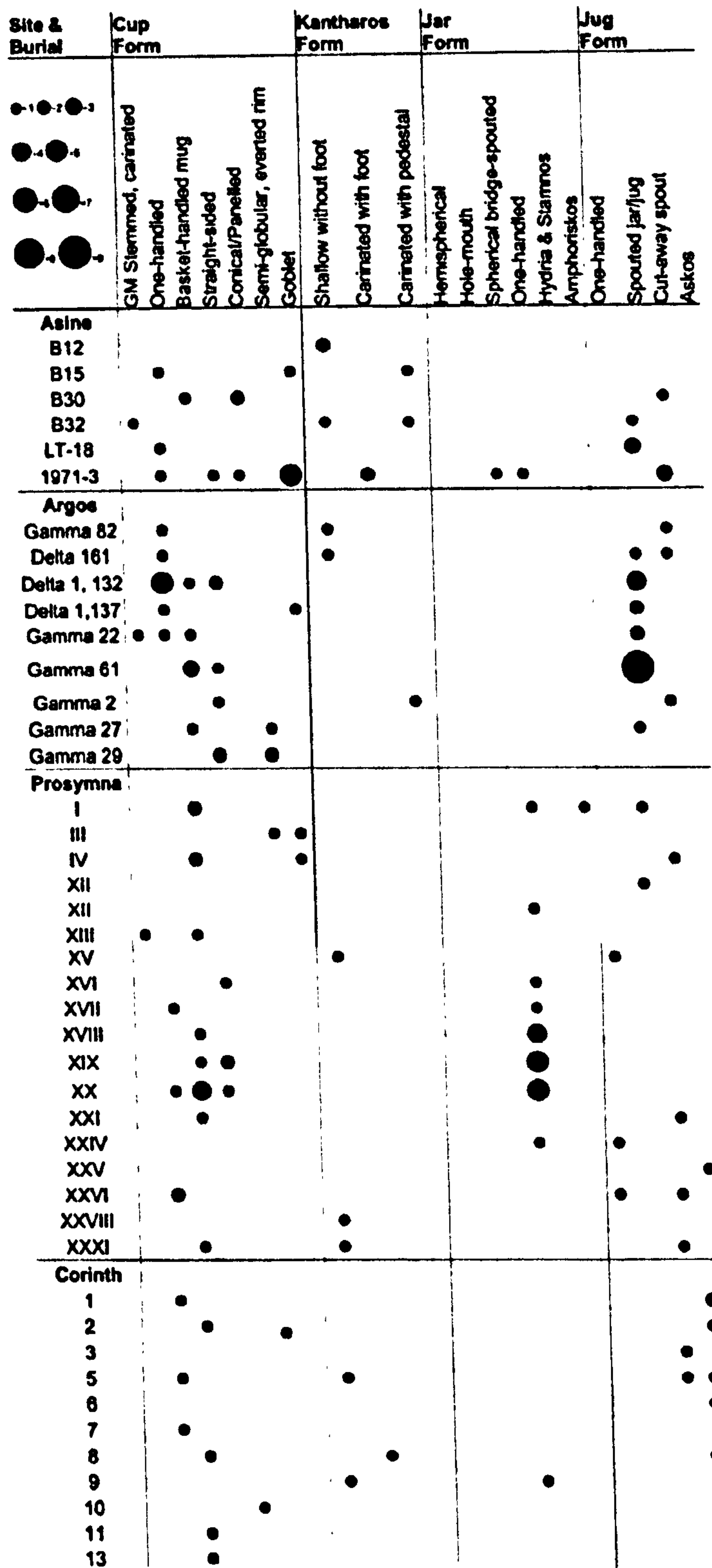


Figure 3.1: Pottery groups from selected cemeteries in the Corinthia and Argolid (Wright 2004c: 93, table 5.1)

Wright's (2004b; 2004c) conclusion that this variety seen in drinking assemblages found in graves is due to the desire to express social and economic superiority certainly appears to be a valid assertion, and is one that I uphold here. However, it may be worth considering whether there was also greater fluidity of *practices* surrounding drinking rituals in the Early Mycenaean period, which is reflected in the diversity of equipment deposited around the deceased. While it may not be possible to confirm this definitively in the archaeological record, the clear variety

already noted in feasting and drinking activities during the funerary rituals makes it highly viable. While the practice of drinking rituals *per se* appears to have been accepted amongst the elite to the extent that they wished to acknowledge it for posterity in their tombs, it is very possible that there was as yet no established way to perform it. The cups cover all shapes and capacities from Vapheio cups to stemmed goblets, from round teacups to the unique ‘Nestor’s cup’ in shaft grave IV (cf. Schliemann 1878: 237). Some are accompanied by jugs, indicating an emphasis on pouring, while the relatively rare appearance of a krater (e.g. shaft graves E and IV) hints towards the presentation of the liquid or even the mixing of it. Moreover, the presence of a wooden “mug” in the Dendra tholos (Persson 1931: 31) points to other vessels that we may be missing which would expand this scenario. What I suggest we are seeing here is an echo in the funerary record of what may have been a wide variety of practices in life, centring around consumption, but with the fluidity to be performed as the individual desired or understood.

Such an inference would be supported further if one could prove that at least some of the vessels deposited in tombs had actually been used rather than just obtained for conspicuous display. Hence, with proof of consumption activities occurring in the arena of daily life, any information that the vessels provide on feasting practices would be strengthened. It does indeed appear that this support exists in a number of the larger vessels that were interred, as some bear patent signs of having been repaired. The fact that it is principally the largest vessels (cauldrons, hydriae, kraters) that have been mended (Matthäus 1980: 323) suggests that it was economically more efficient to place a metal patch on a vessel than to obtain a new one. However, it is equally likely that they were regarded as items worth keeping in use, whether treasured for their own value or for the biography that they had accrued. While some of these repairs were executed due to accidents in the original manufacture of the vessel, others were required through the effects of long use and wear (Matthäus 1980: 323). Eleven of the bronze vessels from GCA bear these patches, indicating not only their value to their owners but also evidence for feasting practices in Mycenae at this time in the non-mortuary sphere (three cauldrons from graves III, IV and V, a krater from grave V, six hydriae from grave IV and one hydria unattributed to any grave: Matthäus 1980: 83-84, 89, 152, 165-67).<sup>18</sup> While the kraters and hydriae support the drinking rituals that I have been discussing, the cauldrons may well have been used for the preparation of food in stews, and thus are one of our few direct items of confirmation for Early Mycenaean non-funerary feasting.

A further intriguing argument has been made by Palaima (2003: 200) regarding the bronze cauldrons, by interpreting a sign on one from shaft grave IV as the beginning of a name of a Cretan artisan, Aigeus. This would make the vessel a valuable import in its own right.

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<sup>18</sup> It should however be noted that the possibility of some of the repairs being due to manufacturing accidents means that these figures should not be stressed as accurate statistics.

However, he then links the name with some cauldrons also of Cretan workmanship that were recorded on the PY Ta tablets (Ta 641 and 709: Palaima 2003: 198-199). Palaima's emphasis is on the antiquity of the Ta cauldrons, illustrated by the fact that two are recorded as damaged. Yet it is also interesting in the light of the above discussion, whether one accepts Palaima's proposal or not, to note that cauldrons were a component of feasting equipment in the palatial period and that they were treasured even when they were damaged. It is indeed very unlikely that cauldrons which were already heirlooms at the beginning of the Early Mycenaean era could have survived for functional use in the late palatial period; yet the important point is that this vessel form was recognised for its use in feasting scenarios and hence these old, patched vessels from the Shaft Graves indicate the practice of feasting at this early date, when so much of our evidence relies on inferences.

Therefore, a careful reading of the metal vessels from Early Mycenaean grave assemblages indicates the almost certain existence of feasting events in the non-funerary sphere and the potential for fluidity of drinking and/or feasting practices. While we cannot definitely say what type of feasting these vessels designate, it is very possible that they served as aids to represent the deceased as he was in life, thus indicating the existence of sociopolitical feasting practices. By serving as referents to this activity, they would thus suggest to the attendees at the funeral that either feasting was a feature of the deceased's life for which he should be remembered, or that he had been in a suitably affluent position to sponsor feasting (whether he actually did or this was a projection in order to increase his status in death is inconsequential).<sup>19</sup>

A continued careful analysis of the vessels deposited as grave-goods can expand upon this point. Wealth in the Shaft Graves appears to have been a mixture of ascribed and achieved; hence statistical analyses on the correlation between elite grave-goods, sex and age have suggested trends but not often given clear-cut results. Moreover, the difficulty in associating grave-goods with specific bodies has led to diverging results between those who have analysed them statistically (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986; Laffineur 1989; Graziadio 1991; cf. Dietz 1991). However, up until a certain point (Kilian-Dirlmeier's Phase 3 or Graziadio's Late Phase II), it appears that only males from either Circle were accompanied by metal vessels (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986: 181; Graziadio 1991: 427; cf. Table 3.3).<sup>20</sup> Later in the Early Mycenaean period, the tholos at Dendra held a man and a woman together in pit 1; the man was accompanied by five precious metal vessels on or closely adjacent to his body and the woman by only one, lying between her arm and her chest (Persson 1931: 16-17, 38). This pattern is not by any means a rule, but it may reflect the idea that feasting and drinking practices were more connected with

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<sup>19</sup> The presence of miniature cooking pots in several of the Volimidhia chamber tombs (4, 5 and 6) indicates the symbolic currency that commensal activities had at this time (J. Hruby pers.comm.).

<sup>20</sup> There were some skeletons that could not be sexed, such as two from Graziadio's Early Phase (1991: 417, 427).



the male sphere of influence than with the female.<sup>21</sup> While I do not doubt that women could participate in drinking rituals also (and indeed it is very likely given the presence of cups as grave-goods with female skeletons), it appears that it was men who used these practices as a form of status display and social competition, hence their increased association with the precious versions of these vessels. It is notable that metal vessels are only found in the most well-appointed of the Shaft Graves (cf. Table 3.4); for example, Kilian-Dirlmeier's (1986: 185) detailed study revealed that no grave with only one weapon was furnished with a metal vessel.<sup>22</sup> There was a clear association between economic superiority (ostentatious deposition of grave-goods), masculinity (multiple weapons) and feasting equipment (valuable vessels), which suggests doubly that the practice of feasting was concentrated in the male sphere and that it was generally those of the highest social and economic positions who could display their association with feasting.

Moreover, in Lewartowski's (2000: 59) survey of 'simple graves', he observed that kraters were not found in the graves of children. I wonder whether this is more than an accident of preservation and instead reflects a belief that feasting, particularly in this case drinking rituals, was an adult (and male) activity in the sense that it offered opportunities for social negotiations and assertions of status. It is unfortunate that skeletal remains from the Shaft Graves are not sufficiently well preserved for age analyses to be performed on a comprehensive scale. Moreover, the difficulty of associating grave-goods with specific individuals has led to discrepancies in interpretation between scholars, yet the one constant is that those from GCB who have been aged and associated with metal vessels have all been adult males. Kilian-Dirlmeier (1986: 185, table 6) lists three individuals aged late 20s, early 30s and mid 40s (Na, Δ and Nb respectively), while Laffineur (1989: 223; cf. Table 3.5) records four bodies aged early 20s, late 20s, early 30s and mid 40s (A, N[west], Γ[northwest] and N respectively). While a tiny sample, this does however show that there may not have been a correlation between age and metal vessels – in other words, that one did not need to be of a mature age in order to host feasting events. This is perhaps because during this period feasting was an accepted method of *gaining* social status for oneself as well as for *displaying* it.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> This is supported well by evidence from MH Lerna, where male graves were associated more with multiple vessel sets and with forms for eating and drinking purposes than female graves were (Voutsaki *et al.* 2006: 65). Moreover, study of dental disease and microwear and stable isotope analysis on the Lerna skeletons have shown that males appear to have consumed more protein (meat?) than females did (Voutsaki *et al.* 2005: 100; 2006: 63).

<sup>22</sup> Laffineur (1989: 233; cf. Table 3.4) attributes grave-goods to bodies slightly differently from Kilian-Dirlmeier and therefore his results diverge to a minor extent; however, the general trend remains.

<sup>23</sup> The situation differs in GCA, where two children were buried in grave III, one of the richer graves in the Circle. This may be due to the fact that wealth appears to have been more ascribed by this point in Mycenae, and therefore vessels/feasting may not have been used in such an active, competitive way.

Kilian-Dirlmeier (1986)			Laffineur (1989)		
Body	Sex	Metal vessels	Body	Sex	Metal vessels
<b>Grave Circle B</b>					
			A	M	1 silver
Γc	M	1 gold/silver	Γ east	M	1 gold
Γe	M	1 gold/silver, 1 bronze	Γ north-west	M	1 gold, 1 bronze
Δa	M	1 gold/silver	Δ centre	U	1 silver
			Δ north-east/west	U	1 bronze
			E	F?	4 bronze
			I	U	1 silver
Na	M	2 gold/silver, 1 bronze	N west	M	1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze
Nb	M	1 bronze	N	M	1 bronze
			Ξ	U	1 silver
<b>Grave Circle A</b>					
Ia	F	? gold/silver, ? bronze			
Ib	F	? gold/silver, ? bronze			
II	M	1 gold/silver, 2 bronze			
IIIa	F	? gold/silver, ? bronze			
IIIb	F	? gold/silver, ? bronze			
IV north	M	? gold/silver, 6 bronze			
IV east	M	? gold/silver, ? bronze			
V north	M	8 gold/silver, ? bronze			
V south	M	2 gold/silver, ? bronze			
Via	M	1 gold/silver			
VIb	M	1 gold/silver, 3 bronze			

**Table 3.3: Correlation of sex with metal vessels in the Shaft Graves<sup>24</sup>**

<sup>24</sup> Laffineur does not tabulate the grave-goods from GCA. A '?' marks where the amount of vessels is uncertain, due to the difficulty of associating grave-goods with specific bodies.

Kilian-Dirlmeier (1986)			Laffineur (1989)		
Body	Metal vessels	Other grave-goods	Body	Metal vessels	Other grave-goods
			A	1 silver	3 knives, 1 helmet, 3 swords, 2 daggers, 1 spear, 2 diadems, 1 'Gemaschenhalter', 1 bracelet, 2 pins, 1 faience vase, 8 pottery vessels
Γc	1 gold/silver	Sword, dagger, spear, knife, 'Gemaschenhalter', gold belt, diadem, ceramics	Γ east	1 gold	2 swords, 3 daggers, 1 lance, 1 diadem, 1 gold sheet, 1 'Gemaschenhalter', 1 belt
Γe	1 gold/silver, 1 bronze	Sword, dagger, knife, gold mask, seal on armband, necklace, ceramics	Γ north-west	1 gold, 1 bronze	2 swords, 3 daggers, 1 mask, 2 necklaces, 1 seal, 6 pottery vessels
Δa	1 gold/silver	Sword, dagger, tweezers	Δ centre	1 silver	1 sword
			Δ north-east/west	1 bronze	1 whetstone, 19 arrowheads, 2 pottery vessels
			E	4 bronze	11 diadems, 1 pin, 6 pottery vessels
			I	1 silver	3 pottery vessels
Na	2 gold/silver, 1 bronze	Sword, dagger, spear, tweezers, knife, gold sheet, an alabaster/faience vase, diadem, helmet, ceramics	N west	1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze	1 knife, 1 helmet, 1 sword, 3 daggers, 1 spear, 2 diadems, 1 alabaster vase, 1 unspecified item
Nb	1 bronze	Sword, dagger, tweezers, diadem, ceramics	N	1 bronze	1 pair of tweezers, 1 sword, 1 dagger, 1 diadem, 4 pottery vessels
			Ξ	1 silver	3 rings, 1 pottery vessel

**Table 3.4: Occurrence of metal vessels with other grave-goods in GCB<sup>25</sup>**

<sup>25</sup> The lack of figures in Kilian-Dirlmeier's data is due to the fact that her tables display presence/absence rather than quantities.

Kilian-Dirlmeier (1986)			Laffineur (1989)		
Body	Age	Metal vessels	Body	Age	Metal vessels
			A	23	1 silver
Γc	Adult	1 gold/silver	Γ east	Adult	1 gold
Γe	Adult	1 gold/silver, 1 bronze	Γ north-west	33	1 gold, 1 bronze
Δa	33	1 gold/silver	Δ centre	Adult	1 silver
			Δ north-east/west	Adult	1 bronze
			E	Adult	4 bronze
			I	Adult	1 silver
Na	28	2 gold/silver, 1 bronze	N west	28	1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze
Nb	45	1 bronze	N	45	1 bronze
			Ξ	Adult	1 silver

**Table 3.5: Correlation of age with metal vessels in GCB<sup>26</sup>**

Therefore, what the evidence suggests is that feasting and drinking activities were an important factor in the sociopolitical developments of the Early Mycenaean period, particularly in the earlier phases when the social structure of mainland Greece was changing dramatically. This is an area that I now explore in more depth, broadening the perspective from the precious metal vessels discussed already to encompass the wider developments occurring during this period and to place feasting in its social context.

Feasting appears to have been part of an elite “package” adopted or at least expressed visually from the end of the MH period. Alongside it was an emphasis on martial skills through war and hunting (an ideology that is conveyed effectively on the Grave Circle stelai: Younger 1997), the exercise of trade and acquiring of overseas goods (made explicit in many of the Shaft Grave assemblages, with motifs and objects borrowed or directly imported from Crete and across the Aegean),<sup>27</sup> and an expression of newly acquired ostentatious wealth (Acheson 1999: 97). This “package” is seen most clearly in what appears to have been an accepted set of grave-goods in the most well-appointed Shaft Graves, combining a regular selection of weapons, precious metal vessels and a variety of jewellery or other gold objects (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986: 180-182). Feasting itself is intertwined with both trade and ostentatious wealth, in the valuable materials used to make the precious vessels incorporated in the grave assemblages and in the employment of foreign shapes and designs.<sup>28</sup> While consumption of alcohol in feasting contexts was an

<sup>26</sup> The exactitude of both authors’ figures is drawn from Angel’s (1973) osteological analysis. However, these should be taken with extreme caution, as it is impossible to age Bronze Age skeletons to such specificity. Neither author discusses the age of the skeletons from GCA.

<sup>27</sup> It is likely that access to foreign lands through importation, as opposed to actual voyaging, was enough to imbue one with an elite or “special” status, due to the mystique of distance and exotica (cf. Helms 1988; 1993).

<sup>28</sup> The relationship between feasting and hunting is also very powerful, and I explore it fully in 4.2.

activity practised long before the Early Mycenaean period,<sup>29</sup> the production and display of precious metal drinking sets, albeit not yet standardised, indicate that behaviour surrounding these events was in the process of being elaborated and codified (cf. A. Sherratt 1995: 19). Hence the arena of feasting was being opened as an opportunity for status display, notably amongst the elite who could afford to invest more into the occasion. There are a number of aspects of feasting that make it ideal for social negotiation; these include the fact that it mobilises and displays the resources that one can draw upon (such as food, alcohol, manpower and equipment), it is a highly social event and brings together a wide range of people in a variety of relationship levels, plus it can replicate familial generosity or be powerfully diacritical depending on the host's aims (Wright 2004d: 73, 76). In a factional society – or the transitional stage from apparent egalitarianism to a fixed authority, characterised by competition for power (cf. Wright 2004d: 71) – events such as feasting offer opportunities to demonstrate one's wealth and group backing and to attract new supporters. As no one in this type of society has sufficient power to compel a large group of people to support them, continual social performances such as feasting both remind the current supporters of their allegiances and constantly renegotiate new commitments, a strategy that is reflected in the precious metal vessels that accompany the bodies in the richest graves of the era (Wolpert 2004: 139; Wright 2004d: 71).

In other words, the metal vessels play a twofold role. Firstly, they reference the feasting that the deceased may have performed during his lifetime and employed as a field for social negotiations. It is worth observing that the precious metal vessels are often deposited close to or even in the deceased's hand, or are laid on his chest. For example, in shaft grave V a Vapheio cup lay right next to one of the bodies (Schliemann 1878: 291-292); in the Dendra tholos five precious metal vessels lay either on the man's chest or next to him; likewise a gold and silver cup lay next to the woman's chest (Persson 1931: 16-17, 38); in the Vapheio tholos the cups were placed at the hands of the bodies (E. Davis 1977: 1; Boyd 2002: 202). While, as mentioned in 3.1, these could reference the corpse's involvement in the funerary feast, they could equally symbolise his participation in feasts when alive. It may be surmised that these vessels were inextricably intertwined with the person's identity, so that the combination of feasting and status display continued into the afterlife. The belief in the continued need of the body for sustenance cannot of course be overlooked, yet ceramic vessels could have fulfilled this purpose equally effectively and the choice of metal vessels is more likely to have been made for symbolic reasons. As Bennet (2004) has explored in the context of the Shaft Graves, the objects selected for deposition alongside the body help to create a 'biography' of the individual buried. Their status, deeds and aspirations are signalled by what accompanies them

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<sup>29</sup> The earliest organic residue evidence for wine manufacture in the Aegean as a whole comes from the EBA, at Myrtos-Phournou Koryphe on Crete (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 142-145). It seems to have been adopted for use in feasting occasions very quickly, to judge from EM ceramic evidence for drinking rituals at Knossos (Day & Wilson 2004).

for posterity, and therefore the placing of feasting and/or drinking vessels around the body creates an image of the deceased's former activities.

Secondly, the metal vessels continue this process of aiding social negotiation by actively making displays of elite status in the tomb assemblage. As Wright (2004c: 97) has discussed, without an institution of authority such as the palaces later became, the elite were able to experiment and to set the agenda, in terms of innovation and of excess if so desired. Extreme deployment of valuable items, such as in a tomb like shaft grave IV, demonstrate explicitly control of wealth and resources and are in essence a form of advertisement.<sup>30</sup> For those who viewed the body and the tomb chamber before they were sealed up after the funerary rites, it would be clear how much wealth the deceased's family had to draw upon and, depending how much they invested upon the equipping of the grave, the social position that the deceased held in life would either be re-emphasised or renegotiated. If, as the evidence strongly suggests, funerary feasting occurred in the larger tomb chambers, where the body and its accompanying grave-goods would be visible, then the participants may well have felt that the deceased still partook in the activities – accompanied as he was with his own drinking equipment – and continued the behaviour that he had performed when alive to manipulate his position in the social matrix.

The vessels that constitute part of the grave-good assemblages therefore are an important element in a web of social interactions – reflecting the social competition and state of flux that existed in Greece from MHIII/LHI onwards, and also playing an active role in continuing these strivings for position and social fluidity into the mortuary sphere. It cannot be said either that they were a product of this sociopolitical situation (cf. Wolpert 2004: 139), or that they were the cause (cf. Voutsaki 1995: 60), but rather that these factors were intertwined in a highly complex way that cannot be unravelled into a chain of cause and effect. Moreover, it may be seen that the feasting evidence concurs with other data as part of a wider pattern of social changes that were occurring at this period on mainland Greece. As this is an exegesis on feasting, I do not go into these other data in the same detail; however I raise some of the relevant issues in order to demonstrate how feasting played its role as part of a broader series of developments.

The competitive nature of MHIII-LHII society can be traced in several areas beyond those of mortuary deposition and feasting activities. I mentioned above the emphasis on war and hunting as part of the Early Mycenaean elite “package”, as demonstrated in the martial scenes on the GCA grave stelai and the increased numbers of weapons buried in the Shaft Graves (cf. Whittaker 2001: 356; Heitz 2008: 21-22). It appears that this was a feature of both ideology and

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<sup>30</sup> As mentioned earlier, even though the grave-goods were distributed between five interments in this tomb, the sheer quantity is so exceptional as not to invalid my point here.

actual practice at this period. The rapid changes in settlement patterns observed at the beginning of the Early Mycenaean era (for example in the Nemea Valley: Maran 1995: 68; Cherry & Davis 2001: 150-152) could be due to a number of reasons, yet they indicate some swift alterations in societal structures. While I would not necessarily go so far as to state that they result from people fleeing the threat of warfare (Acheson 1999: 100-101), they suggest the presence of unrest in society, a situation that could be produced by the competitiveness of increasingly powerful lineages. Whether there was actually strife or not (the “war wounds” seen on the GCB skeletons are ambiguous: Angel 1973; Acheson 1999: 98-99; Triantaphyllou in press), the ideology of antagonism was strongly expressed in a new emphasis on naturally defensive settlement locations, such as Kiapha Thiti in Attica (Maran 1995: 68-69), and on the increased building of fortifications, such as the LHI wall at Pylos (Acheson 1999: 98). The building of the tholoi have also been read in terms of competitiveness and antagonism. As is discussed in more detail in 4.3, the labour invested in the construction of a tholos tomb is sufficient to make a public statement about the deceased’s wealth and control of manpower (or that of his family). Wright (1987: 174) has estimated that shaft grave V would have taken 10 men 10 days to dig, while the Aigisthos tholos would have taken the same 10 men 240 days to dig – which does not include the time taken to *construct* the tomb subsequently. Tholoi therefore became a method for compelling people to recognise the deceased’s sociopolitical superiority. Given the time taken to dig and construct them, it is highly likely that they were prepared prior to death, and thus the occupant was able to take a dominant role in directing his statement of high social position for posterity.

However, a tholos was not just a personal method of aggrandisement, but the investment taken to construct such a large edifice would indicate that the original commissioner intended it to be used by his descendents and therefore that he was marking out a place for his lineage on the landscape. At the time of change induced by a powerful figure’s death, this emblem of permanence would effectively keep the individual’s family in a dominant position (Mee & Cavanagh 1984: 49). In this transitional, factional stage of Early Mycenaean society, individual achievement was intertwined with an emphasis on family bonds. I do not see the two as mutually exclusive (i.e. ascribed versus achieved status), but rather that they could operate simultaneously to form a person-based type of power, where one’s individual qualities – acquired through inheritance and/or achieved through deeds – were what created one’s position in society. There was no institutional role to fill, so one was free to amass power and status according to how effectively one’s aggrandising techniques operated, but the backing of an elite/powerful lineage kept the competition grounded in the social framework and gave a reference point against which personal deeds could continue to raise one’s position.

The competitiveness between different lineages in Early Mycenaean society is best exemplified by the overlap in use between the two Grave Circles at Mycenae. While I do not intend to enter into the arguments of how Mycenaean elite society was structured in relation to the two Circles,<sup>31</sup> it appears very likely that they contained different lineages, both of which held a dominant position in MHIII-LHI Mycenae (cf. Angel 1973; Dickinson 1977: 39-57; Alden 1981: 88-116; Mee & Cavanagh 1984: 48-49; Mylonas Shear 2004: 7-11). These lineages were physically distinct from the surrounding populations, due to strikingly good health, on average greater height, and a high proportion of males who were active and strong (Angel 1973; Triantaphyllou in press). More intriguingly for the purposes of this thesis, it is also possible that they had a diet that differed to some extent from the population around, supported not only by general good health, greater size and lack of malnourishment,<sup>32</sup> but also by the occupant of tomb Σ, who was discovered to have had gallstones (Mylonas 1973: 226; Angel 1973: 383), suggesting that his diet was potentially a rich one. Stable isotope analysis performed on several individuals from the Grave Circles shows that at least some people relied on marine protein to comprise part of their diet (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 222, 226). This reliance on fish protein is surprisingly rare (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 80; Fischer 2007: 132-133) and indicates the possibility of a distinctive diet for these elite individuals at Mycenae.<sup>33</sup> These elite seem to have been able to mobilise qualitatively and quantitatively greater foodstuffs for their diet, particularly those that may not have been accessible to the wider population, and this may have found expression through feasting activities. If the man in tomb Σ had indeed had an excess of rich food, then there is no reason why his condition could not have been induced by feasting practices. Overall, the skeletal evidence from the Grave Circles discriminates the lineages interred in them from the surrounding populations – whether generally through physical good health, or specifically through the feasting that they partook in – and this lends support to the idea that one’s family background created the elite *milieu* in which one’s individual deeds would distinguish one further.

To widen the perspective again, to have a tholos appears to have become a form of elite marker that distinguished on two levels: between the occupant’s family and the rest of the settlement,

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<sup>31</sup> Or three? Alden (1981: 106-108) suggests a Grave Circle C to the east of GCB.

<sup>32</sup> As seen in the reduced proportions of enamel hypoplasia in the teeth of the skeletons in comparison to other contemporary populations (Angel 1973: 387; cf. also Voutsaki *et al.* 2006: 90; Triantaphyllou in press).

<sup>33</sup> Stable isotope analysis performed on MH populations at nearby Lerna have shown very low indications of reliance on marine diet (Triantaphyllou in press). Interestingly, the men in the Grave Circles seem to have had higher levels than the women, suggesting that consumption of marine produce was based on social criteria (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 223, 227; Fischer 2007: 133). The difficulties of preserving fish during transportation, the lack of intensive fishing methods, and fish’s later absence from Linear B records also indicate that it may have been an elite food substance (Fischer 2007: 132-133). The Grave Circles’ lineages’ consumption of marine produce can be seen physically in the shellfish remains left around the graves after the funerary feasts (cf. 3.1) and in the contemporary ‘palace II’ on the citadel (cf. 3.3).



and between the settlement surrounding the tholos and other societies around. In other words, it has been read as indicating a centre of power, where there was a lineage dominant enough to construct one. For example, tholos IV at Pylos was constructed in LHI, an early sign of this settlement flourishing, yet the nearby settlement of Volimidhia did not have a tholos, which has been explained as Pylos holding dominant power in this area (Bennet 1995: 597; J. Davis 1998: 59-60). Hence, the spreading of tholoi over Messenia from LHI and the Argolid from LHIIA seems to represent a form of elite emulation, as it became an accepted way to express not only familial aspirations but also local supremacy (*contra* Voutsaki 1998: 51). Elite emulation, as opposed to elite competition, became more prevalent from LHII-LHIIIA1 onwards, in the later part of the Early Mycenaean era. The cycle is familiar – as more people employ symbols of elite lifestyle, the original elite require different methods to distinguish themselves. In this case, the emphasis moved out of the funerary sphere into that of daily life and sociopolitical architecture and activities became an arena in which to express one's status. Chronologically this is somewhat crude, but the lack of consistent evidence spanning the Early Mycenaean period means that the altered emphasis away from the funerary sphere into non-mortuary monumental architecture is one of the few changes in societal structure that it is possible to observe occurring throughout this era.

This shift takes us full circle back to the precious metal vessels interred in tombs. The adoption of standardised drinking sets in LHIIIA1 reflects both increasingly codified ways of performing feasting and drinking rituals, and also the way in which more people were buried with these markers of consumption activities in order to reflect their life's practices and their wealth (Wright 2004c: 99-100). These sets tended to contain two or three cups, a krater, a jug and sometimes a ladle – all the components necessary to perform a standardised mixing-pouring-drinking ritual, incorporating all the elements of which previously only one or two had been emphasised. In addition, the appearance of tinned pottery in LHIIIA, such as in tomb 10 at Dendra or chamber tomb I:1 at Asine, illustrates clearly the desire to emulate the symbols of elite activity, to make it seem as if one was able to partake in lavish feasting (Gillis 1997; Wright 2004b: 25; 2004c: 99; Shelton 2008: 222-223). Whereas before the precious metal vessels interred as grave-goods had been a way to express individual power and wealth, by the end of the Early Mycenaean period in LHIIIA1 they were objects to emulate in order to adopt the symbols of an elite lifestyle. What is consistent throughout the whole period however is the acknowledgement that feasting activities and drinking rituals formed part of elite behaviour and were an arena in which social status was competed for and negotiated, and merely referencing this in the form of vessels was sufficient for one's social aspirations to be expressed.

### ***3. Halls and Feasting – Consumption in the Sociopolitical Sphere***

The preceding section highlighted evidence amongst grave assemblages to attest the presence of sociopolitical feasting in the Early Mycenaean period. This included the following:

- Vessels which had clearly been used numerous times before deposition in tombs, including a range of forms that were suitable for the preparation and serving of both food and drink, and ostentatious vessels that would be appropriate for feasting as opposed to eating *per se*.
- Deposition of precious metal vessels close to the corpse, suggesting the significance that they held in life for the deceased and signalling feasting activities he participated in.
- Skeletal evidence from the Mycenae Grave Circles, indicating a differentiated and varied diet for the elite groups of that settlement.

Therefore, it appears we can accept that sociopolitical feasting occurred during the Early Mycenaean period; however, the task of locating where this took place and expanding our understanding of it is more complex, particularly due to the fact that the era covers a lengthy chronological span and is not one coherent period. Unlike in the subsequent palatial era, we do not have preserved the remains of a complete feasting assemblage, comprising dining locales, ceramics and faunal remains in one bounded area, such as has been reconstructed from the excavations at the palace at Pylos. In searching for suitable locations in which feasting could have occurred, I firstly investigate the sites that became later palatial centres (with the inclusion of the Menelaion as it has more similarities with this group). Secondly, I examine other sites which bear direct evidence for feasting activities, but which later proved to have a less successful trajectory for internal reasons or through the expansion of a nearby palatial centre. In this way, I hope to gain a multi-layered understanding of the era's sociopolitical feasting that encompasses a range of site sizes, in order to include what is already known about feasting practices and to expand the boundaries of our current knowledge. A methodological difficulty in considering the Early Mycenaean period is the temptation to attribute the significance of the palatial centres backwards in time. While to an extent I yield to this by exploring the larger sites first, almost all of which were later palace locations, I aim not to interpret sociopolitical structures through a palatial lens. Therefore I reserve a discussion of how the sites fitted into a hierarchical framework until after a survey of the evidence.

The questions of whether the Mycenaean palaces developed from Cretan or traditional mainland models and which sites can reliably be said to have borne a proto-palace are still uncertain (e.g. Kilian 1987; Barber 1992; Rutter 2005; Wright 2006a), with different authors accepting different definitions of what constituted a major structure pre-LHIII, offering slightly different chronological *termini*, and seeing the derivations of these monumental buildings from different

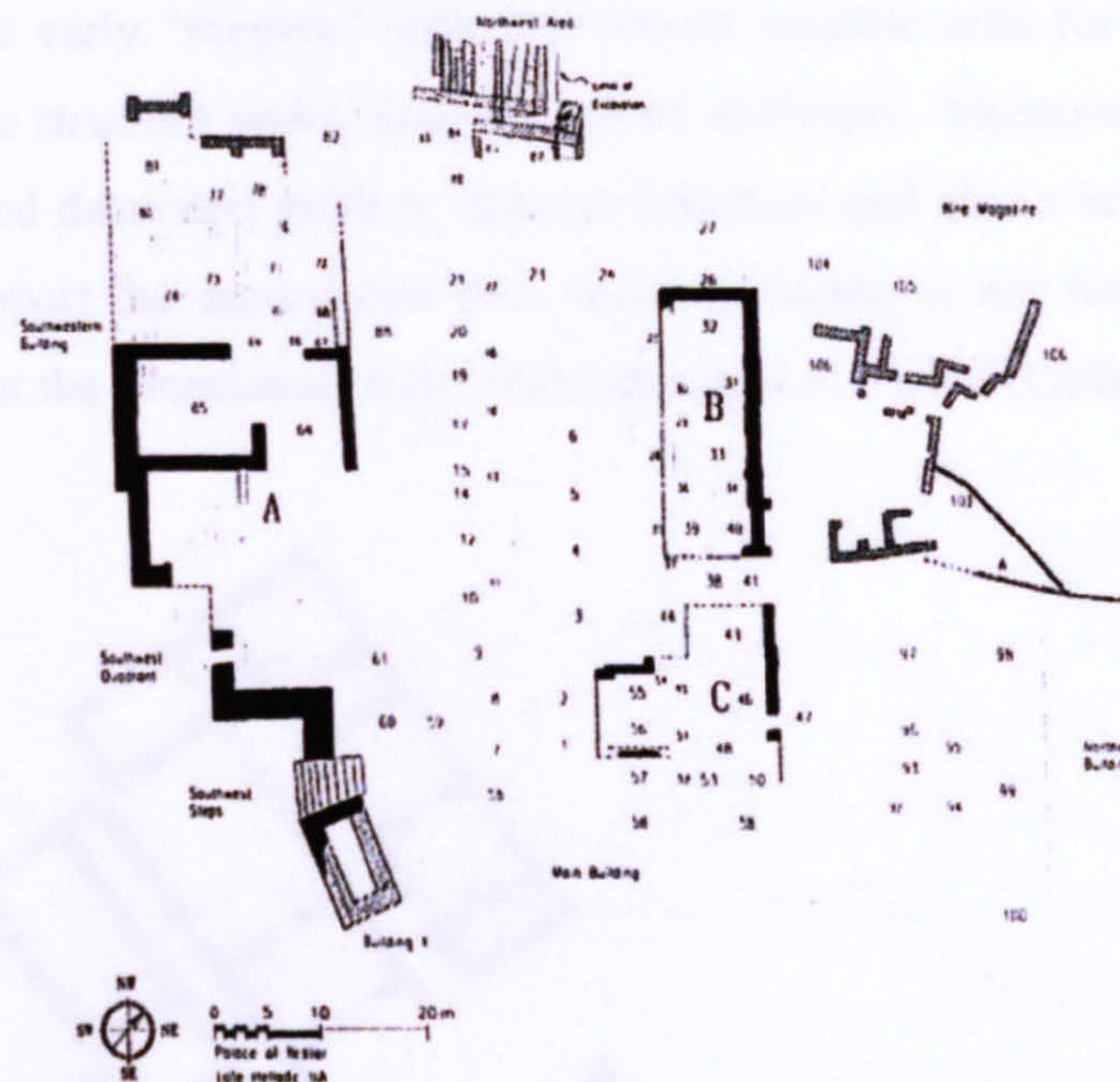
parts of the Aegean. Although it is not entirely satisfactory, I employ Barber's (1992: 22) use of the term 'mansion' in this section to describe these major structures, as proto-palace is too teleological. Mansion implies occupation by a powerful person who may hold equal authority to other people in a relatively restricted vicinity; palace implies one preeminent leader over a wider geographical area. The larger sites which have yielded the most information regarding early mansions and/or feasting are Pylos, the Menelaion in Laconia, Mycenae, Midea, Thebes and Tiryns and it is these that I investigate first.

Pylos has revealed the presence of some form of mansion on the acropolis from the beginning of the LH period (Kilian 1987: 213; Barber 1992: 15; M. Nelson 2001: 113-117, 180-181). This structure, or series of structures, underwent two more changes before the LHIIIB palace was built (M. Nelson 2001: 117-154, 181-186; Rutter 2005: 23-25), so that the well-preserved and familiar final palace was the fourth major construction on the site. The stratigraphy is complex, and here I intend to focus on the presence of feasting events and their sociopolitical connections. While the earliest remains are too scanty to draw any definitive conclusions, it appears that at least some of the rebuilding work was not a case of making alterations to an existing plan,<sup>34</sup> but substantially remodelling the design of the mansion. The possibility of different occupants at these stages is rather likely, supported by tholoi V (the 'Grave Circle'), IV and III covering the whole Early Mycenaean period but destroyed in succession. If so, this would sustain my argument in 3.2 that the era was one of fluid power and social competition.

Little can be said about the LHI and LHII structures, except that they existed on the same ground that the LHIIIB palace occupied; however the LHIIIA mansion appears to have differed radically from the later palace plan and may have consisted of at least three independent structures grouped around an open court (A, B and C in Figure 3.2; Rutter 2005: 25). What would later be termed halls 64 and 65 of the Southwestern Building were in existence as part of structure A, with the two halls apparently displaying the same plan that they had in LHIIIB. As this is the only part of the (admittedly very sparse) remains that resembles a hall in layout, it is certainly possible that feasting could have occurred there – a fact that is substantially supported by the later feasting that took place in hall 65, as discussed in 4.1-2. While I consider this a reasonable conjecture, the comparatively poor preservation of much of the Southwestern Building and the subsequent redevelopment of the acropolis after the LHIIIA fire (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 32-34; 432) have meant that further archaeological support is not at present forthcoming.

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<sup>34</sup> Therefore, this was unlike the alterations made in the final part of LHIIIB, shortly before the palace's destruction, which did merely make changes to an already existing plan (Shelmerdine 1984).



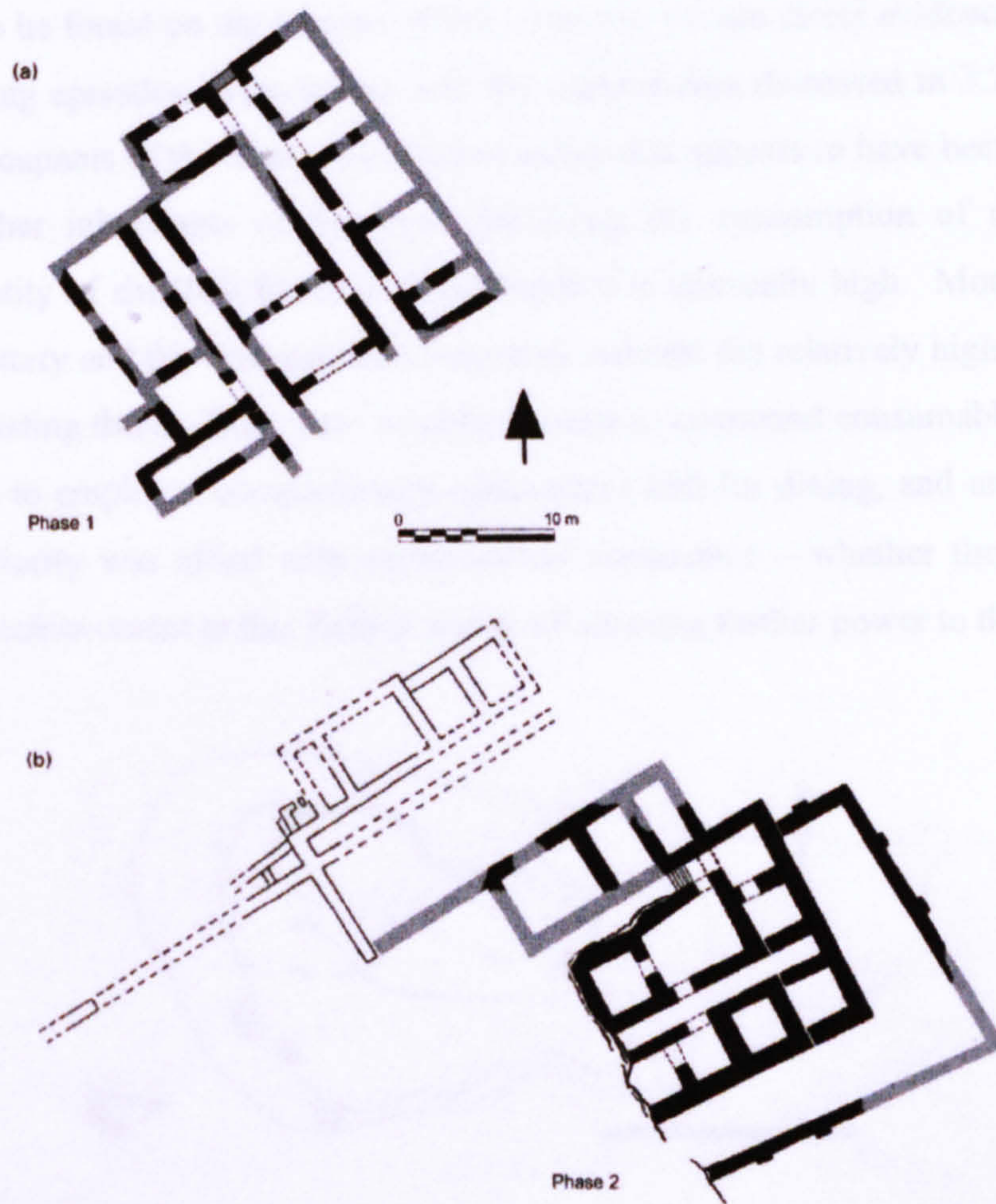
**Figure 3.2: Plan of LHIIIA mansion at Pylos (M. Nelson 2001: 331, fig. 81)**

A similar situation can be seen at the Menelaion, where there were three mansions on the Aetos hill (although the last one in LHIIIB is beyond the scope of this chapter).<sup>35</sup> The chronology is even more complex than at Pylos and is reconstructed in substantially different ways between scholars. Mansion I, certainly constructed by LHIIIB at the latest, had a tri-partite structure with a megaron-type complex in the centre (**Figure 3.3**). While it is debated how far the central complex's resemblance to a later megaron extended – Catling (1976-77: 29) refutes a hearth and columns while Barber (1992: 11-12) thinks their presence highly probable – it is significant that the basic plan is very similar. The reason for the replacement of this structure by Mansion II is again unclear; Catling (1976-77: 29) believes an earthquake destroyed Mansion I not long after it was constructed, leading to it being rebuilt on the same location but reoriented and expanded, while Barber (1992: 12-13) provides a less clear-cut scenario with possibly two coexistent buildings on the hill. Mansion II however was used in LHIIIA1 and then abandoned, and it appears to have had a fairly similar plan to that of the first mansion, albeit larger and more complex (**Figure 3.3**).<sup>36</sup> The significant point to be drawn from this opaque scenario is that the core plan of the Menelaion Mansions did not alter dramatically throughout the site's history and the basic megaron-style complex remained (cf. Kilian 1987: 212). While I would not necessarily suggest that similarity of design equals similarity of practice, the central halls of the Mansions would have provided an ideal location for feasting practices if they were performed at

<sup>35</sup> There were three mansions that we can definitely trace the plans of; however there does seem to have been occupation on the hill before Mansion I and possibly also a monumental building there at that time (Barber 1992: 11).

<sup>36</sup> It also seems to have covered both terraces of the Aetos hill – the lower one where Mansion I had been situated, and an upper area, presumably that where the present remains of the shrine of Menelaos and Helen are (Catling 1976-77: 29). This conglomeration of several buildings recalls that of the contemporary mansion at Pylos.

the Menelaion. These early “megara” were the largest suitable area for entertaining in the Mansions (much as the structure under halls 64 and 65 at Pylos). Moreover, the presence of a fill containing plain and decorated goblets, decorated kylikes and also a krater in the LHIIIA1 layer does indeed support the supposition that drinking rituals, if not feasting as well, were occurring in this area at the Menelaion in the Early Mycenaean period (Catling 1976-77: 31).

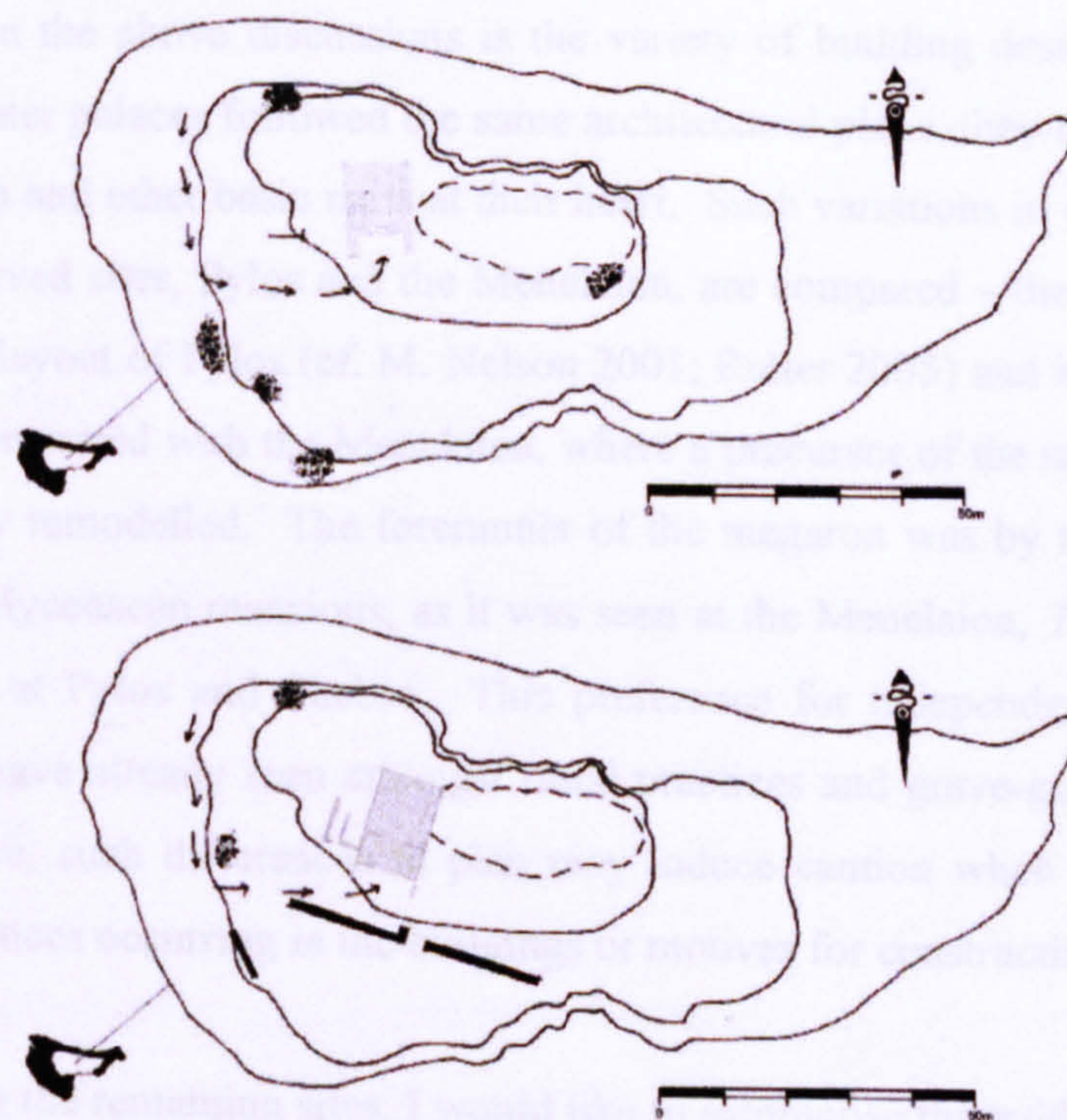


**Figure 3.3: Mansions I (top) and II (bottom) at the Menelaion (Wright 2006a: 12, fig. 1.2)**

Similarly, the later palace at Mycenae was not the first monumental structure on the citadel; building traces remain below the palace from two successive mansions, the first dating from LHI-IIA (French & Shelton 2005: 177) and the second from LHIIB (Mylonas 1966: 59; Kilian 1988: 295; Barber 1992: 15, 17; French 2002: 47; French & Shelton 2005: 175). Mylonas (1966: 59-60) restored these mansions' plans in the form of a megaron (cf. French 2002: 46-47; **Figure 3.4**), which is principally based on conjecture but would reflect the more or less contemporary Mansion I at the Menelaion. As at both Pylos and the Menelaion, there were several phases of construction with the LHI-IIA 'palace II' undergoing a realignment in LHIIB-III A1 (keeping the megaron-style plan<sup>37</sup>), followed by the building of the palatial phase construction itself at the end of LHIIIA2 (French 2002: fig. 14; French & Shelton 2005: 177).

<sup>37</sup> Or introducing it if Mylonas' reconstruction for 'palace II' is erroneous.

However, the most significant feature of the earliest detectable mansion ('palace II'<sup>38</sup>) at Mycenae is not the uncertain layout but the activities that can be reconstructed as performed within it. The building is associated with five deposits of what has been termed 'high quality "domestic" refuse', containing fine pottery, wall-painting fragments and – most notably – much animal bone, principally sheep and pig, and large amounts of oyster and mussel shells (French 2002: 47; French & Shelton 2005: 176). In these deposits therefore, connected with the only major building to be found on the summit of the acropolis, we see direct evidence for relatively sumptuous feasting episodes. This tallies with the skeletal data discussed in 3.2, where it was noted that the occupants of the Grave Circles had a diet that appears to have been differentiated from that of other inhabitants of Mycenae, including the consumption of marine protein. Indeed, the quantity of shellfish found in these deposits is unusually high. Moreover, the high quality of the pottery and the wall-painting fragments indicate the relatively high social status of whoever was feasting there. They were wealthy enough to command consumable resources and fine vessels and to employ a comparatively ostentatious hall for dining, and undoubtedly such economic superiority was allied with sociopolitical dominance – whether the feasting was a display of their achievement in this field or a way of accruing further power to themselves.



**Figure 3.4: Reconstruction of LHI-IIA 'palace II' (top) and LHIIB-III A 'palace III' (bottom) at Mycenae (French 2002: 46, fig. 14)**

Midea and Thebes likewise appear to have had earlier predecessors under their LHIIB palaces. That at Midea, of LHII date, would have been contemporary with some of the wealthiest tombs in the nearby Dendra cemetery and thus perhaps an ostentatious counterpart to them in the

<sup>38</sup> French's 'palace I' was EH/MH and has not yielded evidence for activities that occurred within it, or even whether it was an elite residence (French & Shelton 2005: 175-177).

domestic sphere (Walberg 1999b: 888). The 'First Palace' at Thebes may likewise have dated as early as LHII, although it was of non-traditional form (Kilian 1988: 296; Barber 1992: 18). Finally, it should also be noted that Tiryns had a mansion or proto-palace in LHIIIA, probably a successor to earlier buildings in the same location and with a megaron-style plan of a hearth and four columns (Kilian 1987: 209; 1988: 294; Barber 1992: 17-18; Darcque 2005: 368; Wright 2006a: 18-20). The remains of wall-paintings going back to LHIIA indicate the importance of the series of monumental buildings that existed there and hence of the occupants' superior social status to those around (Rodenwaldt 1976: 1-65; Barber 1992: 18). However, although feasting in a decorated hall could be inferred from comparison with the data from Mycenae and the similarity in plan with later megara, there is as yet no relevant evidence for it.

In all the cases I have explored, excepting the Menelaion, a substantial mansion existed from at least part-way through the Early Mycenaean period and was replaced by a palace on the same location, suggesting that the position was regarded as associated with some form of sociopolitical power. These mansions indicate the presence of a powerful elite who were able both to command this desired location for their own use and to mobilise resources to build conspicuously monumental structures (in both size and interior decoration). One of the most notable points from the above discussions is the variety of building designs and site history. While not all the later palaces followed the same architectural plans, they did almost all contain a standard megaron and other basic units at their heart. Such variations in design are seen when the two best preserved sites, Pylos and the Menelaion, are compared – the non-canonical, even Cretan-influenced layout of Pylos (cf. M. Nelson 2001; Rutter 2005) and its regularly changing structure can be contrasted with the Menelaion, where a precursor of the megaron complex was retained and subtly remodelled. The forerunner of the megaron was by no means a universal part of the Early Mycenaean mansions, as it was seen at the Menelaion, Tiryns and possibly at Mycenae, but not at Pylos and Thebes. This preference for independent choice echoes the diversity that we have already seen amongst ritual practices and grave-good deposition during this era. Therefore, such differences in plan may induce caution when one attempts to find similarities in practices occurring in the buildings or motives for constructing them.

Before considering the remaining sites, I would like to summarise the evidence that we have for feasting at those already examined, beginning with the indications provided by grave-goods in 3.2. Precious metal vessels were buried with the elite that they belonged to; actually used and symbolically valued, they attest the existence of feasting practices amongst these elite. The mansions could only be constructed by those who were socially, politically and economically superior and therefore were occupied by the elite, perhaps the same as those who made statements for posterity in their tombs through their grave-goods. The combination of these two lines of argument allows one to surmise the occurrence of feasting events in the dwellings that

the elite held, which would have been the most monumental structures of the era. Such a surmise is upheld in all the cases discussed, where there were locales or halls for feasting events that would have been impressive settings and have demonstrated the occupants' superiority. In the cases of the Menelaion and Mycenae, it is moreover possible to go beyond the above hypothesis and support it with direct evidence for feasting practices, attested through dining equipment and zooarchaeological debris.

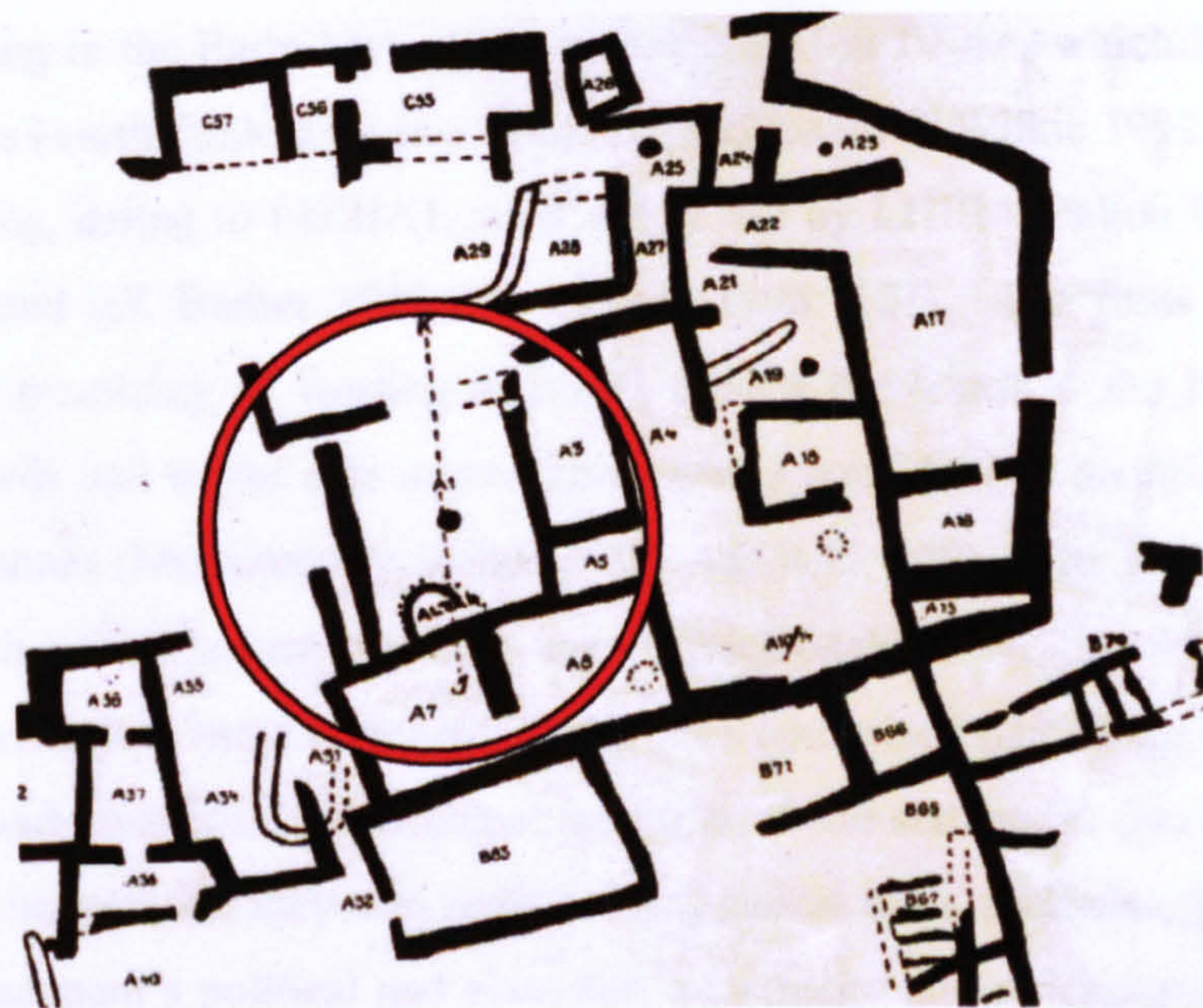


Figure 3.5: Plan of hall A1, Malthi (Valmin 1938, plan III)<sup>39</sup>

I now turn to what are usually regarded as lesser-order sites where there is direct evidence for sociopolitical feasting. The site of Malthi in Messenia was occupied from the later MH period onwards; hall A1 was constructed early on in the settlement's history and appears to be an attempt at a monumental structure, albeit not overtly grand, but with an area of 48m<sup>2</sup> (Valmin 1938: 79; Figure 3.5). It was certainly the largest hall in the settlement<sup>40</sup> and seems to have been well equipped for events of a convivial nature, due to its large hearth along the northwest wall (Valmin 1938: 80). It was also significantly located in the centre of the settlement. However, as well as being suitable for feasting events, it yielded direct evidence that such occasions may have occurred there in the form of animal bones in an ashy layer covering the hearth and mingled with a collection of LHI-III sherds (Valmin 1938: 80-81). Commensality had clearly taken place in A1 and its ideal location and design for fulfilling the role of leader's hall suggests that a form of sociopolitical feasting was what had occurred. This is how it has been interpreted from Valmin's (1938: 79) original assessment of it, laden with the preconceptions of his era, as a 'ruler's reception room', to Wright's (2006a: 9) recent proposal that it was the dwelling of the 'headman' of the primary lineage in the settlement and a locale

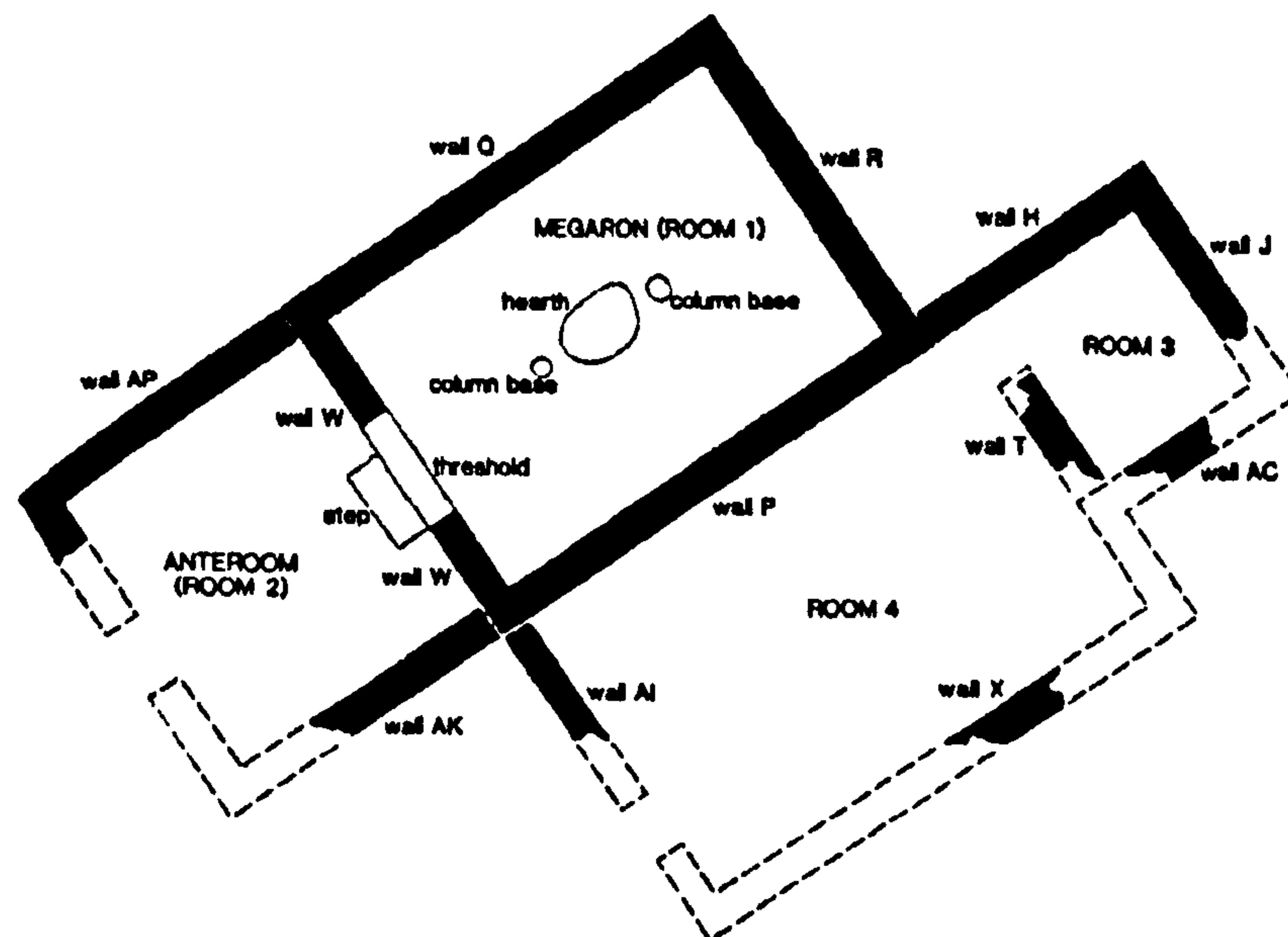
<sup>39</sup> The figure shows the centre of the settlement only, not the full extent of Malthi during this period.

<sup>40</sup> It remained so even after B85 (the 'Mycenaean megaron') was constructed in LHIIIB, which is discussed in more detail in 4.4 (Valmin 1938: 173-174).



for sociopolitical gatherings. I certainly agree with this overall view and would only seek to link it with the present discussion, in which hall A1 may have acted as an arena for binding together the inhabitants of Malthi, an opportunity for the people present to negotiate their statuses between each other and, most importantly, for the leader whose dwelling it was to make explicit to those around his comparative superior social position and wealth.

A very similar situation can be seen in Nichoria, also in Messenia. Here likewise there was one preeminent building in the Early Mycenaean settlement, Unit IV-4A, which has been termed a megaron due to its hearth flanked by two columns (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 434-435; Figure 3.6). This building, dating to LHIIIA1, went out of use by LHIIIA2 when Pylos' ascendancy and realm increased (cf. Barber 1992: 20; Bennet 1998: 127). The finds in the 'megaron' clearly attest the practising of feasting activities around the hearth – the floor was liberally covered with sherds and in the area around there was a considerable quantity of charcoal and some ovicaprid bones (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 434-435, 440). The excavators themselves preferred to attach a ritual meaning to such events (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 435, 438)<sup>41</sup> and, while I do not doubt that ritual elements would have comprised part of the feasting activities, the location of such events in the principal structure of the settlement (presumably a leader's dwelling) would suggest that they also served sociopolitical aims, undoubtedly a combination of displaying the occupant's political and economic superiority and renegotiating the structure of the local social network.



**Figure 3.6: Reconstructed plan of Unit IV-4A, Nichoria (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 435, fig. 7-59)**

<sup>41</sup> They particularly focused on three unusual shallow conical bowls nested in each other (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 435, 438).

Similar purposes and goals were highly likely to have been a feature of activities also performed in the predecessor of the LHIIIA1 'megaron', Unit IV-4B/C, lying below Unit IV-IVA. The archaeological remains are not quite as clear, lacking explicit faunal deposits, but there is still a high proportion of drinking vessels in this area (Area IV, Southwest deposit): goblets formed 66% of plainware in LHI, 80% of vessel forms in LHIIA1, and 40% of vessel forms in LHIIA2; Vapheio cups formed 38% of decorated fragments and more than 50% of decorated shapes (Lolos 1987: 136; McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 478, 486). The LHIIA1 figure is exceptionally high and unequivocally attests the occurrence of drinking rituals, which may well have included the consumption of food also. However, it may be possible to go beyond the mere presence of feasting activities in and around the main structure of the LHI-II settlement and highlight their sociopolitical *milieu*. It was noted during excavation that 'palatial' style ceramic wares were concentrated in this particular area, with the conclusion drawn that Unit IV-4B/C was the forerunner of the LHIIIA1 'megaron', Unit IV-4A (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 763). I would expand this further to infer the political and economic superiority of whoever dwelt in Unit IV-4B/C over the rest of the settlement, in that he was able to afford to obtain such wares. Thus, any feasts held in this building and hosted by this figure would undoubtedly employ these wares in some capacity and display to those feasting with him that he had sufficient wealth/authority/trade contacts in order to acquire them.

Similar patterns can be seen elsewhere. For example, Koukounara in Messenia had a principal building, much like those just discussed, that was termed a 'megaron' when initially excavated. It was a sizeable construction with two phases (LHI and LHII) and an area of 59.4m<sup>2</sup> (Lolos 1987: 28-29), which could have held considerable gatherings of people if required. Apart from the fact that such a major construction existed at this early period in a site that, although flourishing in the earlier LH period, did not become one of the major palatial locations,<sup>42</sup> the large amount of stemmed goblets found in the building is also significant (Lolos 1987: 30). Once again, it suggests that this mansion may have been the location for communal gatherings which included the consumption of food and drink.

Tsougiza in the Nemea Valley broadens the geographical spectrum of feasting activities. A noteworthy LHIIB deposit (in trench EU2) contained an assemblage that appeared to be the remains of drinking activities, comprising numerous drinking vessels of varied forms (conical cups, goblets and teacups) and several jugs (Wright *et al.* 1990: 633). The specificity of the forms for drinking purposes reveals that, although it was unlikely to have been the remnants of a feast *per se*, some major consumption event(s) had been performed, after which the equipment was ritually deposited in one location. A slightly later deposit from LHIIIA2 Early (in trench

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<sup>42</sup> The presence of eight tholoi in the vicinity of the settlement, some of which bore remnants of rich grave-goods, indicates the importance that Koukounara held in the earlier phases of the Early Mycenaean period (Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979: 139-140).

EU9) also contained a very large quantity of vessels, of which kylikes were the most abundant form, but with other shapes including shallow angular bowls, cups, jugs, hydriae and a few storage and cooking vessels – plus the remains of at least six cattle (Wright *et al.* 1990: 636; Dabney *et al.* 2004; Lis 2008: 144-145). The deposition of numerous vessels suggests *post-festum* clearing. To some extent, this differs from the Messenian examples above, as it cannot be explicitly linked to one building and we are seeing purposeful deposition as opposed to debris. The sample base is much too small to suggest that this may be due to regional differences. However, no equivalent building to Malthi hall A1, Nichoria Unit IV-4 and the Koukounara mansion has been found at Tsoungiza, which may explain the differences in practice. Without a defined centripetal point in the settlement, it may have been a more community-focused activity in which consumption and subsequent deposition were performed collectively as opposed to orchestrated by whoever dwelt in the principal structure.<sup>43</sup>

Another significant site from this period is that of Voroulia (Tragana) in Messenia, which again differs considerably from all those already discussed. In Malthi, Nichoria and Koukounara, we see a primary individual in the settlement who constructed a major dwelling not only for his (and his lineage's?) use, but also for sociopolitical gatherings that regularly included food and drink consumption and incorporated at least some of the inhabitants around. The scenario is straightforward and recurs with more regularity in the EIA. At Voroulia however we do not have a whole settlement<sup>44</sup> or even a monumental structure, but rather a storeroom of sorts filled with LHI pottery. There were at least 120 vessels, possibly as many as c.200, covering a wide range of wares and forms (Lolos 1987: 63-64). Out of the largest category, coarse and finer plainwares, the most common shapes were cups/goblets (particularly Vapheio cups) and jugs/jars (Lolos 1987: 66-73, 81). It is noticeable that these forms are closely connected with drinking rituals (consumption and pouring). Nothing else like this has yet been found from the Early Mycenaean period and hence explanations of its function or purpose have varied, including a potter's storeroom for trading enterprises, a cult room, or a more generalised pantry. Despite its smaller size, the similarity with the pantries at Pylos – in quantities of varied forms stacked neatly together – has not gone unnoticed (Boyd 2002: 132, n71). Along with Lolos (1987: 93-95), I would discount both the theories of potter's storeroom and shrine: the former because of the heterogeneity of both fabric and form amongst the vessels and the lack of accompanying workshop equipment and debris; the latter because of the inclusion of common household vessels in the assemblage and lack of associated cultic objects stored with the

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<sup>43</sup> The low quantities of food consumption vessels and selected anatomical discard of the cattle may even suggest that the feast concentrated on distribution, with certain individuals only dining *in situ*, while others took food home with them (Dabney *et al.* 2004: 93; Lis 2008: 145-146). If this was the case, then Tsoungiza would appear even more different in terms of feasting styles during this period.

<sup>44</sup> As yet – it may well have been an important Early Mycenaean settlement but it has not presently been fully excavated (Lolos 1987: 92). The presence of two tholoi close by suggests that the site was much more significant than its present extant remains indicate (Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979: 132-133).

pottery. This therefore leaves us with the conclusion that it was indeed a form of pantry, even if it did not operate quite in the way that the ones at Pylos did later. It has been suggested that it formed part of a mansion which has not yet been discovered (Lolos 1987: 95; J. Davis 1998: 65) and I find this solution the most plausible. What we appear to have at Voroulia is a large collection of ceramics in one defined place that covers all the stages required for feasting, carefully stored ready for use. Triton shells were also found amongst the assemblage, with their ends broken off, which could attest either their use as trumpets or the fact that they had been consumed (Lolos 1987: 93-97, n146). In either case, the scenario is broadened from an emphasis on drinking to include ritualised events and/or food consumption. The size of the assemblage beyond anything else of this type yet found from the Early Mycenaean period suggests that whoever caused these vessels to be stockpiled was not only intent on holding feasting events but was also comparatively wealthy, and the likelihood of a nearby mansion or monumental building is strong.

The final site I discuss is Mitrou in East Lokris, with a deposit from the very end of this chapter's chronological span in LHIIIA2 Early. As yet unpublished, preliminary studies on Trenches LL784-785 have revealed a small assemblage in Building F that Vitale (2008: 230-234) has interpreted as remains of ritual consumption. Eating and drinking vessels form the largest category of pottery, including kylikes and other cups, kraters and dippers, comprising all that was necessary for the performance of drinking rituals (Vitale 2008: 230-231).<sup>45</sup> Alongside these were remains of what had been consumed, including a large quantity of shells, of which c.77.2% were food debris (Vitale 2008: 233, table 3).<sup>46</sup> In the vicinity (Trench LL786) was a concentrated scatter of burnt animal bones and sherds, some of which joined with those in the aforementioned assemblage; plus there was one further deposit (Trench LM-LN784) nearby that seemed to have been dumped, containing burnt animal bones, further shells and pottery, predominantly cooking pots (Vitale 2008: 235-236). The first two assemblages, located in/around one room in Building F, appear to attest a feasting event(s) of a highly restricted nature, and the refuse deposit may well have been the product of this commensality, as it was deliberately discarded.

Moreover, Vitale (2008: 231-233, table 3) has also highlighted the ritual elements of the assemblage, seen in the pottery with miniature vessels, kantharos cups and an extremely unusual 3-handled kylix, and in the shell debris with c.30.4% being rare species that would have been gathered specially (including the potentially hallucinogenic spiny oyster).<sup>47</sup> In many ways, this

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that there were three kraters in the assemblage, a particularly high figure given the fact that it was not a large deposit and was located in one room (Vitale 2008: 230, 234). This appears to be evidence for a focus on ritualised consumption, as opposed to merely eating and drinking.

<sup>46</sup> The figure is based on MNI. If NISp is used instead, then the figure is raised to c.80.1%.

<sup>47</sup> This is the percentage out of the edible species, not the whole assemblage of shells, and again using MNI.

assemblage resembles the sanctuary feasting deposits of the palatial period that are discussed in 4.5, similarities that could be explained by the lateness of the deposit in comparison to the other sites examined. However, the current state of excavation does not suggest that Building F was a specially constructed shrine or ritual centre. Indeed the lack of a “sanctuary” to house the deposit may be attributed to the fluidity that I have emphasised throughout this chapter – feasting activities that had greater ritual elements could have been practised in settlement locations before the palaces fully extended their influence over where and how they were performed. Moreover, the highly restricted nature of this festive occasion, located in one room and catering for low numbers, continues to broaden the spectrum of feasting events occurring during the Early Mycenaean period. As Building F was not the most prominent building in the settlement (Building D held that position), again it appears that the commensality there should be distinguished from the most common model of feasting in a megaron-style leader’s dwelling.<sup>48</sup>

To summarise the evidence that has been discussed, I suspect that I have been guilty of allowing hindsight and knowledge of the sites’ later histories to influence how I have presented them. In some cases, this may have been a valid assumption and a product of the fact that those sites that became later palaces really were the preeminent centres of the Early Mycenaean period as well. For example, the richness of the Shaft Graves demonstrates how Mycenae must have been a dominant centre in the Argolid from as early as the end of the MH period. In other cases, it may miss the reality of apparently smaller sites having had a prior importance that was obscured by their later fate under the palaces. For example, sites such as Nichoria and Malthi appear to have been flourishing micro-regional centres before Pylos’ supremacy expanded in LHIIIB1 (cf. Bennet 1998). Nichoria’s survival in the Linear B records as *\*ti-mi-to-a-ko*, a prominent second-order centre, suggests that in another trajectory it could have ended up as a regional authority. Similarly, the evidence from Voroulia hints at a large site (or at least mansion) that hosted feasting activities on a scale more impressive than can be seen from any other structure of the period, and again we may have lost a potential regional centre. Hence, when seeking to interpret the sociopolitical data as seen through feasting, it is necessary to bear in mind that our interpretation may be coloured by the sites’ later history. It is possible that all of the sites I have discussed in this section were regional centres in their own way at this time, even if some were more preeminent than others, and thus the practising of feasting events in itself was an accompaniment to this position.

While in the above statement I do not wish to suggest that feasting could not have been practised in small hamlets or by ordinary individuals, the co-occurrence of monumental

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<sup>48</sup> Building F was however located just across the road from Building D, so it is entirely possible that the occupant of Building D (Mitrou’s leader?) was able to oversee the ritual events occurring opposite.

buildings and remains of feasting may indicate that for sociopolitical purposes it was behaviour associated with the elite. This echoes the evidence from graves that I discussed in 3.2, where feasting comprised part of an elite “package” adopted at the beginning of the Early Mycenaean era, along with ostentatious displays of wealth (cf. the monumental buildings themselves), martial ideology and the exercise of trade. Those who were able to partake in feasting had this fact demonstrated explicitly through their grave-goods. Thus, what we see in the feasting evidence from monumental buildings may be the reality that the funerary assemblages symbolised. In the grave-good assemblages that placed such emphasis on the performance of feasting, commensal activities were associated with elite status and therefore the discovery of feasting equipment and debris in the mansions of the time proves that the paraphernalia of the deceased was not simply referring to an ideology but to a real practice.

When the sites containing feasting data are seen in this way and with the removal of hindsight, the perspective on them changes. Wright (2006a: 23) comments that by LHIIIA lesser-order sites were emulating the grander architecture of the sites where mansions or proto-palaces existed, such as seen at Nichoria in Unit IV-4A, a fact which accords with the emulation of drinking assemblages deposited in tombs that was discussed at the end of 3.2. From this, one could interpret that people were emulating both architectural designs and behavioural practices, such as feasting; if the megaron space was borrowed, then very likely the activities that occurred in the megaron were copied by lesser-order sites too. However, while I entirely agree that there is a growth of emulative practices at the end of the Early Mycenaean period, in terms of the deposition of feasting sets in tombs, this only works in a non-mortuary context if there is a clear hierarchy of higher- and lesser-order sites. If we are no longer so certain that an apparently lesser site, such as Nichoria, was only of second or third ranking *before* Pylos exerted control over it and brought it into its polity, then the idea of emulation disappears and instead it is possible to interpret Nichoria propagating elite practices in its own right. The fact that Nichoria, to continue with the same example, had a monumental building earlier in the period also (Unit IV-4B/C) suggests that it did not suddenly begin to emulate elite behaviour such as feasting in LHIIIA. Similarly, the extremely early existence of a monumental feasting hall at Malthi, from the end of the MH period, shows how this site also can be regarded as an active agent of elite performance, and not as a passive emulator. As one further example, the recent discovery through geophysical survey of an exceptionally large apsidal building of high quality at Mitrou, dating from LHI, may indicate that this was another site that played a more important role in the Early Mycenaean period than it was fated to do during the palatial era (Van de Moortel 2007: 247-248).<sup>49</sup> The destructions that the settlement underwent at the beginning of LHIIIA2, when the palaces started to rise in sociopolitical power, may have dramatically altered its trajectory.

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<sup>49</sup> It was c.32m x 24m, therefore 768m<sup>2</sup> (Van de Moortel 2007: 247).

However, I do not want to replace one simplistic scenario for another and this does not cover all the available evidence. Sites like Tsoungiza and Mitrou reveal the range of situations that were occurring. It is very likely that these disparities are due to the variety of social structures still operative during at least the earlier part of the Early Mycenaean era. Wright *et al.* (1990: 635) raise the possibility that Tsoungiza was still an egalitarian hamlet during LHII and this may explain the differences in commensal behaviour seen at this site. If there was an absence of one authoritative leader, then feasting activities may have been a more collective event, the aim of which was not the display of one person's resources but rather a unification of those who lived in the settlement through the performance of commensality. The ritual deposition that appears to have been performed after feasting events at this site may have promoted the sense that it was a community occasion, supported by the lack of debris associated with one particular structure. In other words, the fluidity of practices that I have already emphasised several times in this chapter, attested in the feasting activities themselves and in the employment of varied equipment, can be seen in the sociopolitical arena as well where there was no one set way of performing feasts. It appears that each site had the opportunity to modify feasting practices in the way that it saw fit, depending on the societal structure that was operative and the sociopolitical aims that were required.<sup>50</sup>

As for what these aims may have been, I have already made some suggestions regarding the possible purposes of the feasts in the course of the respective site discussions above. Excluding unusual examples such as Tsoungiza, where the variation in societal structure influenced how the feasts were performed, the emphasis on social competition through display in the funerary sphere appears to apply to the sociopolitical arena also. Just as those who could host feasts would leave an advertisement of that fact for posterity in their tombs and attempt to surpass competitors through the variety and value of their grave-goods, so during their life they would have employed opportunities for display. This would have included their material wealth, in the size and comparative sumptuousness of their dwelling and the amount or value of equipment employed, and their political superiority in being able to draw people to them, whether as aides for preparing the feast or simply as guests. As the Early Mycenaean period was one of social fluidity, it may well have been important to remind the inhabitants around of the leader's command of resources, both material and human (cf. Wright 1995a: 66-67). This certainly seems to have been the case at a site like Voroulia, where equipment appears to have been stockpiled for a major feasting event or series of events, or at Mitrou, where the restricted nature of the feast may have emphasised the participants' special status (and command of ritual "resources"?). Moreover, although the expense dedicated to feasts acted as a sign of conspicuous wealth and power, the very fact of its performance could have been an elite

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<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the consistent practising of drinking and feasting rituals at all levels of the social hierarchy can be seen in the ceramic products of the Petsas House, Mycenae (LHIIIA1-LHIIIA2), where the variety of wares and qualities testify to literally 'a cup for every occasion' (Shelton 2008: 227).

indicator. As part of an elite “package” adopted during the Early Mycenaean era, it served to set apart those who were able to practise it on a requisite scale. As such, *how* it was performed was not so important as the fact that it *was* performed.

#### ***4. Gods and Feasting – Where are the Sanctuaries?***

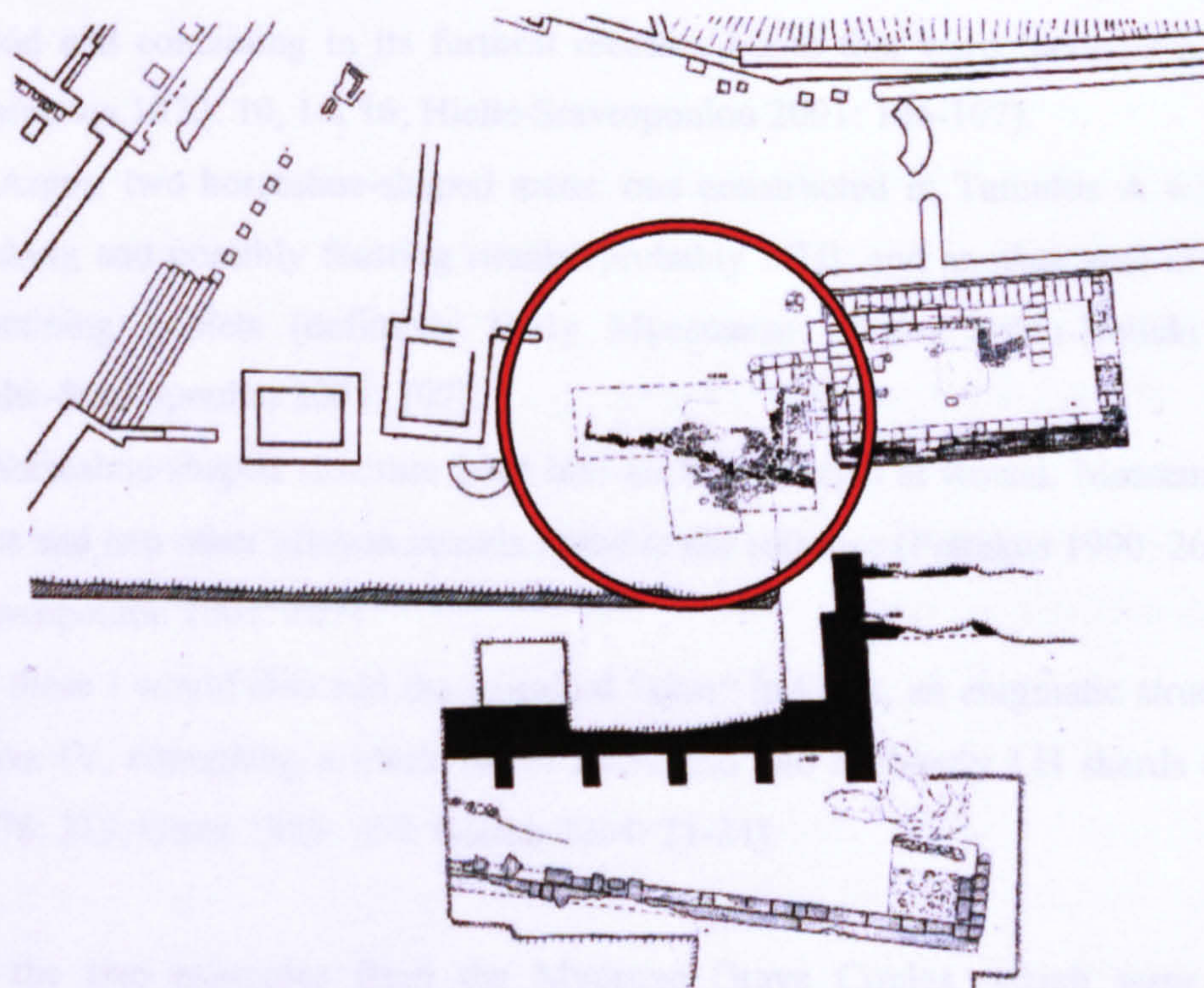
To make this exploration of Early Mycenaean feasting as comprehensive as possible, it is necessary to discuss the third arena of commensal activities, that of sanctuary feasting. However, one is confronted with a striking lack of evidence for such practices in this era, combined with an extreme paucity of sanctuary locations *per se*. Therefore, I present the few data that do exist, before concluding by offering a number of possible solutions to explain this lacuna.

It has been commented several times that the MH period has yielded an almost total lack of evidence for religious practices of any kind (Dickinson 1977: 38; Hägg 1990: 177; Wright 1994: 38). This includes religious installations, sanctuary sites and cultic equipment. The only two examples, and uncertain ones at that, are a very early use of the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros and a possible altar on the tiny island of Nisakouli in Methone bay (Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 103; Whittaker 2001: 355). However, despite the increase of ritual activities in funerary contexts, evidence for sanctuary-based rites is also very scarce in the earlier part of the LH period (cf. Wright 1994: 38). The lack of data and of scholarship on this topic are unsurprisingly intertwined, with the rare attempts made to explain the sanctuary lacuna tending to gloss over the issue. For example, Hägg (1990: 177) comments on libation rituals in the Shaft Graves as if their existence explicates the lack of sanctuary-based rites, while Wright (1994: 38) simply suggests that the formalisation of religious activity was a feature that accompanied the rise of the palaces. The most useful information that one can gain from all this is that if – as the archaeological evidence suggests – religious rituals were an intangible, ephemeral, perhaps even domestic or minor part of MH life, then one should not expect to find formalised and elaborate rituals as soon as the Early Mycenaean period begins, but rather that greater subtlety is required in interpreting the evidence.

What data therefore do exist? The only sanctuary that has revealed certain use going back into the Early Mycenaean period is that of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros (Lambrinoudakis 1981: 59; Figure 3.7). Its later life in the palatial period is discussed in 4.5; what is relevant here is the dating of finds which have demonstrated that it was operating as a sanctuary from a very early period, possibly as far back as the end of the MH era (Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 103; Whittaker 2001: 355). There was an extended altar terrace built of rock and hardened ash, which contained Early Mycenaean sherds (and a LHII seal: Lambrinoudakis 1981: 59, 62). This appears to have been the only cultic installation from this period; however it would have



been perfectly suitable for celebrating religious rituals on, as by the later period at least it covered an area of 50m<sup>2</sup> (Bergquist 1988: 31). The fact that these rituals comprised commensality is attested by the sherds (from drinking vessels) and the ashes (from burning/cooking animals?), which made up the terrace. Moreover, a break in practice is not recorded between the Early Mycenaean era and the palatial period, when the presence of animal bones testifies directly to their consumption, and it is very probable that such commensal rituals were practised earlier also (cf. Lambrinoudakis 1981: 59). This site is therefore highly significant for its support of at least occasional feasting rituals in sanctuary locations during the Early Mycenaean period. The fact however that the only cultic installation was an open-air extended terrace indicates two possibilities that are not mutually exclusive: firstly, that sanctuary-based rituals had not yet been elaborated enough to require cultic buildings or other structures; secondly, that an aim of inclusivity and equality was promoted as participants would sit and dine together in one open area. Although it was close to the settlement of Epidauros, such a sense of inclusivity may have been increased as participants came from the area around to join in the rituals at the sanctuary.



**Figure 3.7: Plan of sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, Epidauros (Lambrinoudakis 1981: 60, fig. 1). Area of Mycenaean activity, including the remains of the terrace, is circled.**

We have absolutely no evidence as to who was worshipped at Apollo Maleatas at this early period, but it is probably safe to assume that the rituals were held in honour of either a deity (possibly one listed in the Linear B documents) or a local nature spirit (perhaps of the hilltop itself on which the sanctuary was situated) – in other words some supernatural entity. Judging by the continuity of ritual practice from the Early Mycenaean into the palatial period, it is very likely that the same entity continued to be worshipped also and thus this is at present the only

relatively certain evidence that we have of a deity/supernatural power being venerated by ritual commensality in the Early Mycenaean period.<sup>51</sup>

The other evidence that we have for religious behaviour is much more ambiguous. Hielte-Stavropoulou (2001) has examined what appear to be cultic installations in cemeteries and interpreted these as replacing the lack of sanctuaries. Excluding examples that are geographically outside the scope of this thesis, they include:

- The well-known and still inexplicable horseshoe-shaped structure in GCB next to grave K, which contained ashes and animal bones and had a large bowl near it (Mylonas 1973: 122-127; Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 106).
- A horseshoe-shaped structure from the EH/MH transition at Ayios Ioannis/Papoulia in Messenia, surrounded by a tumulus in the MH period and reused in MHIII, just outside of which were traces of fire and animal bones on an altar-like construction (Korres 1978: 326-332; Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 106).
- Two horseshoe-shaped structures at Vrana, Attica, one an apparently free-standing construction, the other built inside the late MH Tumulus II at the beginning of the LH period and containing in its furthest recesses bones that were 'perhaps not human'<sup>52</sup> (Marinatos 1970: 10, 14, 16; Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 106-107).
- At Argos, two horseshoe-shaped areas: one constructed in Tumulus A with traces of drinking and possibly feasting rituals (probably MH), and another area in Tumulus C containing goblets (definitely Early Mycenaean: Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990: 82; Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 107).
- A horseshoe-shaped structure built into an EH tumulus at Routsis, Messenia, with two cups and two other Minyan vessels found in the entrance (Petraikos 1990: 26, 28; Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001: 107).
- To these I would also add the so-called "altar" in GCA, an enigmatic structure next to grave IV, containing a black fill of ashes and late MH-early LH sherds (Schliemann 1878: 213; Gates 1985: 267; Gallou 2004: 21-24).

Excepting the two examples from the Mycenae Grave Circles, which were adjacent to contemporary tombs, all the others were connected with EH-MH tumuli. It is also worth noting that they are all (again excepting the Shaft Grave examples) very difficult to date and moreover can even go back to the later EH period. While this may seem unjustified for inclusion in an Early Mycenaean discussion, the apparent long continuity of such practices would suggest that

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<sup>51</sup> It may well have been the case that the feasts occurring in Building F at Mitrou were also cultic in nature, which would offer evidence for a different type of sanctuary design and/or rituals to contrast with Apollo Maleatas. However, despite the presence of ritual vessel forms, there is no certain proof that it was purely cultic and I would prefer to classify it as sociopolitical feasting until there are clear indications otherwise.

<sup>52</sup> 'Ἴσως οὐχὶ ἀνθρωπινῶν' (Marinatos 1970: 16).

insight into early LH religious activity may be obtained from looking at the preceding chronological periods.

What we appear to be seeing here is a genuine phenomenon of religious rituals, regularly including the consumption of drink and sometimes food, in a cemetery setting but not connected with any specific contemporary funeral. They fall into two fairly well-defined groups. The first includes structures that are built into or surrounded by a tumulus and are often of great antiquity by the Early Mycenaean period: Ayios Ioannis/Papoulia, Routsis, the one inside Tumulus II at Vrana, and the two built into Tumuli A and C at Argos. It is noticeable that all these examples are horseshoe-shaped in form. The second group is less clearly defined, but can be described as installations that were constructed for religious rituals in a cemetery setting: the free-standing construction at Vrana, the structure in GCB and the “altar” in GCA.<sup>53</sup> The first two of these were also horseshoe-shaped in form (the “altar” was elliptical). I believe that these two groups can be associated in terms of purposes by the similarity in form – a horseshoe is a shape that requires some type of planning – and by the fact that they were installations constructed for ritual use in cemetery contexts.

Although they appear to have been used similarly, I initially discuss the two groups separately. For those structures that were built into or surrounded by a tumulus, the evidence appears to indicate a form of ancestor cult, although it cannot be excluded that who/whatever was venerated in and around the structure was a divine entity believed to inhabit or visit the tumulus. It should be noted that, where chronology can be deciphered, the tumuli often differ considerably in date of construction from the installations. The structure at Vrana and the one in Tumulus C at Argos were a few generations later than the tumuli they were built into, whereas that at Routsis was considerably later than the EH tumulus. Ayios Ioannis/Papoulia is the most complex example, as the horseshoe-shaped structure was built at the end of the EH period and continued in use until the beginning of the MH period. It was abandoned and was surrounded by a tumulus at some point during the MH period, only to be brought back into use in MHIII (Korres 1978: 329-330). While the order of construction between structure and tumulus differs in each example and the time between each episode likewise varies, the principal point is that in every case there appears to be a desire to associate with the past and to venerate something or someone that came from before the lifetime of the users.<sup>54</sup> In a case such as Ayios Ioannis/Papoulia, this would have been considerably before the time of those who used

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<sup>53</sup> It may also be significant that GCB itself was built over a still unexplained horseshoe-shaped structure of earlier MH date (Mylonas 1973: 124-126; Alden 2000: 16).

<sup>54</sup> An interesting comparison is seen in the LHI tholos at Voidhokilia, which was inserted into a MH tumulus (Korres 1990: 6-8). The previous burials in the tumulus were carefully moved, suggesting that the builders of the new tomb were keen to respect the dead yet desired to obtain this key location for their own burials.

it in its final phase, and it is very likely that the structure's antiquity would have impressed upon those who performed rituals there.

As for the second group, lack of chronological *termini* means that the example at Vrana cannot easily be interpreted, but the two structures from the Grave Circles appear to demonstrate some similarity of purpose. Both are installations for the performance of rituals in the environs of the recent dead (if not contemporary, at least within a generation or two). As the remains of bones, sherds and ashes in them are separate from the feasting debris to be found in the graves' fills, I believe that we are seeing something different from the funerary feasts discussed in 3.1. It is on a smaller scale and associated with the installation, not a specific grave. In this group of structures, the emphasis appears to be on respect or veneration of those deceased who were known to or remembered by the participants.<sup>55</sup>

I believe that it is almost certain that both groups of structures should be seen as cultic installations of some kind, and the location of the first group actually within a tumulus seems to indicate a desire to approach whatever spirit, deity or ancestor was believed to be associated with it. Hielte-Stavropoulou (2001: 105, 111) herself does not settle on any particular solution when enumerating the examples found, suggesting both the celebration of rituals around an ancestor's grave for lineage bonding purposes, and the possibility that these were areas for the veneration of deities that went beyond a cemetery's familiar function. Although the possibility cannot be excluded that these structures acted like "sanctuaries" for the worship of divine entities, their intimate association with graves seems to point towards more of an ancestor veneration scenario. Here I depart from previously accepted views on the topic of ancestor cult, which state that it did not exist on mainland Greece before the EIA, with the possible exception of the LHIIIB refurbishment of GCA (I. Morris 1988; Antonaccio 1995; Gallou 2004: 19-32). Such views are undoubtedly due to the fact that most of the installations discussed here are obscure, chronologically diverse and poorly published. However, I believe that their continuity from the late EH to early LH periods (especially Ayios Ioannis/Papoulia, where rituals were revived several centuries later), wide-spread geographical distribution over Greece in Messenia, the Argolid and Attica, and similarity in form and purpose (in terms of association with drinking/feasting rituals) means that some previously untraced religious phenomenon was in existence, which can be interpreted as a form of ancestor cult.

This statement does not necessarily mean that specific ancestors were selected and remembered as individuals (indeed the chronological gaps may support the opposite conclusion at times), but rather that certain lineages drew upon these rituals and their shared past for cohesion and

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<sup>55</sup> It may be that they are repeated funerary rituals, performed at set intervals after an interment in continued commemoration of the deceased. The reopening of chamber tombs and tholoi may in some cases be part of this phenomenon (when interment of a new body was not the objective).

legitimacy. Whether the tumulus and accompanying structure had remained connected with one kin-group or a fabricated association was propagated, the point remains the same – rituals including drinking and feasting were practised in and around the structures in order to emphasise one's connections with an ancestral power, conveying the message of lineage superiority to anyone who may have viewed the rites and bringing about cohesion amongst those who participated. In the case of the Grave Circle structures, ancestral connections were replaced by current lineage associations. The clear preeminence of the lineages who were interred in the Shaft Graves, reflected in the unusually wealthy grave-good assemblages and the equally atypical circular bordering of the tombs' area, may have provoked a desire amongst the living to demonstrate repeatedly their allegiance to these families through ritual behaviour. Both groups of structures have in common a wish to reflect familial associations through the performance of ritual activities, including consumption, and are without doubt a by-product of the sociopolitical situation of the period, when power and position were derived from the preeminence of one's lineage as much as from one's personal deeds. In a world where power changed regularly, ancestral connections were an important source of social position; additionally, in the *milieu* of uncertainty and fluidity, the permanence of one's lineage would have been a source of comfort.

Therefore, we have two disparate sets of evidence for feasting activities in the Early Mycenaean period that were connected with the religious sphere. I conclude this section by considering whether they can explain the lack of obvious sanctuary-based feasting in this period. I offer several scenarios of how the data can be interpreted, although it may not be possible to select one conclusion alone.

Firstly, it could be the case quite simply that we have not yet discovered the presence of Early Mycenaean sanctuaries other than Apollo Maleatas, which is possible given the lack of data from this period overall, not just in the sanctuary sphere. Therefore, what appears to be a significant pattern may be due merely to excavation bias. However, this avoids the question entirely in an unsatisfactory manner.

Another scenario is that sanctuaries genuinely were not a feature of religious life in the MH era and were gradually introduced over the LH period as cultic behaviour became more formalised (cf. Wright 1994: 38). If we accept the data that we have for both the MH and LH eras as being fairly representative proportions of what originally existed, then this is a plausible option. The lack of MH cultic sites, installations and equipment has already been discussed. It is possible, and indeed has been suggested by Whittaker (2001: 355), that MH religious practices were concentrated in domestic activities and so were not formalised enough to have left archaeological traces. Equally, it may have been that the concept of sanctuary activity was

borrowed and adapted from Minoan precedents, a proposal that is plausible given the eclectic nature of the early dedications at Apollo Maleatas, which contained a number of Cretan objects (Morgan 1999: 304). In the Early Mycenaean period, there is direct evidence for the use of one sanctuary, at Apollo Maleatas, and the increased employment of the horseshoe-shaped cultic installations. By the palatial period, as is seen in 4.5, there were at least six sanctuaries in use for which we have very clear data (Mycenae Cult Centre, Midea Shrine Area, Ayios Konstantinos, Apollo Maleatas, Ayia Triada in the Argolid and the Profitis Ilias cave) and the textual record suggests several more (e.g. *pa-ki-ja-na* near Pylos). Such a development continued further in the EIA, when there were considerably more sanctuaries and there appeared to be a much greater emphasis on performing commensality in such locations (cf. 5.6). Therefore, it may be that there was a very real diachronic shift in sanctuary existence and use, and the lack of Early Mycenaean data actually reveals the tentative beginnings of locating religious rituals in a formalised area, set apart for that purpose.

A further option, partially connected with the above, is that those in the Early Mycenaean period placed greater emphasis on rituals of a different sort, thereby obviating the need for a sanctuary. These could have taken the form of ancestor veneration or chthonic rituals connected with the mortuary sphere, as is suggested by the presence of cultic structures in cemetery locations. In other words, these had more value to people's religious life than a pantheon of deities. It could also have been the case that religious rituals were celebrated in some of the sociopolitical locations that I discussed in 3.3, such as Mitrou. Commensality around a leader's hearth, bringing together the local community, may have had much more of a religious emphasis than is evident.<sup>56</sup> Both of these solutions emphasise the local and the personal, whether it be one's lineage or one's community, which could indeed have been the same thing in some cases.

The last scenario is connected with the previous emphasis that I have laid on fluidity of practices in the Early Mycenaean era and to some extent summarises the above options. In this solution, we see several ways in which people could have performed religious rituals of a commensal nature, depending on personal preference, the region where they lived, or perhaps their kin-group's dictates. They need not be mutually exclusive either, but could have all been practised by one person during the course of their lifetime. Therefore, depending on circumstances and exigency, one could have worshipped the ancestors in the cemetery, honoured one's lineage in the local leader's house, or venerated a deity or spirit in a sanctuary. Possibly due to the lack of one overall political authority during this era and the influence that it could cast over people's behaviour, there was the opportunity to celebrate "sanctuary" feasting in many different locales.

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<sup>56</sup> The hearth itself has been granted religious significance by some (e.g. de Pierpont 1990: 259-260; Wright 1994: 57). The significance of religious rituals in a leader's dwelling becomes much greater/clearer in the EIA and is discussed in 5.2.

Therefore, by searching for the sanctuaries of the Early Mycenaean period, we may be placing the emphasis on the wrong phenomenon. When the evidence is examined closely, it is apparent that religious activities (which included feasting) were practised much more than is at first visible. When the era is viewed in the context of the centuries that preceded it, it is seen that cemetery-based ancestor rituals not only continued but actually intensified during the Early Mycenaean period. As this is still a poorly understood era, I do not wish to select one of my above scenarios as the definitive answer to the question posed in the title to this section. Rather I simply highlight that religious rituals were not so codified as in later periods and that there was greater variation in what was performed and where it occurred. Early Mycenaean religious life was fluid, varied, low-key, even obscure, but it certainly existed.

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To conclude, despite the apparent lack of evidence for Early Mycenaean feasting practices, I believe that a subtle reading of the data has revealed more about commensal behaviour than is at first manifest. The consumption of food and drink in the context of funerary rituals is well supported by the archaeological evidence. Occurring both in and around the tomb, it appears to have been a way of uniting the participants in what were undoubtedly emotionally charged events, and of negotiating the social status of the deceased as those attending had opportunities to see how lavishly appointed were the funerary rites, the tomb and the grave-goods. There is likewise clear evidence for feasting activities in the mansions or monumental structures situated in settlement sites, where dining occurred in the central hall of the leader's dwelling. Similarly, these would have served a twofold purpose of uniting the members of the community who were invited and of displaying to the participants the wealth and comparative social power of the host. Finally, it is also possible to see examples of religiously-focused and ancestor cult feasting, revealing the gradual formalisation and elaboration of ritual behaviour during the Early Mycenaean period.

However, while all these areas of feasting behaviour are supported by direct assemblages of debris or equipment, I have used additional data from the funerary sphere to expand this picture further. This evidence increases our knowledge of what feasting practices may have been occurring and, by using both vessel assemblages and skeletal data, supports the conclusion that sociopolitical feasting was a significant activity amongst the elite. In addition, it reveals quite clearly that feasting could act as an important method of display and negotiation for social position in the Early Mycenaean period, as part of an elite "package" of activities, so important that it continued to be emphasised even after the one who performed it had died.

Therefore, at the end of this investigation, there are two main conclusions to be drawn from the above data and associated discussions. The first is that the social competition of the Early Mycenaean period can be seen to be expressed in the realm of feasting. Individual and family wealth was displayed in the context of funerary feasting events, feasting equipment was a method of exhibiting status for posterity in grave-good assemblages, authority could be demonstrated during sociopolitical feasts held in the halls of the leaders, and one's lineage was celebrated or venerated through ritual feasting at cultic installations. Amongst other methods such as military ideology and participation in trade, feasting was both a symbol of high social status and a method of acquiring it.

The second conclusion is that feasting had much greater fluidity in the Early Mycenaean period than in the subsequent palatial era, undoubtedly due to the competitive social *milieu* that has been described and lack of one authoritative ruler over a large area. Whether it was variations in cuisine, the equipment employed, the locales in which the feast was held, the manners of performing rites, or the ways of worshipping supernatural entities, there was no one accepted way of performing feasting and drinking rituals. This does not mean that there was no similarity in practice across the Greek mainland, but rather that personal preference, wealth and status had more influence in how feasting was performed than any external authority. The ways of feasting were still being formalised, elaborated and codified, much like the sociopolitical environment of the period.



## Chapter 4: Feasting in the Palatial Period

*'And among [the reapers] the king holding his sceptre stood quietly by the swathe, with delight in his heart. To one side his heralds were preparing a feast under an oak, busy with a great ox they had slaughtered: and the women were pouring out an abundance of white barley for the workers' meal.' Iliad 18.556-560*

When addressing feasting in the Mycenaean palatial period (LHIIIA2-LHIIIB), it is necessary to reconsider evidence that has already been comprehensively discussed for around three decades. With a range of studies on ceramics, faunal deposits and textual records, it may appear that there is little value in treating this period again, and certainly one has to approach it in a very different manner from the Early Mycenaean period and the EIA. Yet, despite the abundance of scholarship, few have as yet attempted to synthesise the evidence and examine the experiences that would have been generated for a feast attendee – to explore how and why social negotiations were played out in the context of commensality and the effects of the wealth of sensory impressions that would have been present. Therefore, in this chapter, I do not reiterate the valuable comments about the mechanisms of Mycenaean feasting that have already been discussed by others (e.g. Bendall 2004; Wright 2004b; Hruby 2006), although I draw upon their conclusions, but rather I aim to reinterpret the evidence from a particularly social perspective. Thus I consider in depth how feasting was embedded in the creation and negotiation of social relations, and what it can reveal about the societal structure under the palaces. As palatial feasts are a uniquely well-evidenced feature of this period, I concentrate upon these for a large proportion of this chapter. However, the palatial period has also yielded evidence for sanctuary and funerary feasting, neither of which have as yet been as comprehensively studied, and therefore these too are investigated in detail.

Evidence from the palatial period is exceptionally rich and is drawn from all four categories as defined in chapter 2. It includes:

- An extensive quantity of ceramics and other cooking equipment employed in feasting contexts, principally derived from the extraordinary preservation of the pantries and their contents at the palace of Nestor at Pylos.
- Several significant zooarchaeological deposits from feasting debris, which have been recently or are still being analysed (e.g. Isaakidou *et al.* 2002; Halstead & Isaakidou 2004; Stocker & Davis 2004; U. Albarella pers.comm.).
- A small collection of iconographic representations of feasts or rituals surrounding feasting, drawn from palatial wall-paintings.
- A wealth of Linear B documents, including texts that are accepted as recording the administrative processes surrounding the organisation of palatial feasts (e.g. Piteros *et al.* 1990; Killen 1994; Palaima 2004).

I do not refer to every major site extant during the Mycenaean palatial period, but only those that produce sufficient evidence for my discussion, as this is not a record of the presence of feasting debris but an examination of the processes interlinked with feasting events. Moreover, I have tried to maintain a balance between principal palatial sites and lesser-order sites, which offers me the opportunity to examine how relations between central and smaller sites may have been played out through the gifting of food. Unsurprisingly, a disproportionate amount of this chapter dwells on Pylos in the late palatial period, a result of the huge quantity of relevant finds excavated from the palace, the good preservation of these finds, the site's clear and valuable publication (Blegen & Rawson 1966), and the subsequent amount of study dedicated to the site and its finds.

I have aimed to organise this chapter as one might have experienced feasting events during the palatial period, moving towards the heart of the palace and then back out again. This approach highlights the emphasis that I place on the experiences generated by feasts and how these were interwoven with social negotiations. Therefore, after following the course of a palatial feast, from arrival to dining to subsequent obligations, I expand my perspective out from the palaces to feasting in the hinterlands, in sanctuaries and finally in cemeteries.

### *1. Arrival at the Feast – Constructing Host-Guest Relationships*

When considering feasting practices, it is common to begin with the serving of the food when the guests have already arrived and been seated. Very little, if any, attention is dedicated to the initial stage of a feasting event. However, when one attends any “feast” today, the procedure does not commence with the guests in attendance, suddenly and mysteriously seated ready to dine. Rather, the meal is bounded by other rituals of etiquette and other experiences; in terms of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Western dinner party, one arrives, converses, perhaps drinks, admires the host's house. Therefore, it is perhaps strange that research into feasting events rarely considers the totality of the occasion, but concentrates on the moment of consumption or, if attention is paid to other aspects, examines prior activities such as production or collection of the fare. While the paucity of direct evidence may be an obvious reason for this lacuna, I believe it is possible to expand our picture of Mycenaean palatial feasts by considering some of the additional experiences and sensory impressions that a guest would have undergone, and linking these to the overall sociopolitical aims of the occasion. It is true that much of this relies upon informed conjecture; however, I consider that there are areas where it is possible to glean further details or to make reliable inferences from the archaeological evidence, and thus to reveal more about the networks of social negotiations occurring at palatial feasts. Therefore, in this first section, I use Pylos as a case-study and discuss some of the sensory impressions that would have impacted upon a guest arriving for a feast at a Mycenaean palace, as if following in the guest's

footsteps, and examine how these experiences were valuable aids in constructing a hierarchical relationship between the host and his guests.

Before arriving at the palace, what were the circumstances in which one might attend a feast there? The textual evidence informs us of two specifically sociopolitical occasions on which feasts were hosted by the palatial authorities, as opposed to nominally religious events that could have been manoeuvred for sociopolitical aims. These are recorded on PY Ta 711, where the *wanax* is said to have appointed Augewas as *da-mo-ko-ro*, and PY Un 2, where the *wanax* himself is said to have been “initiated” at *pa-ki-ja-na*.<sup>1</sup> They are the only sociopolitical events recorded during the palatial period that are definitely associated with a feast, and hence their similarity of purpose is striking. Initiations/appointments would have provided opportunities for a new official to display his authority and superiority, and the conspicuous consumption involved in large-scale commensality would have been an ideal way to accomplish this. New leadership required the social structure to be reinforced and to outlast the threat produced by change, thus necessitating a memorable method of expressing the new leader’s dominance over others.



Figure 4.1: Plan of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos (after Blegen & Rawson 1966)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Following Killen (1998: 421), Palaima (2004: 109, 114), Lupack (2008: 48) and Weilhartner (2008: 421), I accept both of these readings. Ta 711 inventories the feasting equipment to be used for the meal accompanying the appointment, while Un 2 records the provisions to be consumed at the “initiation”.

<sup>2</sup> The stars indicate where feasting activities occurred. The darker the colour, the more elite the location.

As the guests approached the palace, the areas where they were to dine would have been carefully directed. Bendall (2004: 124) has suggested that feasting activities could have occurred in court 58 in front of the palace at Pylos (cf. Figure 4.1) and, despite occasional scepticism (Hruby 2006: 108-109), this view is generally accepted (e.g. Thaler 2005: 334). In this thesis, I accept that commensal activities did occur in court 58, although they may not necessarily have been dining *stricto sensu*. The court is an ideal arena for large-scale events as, although we do not know its full extent, the excavated portions are already significantly more extensive than any of the interior courts by at least 100m<sup>2</sup>. Whitelaw (2001: 58) estimated that 500-800 people could be catered in courts 63/88, which would mean that at least 1,000 people could have sat comfortably in court 58; although Bendall (2007b: 92) has revised these figures to suggest a capacity of 200-500 in courts 63/88 and c.600 in court 58, it is still clear that it was a large gathering area. Moreover, we know that the court was bordered by buildings on three of its four sides, making it a sheltered location.<sup>3</sup> The court also offered easy viewing access to any activities occurring in the possibly ritual area of the North-East Building and clear sight-lines for some of the guests down the axis of the propylaion, court 3 and the entrance to the megaron. If there was a “rostrum” in front of rooms 52/53 (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 228-229), then this would also hint at ceremonial activities or an emphasis on display in this area (Cavanagh 2001: 127), although this interpretation has been questioned (M. Nelson 2001: 210). Hence it was no inconsequential area, even if it was outside the actual entrance to the palace, and it would have been suitable for the entertainment of guests.

What form this entertainment might have taken is more speculative. Bendall (2004: 124) suggested that this would be a dining area for the lowest tier of guests invited to feast at the palace and this is a reasonable proposal, especially considering the proximity of pantry 60 to court 58. On the other hand, the pottery assemblage of room 60 is the most diverse of all the pantries, with only kylikes appearing in noticeably high quantities (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 239-241; Figure 4.2), and this has led to suggestions that it served as a “mess hall” for the palace’s staff or a storeroom for perfumed oil manufacturing equipment (Hruby 2006: 108-109; Lis 2006: 21-23).<sup>4</sup> The fabric of the room 60 ceramics was much poorer and handmade vessels (e.g. milk-bowls) were present. If room 60 is being used as evidence for guests feasting in court 58, then the lack of suitable dining ware sufficient for large quantities of people must, if not

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<sup>3</sup> The fourth side, the south-east, was beyond the limits of the excavation and therefore it is unknown how far the court extended and what, if any, buildings were there (although cf. Cavanagh 2001: 128).

<sup>4</sup> An alternative suggestion was offered by Carington-Smith (1999: 89-90), who proposed that room 60 could have served those using the palace after the initial destruction of the Main Building and before the final destruction.

negate the suggestion, at least weaken it.<sup>5</sup> However, the pottery figures from pantries 18-22 reveal a discrepancy that may suggest an answer – there were 1,325 shallow angular bowls which would have suited for food consumption, while the kylix count from room 19 alone was nearly 3,000 (cf. Appendix II). The overall pattern is clear and supported by the smaller quantities of other probable dining forms, such as the ‘teacup’ – there was the potential for nearly 2,000 more people to have been offered liquid refreshment than fed. Even if we do not assume that all the drinking vessels were used on a single occasion, it is still possible to see a greater emphasis on drinking than eating. Therefore I would like to refine Bendall’s suggestion and posit that those in court 58 indeed partook of the palace’s generosity on feasting occasions, but were limited to merely consuming drink<sup>6</sup> (of which large quantities of up to 11,500 litres could have been stockpiled in the Wine Magazine: Hruby 2006: 119, n46).<sup>7</sup>

It must have been clear to those in court 58 that, while the palatial host was generous enough to offer drink (presumably alcohol), they were equally excluded from the principal activities of the feast, i.e. consumption of food. In this context, it is worth remembering the sensory experiences of a large-scale consumption event and the cooking preceding it. Most people in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain have no doubt experienced the vague envy brought about by the scents of neighbouring barbeques, as the smell of roasting meat travels successfully, especially if the wind is in a favourable direction.<sup>8</sup> The effects of such odours would be increased if one was not consuming meat at all and/or was accustomed to regard meat consumption as a luxury. It is highly unlikely that 2-19 cattle (Halstead & Isaakidou 2004: 146), a considerable quantity of meat even at the lower end, could have been roasted without the aromas travelling. Consequently, if my interpretation above is correct, those in court 58 would have been placed in a contradictory position – privileged enough to receive alcohol and to sit practically on the doorstep of the palace, yet noticeably excluded as they would have smelt, heard and probably also seen the activities occurring inside the palace of which they were not a part. This tier of guests was cut off from the main feast and thus made to feel their insignificant place in the social system, so that palatial authority was maintained over them, yet resentment was (hopefully) avoided due to

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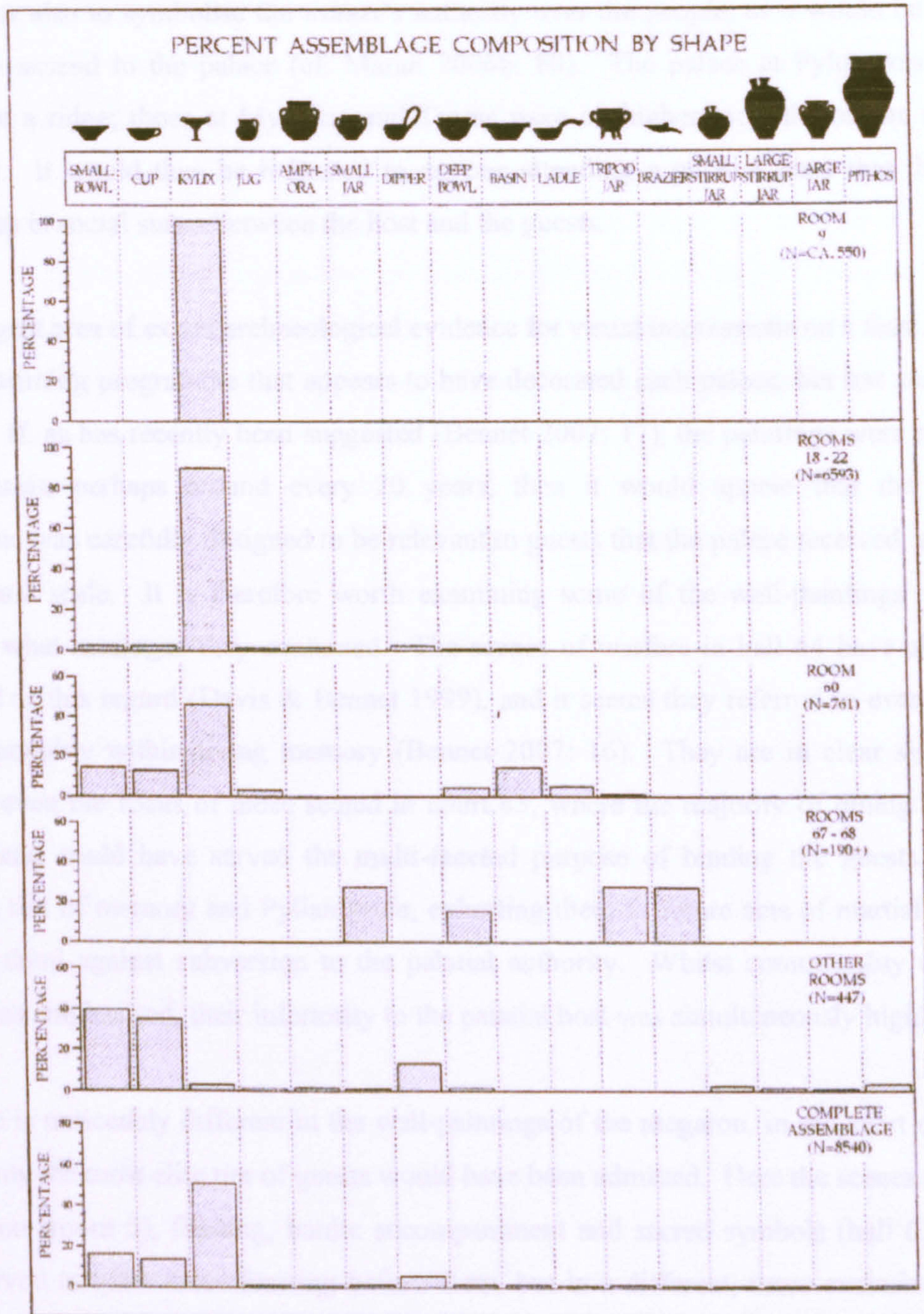
<sup>5</sup> While it is of course possible to argue that people could have eaten meat with their hands, souvlaki-style (cf. Hruby 2006: 145-146), I hesitate to accept this as a solution, especially as it appears that guests in courts 63/88 ate out of shallow bowls (Dabney *et al.* 2004: 82).

<sup>6</sup> Lis (2006: 19) has also proposed drinking-only guests, but not defined where they may have been entertained. I do not accept his suggestion that all those situated in the open-air courts were only supplied with drink, as both the faunal and ceramic remains indicate large-scale dining.

<sup>7</sup> Estimating quantities of liquid stored in the Wine Magazine is notoriously uncertain and Hruby’s figure is the largest yet produced. I have included it as a maximum figure; Palmer (1994: 194) gives a minimum figure of 4,683 litres.

<sup>8</sup> Roasting was the most likely cooking method for the majority of meat at palatial feasts, as discussed in 4.2, (cf. Wright 2004b: 40); note that the bones found in deposits around the palace were burnt, although this could equally be due to selective sacrificial practice (Isaakidou *et al.* 2002: 88).

the fact that they were still invited and were probably provided with enough alcohol to generate a memorable experience.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 4.2: Percentages of vessel forms in individual pantry/cooking areas across the palace at Pylos (Whitelaw 2001: 55, fig. 2)**

Moving on from this semi-excluded tier of guests, let us follow those who were invited inside the palace's bounds to feast and focus on another sense that would have emphasised their place in the palatial system in relation to the overall authority, that of sight. The palaces were designed to be impressive buildings; the one at Pylos was (at least originally) ashlar-fronted and stucco-floored, and that at Mycenae used conglomerate in what appeared to be a palatial

<sup>9</sup> It is worth remembering that there would have been others in the vicinity who saw the preparations for the feast (such as supplies being carried to the palace) and who were not invited, so the fact of actually being present should not be underestimated (cf. Nordquist 2008: 106-107).

programme, linking the structures across the town that were connected to the palace by employing the same building material (Wright 1987: 177; 2006b: 59-60). Moreover, the palace was regularly on a higher location than the surrounding settlement, so as to make it prominent and perhaps also to symbolise the *wanax*'s authority over the people, as it would be necessary literally to ascend to the palace (cf. Maran 2006b: 80). The palace at Pylos was relatively isolated on a ridge; those at Mycenae and Tiryns were on higher ground than the rest of the settlement. It would thus be indicated to anyone attending a palatial feast that there was a marked gap in social status between the host and the guests.

The strongest area of extant archaeological evidence for visual impressions on a feast attendee is the wall-painting programme that appears to have decorated each palace, but has survived best at Pylos. If, as has recently been suggested (Bennet 2007: 17), the paintings were altered on a regular basis, perhaps around every 20 years, then it would appear that the decorative programme was carefully designed to be relevant to guests that the palace received, at least on a generational scale. It is therefore worth examining some of the wall-paintings' subjects to decipher what messages they contained. The scenes of warfare in hall 64 have already been discussed in this regard (Davis & Bennet 1999), and it seems they referred to events in Pylian history, possibly within living memory (Bennet 2007: 16). They are in clear sight-line and possibly even the focus of those seated in court 63, where the majority of dining guests were located, and could have served the multi-faceted purpose of binding the guests together in common ties of memory and Pylian pride, exhorting them to future acts of martial valour, and warning them against subversion to the palatial authority. Whilst commonality amongst the guests was emphasised, their inferiority to the palatial host was simultaneously highlighted.

The tone is noticeably different in the wall-paintings of the megaron, in the heart of the palace where only the most elite tier of guests would have been admitted. Here the scenes of sacrificial procession (room 5), feasting, bardic accompaniment and sacred symbols (hall 6) would also have served to unite those feasting before them, but in a different, more exclusive way. It is very probable that the elite dining in room 6 were the only ones who viewed the sacrificial rituals that seem to have occurred before the feast itself (cf. 4.2), and hence the scene in room 5 of the bull being led to slaughter would remind the guests as they passed it of their own privileged position in relation to the ceremonies at the heart of the feast. Likewise, the scenes in hall 6 would echo the commensality occurring in front of them, and the guests would performatively "complete" the scene, temporarily at one with the immortalised drinkers.<sup>10</sup> In the megaron at Tiryns, there was a wall-painting of a hunting scene (C. Morris 1990: 150),

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<sup>10</sup> And not just with the drinkers in the painting – the presence of otherworldly creatures in the scene, such as griffins, placed the diners almost in a special parallel universe, completely separate from *hoi polloi* dining elsewhere (cf. Nordquist 2008: 108).

linking two elite activities (hunting and feasting) simultaneously,<sup>11</sup> and ensuring that those dining in the megaron felt part of an elite inner circle. It can therefore be seen that simply where one sat to eat and the images that surrounded one in that location were engineered to generate feelings of unity and inclusiveness, at a level applicable to one's social status. There was no shifting of social positions occurring, but rather a re-emphasis on one's prior standing in relation to other guests and the palatial host.

Visual impressions of one's surroundings are to some extent related to the issue of access and how far each guest could penetrate into the palace's interior. I discussed above how those in court 58 may have been prohibited access into the palace as an exclusionary method. The low platforms in areas 1 and 4 and room 5, marking the successive entrances leading towards the megaron, plus that in hall 64, were interpreted as "sentry-stands" by Blegen and Rawson (1966: 57, 68, 74). This has since been questioned, and *inter alia* interpretations of stands for torches, incense-burners or kraters of ritual water have been raised instead (Mylonas 1957: 46-47; 1966: 53,55; Thaler 2005: 334; Peters 2008: 35). As the four platforms differ, with the two "outer" ones in area 1 and hall 64 sunken and the two "inner" ones in area 4 and room 5 raised (Darcque 2005: 178-179; Peters 2008: 34), it seems that there were two strategies operative, defining major/exterior boundaries and lesser/interior ones. Whether these boundary markers were protective, ritualistic, practical or olfactory, transition points were delineated to the guest moving into the palace. The differences observed in the platforms may be explained by the fact that any guest who reached the "inner" ones would have passed the "outer" one in area 1 and so would already have been granted access into the palace's interior; hence the requirement for whatever boundary marker was employed on the outside was not operative within the building itself.

Each of the inner feasting areas required passing through several gates/doorways and therefore progression into these locales would create a feeling of inclusion (cf. Figure 4.1).<sup>12</sup> For the guests in courts 63/88, entrance from the front of the palace required passing through the dog-leg corridor 59/61 and two gateways, a relatively restricted journey. Those in hall 65 were required to enter and pass through hall 64 in addition, which formed a transition space between them and the guests outside in the courts. The indirect entrance to hall 65 secluded those inside from any viewers in court 63 and ensured a sense of privacy and intimacy (Graham 1967: 356). Yet, despite this, both these tiers of guests were noticeably excluded from the Main Building of the palace; they could potentially have attended all the activities of the feast without ever entering the principal part of the palace. Even the serving areas for these guests (pantries 18-20) could not be accessed from the body of the palace's Main Building and so were completely

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<sup>11</sup> Especially if they were eating the product of the hunt, such as venison (cf. 4.2).

<sup>12</sup> For more specific syntactical spatial analysis, cf. Thaler 2005.



separate. Once again a complex semiotic was operative – the relatively restricted passage into these dining areas would have produced a sense of inclusion for the guests, a feeling of being privileged enough to get that far, and yet the marked exclusion from the principal building of the palace would ensure that they recognised their status in relation to the elite inner circle within there. One's dining locale aided the construction of the host-guest relationship.

As for the highest tier of guests at the feast who appear to have dined in the megaron itself, their passage was even more restricted in terms of the amount of rooms and doorways that had to be traversed. The supposedly canonical route was: 1-2-3-4-5-6 (including 3 doorways); however it would have been possible to have entered from court 63: 59-61-63-12-13-5-6 (6 door/gateways), or prior to LHIIB2 also from area 41: 41-38-37-35-5-6 or 41-38-37-44-3-4-5-6 (4 and 5 doorways respectively; Thaler 2005: 334). We of course have no proof as to which entrance was used, although I suspect the first route may have been the most likely, simply because it was more monumental, avoiding the narrow passageways of more private quarters and encountering the remainder of the guests in court 63. In any case, it should be obvious that access to the megaron was restricted<sup>13</sup> and this must have created a sense of entering the palace's heart and of having one's circulation controlled as one passed through several doorways, open spaces and anterooms. This in turn would have generated a sense of excluding the rest of the attendees, of being separated and brought closest to the centre. If one takes the centre to be the *wanax* himself (as indeed is reasonable considering that his throne was in hall 6), then those who dined in the megaron were quite literally feasting at the centre and their intimate relationship with their host was emphasised. Hall 6 has been estimated to hold between 22 people (which is too exact; Stocker & Davis 2004: 71) and c.128 people (which is almost certainly too many; Bendall 2007b: 92-93).<sup>14</sup> Judging by the multiple permanent installations in the room (the hearth, columns and throne), the number of diners is likely to have been towards the lower end of the spectrum and this inclusivity would increase the sense of being close to the host and being selected to dine at his side. Relationships of commonality with the *wanax* himself were thus constructed and these diners' elite status highlighted.

## 2. Consuming the Feast – Constructing Guest-Guest Relationships

Having explored some of the background to a palatial feast and the social messages implicit in the initial stages, it is time to consider the consumption event itself. The social statements already constructed through dining location and the senses of smell, sight and touch<sup>15</sup> were heightened by the use of further diacritica (such as vessels used and fare consumed) and the

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<sup>13</sup> Even more so in LHIIB2 when court 42 was built, sealing off a major entranceway into the Main Building (Shelmerdine 1987: 560).

<sup>14</sup> The room is 12.9m x 11.2m (144.5m<sup>2</sup>), minus a hearth of diameter 4.02m, four columns surrounding the hearth, and a throne along the right-hand wall (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 77, 85).

<sup>15</sup> By touch here I mean haptic impressions, or how one perceives the area around oneself. The journey through the palace would have left differing haptic impressions depending on the route and destination.

manipulation of the senses of sound and taste, ensuring that the guests' positions in the social matrix in relation to each other were made explicit. I have discussed how the guests would have sensed their relationship with the palatial host was being constructed; however, equally relationships with each other were created, strengthened, negotiated or even broken in the context of commensality.

Unfortunately, there is no surviving archaeological evidence regarding seating plans (or even if the guests were seated at all, although the wall-painting of diners in hall 6 implies that at least some attendees may have used stools and tables). To use a modern analogue where seating plans emphasise one's standing, at a British wedding one's physical proximity to the 'top table' and the focal families is a rough indication of one's social proximity to the hosts. It is reasonable to assume that similar processes must have been operative at a palatial feast, although there is no archaeological way to reconstruct the categorisation of who sat where – whether certain classes or trades sat together, whether one could earn a better place, or even whether there was a defined seating plan at all arranged prior to the feast. It is probable that to dine nearer to the *wanax* in hall 6 or closer to the entrance of hall 64 in court 63 would be regarded by one's fellow guests as a mark of privilege, but this may be due to our own preconceptions. Certainly the furniture that one dined on could have been explicit about one's social status; the PY Ta series inventories various chairs, tables and stools employed in a feasting event, which appear to have been remarkably beautiful objects made of ebony and ivory, and inlaid with rock crystal, gold and glass (Ta 713 & 714: Killen 1998: 422; Palaima 2004: 114-115). These would be explicit markers of elite standing, as due to their precious nature only a very few existed and hence only a select group would be permitted to dine on them.<sup>16</sup>

More firmly attested archaeologically are the vessels that were employed for different tiers of guests. This form of diacritica has been discussed several times (e.g. Wright 1984; Galaty 1999a: 51; Whitelaw 2001; Bendall 2004), with Bendall in particular examining it in considerable detail. Hence I summarise the arguments already presented before suggesting how the selection of vessels could have operated to construct guest-guest relationships. It was noted first by Wright (1984: 23) that there were two distinct fabrics in the pottery from the palace pantries 60 and 18-22 and different variants in forms grouped together, and it was suggested that they could have served different groups of people. Bendall (2004: 117-124) analysed who these groups could have been, and posited that the coarser vessels from pantry 60 were employed by the lowest tier of guests (in her argument those in court 58) and the finer ware

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<sup>16</sup> The Ta tablets record 11 tables, six thrones and 16 stools. The stools however cannot have been used as seats, due to their extremely low height (6-12cm tall: Shelmardine 2008: 407; *contra* Stocker & Davis 2004: 71). This reduces the numbers that the Ta furniture could accommodate from 22 to six, further emphasising the privileged status of those who used these precious items.

from pantries 18-22 by a higher level (those in courts 63/88 and hall 65). I diverge from this argument in two key areas: my proposal that guests in court 58 were only served with liquid refreshment, thus creating diacritical divisions through presence/absence of food and not vessel quality, and my reluctance to accept room 60 as a feasting pantry, due to the lack of suitability amongst its contents for a feasting occasion (cf. Hruby 2006: 109, n40; Lis 2006: 21-24). Such a neat schema as Bendall presents is difficult to apply fully to the available evidence, especially as the contents of room 60 appear to have been used for purposes other than large-scale feasts. If pantry 60's coarse vessels were used at all in feasting contexts, then it is likely that they were distributed according to unknown diacritica, not sent as a complete assemblage to one group of diners.

Wooden vessels undoubtedly formed another diacritical level and may have been stored in the parts of pantry 18 that were not occupied by pottery (Hruby 2006: 610). Moreover, kylikes have been found in huge quantities around and within the palace at Pylos, yet they were noticeably absent in hall 6. This absence coincides with a concentration of metal vessel fragments (Bendall 2004: 122-123), suggesting the presence of another level of diacritica, where the most elite guests were served with precious metal vessels. Diacritical statements only function effectively when one is aware that one is treated differently from other guests, so it must be assumed that all tiers of attendees realised that the vessels they were employing were different from those used by people dining in other areas. In this case, feelings of inferiority or superiority would be generated and the social status that one had outside of the palace would be strengthened within its environs. As the guests' actions were dictated by their host, in the sense of where they ate and what they dined from and on, it appears that opportunities for personal negotiation were non-existent.

Before considering the food itself, it is worth continuing the exploration of sensory impressions and how these could be manipulated by the palatial host to affect the guests' experiences. In 4.1, I considered the odours, visual impressions, and spatial surroundings that guests would have encountered when arriving at the palace. However, what about auditory experiences? That which is heard rarely leaves its trace in the archaeological record, and certainly there is no evidence as to whether conversation was permitted to flow freely and whether there were impromptu songs and tales at table. However, a rich base of musical instruments can be constructed for the LBA (cf. Younger 1998), and a festive occasion would be ideal for music-making and song. In hall 6 there is a wall-painting of a bard holding a lyre, juxtaposed with feasting scenes, and it seems highly likely that musical accompaniment was experienced by those dining in the megaron, especially when one notes how closely the rest of the decorative programme in rooms 5 and 6 related to the actions occurring around it. In addition, lyre-players

are mentioned in a ceremonial context in the Linear B records (TH Av 106: Killen 2001: 443).<sup>17</sup> Together the evidence seems to suggest strongly that bardic music and song were part of palatial feasts.

The Homeric poems indicate that a bard's task was to sing the "latest song", one that told of recent events (*Od.* 1.352) and would thus be applicable to the listeners, possibly with an implicit message embedded that had been selected beforehand by the *wanax*. Bennet (2007: 16) has recently developed this scenario in the context of bardic accompaniment around hall 64, serving the guests dining in the vicinity and acting as an aural counterpart to the visual narrative in the adjacent wall-paintings. If, as was mentioned in 4.1, the paintings in hall 64 were renewed regularly (Bennet 2007: 17), then it could well be the case that the fresh images and the "latest songs" acted concurrently to involve the guests, inspiring, alarming or unifying them depending on the host's motive. It would be interesting to know if there were variants in song depending on location (i.e. whether the song in the megaron was different in style and/or content from the one performed around hall 64); undoubtedly there were but these cannot be traced.

It is clear that all the senses were employed concurrently to create powerful bodily memories of palatial feasts. Apart from the obvious tastes activated during consumption, there were the aromas of meat cooking, the sights of the palace for those permitted to enter (including the striking visual décor of the wall-paintings), the sounds of bardic song, and the haptic impressions aroused by the vessels one held or the location one was placed in (for example, whether one was exposed to the elements or enclosed in a hall). All of these sensory impressions could be manipulated in various tiers in order to distinguish between guests, so that it would be possible to attend the same feast and receive very different sensory experiences depending on one's social status. Moreover, by activating all the senses so powerfully, the event would remain in the guest's mind and the social messages implanted during the feast would thus linger on, perhaps until the next commensal occasion.

As for the food itself, PY Un 2, 138 and 718 and the TH Wu sealings record sufficient details that a basic menu reconstruction could be attempted if so desired. However, my aim here is to examine how food and taste could have been employed in the same way as vessels, spaces and entertainment, i.e. to construct relationships between the guests and to highlight their positions in the social matrix. Although somewhat speculative, there are sufficient hints in the archaeological record. Six deposits of burned bones have been studied from around the palace at Pylos, each assemblage containing several cattle (2-19 per deposit) and two groups also containing the remains of a red deer (Halstead & Isaakidou 2004: 146). It seems clear from this

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<sup>17</sup> While unreliable evidence for LBA practices, bards in the Homeric epics, such as Phemios and Demodokos, played in the megara of palaces during feasting events and it may be that this was part of a longer tradition (e.g. *Od.* 1.325-327, 8.485-520).

that at least at some feasts the majority of guests would have eaten beef, with venison reserved for a smaller number. The amount of venison is sufficient to have fed both those dining in the megaron and those in hall 65.<sup>18</sup> This hypothesis becomes more probable when one considers the elite currency that game meat held in Mycenaean Greece, and indeed in other past cultures, such as Medieval England. I mentioned in 4.1 the hunt scene in the megaron at Tiryns and suggested a link between the two elite activities of hunting and feasting. Hunting requires leisure time, equipment, animals (horses and dogs), a retinue of assistants, martial skills and valour, and possibly land rights;<sup>19</sup> all of which tend to be elite markers. With its ability to demonstrate authority over the 'Other' and its requirement of special capabilities and preparations, hunting not only held a mystique in its own right but could also be a way of gaining power over others, and hence formed part of elite ideology (Helms 1993: 153-155; Hamilakis 1996: 163; 2003a: 240).

The fact that hunters were recorded as exempt from taxes in PY Na 248 implies that their occupation was a respected one (Palmer 1999: 469).<sup>20</sup> Hunting scenes appear in several of the palaces (Tiryns, Pylos,<sup>21</sup> and possibly Orchomenos), and it is notable that these paintings are most often in restricted areas, shielded from the general public (Bennet 2001: 35). Moreover, the wall-painting at Tiryns implies a prestigious scale to the hunt that could only have been mobilised by some person/group with sufficient authority to requisition the manpower (C. Morris 1990: 150). This association between hunting and the elite suggests that the consumption of game meat may have been a privilege restricted to those who had partaken in the hunt (or who were of sufficient status to do so) and were therefore eligible to consume its products. The lack of deer in the feasting supplies tablets also indicates that they were not requisitioned in the normal manner alongside the other species of animals to be consumed. The only tablets on which they do appear are PY Cr 591 and 868, where they are listed in small quantities alongside minor toponyms, and it has been suggested that they are being supplied for feasts perhaps by those who had hunted them (Bendall 2007a: 58).

Interestingly, another form of meat diacritica is suggested by the Linear B records of feasting events. Here cattle are markedly rare and presumably a special fare. In PY Un 2, there is only

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<sup>18</sup> No figures have been offered for amount of usable meat obtained from a deer. However, a head of cattle (its closest domestic equivalent in terms of size) would yield at least 100kg of usable meat (Bendall 2007b: 85). It was mentioned in 4.1 that hall 6 could hold between 22-138 people – at a very rough mean of 80 people in hall 6 and the same in hall 65, we obtain 160 people. It would be more than possible to feed all these people with 100kg of meat, as this provides them with a very generous c.750g each.

<sup>19</sup> Halstead (2002: 186) raises the possibility of a deer park at Pylos, which presumably would have been reserved for the elite to hunt in. Cf. also Hamilakis 2003: 244.

<sup>20</sup> Although Hiller (2000) raises the suggestion that these were in charge of the hunting dogs (*ku-na-ke-ta*) and in the palace's service, as opposed to the actual aristocratic hunters.

<sup>21</sup> In room 43, there is a hunt scene combined with what may be preparations for a feast (H 43: Lang 1969).

one head of cattle, as opposed to 32 sheep, four goats and seven pigs.<sup>22</sup> In Un 138, there are only three cattle alongside 16 sheep (and eight 'yearlings'), 13 goats and 13 pigs. In the TH Wu sealings, once again there is only one bull and one cow accompanying the multiple sheep, goats and pigs. Finally, it is notable that in Un 718, the *wanax* (if that is indeed who \**Egkhes-lauon* is) is the one who contributes the one head of cattle to this religious feast. In light of this, Nikoloudis (2001: 14; 2008: 377) has suggested that bulls may have had some elite association in Mycenaean society, or have been connected with the *wanax*, supported by the fact that there is a solitary, massive bull in the room 5 procession scene heading into the megaron. Cattle were clearly selected for special ritual treatment in the faunal deposits, as the Linear B records indicate that other animals such as sheep and goats were provided for palatial feasts, and yet their faunal remains were not deliberately preserved. The apparent discrepancy between the multiple cattle in the zooarchaeological remains and their limited appearance in the tablets could be explained by the possibility that they were also contributed as a gift as opposed to requisitioned, in a similar way to game as described above, so that status could be shown through one's wealth in owning such a large, costly animal (Walberg & Reese 2008: 243).

It is highly likely that sacrificial rituals preceded the consumption of the meat. The selective disposal of the burnt bones in the six faunal deposits (mandible, humerus and femur: Halstead & Isaakidou 2004: 145; Stocker & Davis 2004: 62) may indicate ritual treatment, supported by the fact that the deposit in room 7 was accompanied by 22 miniature kylikes, a MBA spearhead and a similarly antique sword (Stocker & Davis 2004: 70). The suggestion was raised by Stocker and Davis (2004: 73) that the assemblage represents a post-sacrificial deposit, stored temporarily until records were made to preserve an account of the ceremony.<sup>23</sup> Whatever its exact interpretation, it seems incontrovertible that the assemblage comprises the remains of a sacrificial event, probably associated with a feast due to its find-spot next to the Ta tablets, which record feasting and sacrificial equipment (Killen 1998: 421).<sup>24</sup> It is therefore likely that some form of sacrificial ceremony preceded the feast and the 22 miniature kylikes suggest that a select number of privileged persons were permitted to partake in the rituals.<sup>25</sup> While we cannot say whether these select few were the only ones who saw the rituals occur, or whether other guests could observe but not take part, there is a clear division again between those who were regarded as significant guests and those who were simply fed by the palace, as even the

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<sup>22</sup> I have counted male and female together in these figures. Cf. Palaima 2004: 122-123 for relevant translations.

<sup>23</sup> This suggestion has been refined recently by Peters (2008: 45-53), who interprets room 7 as a partially open area. The entire assemblage (bones and ritual artefacts) would have been placed here during the course of the feast or immediately after so that it was visible to all attendees, signalling that the various ritual actions had been performed.

<sup>24</sup> Ta 716 records bridle-rings and chains by which animals would be led to sacrifice, plus the slaughtering equipment of two stunning axes and two knives (Palaima 2004: 116).

<sup>25</sup> I do however raise the issue that not all kylikes may have been recovered; therefore it is hasty to place such stress upon the number 22 in Pylian society (*contra* Stocker & Davis 2004: 71).

treatment of the animals prior to cooking was a way of creating social divisions between the guests.

Cooking methods are an effective way of using diacritica to distinguish between participants in a feast. Having examined the possibility of different types of meat, it is worth expanding here upon different styles of cooking (cf. Appendix III).<sup>26</sup> Wright (2004b: 40) has noted that, if indeed there was a division between game meat for the elite and beef for the other guests, then different cooking methods could have been a practical way of reinforcing these differences. Game meats such as venison are naturally tough and boiling is therefore an effective way of making them consumable (Wright 2004b: 40; McGee 2004: 141, 163). On the other hand, if one is cooking several cattle worth of beef, it is much simpler to roast it, as it requires less cooking equipment. The difference between slices or chunks of roasted meat and a more liquid preparation of boiled meat would be very obvious to guests when served.<sup>27</sup> A stew-type dish that was boiled would also be more suitable for adding extra herbs or spices as flavourings, and again the use of smell could signal different tiers of guests at the feast and highlight one's position in relation to others around.

The subject of *haute cuisine* in the prehistoric Aegean is extremely new and only two authors have addressed it systematically (Hruby 2006; Isaakidou 2007<sup>28</sup>), with both reaching the conclusion that it did exist. I accept these two discussions and am more interested in examining *how* it was employed in constructing guest-guest relationships; however, it is valuable to summarise first the evidence that suggests its existence. *Haute cuisine* marks itself out from *basse cuisine* by transforming what the non-elite classes eat, partly by mingling it with exotic ingredients in complex recipes, and partly by mobilising manpower and produce to a scale that most ordinary people cannot to create dishes that are time-consuming and labour-intensive (Goody 1982: 104-105). Markers of *haute cuisine* in palatial period Greece include:

- The use of specialised ceramic vessels, which suggest labour-intensive, time-consuming concoctions and the ability to mobilise people to prepare such dishes (Hruby 2006: 139-151; Isaakidou 2007: 11-13). It is particularly noteworthy that griddles have only been excavated in higher-order sites, perhaps revealing an example of a specifically palatial cuisine (Hruby 2006: 141; 2008: 153). Certainly the ceramic repertoire at Pylos is significantly more complex and varied than that found at Nichoria, a non-palatial site (Hruby 2006: 172).

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<sup>26</sup> It is also likely that different cuts of meat may have been offered to different classes, but this is difficult to trace at present in the archaeological record.

<sup>27</sup> They might also require different vessels as, if the boiled meat was prepared as a stew, a bowl would be more suitable than a plate.

<sup>28</sup> Isaakidou's article refers to Minoan Crete; however, I believe her comments are generic enough to be valuably applied to the Mycenaean mainland as well.

- The employment of a wider range of foodstuffs than could normally be obtained, particularly including exotica. While the availability of meat and wine is still somewhat uncertain, it appears that they could be acquired by non-elites but were certainly not staples (Palmer 1994: 84, 110; Hruby 2006: 159, 162).<sup>29</sup> More decisive markers of elite food are spices, which could have been expensive and/or of foreign origin, hence requiring the ability or wealth to participate in international trade.
- The selection of particular cuts and types of meat. The slaughtering of animals that were difficult to capture or costly to raise (game meat, cattle) was a mark of conspicuous consumption. Isaakidou (2007: 14-19) also suggests the introduction of finer dismembering and filleting as markers of new or more refined cooking methods.
- The listing of highly specialised personnel, as seen in the Linear B documents. This suggests the authority to draw upon a large base of manpower and the refinement of food preparation techniques; examples include grain-grinders (*si-to-ko-wo*) and mixers (*mi-ka-ta*; Hruby 2006: 151-152).

How a differentiated cuisine operated should be clear: if two or more dishes were brought out to the guests, each to a separate tier of attendee, then as for every other form of diacritica the guests would sense their standing in relation to those around them. In some situations, this may have been instantly readable; for example, the use of spices in food, especially if they were a species known to have been imported, could be smelt and it would be understood that such a dish was intended for an elite consumer. While we cannot definitely say how many of the spices employed in Mycenaean palatial cuisine were imported, some clearly were transported around the Mediterranean as evidenced by organic remains upon the Uluburun wreck (Isaakidou 2007: 9).<sup>30</sup> Moreover, spices such as cardamom, cinnamon and cumin do not appear to have been grown in Greece and so their listing in the Linear B tablets indicates that they would have been obtained from abroad, probably the Near East (Sarpaki 2001: 206, 208-210, 216-217).<sup>31</sup> The acquisition and employment of foreign ingredients is a visible sign of conspicuous consumption and hence of status display (Goody 1982: 130). In addition, the MY Ge tablets indicate that the collection of some spices was under palatial control as, even if private individuals initially acquired them, both the kind and the amount of aromatic plants grown and supplied were enforced by the palatial authority (Killen 1983; Palmer 1999: 482).

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<sup>29</sup> The Linear B tablets record different “flavours” of wine, such as ‘honeyed’ on PY Wr 1360 and ‘sweet wine’ on KN UC 160 (Palmer 1994: 62-63). By being distinguished from regular wine, it may have been the case that they were drunk only by certain groups of people.

<sup>30</sup> Black cumin (or nigella) is one of the spices that was found aboard the wreck (Haldane 1993: 352).

<sup>31</sup> This conclusion is drawn from the two facts that their names are of foreign origin (and therefore they had not been naturalised into Greek) and that the plants quite simply could not flourish in the Greek climate and/or soil (Ventris & Chadwick 1973: 226-227; Killen 1983; Sarpaki 2001: 205-231).



The employment of spices as diacritica recalls their use in Medieval Europe, where they were liberally applied to dishes more to signify status than to improve flavour (Schivelbusch 2005: 124). If such importance was linked to aromatics, then their scent as dishes were carried from one part of the palace to another – and the fact that one either received or did not receive them – would be enough to signify one’s social position. Those who ate such dishes, and noted how strong (or not) the spices were, would simultaneously observe their host’s command of resources and their own privileged position in the social hierarchy. Similarly, again as seen in Medieval Europe, spices could have been used for their dyeing properties; for example, safflower could have turned food strikingly yellow (Sarpaki 2001: 206-207), and so its deployment in cooking would visually signal which guests were privileged to receive a dish incorporating the precious ingredient. While the quantity of food offered at a feast would accrue an impression of power, success and authority to the host, the quality of certain fare employed – the utilisation of “elite” or luxury foods – would mark out the exclusivity of those who were dining on them, undoubtedly those of the host’s closest circle (Van der Veen 2003: 413).

Not all forms of differentiated cuisine would be so easily comprehensible however, and it depends how much the dishes were reliant on markers of elite status (e.g. spices, game meat) to signal who should consume them. For example, a plain dish and one served with a sauce would not be employing any particular elite currency, but would still be making a statement simply by being qualitatively different. In this case, the vertical social differentiation would be lightly concealed and left to the guests themselves to interpret and realise that tiers of guest relationships were being constructed. I consider it highly unlikely that guests could have employed palatial feasts as an opportunity to manipulate and improve their social status, but rather that the host dictated their position, whether to emphasise and strengthen their place in the social hierarchy prior to the feast, or to re-negotiate status during the course of the event. A large communal occasion such as a feast would give an opportunity for a guest to see how others were treated, especially those of a similar standing, and this would help comprehension and interpretation of how his own social status was being signified.

### *3. Consequences of the Feast: Constructing and Fulfilling Obligations*

Consuming a meal as a guest is accompanied by a set of accepted obligations; by partaking of another’s generosity, one is required to reciprocate in some manner.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, hosting and consuming a feast can be seen as an impermanent form of gift exchange – as in any other exchange scenario, something is offered which carries with it the obligation to repay at some

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<sup>32</sup> The literature on reciprocity in feasting scenarios is comprehensive, as it is an accepted tenet of communal consumption that the guests will be bound to the host through a need to repay his generosity. For an early discussion of different types of reciprocity, including that produced by commensality, cf. Donlan 1982. Dietler (1996; 2001) and Hayden (1996; 2001), as well as the majority of contributors to their 2001 edited volume, discuss this concept in detail.

point. However, in the case of a feast, the gift is destroyed as soon as it is received and therefore the situation becomes more complex, leading to a protracted period of asymmetrical relationships as the guest cannot repay immediately. An unwritten contract is embarked upon when one accepts an invitation to dine at another's house. In a modern situation, such a contract has been distilled into etiquette – one takes a token gift when visiting someone's house, or will reciprocate by inviting the host back for a meal. However, when the host is considerably richer or more powerful than the guest, it may be impossible for the guest to reciprocate in an equal fashion, increasing the asymmetrical relationship already associated with “feast exchange”. It should be obvious from what has already been discussed that Mycenaean palatial feasting was on a grand scale, requiring a huge reserve of resources (both comestibles and manpower), and thus necessitating a host who was rich enough to own/control that and authoritative enough to command staff to requisition, prepare, cook and serve it. Hence the majority, if not all, of the guests would never have had the resources and power to reciprocate in an equal manner. And yet, the terms of the agreement that became operative at the moment of accepting an invitation to dine at the palace required suitable reciprocity.

The solution to such an apparent dilemma is to repay the host and to fulfil one's obligations in ways other than a reciprocal meal. This can take a variety of forms, including providing labour, supplying resources, producing craftwork or serving in a military context. It can be an effective method of keeping society operative and integrated and was practically universal in agrarian societies before the rise of capitalism (Dietler & Herbich 2001: 240). The remuneration of a large meal may seem poor pay for labour in comparison to cash wages, but the situation was more complex than that. The receiver consumed the meal as a form of privilege and became embedded in social networks that could prove advantageous; he had the opportunity to eat and drink comestibles that undoubtedly exceeded the staple fare of a non-elite; plus, the requirement to reciprocate the meal in an equal manner was removed. From the host's point of view, the advantages were obvious: there was a workforce bound to him, and his social superiority and/or political power was made explicit to a large group of people in a way that was worth the initial expenditure.

The recruitment of labour through the construction of obligations is one very likely result of Mycenaean palatial feasting and a topic that has recently begun to be studied. While it is clear that many groups of people were bound to the palaces, the majority of these would have been of servile status or fulfilling obligations in return for gifts of land or raw goods, both clearly documented in the Linear B records. However, sometimes the circumstances were more complex and it is here that we may adduce feasting as a method of obtaining labour or other forms of service, including military. Killen (2006: 73-74) has recently associated those who contributed flax to the palace on the PY Na series with the ‘coastguards’ listed on the *An o-ka*

records (cf. also Shelmerdine 2006: 79). These men seem to have been landholders who gave a certain proportion of their produce (i.e. flax) to the palace in return for being granted areas of land; however, this does not explain why the same men also appear to have worked part-time as coastguards. I would suggest that they received some other form of remuneration in return for this additional service, and a large feast would be a reasonable supposition.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, if Killen's (2006: 84) further suggestion is correct that the various craftsmen on An 207, such as goldsmiths, potters and bow-makers, were brought into the palace part-time for special commissions, then they may well also have been granted a feast (or several) during their service there, as a way of repaying or binding them. Such hired workers must have been "paid" in some way, as the slaves on the Linear B tablets are explicitly designated as such, and it is the nature of the textual record to document precisely if payments of land, goods, or rations were handed out; therefore, it appears that a more transient form of remuneration existed for these cases. Finally, the issue has recently been raised that certain craftsmen (principally textile- or leather-workers) may have acted in their official capacity at feasts and hence were possibly rewarded by food for performing their duties in a ceremonial, commensal context (TH Av 100 & 106: Dakouri-Hild 2003: 97-100).

Wright (2004b: 47) has suggested that labour mobilisation via feasting could have been the method by which the major building projects of later LHIIIB were carried out, such as the construction of Cyclopean walls and tholos tombs, and the draining of the Kopais. One of the largest tholoi, the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae, has been estimated to have taken c.20,280 man days to construct, including digging the area, transporting and dressing the stone, building and decorating the tomb itself (Cavanagh & Mee 1999: 99-100). The team employed on the tholos may have been as large as 1,000 men at times, as Cavanagh and Mee (1999: 96) calculate that the massive lintel block may have required that many men to move it.<sup>34</sup> Equally impressive are the fortification walls, as it has been estimated that the blocks used at Gla could have taken 195 years to transport, based on 4 men per block, if manpower alone was relied on (as opposed to oxen: Loader 1998: 68-69).<sup>35</sup> In order to reduce the building time, the amount of people involved in such constructions needed to be extensive and some strong motivation would have been required to compel them to perform these tasks. Unfortunately the use of labour mobilisation feasts can only remain a reasonable conjecture as we lack specific proof at present, except for an argument *ex silentio* as there is no evidence for Mycenaean slave labour, implying instead cooperative projects. Kilian (1988: 294) notes that the rebuilding of the Tiryns citadel in LHIIIB was completed in only a couple of years, which he attributes to the *wanax's*

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<sup>33</sup> Similarly, there were textile-workers at Knossos who were also recruited part-time to act as rowers along the coast (KN As 4493: Killen 2007: 265-266).

<sup>34</sup> Santillo Frizell (1998: 173, 177) gives a smaller estimation of c.400 men, although this is still a sizeable figure.

<sup>35</sup> It has also been estimated that to pull just one average-sized Cyclopean block up the incline of the Great Ramp at Mycenae would have taken 63 men (Loader 1998: 67-68).

administrative power; I would expand this to suggest that perhaps it was produced by 'collective work events' or labour mobilisation feasts (Dietler & Herbich 2001), which are effective ways of gathering large groups of people and ensuring major work projects are performed relatively quickly. If people do not attend labour mobilisation feasts voluntarily, then the situation becomes *corvée* labour (which demands an institutionalised central authority, like the palaces) and the effectiveness of obligating large numbers of people to perform laborious tasks increases further (Dietler & Herbich 2001: 244). I would emphasise the fact that there are no administrative records documenting such major building projects, which would be surprising if the workers were paid with rations or other goods, and hence the use of a 'collective work event' or labour mobilisation feast appears reasonable.

A similar situation could exist with the mobilisation of an army if the threat of invasion or internal unrest required it, and potential soldiers could be offered participation in a large-scale feasting event prior to recruiting or serving (Fox & Harrell 2008). The coastguards discussed above are generally considered to have a military connection, responding to possible threats shortly before the collapse of the palace at Pylos (Shelmerdine 2006: 78), and as suggested they may have been recruited through a palatial feast.<sup>36</sup> It is also notable that those serving in a military context were outfitted by the palaces – the PY S series inventories chariots, armour and weapons stocked at the palace, and the KN Sc series, albeit earlier, even records the allocation of such items (Shelmerdine 2006: 79). This suggests that the palaces had strong control over who served as a soldier, even providing weapons, and hence it is likely that methods of recruitment would also have been carefully organised by the palaces. A feast was not only a way of indebting people to the palace, but also of bringing large numbers to the heart of the palatial authority where it was easier to impose obligations upon them.

The hosting of a large-scale feast, such as occurred at the Mycenaean palaces, was a conspicuous display of authority and wealth. As has been stated, the hosting of these feasts required considerable manpower – to requisition supplies, tend the animals while other preparations were being completed, cook and serve the food – as well as a wealth of resources to draw upon. It is apparent from the Linear B documents (e.g. TH Wu series) that supplies for feasts could be requisitioned from other individuals or groups (and it is even likely that to give an animal for a feast was a mark of distinction, rather than an imposition: Killen 1994; Bendall 2004: 110-111; Palaima 2004: 105); thus the onus for hosting a feast did not fall solely on the palaces. However, the palatial authority was still required to employ a large quantity of foodstuffs for each feasting event, some of which, such as cattle, were costly to rear and whose

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<sup>36</sup> Shelmerdine (2006: 78) also suggests that the rowers on PY An 1 and 610 were performing military service. While I think this is likely, the link with feasting is less apparent, as they could be rowing in return for land-ownership instead of a feast. *Contra* Uchitel (1984), who is less convinced by the military interpretation of the *o-ka* tablets.

destruction represented a considerable investment. It is also worth noting that almost all the pottery in the palace pantries at Pylos was unused (Whitelaw 2001: 61-62; Hruby 2006: 44), thus the vessels appear to be a fresh consignment brought in between feasts. The combination of large numbers of people, high quantities of alcohol and ceramic vessels no doubt led to a relatively high breakage rate at each feast, and the new batch presumably was ordered in preparation for another feasting event. Hence, it is clear that the palace had the expenditure not only of providing copious quantities of food and drink, but also of supplying sufficient equipment for each feast that was hosted. Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to investigate the mechanisms through which animals were reared or requisitioned and the supplies of feasting equipment brought to the palace.<sup>37</sup> What is relevant however is the fact that palatial feasts were events at which the palace could reveal its sociopolitical authority, managerial or administrative skill, and material superiority over the guests. Such expenditure and organisational ability would be perfectly clear to the guests, thus enhancing the palatial host's prestige and making it more likely that the guests would feel inferior and indebted to the palace.

It is possible to consider whether this display of wealth and power was analogous to other palatial projects during the later part of LHIIIB. For example, Wright (1987) has highlighted the building projects undertaken at Mycenae which seem to have been a way for the palace to impose its superiority over the local population and to legitimate the occupants of the palace in their position. The large tholoi of Atreus, Klytemnaistra and the Genii, the Lion Gate, the wall around the citadel and the refurbishment of GCA were some of these building developments that occurred during this period (Wright 1987: 177; 2006a: 17-18; 2006b: 59-60). All were in conglomerate stone, as were the concurrent alterations to the palace itself, and hence stamped the palace's authority over the whole town in a visual, permanent manner. This was especially clear on the Lion Gate, where the palace appears to have been symbolised in the column between the lions (French 2002: 78). Just as in the case of hosting feasts, such works required a considerable reserve of manpower to draw upon and access to large quantities of raw materials, in this case stone. I would view these two phenomena as comparable in the sense that both were ways for the palaces to display their access to resources and control over a workforce in forms of conspicuous consumption that would have been statements of power to the local population.

All forms of palatial action, whether they involved rituals or more permanent displays of power, would have necessarily impacted upon those who lived in the vicinity or who were invited/coerced into activities organised by the palace. This does not mean that the local population was subordinated, as we lack evidence that the palaces kept such a tight rein on the

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<sup>37</sup> There was a variety of ways in which animals could be given or requisitioned for a feast, including taken from palatial herds, drawn from sanctuary-owned flocks, obtained as a method of fiscal requirement, or given as donations (Halstead 1999; 2002: 167-168; Palaima 2004; Dakouri-Hild 2005: 212). For ceramic production, cf. Galaty 1999b.

Mycenaean people; however, as the palaces appeared to have a certain amount of control over the economic, political and religious spheres, it is likely that there was some overall strategy to keep the local people fairly closely tied to the palatial authorities. Feasting could have been one method among several of achieving this. It indebted the people to the palatial host, impressed them with its generosity, and warned them by displays of its power.

This also parallels what appears to be a general tightening of security near the end of LHIII B. I do not speculate here on the causes of this and if there were international, interstate or internal threats, as these are still highly uncertain. It could have been a response to potential dangers sensed across the Mediterranean; it could equally have been simply a desire to keep the people as firmly controlled by the central administrative authorities as possible. For example, Shelmerdine (1987: 564-565) has noted that access to the palace at Pylos was restricted shortly before the collapse and, concurrently, that there appeared to be a desire to bring various operations closer to the heart of the palatial authority, such as ritual activity, storage and craft manufacture.<sup>38</sup> Courts 42 and 47 were built, effectively blocking off the former entrance at area 41 and leaving only one principal access-route to the palace's heart (area 1); the Wine Magazine and the North-East Workshop were also built late in the palace's lifespan, both of which appear to focus large-scale storage and craft activities more closely with the palace (Shelmerdine 1987: 560-564). Similarly, the coastguards and rowers, who were discussed above, could be indications of a desire for heightened security or border controls, especially if the rowers are seen in a proto-naval context (Shelmerdine 2006: 78). At Mycenae, the fortification wall was expanded during the later part of LHIII B, not only protecting the citadel but also significantly bringing the ritual area of the Cult Centre inside the wall's bounds for the first time (Wardle 2003: 324). This appears similar to what was occurring at Pylos, with various activities being brought closer to the palace's centre. In this context, it is interesting to consider the possibility of feasting activities being employed as a method of keeping the people themselves close to palatial control. It is noticeable that the pantry areas at Pylos are likewise late alterations to the palace's structure (Shelmerdine 1987: 559; Hruby 2006: 8), hence implying that a need for entertaining on such a large scale only arose at a period comparatively late in the palace's lifespan, possibly when concurrent changes were occurring in other spheres of activity. By indebting the local population to the palace, in ways that I have described in this section, a large work/security force was available for mobilisation when necessary and palatial power was made explicit. Whatever the threat that was sensed at this time, it is possible that large-scale palatial feasting was indirectly a response to it and a way of handling the people in the vicinity by effectively binding them under the guise of generosity.

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<sup>38</sup> This does not mean, however, that the palace at Pylos was being turned into a fortified locale (Thaler 2005: 327).

#### ***4. Expanding the Feast: Constructing Palace-Polity Relationships***

Up to now, I have concentrated specifically upon feasting in the Mycenaean palaces themselves; however, they were surrounded by hinterlands in which consumption events would also have occurred. As yet very little attention has been paid to feasting at lesser-order sites, principally because these settlements had not been thoroughly investigated until the relatively recent development of regional studies (e.g. Wright *et al.* 1990; Bennet 1999). In this section, I therefore broaden my perspective, looking beyond the palaces to lesser-order sites in their vicinity where examples of feasting debris have been excavated, and employing these to explore how palace-polity relationships can be understood through the lens of feasting activities.

The Linear B records bear evidence to the amount of economic control that the palaces had over their polities, revealing where and from whom supplies were requisitioned, whether they were required as taxation or offered as a gift, or whether they were derived from palatial land, plus what type of produce was collected and the quantities of each (cf. Halstead 1999). However, they are less informative on the political and ideological influence or control that the palaces had over their polities. It is in relation to this influence/control that I consider the issue of feasting events occurring in the smaller settlements and their relations to palatial feasts. Because of the paucity of work on feasting in non-palatial sites, I concentrate on textual evidence and three Messenian sites: Malthi, Nichoria and Pylos. This means that conclusions reached must not be generalised for all non-palatial feasting, but they may produce fresh frameworks through which future work can be viewed.

There are three models to which non-palatial feasting may adhere: distribution (where feasting is controlled by the palaces to the extent that provisions are sent out to lesser-order sites), emulation (where lesser-order sites arrange their own feasts but perform them to the model of palatial commensality), or independence (where lesser-order sites host their own feasts with no reference to palatial feasting). From the evidence in the sites under discussion, it appears that the third model – that of independence – is most implausible, and hence that a relationship between palatial and polity feasting did exist. As stated, this is a product of the dataset and does not mean that independent feasting did not occur at all, merely that the available evidence is not informative on this practice, and hence it is not considered in this thesis. Indeed, the faunal evidence bears witness to a much greater variety of consumption practices than the Linear B records attest, suggesting that much was occurring outside of the palaces' jurisdiction (Halstead 2002: 185). I therefore intend to investigate more closely the concepts of distribution and emulation in the context of feasting in the polities, in order to understand not only the commensal occasions occurring outside of the palaces but also the relationship between the palaces and the lesser-order sites surrounding them.

In emulative commensality, lesser-order sites would autonomously arrange their own feasts, but would imitate the styles known to be associated with palatial feasting in order to project a desired image. This could be because of a settlement's pretension to a higher significance than it actually possessed, a belief that "if the palaces do thus, then it must be right", a fear of repercussions if adherence to prevailing styles was not demonstrated, or a way of stating a settlement's position in a local hierarchy by displaying its pseudo-palatial customs. The spread of tholos tombs in the Early Mycenaean period as a status marker can be seen as an analogous development in the funerary sphere – a method of employing elite symbols to negotiate social position beyond the level of the individual (cf. 3.2; Bennet 1995: 596-597; 1998: 125-126; J. Davis 1998: 68). It may have been that the practice of feasting itself was regarded as an elite activity to emulate, as was demonstrably so in the Early Mycenaean period, although the very different societal structure of the palatial era should provoke caution before drawing the same conclusion. It is clear however that certain ways of feasting were adopted by the smaller settlements in order to convey that they were able to produce feasts recognisably similar to what was occurring in the higher-order sites.

The site of Malthi in Messenia demonstrates this in a concrete way. The monumental hall A1 had been used from late MH times as a feasting location, demonstrated by the presence of kylikes and broken bones mixed with ashes (cf. 3.3; Valmin 1938: 79-81). However, in LHIII a 'megaron' (hall B85) was built in the most favourable, sheltered location in the settlement. Its features clearly referenced those of the palatial megara, with four columns and a central hearth, and its use as a feasting locale was attested by animal bone fragments on the hearth and various pottery sherds around the room (Valmin 1938: 173-174; Figure 4.3). Bendall (2004: 126) has – rightly I believe – interpreted this replacement of what was a perfectly adequate and monumental dining hall by one that obviously modelled itself on the palatial megara as a way of adopting elite ideology, a belief that this was how feasting ought to be done. In fact, A1 was larger than the replacement 'megaron', implying that B85 was built for the new style, not for increased capacity. In this context, it is notable that some of the kylikes from A1 were slipped with a yellowish clay, possibly to make them resemble the fabric of the wares from Pylos (Bendall 2004: 124, 126). This also suggests emulation of feasting occurring at the central palace and the equipping of the lesser-order site with the trappings necessary to make their commensality echo palatial feasting events. Possibly related to such a wish is the miniature kylix found at Nichoria, also in the Pylian polity (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 515).<sup>39</sup> This is the only published example from Messenia, excepting those at Pylos (e.g. in room 7) and from the wealthy tombs at Volimidhia. These tiny vessels have a symbolic significance<sup>40</sup> and appear to have been intimately connected with elite drinking rituals. Thus the appearance of such a cup at

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<sup>39</sup> Ref. P3583, found in L23 Sq, level 7 (LHIIIB2).

<sup>40</sup> They are generally found in ritual or cultic contexts, and are far too small to have served any practical function (cf. Stocker & Davis 2004: 70-71; Vitale 2008: 231-232).



Nichoria, not a central elite locale but a second-order settlement, suggests again the borrowing of elite symbols and equipment in order to emulate commensal activities occurring at the palace.

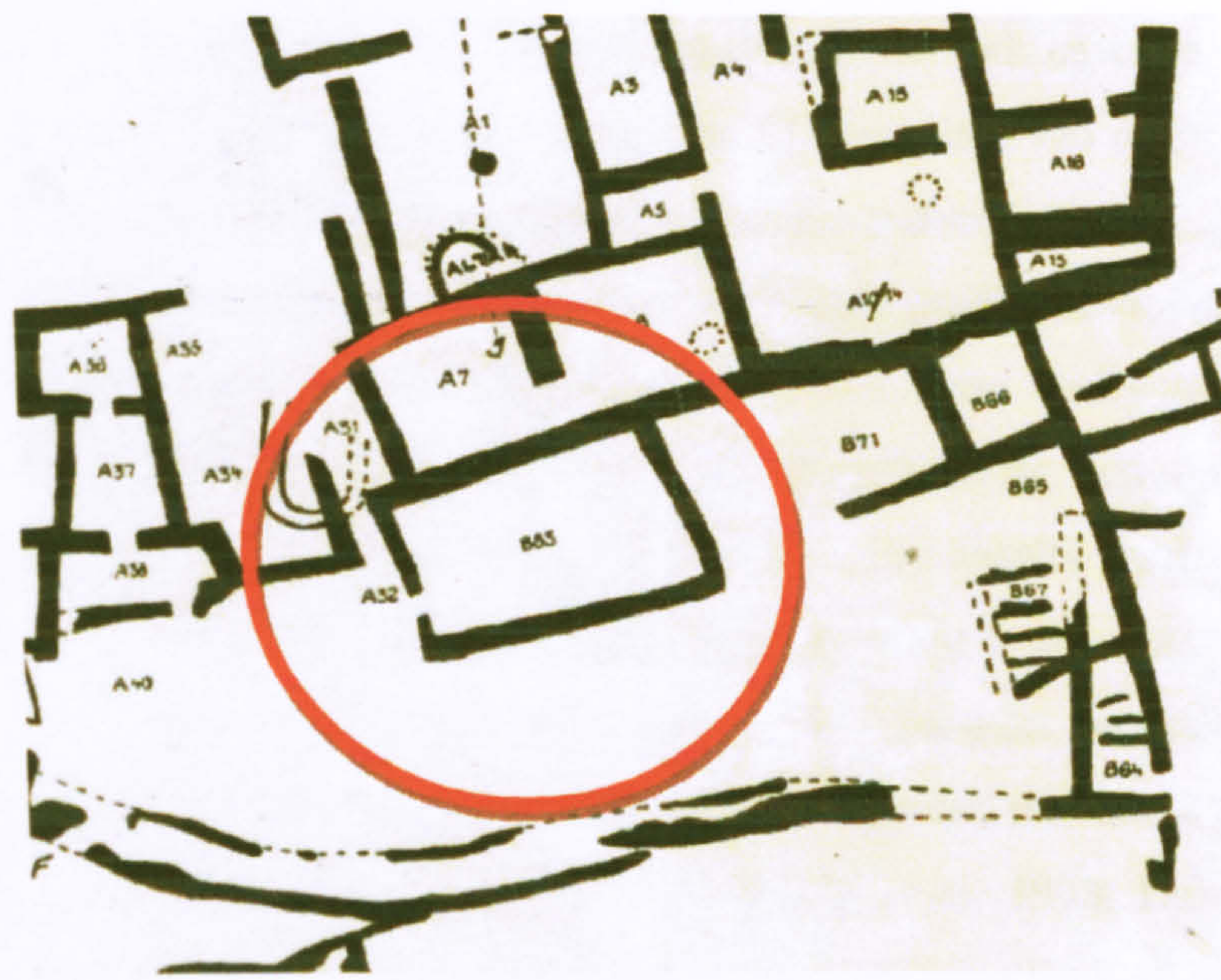


Figure 4.3: Plan of hall B85, Malthi (Valmin 1938: plan III)<sup>41</sup>

The evidence from these two non-palatial sites suggests that feasting occurring there was to some degree influenced by the palaces, and that some strategy of emulation was operative. This does not have to be interpreted as an attempt to make the site appear to be of elite ranking, but could simply be a method of ensuring that the lesser-order settlement fitted into a polity-wide system of activity, of buying into accepted ways of performing dining rituals because that was what everyone did. However, the idea of emulation does not cover all the available evidence, and here I turn to the third model – that of distribution. In this scenario, the feasting supplies were actually provided by the palaces to the lesser-order sites so that they no longer organised their feasts autonomously. This could operate under either coercion, whereby the smaller settlements did not have a choice about partaking in feasting activities, or generosity, whereby the palaces ensured that everyone around had an opportunity to join in the festive events. Unfortunately, the evidence for further interpretation is scarce at present; all we can state is that distribution was occurring.

As examined in 4.1, the feasting equipment in the pantries at Pylos could have catered for a maximum of c.1,000 dining guests and c.3,000 drinking guests. However, the quantities of provisions listed on PY Un 138, a record of a feast at the palace, have been estimated to provide c.1,750kg (Weilhartner 2008: 413) or c.1,900kg of meat (Bendall 2007b: 86). To put this into perspective, Weilhartner (2008: 412-413) has estimated that 1,200kg of meat listed on Un 2 for a feast at *pa-ki-ja-na* could have fed 2,500-3,000 people. The zooarchaeological evidence

<sup>41</sup> The plan is of the centre of Malthi, not the whole extent of the settlement at this period.

supports the huge quantities of meat seen in the textual record; it has been estimated that the number of animals attested in each of the faunal deposits could have produced as much as 2 tons of meat, enough to feed c.3,000 people (Halstead & Isaakidou 2004: 148). The discrepancy between the amount of meat and the ceramic equipment in both cases is striking and leaves enough meat for c.2,000 people who do not appear to have been fed at the palace itself. One likely solution is that the animals were slaughtered at the palace and then offcuts of meat were immediately distributed to other sites in the vicinity.<sup>42</sup> It is worth remembering that the species were cattle and red deer, neither of which would have been easily available to non-elite populations (due to costs of rearing and derivation from hunting activities), and also that it appears likely from the room 7 deposit that the animals were ritually sacrificed first – requiring a religious officiator who may not have been present at every small site. Feast distribution is attested at the end of the Early Mycenaean period at Tsoungiza, where selective discard of anatomical parts in the LHIIIA2 Early EU9 deposit suggests that meat was taken away by participants for consumption elsewhere (cf. 3.3; Wright *et al.* 1990; Dabney *et al.* 2004; Lis 2008: 145-146). It was therefore a known practice and may have been adopted by the palaces to extend their influence over wider numbers of people.

The textual record also explicitly reveals the distribution of feasting supplies by the palaces to sites in their polities. PY Vn 20 lists the provision of large quantities of wine to nine towns, a list of sites corresponding neatly with Cn 608 where the same towns are instructed to fatten pigs. These two texts have been read together as documenting preparations for a regional feasting event (Palmer 1994: 76-78; Bendall 2004: 109-110; Hruby 2006: 119-120).<sup>43</sup> While on this occasion meat was not supplied but only ordered to be prepared, a considerable amount of wine was distributed to the towns, 410 units (estimated at 11,808 litres: Palmer 1994: 194). This echoes the huge quantities of meat distribution discussed above, in that the palace had the agricultural and administrative resources to cater on such a conspicuously generous scale at a distance from the centre. As mentioned in 4.2, wine does not appear to have been a staple commodity, and hence the distribution of large quantities on one occasion would mark a festive event and emphasise palatial generosity. At Thebes, it has been noted that feasting supplies on tablets from the Pelopidou Street deposit were recorded as sent to *te-qa-jo-i* and *i-si-wi-jo-i*, smaller settlements or groups of people in the region, and these could have been food distributions for them to host their own commensal events (Dakouri-Hild 2003: 179).

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<sup>42</sup> It has also been suggested that vessels themselves could have been distributed along with the food (specifically shallow angular bowls), which would increase the sense of events being directed by the palatial organisers and leave a physical reminder of the occasion (Lis 2006: 19).

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, all nine towns on both lists are in the Hither Province, perhaps suggesting the limit of the palace's jurisdiction in dictating feasting events.

Other evidence for distribution of feasting supplies is more elusive but nevertheless still worth discussing. Hruby (2006: 70) has posited the idea of the vessels from the Pylos pantries being stored in ways that would make them easily transportable; as they appear to have been tied together in batches of 10, rather than simply stacked on top of each other, it would have been straightforward to gather up several batches for a feast outside of the palace. I remain a little sceptical of this idea as it suggests that the palace was not just supplying provisions to lesser-order sites, but was actually taking the feast outside (picnic-style), which would either have been a huge operation<sup>44</sup> or would not have reached such a wide sector of the population. However, the issue is worth bearing in mind and future investigations may shed further light on it. It is perhaps significant that the wall-painting in hall 6 at Pylos seems to depict the lyre-player in an *al fresco* context, possibly indicating the existence of feasting outside of the palace's buildings (Hruby 2006: 117; Bennet 2007: 14), although of course it was the case that only a very limited number even at palatial feasts would have actually dined inside.

When all the evidence is viewed together, it suggests that the distribution of feasting supplies was a known occurrence in the palatial period and that certain feasts in the polities were provisioned by the palatial administration. However, such information requires interpretation in the context of palace-polity relationships to be truly valuable. What scenarios can we envisage occurring? While I have constructed the emulation and distribution models separately, it is entirely possible that they could have operated simultaneously, in the sense that the palaces provided feasting supplies to lesser-order sites, who consumed them surrounded by palatial-style equipment or structures in an attempt to adopt the palace's ideology of dining. From the limited data, it is impossible at present to be more specific; however, the solution is probably a complex web of motivations, with both external pressure and internal desires to conform to a set way of feasting. It appears that distribution was the stronger model of the two, and very probably the palaces were highly involved in feasting throughout their polities and exercised a definite influence (although perhaps not control) over what was occurring in the lesser-order sites. The expense that the palaces went to in order to offer sufficient provisions for the lesser-order settlements reveals that they had a keen interest in what happened there and a desire to direct affairs accordingly. It is impossible to tell whether such supplies were received gratefully or grudgingly by the settlements, although the emulation of palatial feasting models perhaps suggests a sense of appreciation and an attempt to make the experience as "authentic" as possible.

To take a broader perspective, it is clear that the palaces were the centre of their polities and to a certain extent controlled the settlements around; note that Pylos does not occur on the taxation

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<sup>44</sup> It was also apparently an unnecessary operation, given the suitability of the palace itself for holding commensal events, with its large courts and proximate pantries and cooking areas.

lists in the Linear B records so would appear to have some form of rights over the other sites (Bennet 1995: 592). The extent of the palaces' influence is also attested in the textual record as extremely wide-spread and hence it would be no surprise if they interfered in activities occurring in relatively distant settlements. For example, it appears that Euboia was within the scope of Thebes' influence; while direct control cannot necessarily be inferred, the fact that feasting supplies were collected from Amarythos in Wu 58 suggests that the palace had sufficient authority over this area to requisition goods when required (Dakouri-Hild 2005: 212). With these kinds of political scenario in mind, non-palatial feasting has been interpreted in two subtly different ways. Firstly, Dakouri-Hild (2003: 181) has suggested that there could have been polity-wide religious festivals around Thebes, celebrated both at the palace and in the regional communities, for which the palace administered the supplies to ensure that all could partake. Secondly, Hruby (2006: 121) has also seen simultaneous feasting across the Pylian polity, but employing the palace's conspicuous generosity in provisioning wine to its subjects for sociopolitical aims. Although regional and/or chronological differences may explain the varied interpretations, I find Hruby's scenario more compelling, as the expenditure and managerial organisation involved in feasting distribution would be unlikely without the expectation of benefits received. This does not necessarily mean that feasting was imposed upon the residents in the polity, but it does mean that the palace's role was not negligible and that, if they did not fully control regional commensality, they had a significant influence over what occurred.

### *5. The Feast in the Sanctuary – Juxtaposing Official and Popular Cults*

This chapter has so far concentrated purely upon the sociopolitical sphere of feasting in the palatial period. However, we also have evidence from this era attesting to feasting activities in the other two arenas, sanctuary and funerary. I discuss sanctuary feasting first as it appears to be more strongly related to sociopolitical feasting and the issues discussed in the previous section, due to greater evidence for palatial involvement in the religious sphere. As this is an arena that is first only unambiguously attested in the palatial period, elements of the mechanics of sanctuary feasting are discussed separately in Appendix IV.

It has been claimed that there were at least two levels of religious activity in the palatial period: the 'official' and the 'popular' (Hägg 1995: 387), and, as seen below, this appears to be borne out by the archaeological evidence. There were undoubtedly also intermediate areas where elements of both levels intermingled, but the two ends of the spectrum are easier to identify in the archaeological record and are used as a basis for the following discussion. As examined in 4.4, the palaces had a major influence over activities occurring in the settlements in their polities, even if they were not explicitly controlling them. It is very likely that a similar situation was occurring in the religious sphere and that the palaces were involved in ritual

activities, including feasting, that were taking place in sanctuaries and cult areas, possibly across their polities but certainly in the areas close to the centre (Killen 1987). The extent of this influence is the principal question of this section; however, it is necessary to recognise that there were different types of sanctuaries and palatial involvement appears to have varied in each of these. Although the 'official' and 'popular' categorisations reappear in the subsequent discussion, for the initial consideration I have preferred to divide the sanctuaries into more objective groupings, defined by location and/or structure type: enclosed shrines/cultic structures in or near the palaces; sanctuaries with restricted-access cultic buildings not connected to a palace; and hypaethral sacred locations across the landscape (either rural or extra-urban). I discuss the different types of sanctuaries first, before returning to address the question of the palace's involvement/influence/control in the religious sphere.

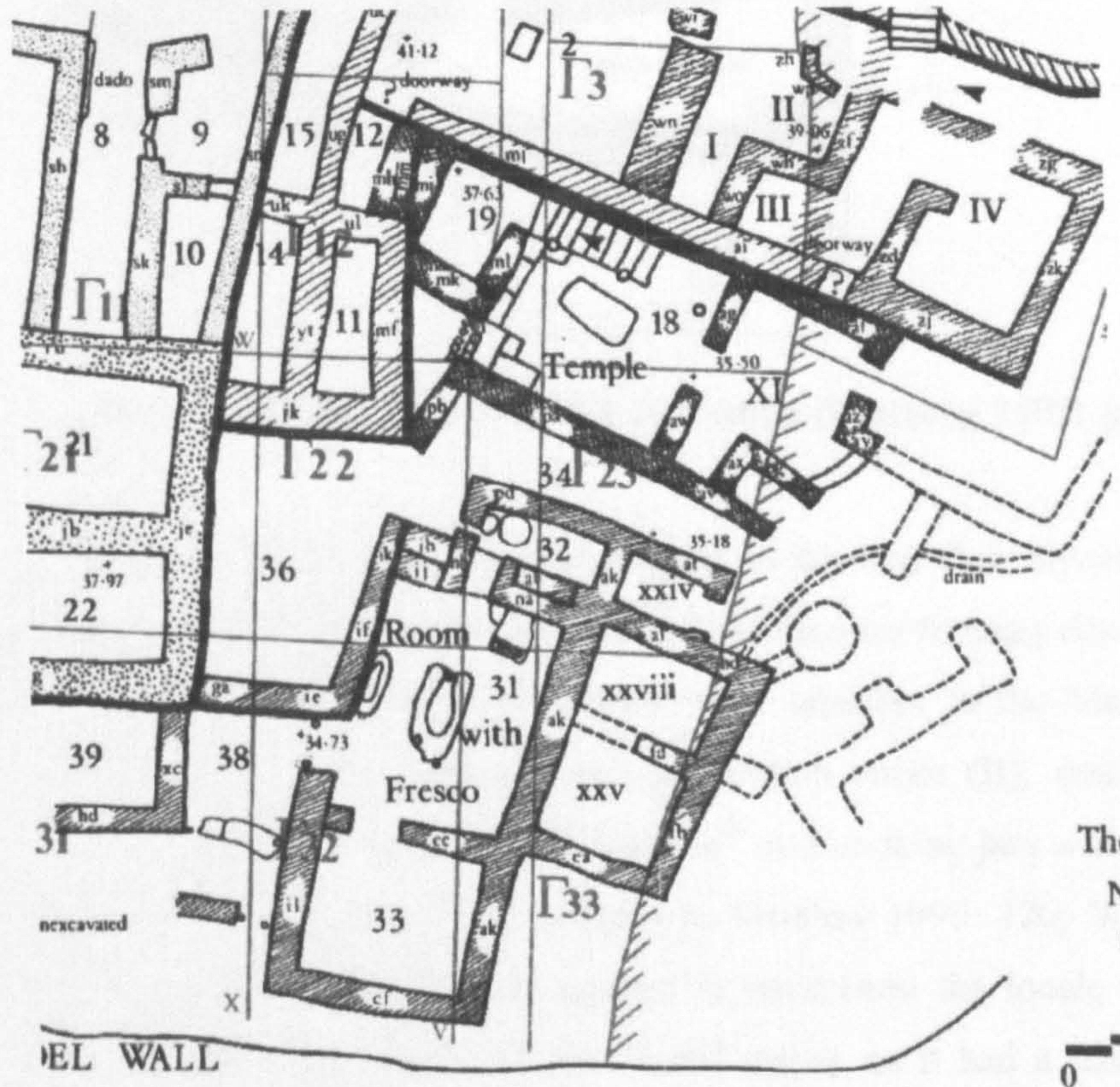
The first category, of shrines or cultic structures connected with the palaces, is best evidenced by the Cult Centre at Mycenae and the Shrine Area at Midea.<sup>45</sup> The Mycenae Cult Centre bears clear evidence of feasting rituals in at least two structures, the Room with the Fresco Complex (RFC) and the Temple Complex (Figure 4.4). This is attested in both buildings by burnt animal bones, shellfish debris and a predominance of consumption vessels (particularly kylikes), and in the RFC by residue analysis of what may have been a stew from a cooking jar (U. Albarella pers.comm.; Moore & Tylour 1999: 84-87; Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 128; Moore & Tylour forthcoming: 23-28, 34). Both cult buildings seem to have been designed for highly restricted rites. In the Temple Complex, the main room (18) was 11m<sup>2</sup> and has been estimated to have held around 11 people (Moore & Tylour 1999: 82). A similar number could have gathered in the anteroom (XI), suggesting that perhaps there were two tiers of celebrants (especially as there was a hearth in room XI). Possibly there were two sets of feasting rituals occurring, one in the Temple itself and a second, less privileged one nearer the building's entrance. In addition, the court in front of the Temple Complex could have held a greater number of people, although still perhaps only c.100 (Gallou 2005: 26), who would have been able to view the rituals occurring at the altar in the court and possibly eat there too (near the altar was a *bothros* containing ash, animal bones and sherds: Gallou 2005: 85). Even if they were dining in the court however, they were still excluded from what was occurring within the Temple Complex itself.

The RFC also restricted access due to its limited size. The principal room (31) was 21.2m<sup>2</sup>, and has been estimated to have held around 18 people (Moore & Tylour forthcoming: 37). While the building was slightly larger than the Temple Complex, it was oriented away from the court and hence its rituals were entirely private. Those in the small open area in front of the anteroom

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<sup>45</sup> While sacrificial rites clearly occurred at the palace at Pylos, and the North-East Building has been hypothesised as a cultic location, its role as a shrine is still debated (Bendall 2003: 185-186; *contra* Lupack 2008: 131-138) and the rituals occurring appear to be adjuncts to sociopolitical feasting as opposed to sanctuary feasting in their own right.

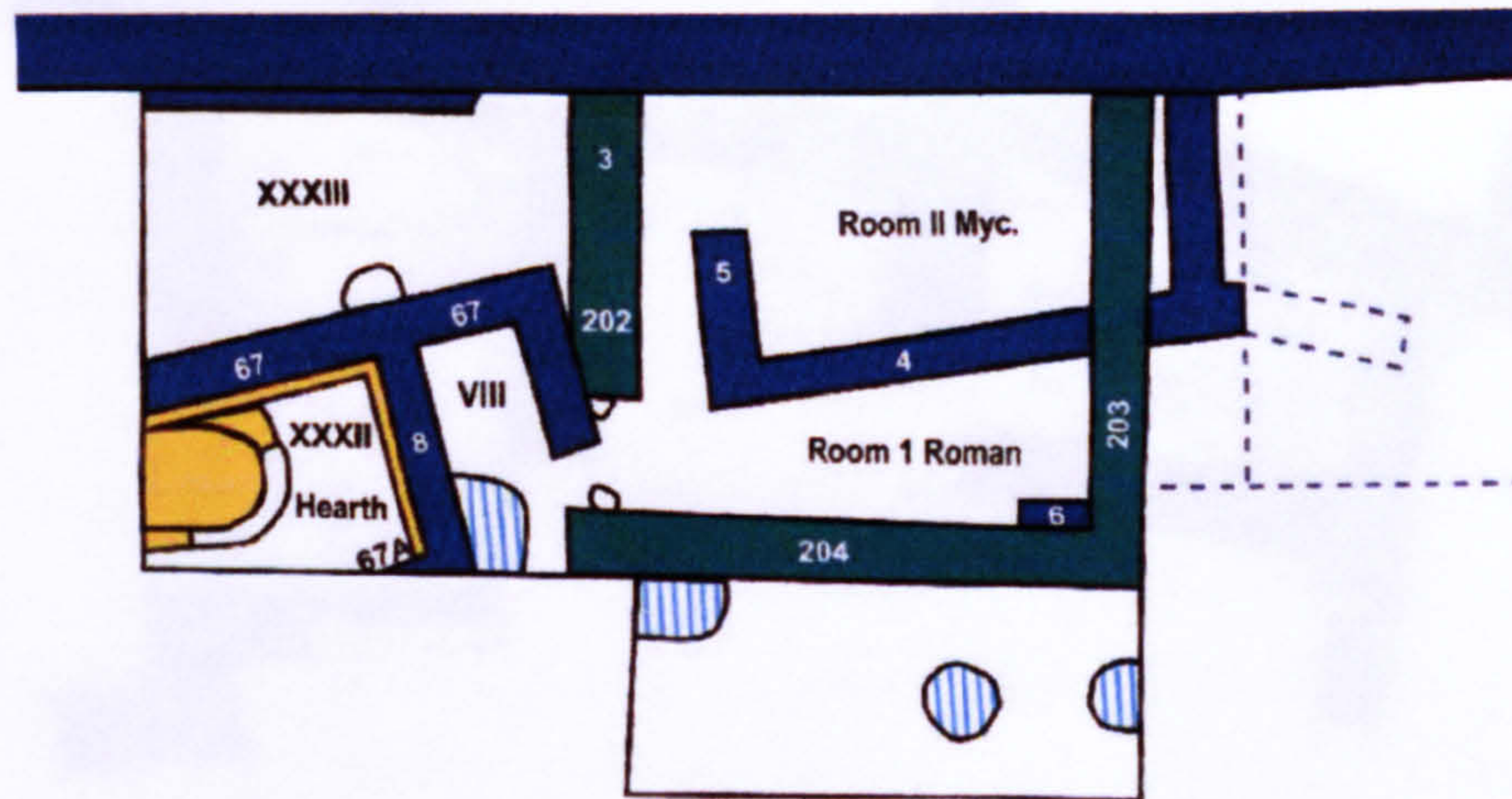
38 did not have a sight-line into room 31 because of an offset entrance. Whoever was permitted to dine in room 31 was no doubt of privileged status, whether socially or religiously elite. It has been estimated that the adjoining rooms 38 and 33 held 7 and 13 people respectively, with another 3 possibly in the small room 32 (Moore & Tylour forthcoming: 38), making a potential total of c.41 in the whole complex, still a low figure for a cultic building in a major settlement. This of course assumes that different people used the different rooms simultaneously; it is more likely that one smaller set of people used all the rooms for their rituals.



**Figure 4.4: Plan of Room with the Fresco Complex and Temple Complex, Mycenae Cult Centre (Tylour 1981: plan 2)**

It may have been that these two cult buildings next to each other, each tightly inclusive and even with entrances facing opposite ways, served two sets of people of different statuses, classes or groups, worshipping different deities. This is supported by artefacts from the RFC, expressively indicative of status and diplomatic activity (ivory objects and an Egyptian faience plaque), equivalents of which were absent from the Temple Complex (Wardle 2003: 321). It should be noted that the entrance to the RFC was altered at some point during LHIIIB from the court on the east to a more restricted access from the west (French 2002: 64), as if the exclusiveness of the rites occurring in that building was being highlighted. It is therefore possible to see a clearly defined range of status tiers worshipping in the Cult Centre, from the highest elite in the RFC to a secondary elite level inside the Temple Complex, followed by those of lesser status in the anteroom and court before the Temple Complex. Indeed those in the court may of course still have been privileged to partake in these rites at all, given the fact that

the extension of the fortification walls around the entire Cult Centre in later LHIIIB blocked access to the court from the west, sealing it off from any who might have ascended from the lower town to worship there.<sup>46</sup>



**Figure 4.5: Plan of Shrine Area (Terrace 9), Midea (Walberg 2007: plan 3)<sup>47</sup>**

Although Midea did not have a complete cultic quarter in the way that Mycenae did, similar patterns can be seen in the Shrine Area on Terrace 9. Evidence for feasting rituals is attested in a restricted cult building within the bounds of the town, adjacent to the Megaron Complex (Figure 4.5). Here there was a specific food preparation room (II), containing culinary equipment (mortar and pestle, millstones), food remains<sup>48</sup> and cooking jars with organic residue of a similar nature to that from the RFC (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 126; Walberg & Reese 2008: 239-240). The nearby room XXXII appears to have been the locale for further food preparation, perhaps for cooking rather than the initial stages, as it had a sizeable hearth and large quantities of butchered and burnt animal bones (Walberg & Reese 2008: 240-241). The actual feasting seems to have occurred in the neighbouring room XXXIII, where there was a large number of animal bones and vessels, dominated by consumption forms (particularly deep bowls:<sup>49</sup> Walberg 2007: 61-62; Walberg & Reese 2008: 240-241). The identity of the worshippers as elite is supported by the restricted nature of the rooms, much as was seen in the Mycenae Cult Centre. Room XXXIII, the dining room, was 6.2m<sup>2</sup> (Walberg & Reese 2008: 240-241), considerably smaller than either of the two Mycenae cult rooms and therefore participation would have been on an even more limited scale – probably less than ten celebrants.

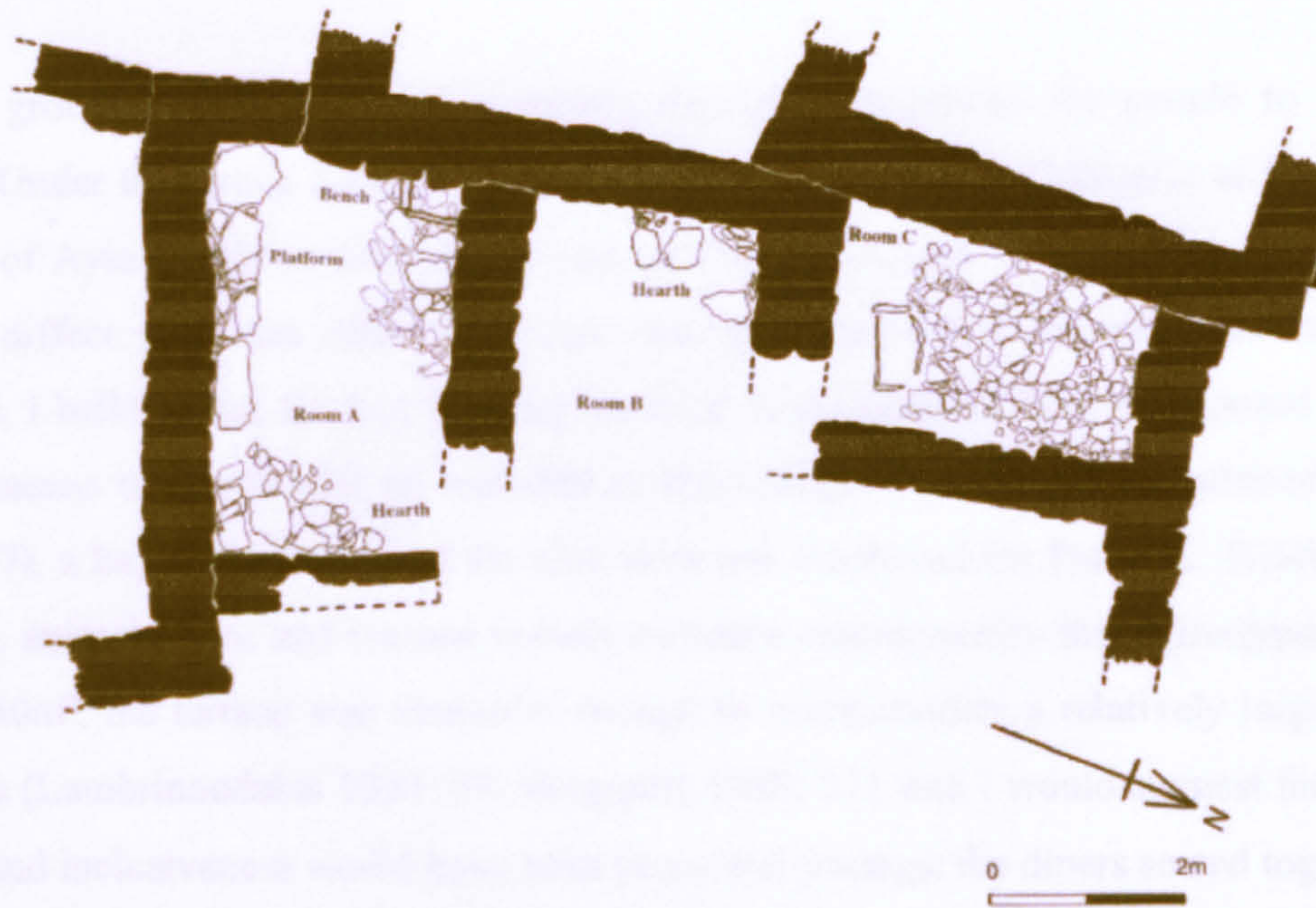
<sup>46</sup> Access through the processional way was restricted as there was a door part-way along it; similarly, the only other route to the Cult Centre (along the wall) was merely 1m wide in places and its narrowness may have been a method of restricting participation (Aamont 2008: 35). It should also be noted however that the later LHIIIB extension of the walls may have taken the RFC out of action, as access was subsequently so difficult (Wardle 2003: 319-320, 322).

<sup>47</sup> The yellow walls are early LHIIIB and the blue walls are later LHIIIB. All other colours are irrelevant to this period.

<sup>48</sup> These were principally plant remains, including fig, grape, olive, legumes and cereals (Walberg & Reese 2008: 239-240).

<sup>49</sup> As is seen in 5.1 and Appendix V, the deep bowl was the consumption vessel of choice at Midea, surpassing the kylix in quantity.

The investment in commensality is high, shown by two cooking rooms for so few people, and strongly indicates that the attendees were of the uppermost social tiers.



**Figure 4.6: Plan of principal cult rooms at Ayios Konstantinos, Methana (Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004: 139, figure 3)**

The second category of sanctuaries, that of restricted-access cultic buildings connected with a non-palatial settlement, is best exemplified by Ayios Konstantinos on Methana. It was near a relatively minor settlement and, unlike the previous two sanctuaries discussed, was not associated with a palace and may not have been located in the heart of the town.<sup>50</sup> The site consisted of several rooms/buildings, all relatively small and with several yielding clear evidence for feasting rituals (**Figure 4.6**). Rooms A, B and C, part of the same principal building, were notably restricted in size; room A was 11.2m<sup>2</sup> (Konsolaki 2002: 27) and, on the basis of the figures estimated for the Mycenae Cult Centre, this would have held about 11 people. Room B appears to have been of similar size, room C slightly smaller. Each room held quantities of burnt ovicaprid and pig bones, and room A contained cooking equipment in the form of a spit-stand and tripod-cauldrons (Konsolaki 2002: 28-29; Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004: 141-144). Furthermore, there were two adjacent buildings, G and Z, that also had high concentrations of consumption debris and appear to have been locations for ritual feasting (Hamilakis 2008: 8-9).<sup>51</sup> As the sanctuary did not appear to have had an external gathering area (Marakas 2007), it is likely that those who could enter these rooms/buildings were the only ones who could actually perform and/or view the rituals. For all three sanctuaries (Mycenae, Midea, Ayios Konstantinos), dining in such small rooms would enable everyone to see and speak to

<sup>50</sup> Further excavation is required to discover whether the sanctuary was central in the settlement or on the outskirts of it.

<sup>51</sup> G had a predominance of cattle bones and seashells; Z had a concentration of fish bones and seashells (Hamilakis 2008: 8-11).



each other so that feelings of familiarity and inclusiveness would be generated, while at the same time explicit messages of exclusion were sent to those who were not able to enter and join in these feasts.

The final group of sanctuaries were simply hypaethral locations for people to gather and worship. Under this group I have included the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauras, the small site of Ayia Triada in the Argolid, and the Profitis Ilias cave near Tiryns. While Apollo Maleatas differs from the other two sites due to its proximity to and connection with a settlement, I believe that the fact feasting occurred in the open-air here as opposed to in a cult building means that it should be included in this category.<sup>52</sup> As was mentioned in 3.4 (cf. **Figure 3.7**), a large terrace around the altar area was employed for feasting. Black fatty earth and ashes, animal bones and various vessels evidence commensality there (Bergquist 1988: 27, 32). At 50m<sup>2</sup>, the terrace was extensive enough to accommodate a relatively large number of celebrants (Lambrinoudakis 1981: 59; Bergquist 1988: 31), and I would suggest that a sense of equality and inclusiveness would have been promoted amongst the diners seated together on this terrace. Although it undoubtedly served the local settlement, it could also have attracted those from a wider area (Lambrinoudakis 1981: 62), perhaps those who wished to celebrate sacred feasting activities but were not eligible to enter the inner cultic areas of the more restricted sanctuaries.

Similarly, the small sites of Ayia Triada and the Profitis Ilias cave, which have as yet had little study dedicated to them, have evidence for ritual feasting activities and appear to have served a wider, more inclusive range of people than the more formalised sanctuaries. At Ayia Triada, there was clear evidence of drinking rituals (kylikes and other drinking vessels); the site itself lacked architectural installations but was an open area on a ridge (Kilian 1990: 185-190; Marakas 2007). The Profitis Ilias cave, also on a hilltop, did have a large, simple sanctuary building and feasting activity was indicated by kylikes, cooking vessels and ash (Kilian 1990: 190, 193; Marakas 2007). Both sanctuaries were particularly isolated and not connected with any nearby settlement.

It can therefore be seen that worshippers underwent very different experiences at each of the three sanctuary types. In terms of inclusiveness/exclusivity and equality/hierarchy, the first two categories have much in common by tightly restricting participation. What their criteria were is

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<sup>52</sup> Marakas (2009; pers.comm.) categorises LHIII B sanctuaries as palatial, settlement and isolated; thus Apollo Maleatas is a settlement sanctuary, due to its obvious proximity to the settlement of Epidauras, and is regarded as different from Ayia Triada and the Profitis Ilias cave. While I appreciate her reasoning, I have categorised my sanctuaries under the types of installations/buildings present, and from this perspective Apollo Maleatas is very different in form from the palatial and other settlement-type sanctuaries. The form of the sanctuary affects the motivations and behaviour of the worshippers and therefore I class Apollo Maleatas under my hypaethral sites.

no longer clear (possibly one had to be socially elite or religiously initiated), but it is apparent that only selected people could perform the feasting rituals, or even view them. This limiting of participation was expressed in the architecture of the sanctuary areas themselves, through the small spaces and sometimes restricted access (Aamont 2008: 34). The social status that one had outside the heterotopic world of the sanctuary was not erased by entering the sacred area or partaking in ritual activity, but rather was reinforced by direct restriction of participation in the feasting or even prohibition of viewing the processes surrounding the feast. Therefore, sanctuary feasting exhibited diacritica without an individual host to direct the social relations of the diners, yet these would be just as effective at ensuring one felt one's place in the social matrix. I discussed in 4.2 how participation and/or viewing of the sacrifices and rituals surrounding the feasts at Pylos would have been permitted to only a few and, while not a sanctuary feast *per se*, it shares a similar ideology. The same patterns at work in the sociopolitical sphere could be just as evident in the religious sphere, and it may be possible to infer from this that some sanctuaries at least were not independent from palatial ideologies.

However, at a sanctuary feast it is likely that a participant would have been more involved or at least more proximal to the central rites, such as the slaughter of the animal(s) (Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004: 146). In general those who *took part* in sanctuary feasts were more active participants, performing or closely observing rites rather than just being provided with food.<sup>53</sup> The absence of a visible host at a sanctuary feast meant that the diners were more involved in the whole procedure and not reliant on one individual or hosting group. Sanctuary feasts were a sphere in which the equality of the participants could at times be emphasised in ways that were inappropriate or forbidden outside the sanctuary's grounds. This equality is emphasised in the third group of sanctuaries, where feasting was performed outside and, in certain cases, in locations remote from any specific settlement. The completely different architectural arrangements ensured that all could at least view the rites, and the greater space available suggests that there was wider participation. Here, unity is emphasised above all, as the worshippers were not bounded in any archaeologically visible ways and it may be that these were occasions for otherwise separate social groupings to interact.

The sanctuaries examined cannot be divided neatly into 'urban' and 'rural' and hence I would prefer to return to the terms 'official' and 'popular' cults, in order to explore more deeply the issues of which sets of people would have attended them and how involved the palaces were in religious activities. Hägg (1995: 387) defined 'official' cult as 'the rulers' involvement in religion' and Wardle (2003: 317) as 'access restricted by elite', both of which seem to me

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<sup>53</sup> The key distinction here is *took part*, as there would also have been those who attended and were excluded from the feasting and the sacrificial rituals surrounding them.

satisfactory working explanations as they remove the possibility of confusing the category with that of state cults of later eras.

At the 'official' end of the spectrum, examples include the Cult Centre at Mycenae, the Shrine Area at Midea, and also the libation channel in the megaron at Pylos. It is surely not coincidental that a processional road directly linked the buildings of the Mycenae Cult Centre with the palace itself (Hägg 1995: 389; Maran 2006b: 84); plus I have already noted the explicit architectural connections between the palace and the Cult Centre through the conspicuous use of conglomerate (Wright 1987: 177).<sup>54</sup> The fact that this area was brought within the citadel's fortification wall near the end of LHIIIB emphasises a wish to connect it more closely with the palace's authority, as well as denying access to those dwelling in the vicinity. Moreover, the wealthy artefacts in the RFC and Temple Complex suggest participation by those of elite status. The Midea Shrine Area likewise was a secluded cult building close to a megaron of some significance, limited in size and participation, and with considerable investment in the feasting rituals. As for drinking rituals in the Pylos megaron, only selected guests would have been permitted to take part, as discussed in 4.1-2. The fact that the libation channel was directly next to the throne may suggest that the *wanax* had primary use of it, or could control who else did. It appears that these urban, exclusive locations were predominantly for elite use, perhaps even officially restricted as such. More specifically, they were apparently linked with the local (palatial?) elite, due to the architectural relationships between the cult areas and the palace structures; those of elite status who lived in the palace or the proximal area would be the ones entitled to employ these sanctuary spaces.

In contrast, it appears that a sanctuary like Ayios Konstantinos would have served more than a specific, limited sector of the local population. While it was connected with a settlement, it also occupied a key coastal location and the discrepancy between the size of the sanctuary and its accompanying town suggests that its importance went beyond the local settlement (Konsolaki 2002: 36). While my discussion on this sanctuary identified how it was a location where those of privilege feasted, these were probably not just the local or top-tier elite, but rather included those from a wider catchment area who were drawn to celebrate at the sanctuary perhaps because of its regional importance. Exclusivity clearly existed, as demonstrated by the limited size of the cult buildings, but restrictions on participation may not have been as tightly controlled as at the more 'official' sanctuaries. The sanctuary of *pa-ki-ja-na*, attested only in the textual record (e.g. PY Un 2), may perhaps be another example of this category – not physically connected with a palace or palatial town, but important enough and accessible

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. 3.2, 4.3. For example, the threshold at the entrance to the RFC was of conglomerate (Moore & Taylour forthcoming: 36-37).

enough to be a location for major higher-status ritual activities, including even the *wanax*'s initiation.<sup>55</sup>

The 'popular' end of the spectrum appears to be reflected in the open-air sanctuaries, which were inclusive to anyone who ascended to the sacred area. Apollo Maleatas, although it had an accompanying settlement, was an open sanctuary near the top of a hill and may come into this category also.<sup>56</sup> As opposed to the other types, where only the elite or the eligible could enter the sacred buildings and partake in the rituals, these smaller sanctuaries would have attracted ordinary people, those who would not have had an opportunity to participate in ritual feasting otherwise and probably were not even permitted to view the activities occurring elsewhere. Marakas (2007) has suggested that large-scale religious gatherings were not a feature of Mycenaean cultic activity. While I agree that the evidence from the larger and/or more 'official' sanctuaries supports this claim, it overlooks the possibility of an undercurrent of 'popular' religion where more people could participate and there was an inclusive nature to the feasting and other rituals. The lack of architectural structures at Ayia Triada removed any attempts at exclusion, ensuring that the drinking rituals were not hidden from anyone's view and not selecting certain people as eligible to take part. This varies dramatically from the architectural elaboration of the buildings at the Mycenae Cult Centre, or the tiny rooms in the Midca Shrine Area or at Ayios Konstantinos. I would therefore conclude by saying that there were indeed at least three levels of cultic activity occurring in the palatial period, serving different sectors of the population. What remains to be addressed however is how much control the palaces had over the various levels.

The textual record is very clear that there was palatial involvement in religious ceremonies and sanctuary activities (cf. Bendall 2007a; Lupack 2008). The palaces are recorded as regularly sending offerings of goods to sanctuaries, religious officiators and deities, and paying close attention to festivals in the cultic calendar. For example, PY Un 718 records a list of supplies collated for a feast in honour of Poseidon. It bears a close resemblance to the other feasting documents (such as Un 2 and 138) hence showing that, even though it was held on the occasion of a religious festival and not for the palatial authority's sociopolitical purposes, the palace still invested the same amount of interest and managerial administration, plus a certain amount of expense. Other religious or cyclical festivals recorded in the documents include the 'festival of the new wine' (*me-tu-wo ne-wo*, Fr 1202) and another festival held for Poseidon, this time at

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Lupack 2008: 48-49 for the importance of *pa-ki-ja-na*. She suggests that the performance of the initiation there may be an indication that the *wanax* needed approval from the gods (and religious personnel?) at the sanctuary in order to rule.

<sup>56</sup> Apollo Maleatas may have had some similarities with the type of sanctuary that Ayios Konstantinos and *pa-ki-ja-na* are. I prefer to categorise it as 'popular' because of the sheer openness of the site and lack of cult buildings; however, I am aware that its associated settlement may have been able to exercise some control over the ritual activities.

*pa-ki-ja-na* (the *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, Fr 343 & 1217: Hruba 2006: 113). These were not just noted as calendrical events, but were occasions of palatial administrative effort and resource expenditure. Moreover, as they were recorded in a similar way to other managerial enterprises of the palaces documented in the Linear B records, it suggests that the level of palatial involvement was equivalent, and that the palaces had the authority to direct to a certain extent the events that were occurring. The fact that the palaces could also requisition animals from sanctuary flocks (*i-je-ro/ra* on TH Wu 44, 66, 86 & 87: Nikoloudis 2001: 12-13; Dakouri-Hild 2005: 212; Lupack 2008: 96-97) and gave rations to religious personnel (PY Fn 79 & 187: Killen 2001: 440) suggests that at least some of the sanctuaries were under their jurisdiction.

So were the palaces controlling the feasting activities occurring in sanctuary contexts? As far as the palatial shrines/cult buildings are concerned, it is fairly obvious that the answer is yes. While I definitely reject the view that holds the *wanax* as worthy of receiving divine attentions himself, it appears that he held a position of religious authority over his polity and that one of his principal spheres of influence was religious activities (cf. Wright 1994: 59-60; Palaima 1995: 129-130). Therefore, to have cultic installations or temple-type buildings either directly in the palace or explicitly connected with it implies that the *wanax* had a considerable amount of control over ritual activities occurring there. As for sanctuary feasting occurring in places like *pa-ki-ja-na*, the palace involved itself in the rituals through managerial organisation and on occasion the provision of feasting supplies. The *wanax* himself need not have officiated there, but the palace still had a good deal of influence – although perhaps not control – over what occurred. This may also have been the case in Ayios Konstantinos, although it is unclear at present which palace's jurisdiction it would have fallen under.

The issue becomes more complex when one moves away from the palatial centres to feasting at the open-air sanctuaries. I think it likely that such feasts were free from the palace's authority, particularly when the evidence from Apollo Maleatas and Ayia Triada is compared with that from the Cult Centre at Mycenae. The hypaethral sanctuaries' equipment and installations are remarkably open and simple: terraces, at Ayia Triada not even a cult building, plain pottery and some figurines. In contrast, the cult buildings at Mycenae were intricately designed to shield the activities inside from view and were full of cultic equipment: vessels of assorted kinds, a series of interconnecting rooms, anthropomorphic and animal figurines, hearths, wall-paintings, various steps and platforms to create different levels, and fragments of ivory and other precious materials.<sup>57</sup> Although at both groups of sanctuaries feasting and drinking rituals occurred, there was a recognition that figurines had a place in the performance of worship, and probably deities from the same pantheon were revered, it is clear that two very different types of cult were

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<sup>57</sup> These assemblages conform to the descriptions set out by Hägg (1995: 389) for 'popular' and 'official' cult respectively.

occurring. They seem to adhere to the same religious beliefs but to be practised by two distinct groups of people. The simplicity of the open-air, hilltop sanctuaries and the rituals practised there suggest to me that the palaces were not involved in the feasting that took place at them. While there may have been some minor emulation of 'official' sanctuary feasting (the employment of kylikes could hint at a common ideology), I do not believe that they were controlled by the palaces. It is even questionable whether the priests and priestesses mentioned in the Linear B documents officiated at these open-air sanctuaries, as they appear to have been under some form of palatial authority, and thus perhaps the impressions of inclusiveness generated by the architectural designs (open spaces, terraces) were genuine as people worshipped their deities through communal feasting and not through a religious official's mediation.

Therefore, while the patterns observed in 4.4 on polity feasting can be seen to be repeated in sanctuary feasting – the palaces involved themselves in other sites, through direct management, distribution of goods and propagation of ideologies – it appears that there was more space for independence in the sanctuary sphere, at least in the area that might be termed 'popular' cult. Killen's (1987: 171-172) reading of the PY Fr offering tablets, interpreting all the place-names as close to the palatial centre, suggests that the palace's jurisdiction over cultic activities diminished in proportion to the distance from the centre. Perhaps it should be remembered that the palace itself, while it monitored and influenced activities at certain sanctuaries near at hand, was under the control of the deities after all. The disbursements of raw goods, food and animals to sanctuaries that are recorded in the Linear B tablets seem to be carefully noted in an attempt to prove that the palace's obligations to the gods had been fulfilled (Bendall 2007a: 288).<sup>58</sup> This two-way flow of offerings and responsibilities may help to explain why the palace does not appear to have directed all the sanctuary feasting that occurred in its polity.

#### *6. The Feast in the Cemetery – Blending the Public and the Personal*

The final feasting arena, the funerary, should be the one with the most scope for independence and personal involvement. It is likely that everyone would have had the opportunity to partake in several funeral feasts in their lives, as they could be held according to the deceased's relatives' means and there is little evidence in the palatial period for sumptuary restrictions on funerary behaviour.<sup>59</sup> However, having seen how much influence the palaces had over other feasting activities, I believe the issue of how independent and personal funerary feasts actually were should be re-examined before it is accepted. While funerals across the polities do not

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<sup>58</sup> It should also be noted that even the *wanax* himself (if that is who *\*Egkhes-lauon* is) is recorded on Un 718 as donating a variety of goods and a bull to Poseidon to be used in a sanctuary feast. Although he may be acting in his personal rather than public capacity here, it is another indication that the *wanax* was not above the gods and their demands.

<sup>59</sup> As far as we can tell, the only evidence for sumptuary restrictions is in the decrease of grave-goods, as the most valuable ones appear to have been restricted to palatial sites (Voutsaki 2001: 203).

appear to have been directed by the palaces, did people emulate a pervasive ideology or did they truly act independently? Was this an opportunity for people to express their emotions through the medium of feasting or an occasion to be mobilised to demonstrate sociopolitical power? In order to address these issues, I firstly examine how funerary feasting rituals in this period operated and conveyed social messages. Following this, I take a broader perspective and look at ways in which the palaces could have interfered in and mobilised funerary rituals, before concluding by re-assessing the questions I posed above.

The feasting debris found in palatial period cemeteries reveals that the rituals occurred either directly in the tomb chamber itself or in the *dromos* leading up to the *stomion*, just as in the Early Mycenaean era. Feasting may also have occurred around the tomb area, with the debris subsequently swept down to be covered in the filling of the *dromos*, but this cannot be distinguished from actual *dromos*-based rituals. Assemblages of feasting debris and the exact processes of funerary rituals have already been explored in detail by Cavanagh and Mee (1998) and Gallou (2005), and I do not intend to repeat their conclusions beyond emphasising that both feasting and drinking rituals in cemeteries are adequately attested throughout the palatial period in the archaeological record, through deposits of ceramics, animal bone and ash debris, and the internal furnishing of tomb chambers.

Funerary feasts could be very intimate occasions, emphasised by the limited space for ritual activity available. The average dimensions of *dromoi* varied according to tomb type and the wealth of the tomb, so it is hard to estimate how many could have gathered there. The longest tholos *dromoi*, belonging to the Treasury of Atreus and the Tomb of Klytaimnestra at Mycenae, were c.37m long and 6m wide (Loader 1998: 197). Forming a minimum space of 222m<sup>2</sup>, these could have held at a maximum around 200 people. However, these were exceptional in their size and also in the fact that they were palatial tholoi; the majority of *dromoi* would have been nowhere near as monumental, holding perhaps 10-15 people or the size of an inner kin-group. While gatherings in the *dromoi* could have spilled out beyond its limits, the tomb chamber itself was smaller and more tightly restricted in capacity, reduced further by the presence of tomb furniture and grave-goods. The average floor space inside a LHIIIB chamber tomb was 7m<sup>2</sup> (Mee & Cavanagh 1984: 60), which could have held perhaps 5-10 people tightly, making the whole attendance of a smaller funerary feast c.20 people. This was of course at the lower end of the spectrum, and could increase to much larger numbers at elite tombs, such as the Tomb of Klytaimnestra with a chamber of 141m<sup>2</sup> (Loader 1998: 197). The royal chamber tomb at Megalo Kastelli, Thebes had a tomb chamber of c.80.5m<sup>2</sup> and a *dromos* of c.100m<sup>2</sup> (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 68), and could have catered for at least 150 people. While the scale of funerary feasts obviously depended heavily upon the wealth of the hosting family, overall it can be seen that they operated on a much smaller and more intimate level than sociopolitical feasting. Even

the largest funerary feasts would have been minimal compared to those held in the palaces with their guest-lists of over 1,000 people. The personal and the familial were valued over the large-scale in funerary contexts and this reflects the different agenda of funerary feasts.

In these tightly-bonded, small-scale gatherings, two social messages could be conveyed to the participants and to anyone who observed what was happening: cohesion, or the uniting together of a networked group of guests, and dominance, or the emphasis on the hosting family's prestige. I address cohesion first and how this could be conveyed through feasting rituals at tombs. On such a small scale, where even those at the end of a *dromos* were still included in what was happening, the overall experience would have been very powerful and emotive. Although those who entered the tomb chamber itself and dined there were probably involved in exclusive rituals that the others could only glimpse, unless we posit people above and around the *dromos* (which cannot be read from the evidence) then everyone present would have been participants to some degree. Inside the enclosed space of the chamber, all the senses would have been activated: flickering lights, funeral songs or chants, other bodies pressing around, the funeral meal and wine, scents of roasted meat and perhaps herbs and plants used for their ritual connections. As sight would have been reduced in the dark interior, the 'lower' senses would have been heightened (Hamilakis 2002: 128). In this intensified atmosphere, those who underwent such an experience would feel a bond with those around them who had gone through the same sensory impressions and otherworldly rituals. Memories from the rites would connect those present when they returned to their quotidian life. While all commensality creates a bond between those dining together, the heightened sensations aroused by the mode of funerary feasting would strengthen this link. Animal bones, vessels and ash in tombs evidence the practice of feasting inside the chamber, such as found in the tholoi at Magoula, Galatas (Gallou 2005: 93, 124). Although it is not impossible that these assemblages were ritual deposition following external dining, the presence of dining furniture within certain tombs further indicates feasting within. For example, benches around the sides of tombs could have been utilised by diners, such as in tomb 34 at Argos, where they ran around three sides of the chamber (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 65). In the royal tomb at Megalo Kastelli, there was even a rectangular slab that appeared to have been supported on wooden legs – perhaps a rough table for the participants (Gallou 2005: 125). It seems highly likely that actual eating occurred within the tomb chamber itself, in these restricted, dark spaces.

Similarly, the limited attendance at funerary feasts, as examined above, would heighten the sense of inclusion amongst those who were present. In such a small gathering, removed from the settlement into the 'Other' world of the cemetery, united by powerful emotions, the guests would feel their bonds with each other formed and/or strengthened. By sharing the grief of the directly bereaved, one demonstrates solidarity with the members of their social group



(Huntingdon & Metcalf 1979: 32; Hayden 2009: 39). The unique nature of funerary feasts, as opposed to sociopolitical and sanctuary dining, is that they are based on the kinship group and probably restricted to such in the smaller-scale cases. In the larger funerary feasts, those who were not related would undoubtedly attend – friends and sociopolitical allies/supporters – but in the smaller ones familial ties were the basis of participation in the event. Hence the rituals built on a connection already shared by the guests – if not that of actual blood-ties, certainly that of interest in the deceased.

The whole occasion was a way of creating future memories at the same time as forgetting aspects of the past that one did not wish to remember, perhaps in an attempt to defeat the liminality of death. It is not the amount of food here or the generosity of the host that is key – in fact, it would have been technically difficult for a massive feast to be transported to the tomb – but rather the combination of sensory experiences with a heterotopic, heterochronic location. Through the process of consumption, bodily memories would be created that would allow the event to continue to impact upon the guests as they returned to quotidian life (Hamilakis 1998: 116-117). Plus, the prevalence of drinking rituals suggests a high level of alcohol consumption at these events, with its intoxicating effect adding to the bonding of participants as social inhibitions were broken down (Hayden 2009: 39). However, the creation of bodily memory and social bonds was not the whole agenda; there was a ritual clearing away of memories so that everyday life could recommence. Feasting debris is regularly found neatly stored in a large vessel or a *bothros* rather than left scattered around the tomb; for example at Prosymna tomb XLI, where the feast detritus of animal bones, sherds and ash were collated into a vase that was placed at the tomb's *stomion* (Gallou 2005: 121). In the royal tomb at Megalo Kastelli, a jar filled with animal bones and ash was placed inside the tomb on a bench (Gallou 2005: 121). It was as if the sweeping up of the remnants of the funerary meal was a way of enabling the participants to resume their daily life. The same sense of farewell and conclusion of the feast is seen in the practice of smashing kylikes against the *stomion* as it was sealed post-rites. This is attested in a number of tombs, such as tomb 13 at Dendra where the remains of c.40 shattered kylikes were found directly in front of the *stomion* (Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 72). The ritually “killed” vessels in the tholos at Nichoria were dented and pierced for similar purposes (McDonald & Wilkie 1992: 252-253). Social cohesion or unity could be reinforced through rites such as these, where those who experienced the emotions and impressions of a funerary feast and the ritual farewell to the deceased would have a set of unique and powerful memories to connect them in the future.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Driessen *et al.* (2008) argue from similar ritually “killed” assemblages at Malia, Crete that not only did the destruction mark the end of the deceased's life, but that people may have taken small sherds home with them as a way of remembering the dead individual as they recommenced their quotidian lives.

However, it is not as simple as this. The ability to engineer memories such as these is also a useful method of achieving social dominance (Hamilakis 1998: 118). By bringing together a tightly inclusive group of people to a locale set apart from the normal world of the settlement, with emotions running high due to the proximity of death, the volatility of the guests' minds would be easier to manipulate. I suggest that, while all feasting contexts engender obligations and bonds, those in a funerary sphere would be more open to manoeuvring due to the recent crisis that made people more susceptible and vulnerable to influences.

Unlike the Early Mycenaean era, in the palatial period funerary rituals and structures were not an arena in which sociopolitical domination was actively contested amongst individuals. However, it was still a sphere in which the palatial authorities and elite lineages could express their (already attained) dominance over others. This could occur directly, by explicit statements of palatial power demonstrated in a funerary context, or indirectly, by spreading palatial ideologies that other families commemorating their deceased would adopt. To examine the direct mode first, funerary rituals and structures served as areas in which the palatial authorities could invest in order to demonstrate their superiority of wealth and authority over others. This could take the form of conspicuously deploying resources; I mentioned in 4.3 how the largest tholoi, used by ruling lineages, would have taken several months at least and a sizeable workforce to construct. These were prominent displays of wealth and managerial authority. The time taken to build these grand tholoi would ensure that those in the vicinity would have plenty of opportunity to recognise the superiority of those commissioning it. Moreover, the labour was freely visible, so that the construction itself was a statement to the populace, a public spectacle, demonstrating the conspicuous mobilisation of manpower. For example, it has been estimated that the lintel block alone of the Treasury of Atreus, at more than 120 tons, was moved by a minimum of 400 men and possibly as many as 1,000 (Santillo Frizell 1998: 173, 177; Cavanagh & Mee 1999: 96).

Direct demonstration of palatial dominance could also take the form of the tombs being prominent features in the landscape, as the visibility of the grandest tombs conveyed the sociopolitical authority of the lineages who used them. The large Tomb of the Genii and Treasury of Atreus were almost 0.5km away from the citadel of Mycenae; any funerary cortege travelling towards them would be conspicuously visible to those around and within the city. Even after the funeral was over, tombs could continue to make statements to those in the vicinity – the re-routing of access to Mycenae (subsequent to the building of the Lion Gate) meant that those approaching the citadel passed by and hence viewed the Tomb of Klytaimnestra. As already discussed, the use of conglomerate in the later Mycenae tholoi made instantly clear to whom the tombs belonged, and in a sense represented the palace in the funerary landscape (cf. 4.3; Wright 1987: 177; 2006b: 59). Moreover, palatial dominance could

also be expressed in areas beyond the palace's vicinity. In Nichoria, the few large tombs there and the 'megaron' Unit IV-4A fell out of use when a new tholos was built in LHIIIA2. This apparent discrepancy has led to suggestions that the tholos marked a new authority over the settlement, undoubtedly Pylos, and the tomb was a physical sign of the change of rulership (Bennet 1995: 598-599; 1998: 127; 1999: 15).

However, perhaps the most conspicuous funerary display of all was the LHIIIB refurbishment of GCA at Mycenae, renovating it and marking it as associated with the palace again due to the use of conglomerate. This visibly formed a connection with a previously wealthy and powerful dynasty and delimited a ritual space for use only by those who were permitted. Access into it could be controlled through the Lion Gate (Cavanagh 2001: 130). Feasting is attested in the refurbished Circle around the old stelai, with animal bones, ash and pottery (Gallou 2005: 29, 123), although as discussed in 3.1 the use of GCA at two periods makes the evidence complex. It appears that what occurred in this bounded area is the closest evidence we have for ancestor cult in the palatial period. Gates (1985: 264) has argued convincingly that both Grave Circles and other interments in the Prehistoric Cemetery were forgotten during the intervening period between their early LH use and the LHIIIB refurbishment, which is probable given the amount of time that transpired. If so, the selection of GCA for veneration over GCB would be explained by its proximity to the citadel itself and hence greater likelihood of rediscovery. Legendary reminiscences of the Shaft Grave era, when the inhabitants of Mycenae first obtained extensive imported wealth and societal structures changed significantly from the MH period, may have been projected onto the well-appointed tombs and their accompanying stelai (cf. Gates 1985: 272). This almost mythical, powerful lineage would then be appropriated by the palatial authorities, as the current rulers, in a way not dissimilar to the re-employment of Mycenaean remains in the 8<sup>th</sup> century for ancestor cults (cf. 5.5). If this is what was occurring, then it takes the processes of funerary feasting onto a new level – the unity celebrated by the participants who were included in the feasting rituals was a way of asserting their connection to a desirable lineage and thus of their superiority over all who were not related to this bloodline, actually or fictitiously. It is perhaps significant that the ritual space of GCA was tightly bounded, excluding non-participants, but was also hypaethral and thus very visible to those around, heightening the message of exclusion.<sup>61</sup>

As for the indirect influence of the palaces on funerary activity, the phenomenon of drinking rituals provides an intriguing example. The drinking of (presumably) alcoholic beverages at funerary feasts is widely attested from at least the Early Mycenaean period down through historical Greece, with the alcohol easing the transition from the deceased's presence to their

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<sup>61</sup> This contrasts with similar restrictive tactics in sanctuary feasting, where exclusion was made explicit through the admission of certain people only into a private, enclosed building.

absence and serving to bond guests at the funeral. However, funerary drinking rituals play their most significant role during the palatial period, with the appearance of numerous kylikes in and around tombs, sometimes independent of accompanying feasting debris. The rise of kylikes deposited in cemeteries coincides with the rise of the palaces and, when it is considered what an important role kylikes played in sociopolitical feasts and drinking rituals at the palaces, it is possible to see an association between these two developments. Kylikes were not deposited at tombs before LHIIIA; they became more common around LHIIIA2-B1 and by LHIIIB2 they were truly abundant (Cavanagh 1998: 111; Dakouri-Hild 2003: 150-153; Gallou 2005: 88-89). The kylix often predominates in cemetery ceramic assemblages from this period; for example, at Dendra it constituted 40.3% of the ceramics (Gallou 2005: 94). Even more significantly, miniature kylikes were excavated from the tholoi at Magoula, Galatas (Konsolaki 2001: 218; Gallou 2005: 93), a vessel form that was intimately associated with elite ritual drinking (cf. 4.2, 4.4). Yet equally striking as the sudden rise of kylix-based rituals is the abrupt disappearance of the practice in LHIIIC after the palaces' collapse. Perati in Attica, a well excavated and large LHIIIC cemetery, yielded only four kylikes – less than 1% of the total ceramic assemblage (Iakovides 1980: 26). It appears that the practice was closely connected in some way with the palaces and there was no need or desire to continue performing it after the palatial authorities had disappeared. The smashing of kylikes against the sealed *stomion*, presumably a part of the same ceremony, likewise developed after the Early Mycenaean period, stopped abruptly in LHIIIC, and was absent from Achaia (where no major palace site has been found: Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 115).

I believe that the drinking ritual embodied a palatial ideology that spread across the hinterlands of the palaces, perhaps because the kylix form itself embodied elite currency (cf. Galaty 1999b: 30-31). In support of this, the geographical distribution of the kylix-based drinking ceremony is most clearly attested in, possibly even restricted to, the areas of Greece that had the strongest palatial authorities, the Argolid and Messenia (Cavanagh 1998: 107). Palatial drinking practices, whether borrowed from ceremonies at elite tombs or from feasts experienced at the palaces, seem to have been transposed into the ordinary cemeteries, perhaps because it was the most accessible way for the majority of people to perform them. Cavanagh (1998: 111) has queried whether the kylix-based ritual's abandonment in LHIIIC was a falling into disuse, as it was no longer relevant, or whether it was actively rejected (cf. Appendix V). If the former, it would suggest a willing adoption of palatial ideology or an emulation of what was seen to occur in elite settings; if the latter, it would appear that there was a direct propagation of practices instigated by the palatial elite and imposed upon others to conform to.

The arena of funerary feasting yields complex messages regarding palatial involvement. While the methods employed by the palaces to maintain or express sociopolitical dominance through

the funerary sphere are certain and would have been obvious to the local population, they only pertain to a very small percentage of the rituals occurring. It must be remembered that there were many small- and medium-sized tombs across the mainland where burials took place, and where funerary feasts could be celebrated amongst a cohesive circle of relations and friends. These were undoubtedly independent of palatial control; they were small-scale, intimate and focused upon uniting the participants rather than marking superiority. The overall aims were to say farewell to the deceased, to bond those who were left behind, and to create lasting memories of a fundamental *rite de passage*. However, while they may have been independent of palatial control, were they truly personal, individual occasions free from palatial influence? Here the issue grows more complex, as the common ideology of kylix-based drinking rituals suggests that there was a set way of performing funerary ceremonies that people accepted on a wide scale across the mainland, and most noticeably in areas where the palaces were most powerful. The feasting and drinking rituals may have been autonomous, in the sense that ordinary people organised their performance, but they do not appear to have been a method for people to act truly individually. This may be because the funerary sphere is naturally conservative as a way of honouring the dead and it would be irreverent or even dangerous to be innovative, because there was a desire to emulate how the elite performed their funerary ceremonies, or because there was subtle pressure from the palatial authorities to conform to a set way of commemorating the deceased. The abrupt abandonment of the drinking rituals in LHIIIC and its apparent non-performance in areas like Achaia, at a distance from known major palatial centres, both support the idea of palatial influence. Therefore, while the funerary sphere of feasting may have been the most personal, it was also still guided by the palaces and their way of acting.

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To conclude, this detailed survey of feasting practices during the palatial period has indicated a high degree of palatial involvement in and manipulation of feasts in every sphere, through a combination of indirect influence and direct pressure, although it has also been shown that the palaces did not specifically control everything that was occurring. To a certain extent, the degree to which the palaces were involved in the feasts was dependent upon the proximity of the events. The feasts that took place actually within the palaces were carefully constructed and engineered so that the guests would sense their inferiority to the palatial host and their place in the social matrix vis-à-vis the other guests. The spaces the guests traversed, the vessels they employed and the food they consumed all contributed to this social manipulation. Concurrently, a network of obligations was constructed, whereby guests would be indebted to the palatial host for much longer than the timespan of the initial feast, and hence the palaces would be able to control their guests' actions (usually in the form of obtaining labour) for an extended period after the event.

Moving further out, sociopolitical feasts in the polities combined strategies of distribution and emulation so that the palaces not only had a significant role in controlling the performance of feasts, even to the extent of what was consumed, but also more subtly influenced the lesser-order sites' views on how feasting events should be conducted. It appears that feasts in the polities were not independent of either palatial direct control or indirect influence, at least in the limited dataset that we have at present. Similarly, in the sanctuary sphere, the palaces had a high degree of control over the 'official' cults and possibly also over those that were not directly connected with palatial structures but were frequented by the elite. In the funerary arena, the palaces were able to express their social dominance through ostentatious tomb construction and exclusionary rituals. However, this is not the complete picture. In the open-air cults at a distance from the palaces, we see what appears to be autonomy from palatial control, freedom for a wide range of people to worship together without marked exclusion. There was also a significant degree of freedom for ordinary people to perform funerary feasts without palatial jurisdiction or organisation, and instead to celebrate inclusion in their kin-group and mourn the death of their loved one.

Therefore, overall there are two superficially free areas – open-air cults and non-elite funerals – where people were not directed by palatial strategies. Yet, even here feasting practices still seem to have adopted palatial ideologies, in the manner in which they were performed or by the inclusion of certain actions, such as the kylix-based drinking rituals. While the people had independence to act as they chose in these arenas, they elected to accept ways of feasting that echoed what occurred in the palaces, although this is likely to have been due to lack of innovation rather than any specific direction or control. This is supported by the rare cases where domestic assemblages have been studied in detail to reveal how ordinary people were dining. In the Panagia Houses at Mycenae, similar patterns of ceramics are seen to those excavated from the palaces (Mylonas Shear 1987). If the kylix was indeed associated with elite drinking rituals, then the presence of several in the Panagia Houses shows – as in the case of the funerary evidence discussed above – that people were adopting patterns of consumption that the palaces exemplified. It appears that the palaces truly did have the social power to create an influence that impacted upon every form of feasting activity.

## Chapter 5: Feasting in the Early Iron Age

*'...Telemachos administers your allotted lands and apportions the equal feasts, work that befits a man with authority to judge...' Odysseey 11.185-186*

The EIA offers a completely different set of challenges and opportunities in interpretation from the preceding two eras. Unlike for the Early Mycenaean period, the existence of feasting practices is easier to trace, the data are more plentiful, and the social changes occurring are perhaps easier to define. Unlike for the palatial period, there have been no detailed studies of feasting activities or of how the social structure operated. Hence, in this chapter I neither give a preliminary overview of feasting nor reinterpret the data to explore the experiences of hosts and guests, as in chapters 3 and 4 respectively. I acknowledge that feasting has already been recognised in various locales during the EIA and, while I seek to expand the list of sites that is commonly discussed, I am not trying to find where examples of feasting might exist. On the other hand, the data are not sufficiently detailed or understood for me to give a more experiential discussion. Rather, my aim for this chapter is to draw together the disparate and tentative discussions of feasting in the EIA that have already been produced in order to understand better what was happening in commensal activities throughout the whole period and in all the spheres that I have outlined. This is not a case of “discovering” feasting so much as drawing it into the larger tableau, with the result that the dramatic social shifts throughout this lengthy period are illuminated against the background of one continuum, feasting.

The chronological scope of this chapter begins immediately after the collapse of the palaces and thus incorporates LHIIC, divorcing it from the rest of the Bronze Age. I believe linking this period with the EIA is more productive, as the conclusions drawn in the previous chapter regarding feasting practices rely heavily on the existence of the palaces and their bureaucratic scope, and the radical changes in sociopolitical structure that occurred after their collapse justifies seeing LHIIC as the beginning of a new era. However, the *terminus ante quem* of this chapter remains less clearly defined in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This century of developments, so swift and dramatic that it has been termed a ‘Greek Renaissance’ (Hägg 1983), witnesses an explosion of feasting data, including the birth of new types of commensality. To incorporate all this in the same chapter as the first post-palatial developments would be taking such a broad viewpoint that finer details would be lost. Hence, when data in the 8<sup>th</sup> century either support practices that have occurred consistently throughout the PG and EG periods or continue in a direction whose roots have been presaged in the preceding century, then I feel that they are justified for inclusion here. However, entirely new phenomena of the later 8<sup>th</sup> century must be excluded as they involve innovative uses of commensality that are intertwined with the major sociopolitical developments of that century and the subsequent Archaic period. Because of this,

the hero cult and the *symposion* are not discussed here, although they are briefly considered in chapter 7.

Evidence for feasting in the EIA may not be as plentiful as in the palatial period, but it is certainly more abundant than in the Early Mycenaean era. Following the schema used in the previous two chapters, I summarise it as follows:

- A quantity of feasting equipment, including ceramic vessels, metal vessels and spits. These can be both *in situ* (around a hearth, in a cooking area, left over a grave, in a sanctuary's rubbish deposit) and hence reveal direct use, or interred in tombs to reference feasting practices symbolically.
- Zooarchaeological remains testifying to direct consumption, principally found associated with graves or in sanctuaries.
- Informed inferences about locales where feasting may have occurred, including the juxtaposition of hearths and other installations for commensal activities, and structures in cemeteries that appear to have been specifically constructed for drinking and dining activities.
- Iconographical evidence on pictorial vessels that attests a relationship between feasting activities and the elite lifestyle.
- More abundant textual evidence than has been seen before, including the Homeric and Hesiodic poems. However, as the extent and nature of this textual evidence differs from that in the palatial period, I treat it separately in chapter 6, in order that I may not risk misinterpreting its relationship to the real world (whether historical or contemporary), and so that this chapter is methodologically compatible with the previous two.

Uniquely for this thesis, the EIA has a broad range of data for all three spheres of feasting. I commence with feasting in the sociopolitical sphere in order to explore concurrently the social changes that were occurring. Feasting in the LHIIIC period is examined first, as this forms a coherent unit, in terms of both commensal practices and sociopolitical *milieu*. This is followed by an examination of feasting during the rest of the EIA, its breadth justified by the fact that chronology is still somewhat obscure and data are relatively patchy. The final sociopolitical section deals with the ideology of feasting during the era as a whole. Following this I examine funerary feasting during the whole period, as it does not appear to demonstrate any radical changes from the preceding era or during the course of the EIA itself. The chapter concludes with two sections on religious feasting, the first considering feasting activities with a highly ritualised basis that did not occur in sanctuaries, such as tomb cult, and the second tracing commensality in sanctuaries *per se*.



### *1. The Old and the New Feast – Commensality in LHIIC*

It is universally agreed that the Mycenaean palaces underwent some major disaster(s) at the end of LHIIIB, or in the later 13<sup>th</sup> century. What brought about this catastrophe however is much less clear and still a matter of scholarly controversy. Dickinson (2006a: 43-56) provides the most recent summary of the principal theories, and I agree with his assessment that it was a multi-causal collapse. Certainly in the Argolid there seem to have been natural disasters, evidenced by earthquake damage at Midea, Mycenae and Tiryns; this could have been coupled with internal social unrest and overstretching of the palatial economy, heightened by external disorder in the rest of the eastern Mediterranean, which meant the sociopolitical system was unable to fend off difficulties from multiple angles. These catastrophes produced a very different social structure from that which had existed during the palatial period – tightly knit settlements that were vibrant in their own right, but much less secure or wealthy than those that had existed previously, led by those who could demonstrate their inherited links to the past and/or their personal power. As for feasting in this new environment, it was no longer a large-scale, highly engineered affair where several tiers of society were constructed and reinforced through diacritica, but a method of demonstrating a leader's wealth and power over his people while fostering group cohesion amongst the guests, in a simple two-tier division of social status.

LHIIC is often overlooked as the fading end of the LBA as opposed to an important period in its own right. In comparison to the palatial era, it is true that it was an insecure and relatively impoverished time; however, it is now being recognised that certain regions briefly flourished again during LHIIC Middle (cf. Thomatos 2006) and those who set about building new lives after the palaces' collapse chose both to mobilise their lost past and to construct a new direction for society. There were opportunities for new individuals to accrue social, political, economic and religious power, and some palatial features seem to have been actively abandoned, such as the kylix-based drinking ritual (Cavanagh 1998: 111; cf. Appendix V); however, the amount of continuity is greater than might perhaps be expected (cf. Rutter 1992: 70), as locales and symbols associated with the palaces preserved their significance and major activities such as feasting did not dramatically change in form or role. It is this blend of the old and the new that I focus on throughout this section, investigating which aspects of feasting the people of LHIIC saw fit to preserve in a post-palatial world and which they adapted to the changed circumstances, thus concurrently expanding upon the sociopolitical situation that existed throughout this period.

It is unclear just who the people were who managed to accrue authority after the palaces' collapse and were engineering feasting occasions in this new *milieu*. The 'decapitation theory' sees minor officials stepping into the vacuum left by the *wanax*'s fall to seize power for themselves (cf. Lenz 1993: 108-109); Lenz (1993: 113-114) himself specifically identifies these

minor figures as the *qa-si-re-we* or *basileis*. Palaima (1995: 124-125) expanded upon this by suggesting that the *qa-si-re-we* may have been local chieftains, whose pre-palatial authority was capitalised on by the palaces, and therefore they were more likely to have survived the palatial system's collapse.<sup>1</sup> Recently, Dickinson (2006a: 60-61) noted that the former leaders (the *wanakes?*) undoubtedly forfeited their right to rule through their inability to deal with the palaces' collapse and therefore, while the new rulers may have comprised some who were genetically related to those formerly in power, they were probably also intermingled with those who were new to the highest tiers of authority. I do not think the present evidence allows us to select a specific named group that achieved new levels of power, such as the *qa-si-re-we*, although undoubtedly those who became the leaders in LHIIC had held some political authority in the palatial period (or were descended from those who had), as their status and previous experience would ensure people naturally turned to them. It was a period when lesser officials or members of the elite were able to accrue for themselves power and authority that had previously belonged to the *wanax*, yet their reliance on past symbols of authority for legitimisation, as discussed below, makes it unlikely that complete *parvenus* became the new leaders.

Data from this era are not plentiful in comparison to the palatial period; hence I concentrate in detail on a limited number of sites. Indeed, two of the main sites relevant to this section, Midea and Tiryns, have only had their LHIIC habitation recognised and examined during the last 10-15 years. I have however selected a variety of settlement types in order to obtain a broader picture, as what was occurring at the former palatial sites appears to differ from that at the lesser-order settlements. Midea and Tiryns both provide rich evidence for feasting activities and sociopolitical development in former palatial centres, and this is supplemented by information from Mycenae. As for the smaller sites, evidence can be obtained from Korakou and Xeropolis-Lefkandi, and I employ this to balance out the data from the larger settlements.

Midea provides the most unequivocal evidence for LHIIC feasting at any settlement site. The LHIIB megaron on Terrace 10 was damaged by an earthquake and the building was repaired for further use in LHIIC, accompanied by significant alterations to the interior plan as the central hearth was removed and a row of three columns inserted instead (Walberg 1995: 87; 1999b: 887; 2007: 66-67; Figure 5.1). Thus the location and basic layout were preserved into LHIIC as a seat of authority, emphasising links with the past, yet a new design was incorporated in order to demonstrate the different basis or expression of power possessed by the megaron's latest occupants. During LHIIB, one of the two rooms to the back of the megaron (XI) had been clearly used for food preparation, evidenced by millstones, pounders, a whetstone

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<sup>1</sup> This was in contrast to the *(po-ro-)ko-re-te-re*, who were put in place by the palace and therefore more closely associated with its system of administration.

and a large quantity of animal bones (cattle, ovicaprid and pig: Walberg 1998: 214; 1999b: 888; 2007: 64-65; Walberg & Reese 2008: 241). Its lack of hearth suggests that it was not the principal kitchen but rather a room where further culinary procedures were performed before serving to those in the megaron, conveniently proximate to room XI. The fact that those in the megaron dined upon such dishes is supported by animal bones excavated from the floor deposit, the species the same as those from room XI (Walberg & Reese 2008: 242). That feasting was also performed on a wider scale is indicated by animal bone debris discovered in the courtyard in front of the megaron (Walberg & Reese 2008: 242). This would have been an ideal location for extending the feast into a large-scale event, consistent with contemporary activities at Pylos.

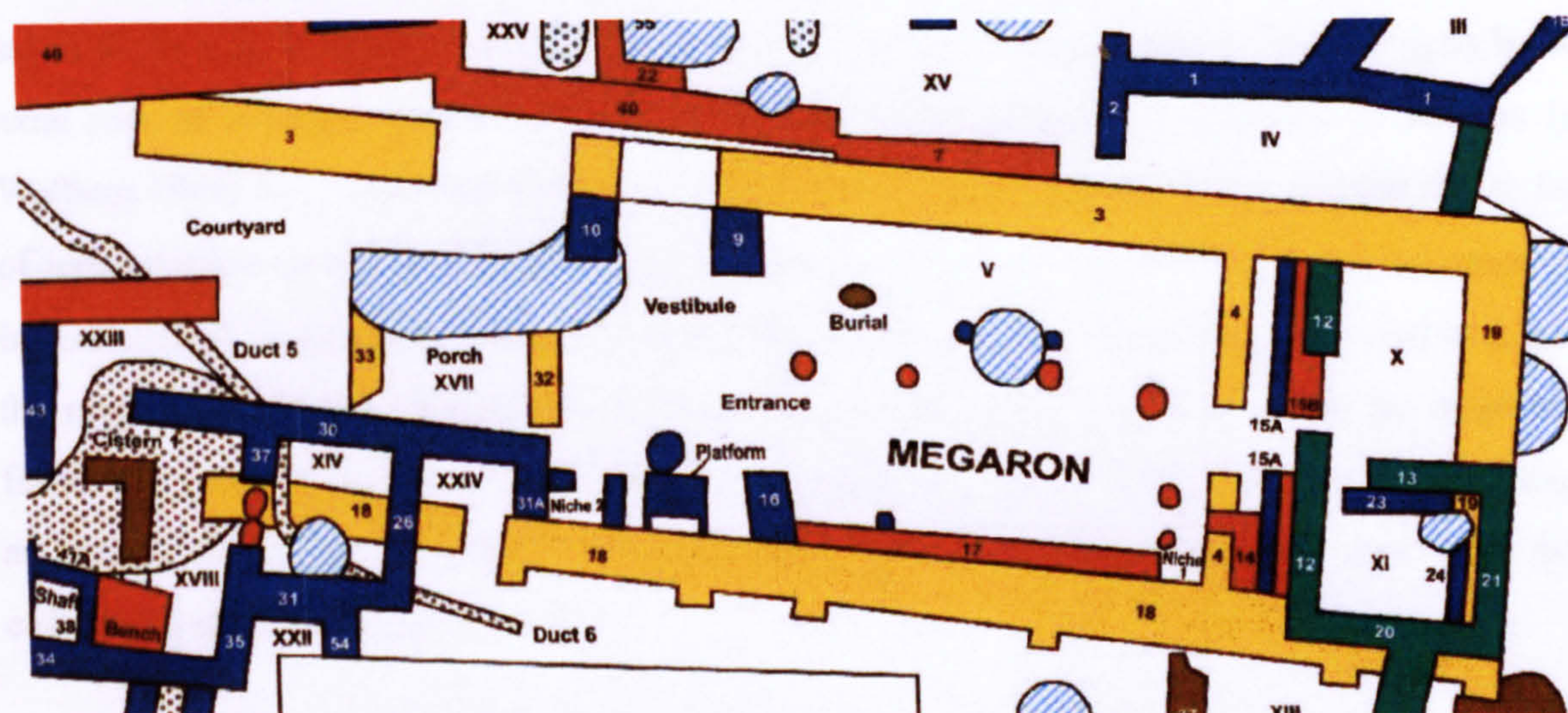


Figure 5.1: Plan of Megaron Complex (Terrace 10), Midea (Walberg 2007: plan 3)<sup>2</sup>

Clear archaeological strata in the LHIIB-C deposits means that it is possible to compare these LHIIB activities with those succeeding them in LHIIC. The similarities and differences are significant. Room XI maintained its function as a food preparation room, as millstones and pestles were also found in the LHIIC layers (Walberg 2007: 67), and feasting continued in the megaron with some pottery sherds and animal bone debris found there, apparently of the same species as before (Walberg 1999b: 888; Walberg & Reese 2008: 242). Feasting in the megaron is also attested by a ladle, discovered in the centre of the room, containing what is stated to be residue of oil and meat (Tzedakis & Martlew 1999: 127; Walberg 2007: 66-67). It is clear that the central process of food being cooked somewhere in the vicinity of the megaron, additional culinary procedures occurring in room XI, and consumption in the megaron itself continued despite the fact that the inhabitants of the building did not fulfil the same role as the former palatial authority and the layout of the main room had been altered. The new occupants, who clearly held some power over Midea albeit probably not the same degree of control as the

<sup>2</sup> Yellow and blue features are LHIIB; the red features are LHIIC.

LHIIIB palace, appear to have wished to preserve both the structures and the rituals that occurred in them.

However, there were differences, and not only in the fact that the diners no longer sat around a central hearth. Walberg (1995: 90) has suggested that the lack of communal hearth gave feasting activities an individualistic focus as opposed to one controlled by the palatial state (cf. Maran 2001: 117). While this echoes the ‘hearth-*wanax* ideology’ (cf. Wright 1994: 59) more than I would accept, by placing a certain amount of sacred power in the central hearth, I certainly agree that the lack of a focal point in the LHIIIC megaron would have conditioned a different dining experience. Although we cannot definitively prove that palatial period diners sat in a circle around the hearth, the new partition of the Midea megaron into sections by the axial row of columns would have led to different arrangements or divisions of feasters (cf. Walberg 1995: 91). Quite what this new experience would have been like is unclear due to lack of iconographic or textual evidence, but it is highly likely that some diacritica were operative. In this context, it should be noted that during the later stages of LHIIIB, the courtyard in front of the megaron had been partially built over, which would have limited or ended the large-scale feasts occurring there, and this arrangement was preserved into LHIIIC. If there was no longer an outside/*hoi polloi* vs. inside/elite separation, then more subtle divisions may have been enforced within the megaron itself.

Changes are also seen in the pottery assemblages. The deep bowl’s popularity that was already visible in LHIIIB<sup>3</sup> became even more pronounced in the succeeding era, as the kylix – a form closely associated with palatial drinking rituals – was almost totally absent from the LHIIIC megaron area (Walberg 2007: 144).<sup>4</sup> In terms of sherd numbers, the LHIIIC ceramic material was dominated by kraters, deep bowls and shallow angular bowls<sup>5</sup> (incorporating the activities of mixing, drinking and eating), and it has been suggested that the altered focus on these forms echoes new types of rituals (Walberg 1995: 90; 2007: 140-141). This could be a valid assumption, especially as the krater (and thus the mixing ritual) seems to have a much greater emphasis than it held in the palatial era. It could also be the case that the kylix recalled the palatial governing of rituals too much (cf. Galaty 1999: 8) for those in a post-palatial world and thus a new type of vessel was sought for regular use; therefore the basic practices were retained but the vessel form was altered and perhaps concurrently elements of the rites too. An additional point to note is the exceptional amount of kraters found in the megaron area, 24.4% of LHIIIC sherds,<sup>6</sup> which has been explained by Walberg (2007: 140-144) as storage of these

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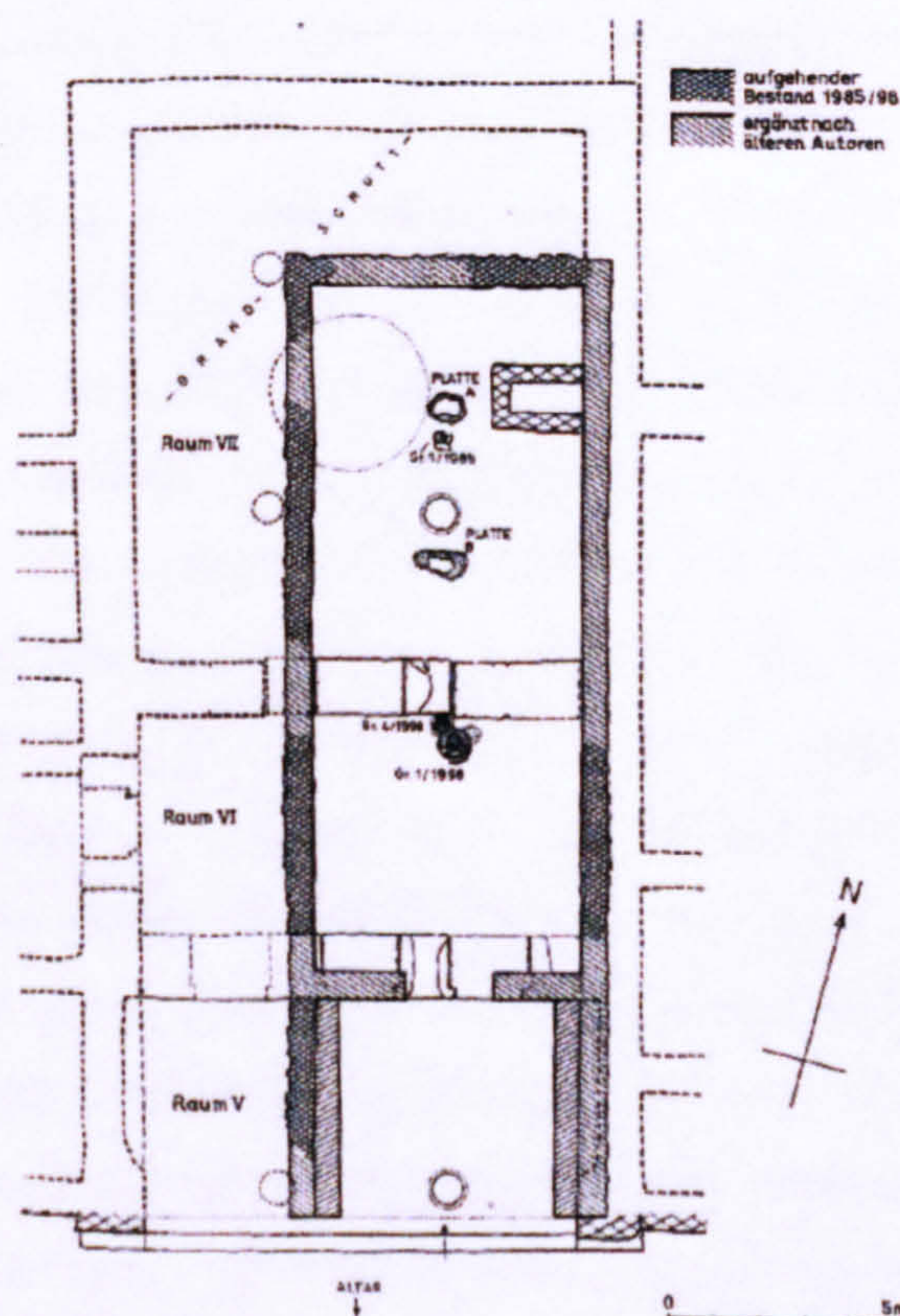
<sup>3</sup> It was the most frequent vessel type amongst LHIIIB decorated pottery (Giering 2007: 124, 133).

<sup>4</sup> Only 6 kylix fragments were found during the 1994-1997 excavations (Walberg 2007: 144).

<sup>5</sup> 24.4%, 13.9% and 9.3% respectively (from Walberg 2007: 140, fig. III-2).

<sup>6</sup> There were not even twice as many deep bowls as kraters, hence the balance is not correct for “drinking sets” (Walberg 2007: 144).

vessels here. To expand upon this, could it be that this vessel, presumably expensive and certainly symbolically charged, was thereby associated with those dwelling in the megaron and its vicinity? In other words, as is discussed further in 5.3, the krater was seen as an expression of elite status and owning quantities of them materially signalled the newly-obtained power held by those in the LHIIIC megaron at Midea.



**Figure 5.2: Plan of Building T, Tiryns (Maran 2001: pl. XXXI)<sup>7</sup>**

The data from Tiryns complement those from Midea. While evidence for feasting practices in the area of the former palatial megaron is less explicit, the architectural adjustments in the LHIIIC period are seen even more visibly, thus highlighting the sociopolitical transformations that they accompanied. The former megaron was rebuilt (in the form of Building T), hence retaining the symbolic authority inherent in the location and the previous structure, but with significant differences that revealed a new political system. Even more so at Tiryns, the users of Building T referenced the LHIIIB architecture that preceded them, by not only retaining certain walls and the overall orientation but also preserving the location of the throne in a way that appears to have been deliberate (Maran 2000: 14-15; 2001: 115; **Figure 5.2**). This does not seem to have been a convenient reuse of a partially standing structure so much as a conscious reference to the sociopolitical authority of the palatial era. While it could simply be that the new rulers of Tiryns were trying to convey that little had changed by appropriating continuous

<sup>7</sup> The dark walls are the LHIIIC Building T; the light ones the former LHIIIB megaron.

elements of authority, it has also been convincingly suggested that they were legitimising their rule by highlighting symbols of the past and emphasising their familial links (real or otherwise) with those whose had occupied this area before (Maran 2001: 119; 2006: 144; cf. Thomatos 2006: 211).

Conversely, changes are seen in the layout of Building T, as the central hearth that was a feature of the palatial megaron was abandoned and a row of columns replaced it down the axis of the main room. The similarities in plan between Building T and the LHIIC megaron at Midea suggest that a common ideology lay behind these changes and that the rooms were being used for comparable purposes. While ideology and purpose are clearly intertwined, it is worth examining them separately. Maran (2001: 118) has suggested that, without the paraphernalia of the great hearth and its surrounding columns, the throne may have been more visible on entering the room, thus reducing the mysteriousness of the ruler and concurrently advertising his authority. This was appropriate for the greater sociopolitical instability of the era, when power seems to have been based more on individual qualities than an institutional position, and the immediate sight of the throne's occupant when one entered Building T would effectively convey his authority to the viewer. However, it is also the case that the room's central focus was removed and that the throne was in relative terms much further from the entrance than it was in the original megaron. While there could be an element of distance equalling grandeur, it may also be profitable to recall the way in which the axial columns at Midea were noted to subdivide the room, thus creating a contrasting effect from the central focus of the hearth in the palatial era. The distancing of the throne's occupant is explicable in this framework as being the culmination of hierarchical divisions in the room itself, a factor that must have created an entirely different feasting environment from the megaron's previous use. Before, the occupants had been united in their shared high social status through the elite symbolism of the wall-paintings showing hunting activities; here, while there was undoubtedly an element of privilege in entering Building T, there may have been diacritica involved in where one sat in the room.

The room's ideological expression is associated with its purpose for feasting activities. The clear similarities with the LHIIC megaron at Midea indicate that the purposes of the two buildings may also have been comparable, i.e. to hold feasts *inter alia*. Such commensal activities are directly evidenced at Midea through their debris, and I believe the two buildings show such parallels in their plans that it is almost certain that feasting was held in Building T as well.<sup>8</sup> The lack of any other rooms in the building and hence facilities for domestic life means that it may have served as a gathering-hall rather than an elite dwelling (cf. Maran 2006a: 126).

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the continued use of the altar to the south of Building T's entrance in the LHIIC period indicates that sacrificial rituals were still occurring in the vicinity of the building and hence there would almost certainly have been subsequent feasts either in or around it.

If so, the likelihood of feasting occurring in Building T increases further, as it was an ideal *raison d'être* for a gathering-hall. A row of 12 pithoi just to the north of Building T (inside the wall of the old megaron) have been interpreted as holding supplies for feasts occurring inside the building (Maran 2001: 118). The demonstration of storage capacity can express sociopolitical and economic authority, and therefore it seems that the pithoi fulfilled both practical and symbolic purposes.<sup>9</sup> A feast would be an ideal opportunity for the user(s) of Building T to exhibit their authority, politically in terms of inheriting rituals of rulership and economically in terms of having sufficient resources to feed guests.

Unlike many other sites during LHIIIC, Tiryns grew significantly in size and flourished as a well-ordered, rebuilt settlement with newly developed areas for the burgeoning elite to express their status and wealth without palatial restrictions (Kilian 1980: 171; Maran 2002; 2003: 224). It was suggested by Kilian (1980: 173) that Tiryns acted as a refugee settlement for other sites in the area, initiating a form of synoicism in the Argolid. Further excavations at other sites, such as Midea, have shown that Tiryns was by no means an anomaly for continuing into LHIIIC and the organisation of the city during this time means that its role as a refugee destination is no longer considered a fully accurate picture of what was occurring (cf. Maran 2002). However, it remains the case that Tiryns does seem to have attracted new inhabitants, at least from the surrounding countryside, if not from other former palatial sites as well. What attracted people to this city? It is worth considering whether the overt use of palatial symbolism at Tiryns was part of the reason. It is unique at present amongst our excavated evidence for adopting palatial symbols of authority so explicitly and, while the recent data from Midea suggest that the site's revival was not an isolated phenomenon, the retaining of the throne and the great altar before the megaron indicate that the users of Building T were attempting to represent themselves as successors to the palace, perhaps offering similar security. The continuation of former practices, such as feasting, in the megaron's location would have added to this image that major disasters and sociopolitical collapse could not eradicate the stability of those on the citadel, supported by the economic surplus that was suggested by the storage vessels behind the building and demonstrated through commensal events.

As Tiryns and Midea show definite similarities in the LHIIIB-C shift, they should be set against the evidence of another palatial site to broaden the scenario. A reasonable scale of occupation at Mycenae also continued into LHIIIC, although the site did not flourish in the same way that Tiryns did (French 2002: 140). A tantalising piece of evidence for sociopolitical feasting is derived from a large deposit of very high quality pottery that had been washed down to the

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. 5.2 for a more detailed discussion of this point.

citadel wall from some building higher up (French 2002: 136; Thomatos 2006: 142);<sup>10</sup> however there is no indication as to the structure from which it originated. Clearly some person or group was using feasting as a method to display their superiority through their choice of vessels, but there is no way at present of connecting this to what was occurring on the site of the former palace.

Unlike Midea and Tiryns, Mycenae does not reveal a strong sense of continuity on the location of the LHIIIB structure. Five rooms, apparently part of a single building, were excavated in the area that was the former palace's court and were first interpreted by Tsountas as Geometric in date, a theory that continued throughout the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Klein 1997: 250, 277). The Geometric attribution was originally made on the basis of pottery (possibly misinterpreted LHIIIC Middle examples) but further excavations have not revealed any Geometric sherds, indeed nothing later than LHIII ceramics (Klein 1997: 254, n27). More recent studies have taken the view that these rooms were actually LHIIIC (French 2002: 136; Thomatos 2006: 184) and it is this opinion that I support here, due to the lack of diagnostic pottery as mentioned and the minimal accumulation of earth recorded between the palatial court level and the later rooms (0.3cm: Klein 1997: 254). The fact that the building(s) was located on the court, as opposed to over/within the palace itself, and did not follow the former palace's orientation is indicative of a different set of objectives from those seen at Midea and Tiryns. The message of reoccupation of a formerly symbolic location was not being propagated, beyond a general belief that the citadel itself equalled a position of authority. The court offered a convenient space for building as opposed to *re*-building (Thomatos 2006: 184). As for the structure itself, it is described as having 'thin rubble walls' by Klein (1997: 277), being 'a well laid out building of some sophistication' by French (2002: 136), and 'of a much poorer quality than the earlier buildings' by Thomatos (2006: 186). I believe Klein and Thomatos assess the building more accurately than French's optimistic description, given that the details we have offer an unfavourable comparison with the palace in terms of size and quality of construction; however, it would be strange if its occupants had no pretensions to grandeur given the location on which it was constructed and the fact that the building may have been somewhat sizeable.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to attribute the previously mentioned deposit of pottery to this structure without further evidence, and hence we cannot say whether the building was a feasting location, like those at Midea and Tiryns were.

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<sup>10</sup> This was also the largest LHIIIC pictorial pottery collection from Mycenae (Thomatos 2006: 142) – cf. 5.3 for the symbolic significance that such ware held.

<sup>11</sup> It originally extended further south beyond the limits of the excavation, as a wall was found leading to the collapsed southern slope (Klein 1997: 277). Unfortunately, both the original plans of the building and the drawings of the pottery from it have been lost (Klein 1997: 254, 277), and thus it is impossible to make a more detailed judgement upon how imposing or well-appointed the structure was.



Therefore, what the evidence at Mycenae offers is very different from the other two palatial sites examined and reminds us that it is not possible to construct a generalised picture of developments in LHIIIC. While I would query the idea that the building at Mycenae was merely an opportunistic use of space, given the significance of the location,<sup>12</sup> there does not seem to have been the same adaptation of earlier places and practices seen at Midea and Tiryns. However, all three sites reveal some construction of references to the past and reuse of symbols or locales of authority, proving that, while the palaces had collapsed, their influence was not immediately and comprehensively rejected. Moreover, feasting was still used as a method to display sociopolitical superiority, seen explicitly at Midea where LHIIIB practices directly continued in the same location, implicitly at Tiryns where the evidence suggests that commensal activities maintained their role as an arena to define a leader's position, and indirectly at Mycenae where feasting could have been an opportunity to display one's wealth.

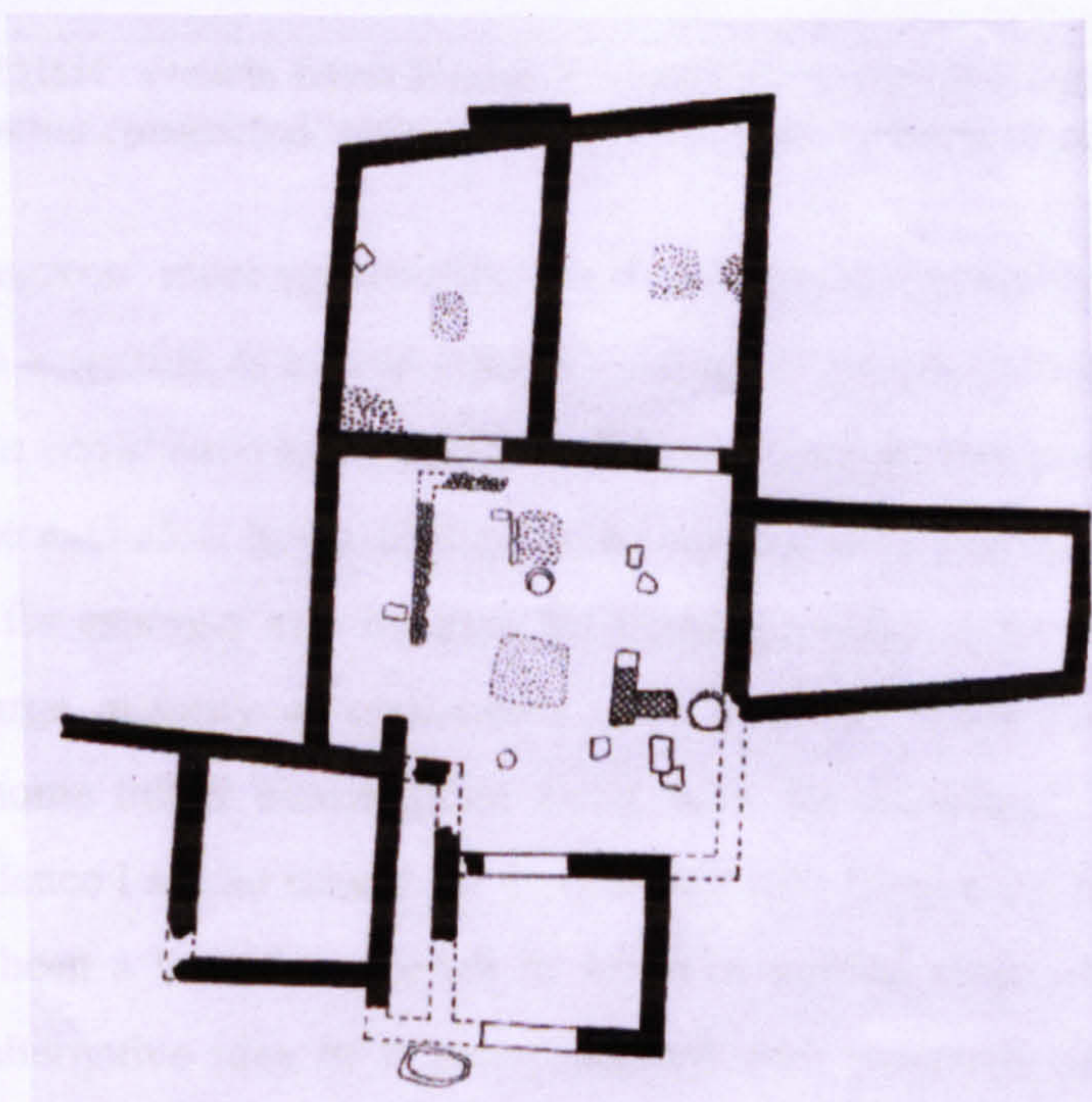
The differences from the past are equally as strong as the similarities. At both Midea and Tiryns, the leader's halls were remodelled, the hearths were removed (which may have been too closely associated with palatial rituals), and there was a redesigning of how the rooms were experienced. Diacritica may have been more evident in the halls, formerly an area of elite unification, and thus may have acted as a method for the new leader(s) to display and maintain their power. The insecurity of the period, evidenced in the numerous destructions experienced in all three sites during the course of LHIIIC, meant that authority was no longer taken for granted and had to be negotiated and expressed to be maintained. At Mycenae, if the pottery deposit came from a building other than the one on the former palatial court, this would reveal the greater freedom that existed during LHIIIC for other elite individuals to accrue their own power. Such a scenario is supported by the fact that Megaron W in the Unterburg of Tiryns is actually larger than Building T, also with the axial line of three columns (Thomatos 2006: 195), thus representing the competition for social position amongst the elite. Feasting was engineered by those in political power as a way of demonstrating their authority and bringing people together to witness it, but it was also mobilised by those who had social superiority and had new opportunities in LHIIIC to display it to a much greater extent.

The evidence from these former palatial sites should be set against that from lesser-order settlements in order to obtain a fuller image of LHIIIC sociopolitical feasting. All three sites examined above displayed a use of former glories in their own way, alongside new developments. But what about those sites that did not have a preceding palace? Direct evidence for feasting at lesser-order sites is not plentiful and hence I focus on two examples only.

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<sup>12</sup> Even if it was only on the court, it was still using ground that would have originally been included within the palace's bounds.

Korakou in the Corinthia was a flourishing small community during LHIIIB that continued without serious interruption into LHIIIC. During this later period, a major house (P) was built that Blegen (1921: 89) termed ‘the largest and most pretentious establishment yet excavated at Korakou...undoubtedly the home of a very substantial citizen’ (Figure 5.3). Allowing for differences in terminology that have developed over the last century, it appears that House P was the dwelling of a probable leader of the settlement, or at least someone with considerable command of resources. Employing the small finds and installations, Blegen interpreted the function of each of the three main rooms of the house, and I see no reason to disagree substantially with his conclusions (cf. also Thomatos 2006: 200). The western room at the back of the house, a probable bedroom/general domestic room, does not concern us here; the eastern room bears clear evidence for cooking (hearth, stone for supporting hot vessels, quern and sherds from at least 24 vessels: Blegen 1921: 88-89). The ‘megaron’ itself contained a number of permanent installations: a central hearth, a column base to the north (‘baetylos’), an earthen platform (‘sacrificial table or altar’), and a very low L-shaped bench (Blegen 1921: 86). The quoted terms reveal how the room was interpreted as having a ceremonial and religious function. When compared with the later EIA evidence in 5.2, this amount of permanent and unidentifiable installations in one room is unusually high, and thus the temptation to apply ritual significance to them is understandable.



**Figure 5.3: Plan of House P, Korakou (Blegen 1921: 84, fig. 114)**

In order to comprehend the activities that occurred in House P’s ‘megaron’, it is worth examining the data more closely. The pottery from the house, both whole and fragmentary, reveals a clear bias towards forms connected with drinking rituals (Table 5.1); the three most

popular forms (kylix, deep bowl and cup) are all vessels for liquid consumption. There are also three types of pouring vessel evidenced (hydria, oinochoe and jug), the surplus of forms suggesting ritualisation of the drinking activities. Moreover, excepting the three stirrup-vases, all the remaining vessels could have been involved in food preparation and consumption. While a certain amount of forms connected with drinking and eating should be expected in any location where people dwell, and therefore any patterns should not be overstated, I believe that the quantity of drinking-related equipment, surplus to one family's requirements (there are 39 cups or equivalents), indicates the use of the building for communal drinking rituals.

Pottery Form	Number of Examples
Kylix	17
Deep bowl	14
Cup	8
Shallow basin	7
Hydria	5
Stirrup-vase	3
Wide shallow bowl	2
Oinochoe	2
Coarse jar	2
Jug	1

**Table 5.1: LHIIIC vessels from House P at Korakou (from Blegen 1921: 129). Forms connected with drinking rituals have been shaded.**

To return to the 'megaron' more specifically, the hearth could reasonably be expected to have played a role in such activities, as a focal point around which people gathered. The column base and earthen platform *could* have had a religious function, and an interpretation of the platform as an altar cannot be excluded; however they could equally have played a more prosaic role in drinking activities, for example as a location for pouring vessels to be placed.<sup>13</sup> Between the two structures a large quantity of carbonised olive pits had fallen (Blegen 1921: 86, n1), possibly attesting some minor consumption along with the drinking.<sup>14</sup> As for the "bench", without further evidence I see no reason for disagreeing with Blegen's (1921: 86-87) suggestion that it could have been a base for a bench in wood or unfired clay, which is certainly more realistic than his alternative idea of it being covered with materials and sat on, improbably suggesting that LHIIIC people preferred the floor to furniture. To summarise therefore, we have evidence of a principal dwelling in Korakou that catered for drinking activities with possibly

<sup>13</sup> Due to Blegen's instant interpretation of the column base as a ritual installation in its own right, it is easy to forget that another purpose for its presence there could simply be as a base for an actual column.

<sup>14</sup> The rather bizarre image of a LHIIIC cocktail party is evoked with this evidence, but there is no reason for us to divide consumption into drinking alone or a full meal – the idea of "nibbles" alongside drinking rituals is perfectly reasonable and probable.

some minor consumption occurring (the proximity and yet separateness of the eastern “kitchen” would have been convenient for this), all occurring around a central hearth in a relatively grand and imposing room, with additional structures that may or may not have played a role in these events. Whether the occupant was indeed the leader of Korakou or not, it is likely that such commensality was hosted in order to display his command of resources and because, as a principal member of the community, he may have had some control over ritual activities.

Thomatos (2006: 200) sees the large hearth in House P as a reflection of the palatial megaron, and this raises an important question: why did the central hearth tradition continue here but not in the former palatial sites, where there was a seemingly deliberate attempt to erase such a layout? There are two possible options; firstly, the central hearth was maintained at Korakou not specifically because it was a memory of the palaces, for after all such a feature preceded them (e.g. Unit IV-4A at Nichoria), but because it was convenient and had functioned satisfactorily for as long as anyone could remember. Secondly, as is often the case in smaller, more rural settlements, styles do not move so quickly as in larger towns and a site like Korakou may have retained the former palatial ways for a while after the palaces themselves had collapsed, either because they saw no reason to change or because they nostalgically preserved what was familiar. In the former palatial sites, it would have been beneficial to the new leaders to remove the features that reminded people most explicitly of the palace’s sphere of influence and to design their megara in a way to suit their new style of ruling. However, at Korakou, the occupants of House P retained apparently outdated styles of architecture and feasting because their practicality suited their purposes, to some extent in emulation of a regime whose disappearance had perhaps not been fully comprehended. It is also worth noting that the kylix was the most common vessel from the house, possibly demonstrating their retained allegiance to the vanished palatial authority, whether conscious or not. On the other hand, the reactionary elements of House P should not be overstated – it concurrently forecast the direction that feasting would take for the majority of the EIA, where the leader of a settlement hosted commensal events in the main room of his dwelling, very often around a hearth, and incorporated ritual elements to emphasise the religious role that he played in his community.

There is a lack of comparanda to Korakou in LHIIIC, and I employ Xeropolis-Lefkandi as an example against which it can be set because of its well-published recent excavation and the fact that the site flourished during this period. Indeed, the evidence for food consumption at Xeropolis should be principally understood as indicating domestic activities and not feasting as I have defined it. However, the conclusions that I have drawn from House P can be supported by comparing the feasting scenario there with evidence for ordinary dining. In Phases 1 and 2 (the principal periods during which Xeropolis flourished), there were specific rooms for food preparation and storage, much like the eastern room of House P, separated from the dining areas

but proximate enough to make serving convenient. For example, in the West House during Phase 1, the basement room 11 served as a “kitchen” and food storage area, while finds from the room directly above it – cups, deep bowls, a scoop – suggest that the food was consumed there (Evely 2006: 13, 16). The layout obviously differs from House P in the fact that it was two-storeyed, but this probably reflects regional variations, and the same basic pattern can be seen of dining/feasting occurring in a separate and grander room with a dedicated “kitchen” in close proximity. The tableware in the West House gives us a good indication of the amount of ceramics required for an ordinary family’s use: five deep bowls, three cups and three kylikes (Evely 2006: 22). While the inhabitants of Xeropolis in the earlier phases do not appear to have been particularly wealthy, and thus the quantity owned by House P’s occupant may have been partially because he was economically superior, I suggest that the dramatically higher numbers of table/drinking ware in House P resulted from the hosting of feasting activities there.

In Phase 2, the economic security of the inhabitants of Xeropolis appears to have increased and commensality beyond family meals may have been practised. Yard 8/9 between the North and South Houses held a collection of drinking equipment (kylikes, deep bowls and kraters) that seems to have been disposed of as debris (Evely 2006: 48). By Phase 3, this approximate area had accumulated further consumption debris, including animal bones (S. Sherratt 2006: 307). The dining seems to have taken place within the buildings around; the North House in particular yielded drinking equipment of a similar nature from the large room 2 (seven kylikes and fragments of several kraters, an amphora and a hydria: Evely 2006: 51). While it is almost impossible to separate feasting from ordinary drinking and dining in this context, given the relatively low number of vessels, there was a notable quantity of kraters in comparison with the Phase 2 drinking vessels (especially elaborately decorated: S. Sherratt 2006: 307). It is probable that this reflects an increasing emphasis on drinking and mixing rituals. Whether the aim of such events was to display a leader’s superiority or to unite the small community, the efficacy of commensal activities seems to have been recognised.<sup>15</sup>

The evidence from Xeropolis supports that already examined from Korakou, and the multiple kraters that appear during the course of LHIIC echo those from the later megaron at Midea, suggesting again the development of commensal rituals that included a greater emphasis on mixing. As the drinking and eating activities mainly occurred on upper floors at Xeropolis, the environs cannot be reconstructed, but overall the image of community consumption agrees with certain comparable elements from House P, forecasting the developments of the EIA. This emphasis on the new may be explained by the fact that the site was almost completely rebuilt

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<sup>15</sup> The elite iconography on the kraters, particularly warriors, suggests that these were employed to display and negotiate status (pictorial vessels are discussed in 5.3).

and greatly expanded at the beginning of LHIIIC, thus revealing a disassociation with the old system.

Overall, it must be said that feasting in LHIIIC blends the old and the new, in different ways or different proportions depending on the site's characteristics and needs. In Midea and Tiryns (and possibly also Mycenae), the old locations were preserved and adapted, in Midea the same species seem to have been consumed, in Korakou the old style of feasting around a hearth was continued, and in all five sites there was a recognition that feasting was still an arena in which to negotiate and display social status. However, the new was equally prominent: in Midea and Tiryns the spaces for feasting were significantly redesigned, in Midea and Xeropolis there are suggestions of altered drinking rituals with an emphasis on mixing, in Korakou the model of feasting in the home of a sociopolitical and perhaps also religious leader is propagated, and all the sites show a noticeable decline in the number of guests that could be catered for in comparison with the large-scale palatial feasts. The social negotiations that could be performed during the context of a feast now included attaining and preserving power, as opposed to simply expressing it, and possibly also community cohesion.

This blend of old and new very much reflects the sociopolitical *milieu* of LHIIIC as a whole. As was emphasised at the beginning of this section, the palatial past was not entirely overthrown or obliterated from memory; while there were dramatic changes, it was respected and even mobilised. New leaders drew upon palatial symbols and locations in order to justify their positions. Tradition was not abandoned and the past was very much present in the LHIIIC world; however, there was equally a sense of looking forward and progressing in a new direction, as opposed to returning to the past (cf. Thomatos 2006: 260). LHIIIC was a significant era for new elite groups, who were able to obtain power that would not have been possible under the palaces' administration (cf. Crielaard 2006: 291-292). This included both those who saw themselves as successors to the palaces' authority and those who were able to be leaders of their settlement without interference from outside bureaucracy. Hence, society began to fragment into smaller areas of influence under a variety of individuals and those in the former palatial sites introduced new ways of expressing their power (seen in the different building designs at Midea and Tiryns and the emphasis on storage capacity at Tiryns), while those in smaller settlements focused on binding their less wealthy neighbours to them through communal events and possibly ritual control. The psychological effects of the palaces' collapse on the people of LHIIIC has recently been emphasised (Dickinson 2006a: 70-71) and in this environment such a blend of old and new may have been the most effective way for the new leaders to gain and retain control. To rule completely in the old way would no longer have been applicable – people's belief in the palaces' stability had been shaken and the period's mobility shows how events were changing at a rapid pace – yet to ignore the past entirely would have

alienated an already alarmed and unsettled population who needed a connection to familiarity. It is in this context that the use of feasting lies, as a continuum that was recognisable ground for negotiating and expressing sociopolitical aims and yet flexible enough to be adapted to the new needs of the period.

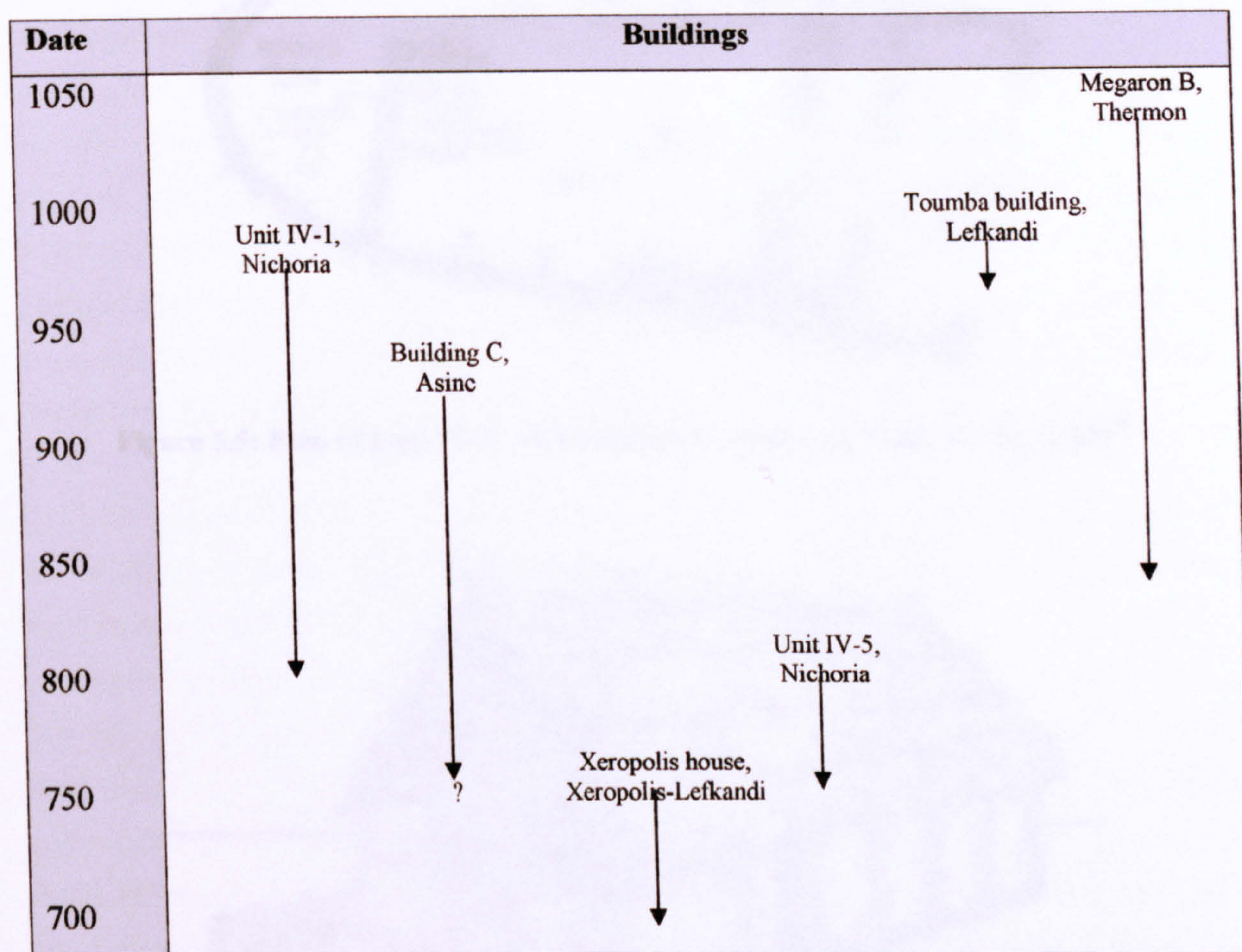
## *2. The All-Encompassing Feast – Commensality in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

After LHIIIC, mainland Greece abandoned the shadow of its Mycenaean past and the influences of the palatial period, partly through deliberate rejection and partly through the transformative effects of time. Feasting practices concurrently changed in their style, their purposes, and what they encompassed. Elements intimately linked with the palatial *modus operandi*, such as the kylix-based drinking ritual, had already been intentionally abandoned before the start of the EIA, no longer applicable, desired or submitted to in a post-palatial world. Other elements altered more gradually throughout LHIIIC and continued to develop during the EIA, more a result of the changes in sociopolitical structures subsequent to the palaces' collapse than any conscious decision. For example, the feasting model that can first be seen at House P at Korakou and perhaps also the Xeropolis houses, mingling community cohesion with display of status, was a product of the fragmentation of the sociopolitical structure into smaller-scale units resulting from the power vacuum produced by the palaces' fall. By the time the EPG period began, it is likely that the Mycenaean past, including the large-scale banquets held at the palaces, was a fading memory preserved only in song, and the new ways of life and styles of feasting experimented with during LHIIIC were what survived into the following centuries.

The principal continuum that ran through the practice of sociopolitical commensality, from LHIIIC and throughout the EIA, was its location in the main dwelling of the settlement. This does not of course rule out feasting occurring in other buildings, although a certain amount of social and economic superiority may have been a requisite for holding feasts. However, the locations where we have the strongest evidence for feasting events at this time are what have been termed 'rulers' dwellings' (Mazarakis Ainian 1997), and are the largest buildings in their respective settlements, sometimes by a considerable amount. They also surpass their neighbours in the amount of ritual and storage elements/installations associated with them, implying religious and economic superiority as well as social and probably political. 'Rulers' dwellings' seems perhaps too monarchical, and therefore I use 'leader's dwellings' in this thesis, as this relies upon the assumption that one person had accrued a greater degree of political and economic authority than his neighbours rather than holding full power over a settlement.

Because of the somewhat patchy data from this lengthy period, I have chosen to deal with it in one section. Diachronic changes can be observed and are noted, but essentially it can be treated

as a whole as there remains a remarkable unity throughout these three centuries. I have selected six leader's dwellings over four sites which I believe illuminate the issues under discussion in this section, as they reveal evidence of the social structure of the EIA Greek mainland and either yield direct evidence of feasts or can be indirectly assumed to have hosted them. These examples are: Unit IV-1 and Unit IV-5 at Nichoria, the apsidal building(s) at Asine (74N-71G, 74L-70L), the apsidal building at Xeropolis-Lefkandi, the Toumba building at Lefkandi, and Megaron B at Thermon (**Figure 5.4**).



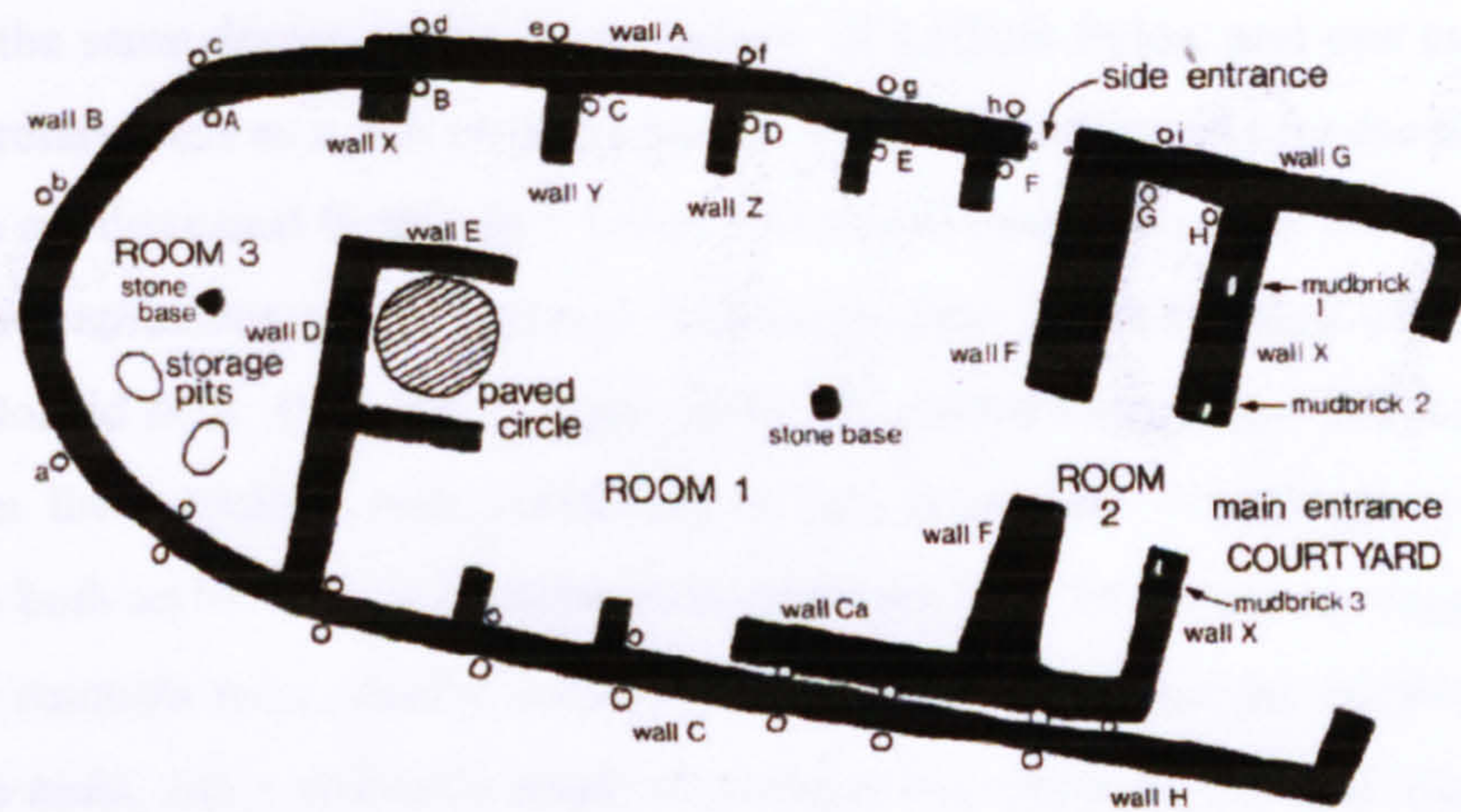
**Figure 5.4: Chronological comparison of sites examined in section 5.2**

Unit IV-1 at Nichoria is in many ways the exemplum of both the feasting activities of the EIA and the contemporary sociopolitical structure, and therefore I discuss it first in fuller detail than the other sites (**Figures 5.5, 5.6**). It was in use for the whole of Nichoria's DAII period, approximately from the early 10<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (EPG-EG). It appears to have gone through two phases, although it has been debated whether it was rectangular or apsidal in the first phase (Mazarakis Ainian 1992).<sup>16</sup> According to the excavators, phase 1 was a rectangular, one-roomed building with a central hearth and a stone circular structure against the far (west) wall (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 25, 27, 29). In phase 2, an apse and a courtyard were

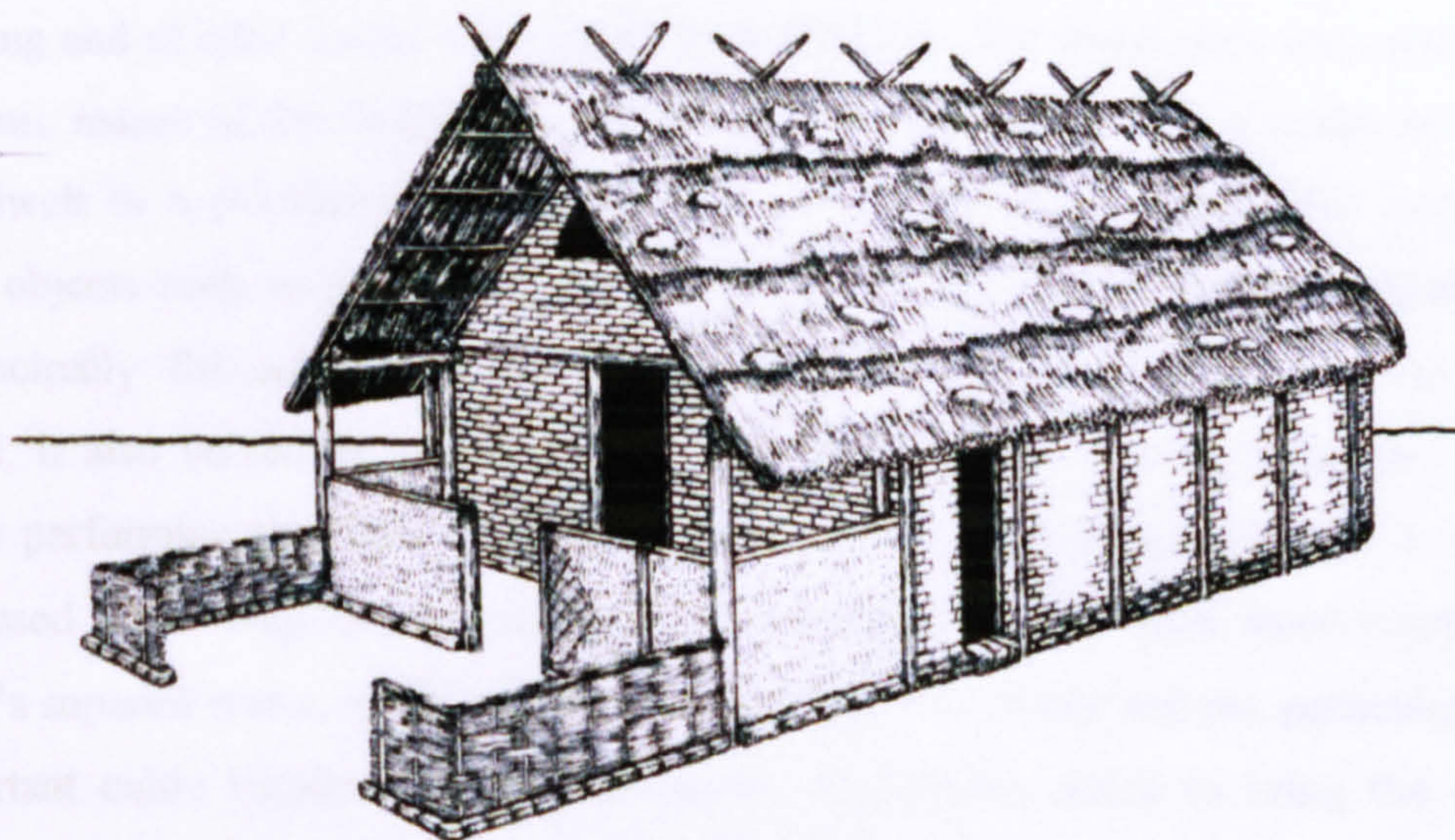
<sup>16</sup> Fagerström (1988b: 38) sees a single phase only, but the changes undergone throughout the use-life of Unit IV-1 seem too major to dismiss the excavators' original theory completely and to be accounted for merely by preparations before construction, as he suggests.



said to have been added, giving the building an extra room and enlarging its space, and the circular structure was “monumentalised” by framing it with walls (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 33, 38). As the initial form of the building does not affect my reconstruction of what occurred within, I do not offer solutions to this debate but instead concentrate upon the activities inside Unit IV-1.



**Figure 5.5: Plan of Unit IV-1, Nichoria (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 36, fig. 2-22)<sup>17</sup>**



**Figure 5.6: Artistic reconstruction of Unit IV-1, Nichoria (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 37, fig. 2-23)**

The evidence for feasting within the building is unequivocal. Both pottery and animal bones covered the floor in high quantities throughout its entire use-period. The species of the animals were standard festive fare: goat, sheep, pig and cattle, with a minority of red deer (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 26, 39). The pottery that lay in the centre of the room between the circular structure and the hearth was dominated by skyphoi, indicating an emphasis on drinking rituals (Fagerström 1988a: 34, 128; 1988b: 39). The hearth may only have been used during the first

<sup>17</sup> The plan is of the building in its second phase.

phase,<sup>18</sup> and certainly thereafter food storage and preparation seems to have occurred in the apsidal room 3, evidenced by animal bones,<sup>19</sup> pulses (peas/beans), a large amount of coarseware, and two stone-lined store pits (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 36-37). This would suggest a variety of cooking activities occurring in the back room, with the finished products carried out to those dining in the main section of Unit IV-1. The range of food remains and equipment (fragments of a grill were found) in room 3 suggest an element of sophistication in the dishes, even if not to the same degree as the *haute cuisine* of LHIII B Pylos, and one can envisage an attempt at impressiveness as it was presented to the guests attending. As for the paved circle, its ritual elements are discussed further in 5.5, but it seems to have served for holding sacrifices, as quantities of ovicaprid bones and charcoal fragments were found brushed off immediately to one side (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 38; Morgan 1990: 75; *contra* Fagerström 1988b: 41). Whether the meat from these victims was consumed or not is unclear – analogies with sacrificial practices from both earlier (Ayios Konstantinos) and later (e.g. Isthmia) may suggest that it was. Perhaps small amounts were ritually consumed in order to commence the feasting occasion and to precede the main, more elaborate meal; or perhaps two separate types of feasts occurred in this building on different occasions.

The multi-purpose nature of Unit IV-1 thus highlighted is a significant defining element both of this building and of other leader's dwellings from the EIA. The excavators had no doubt about the domestic nature of the building in both phases, in other words that a leader or 'chieftain' actually dwelt in it (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 33, 40). This seems practically certain, as the domestic objects such as spindle-whorls and coarse cooking equipment are unlikely to have been principally for cultic purposes (*contra* Sourvinou-Inwood 1993: 6). As has been suggested, it also served as a gathering-hall for sociopolitical feasting occasions and was a locale for performing sacrifices. Therefore, commensal events held in Unit IV-1 would have encompassed both religious and sociopolitical elements; they would have emphasised the occupant's superior status, wealth and control over religious rituals and yet, particularly if it was an important cultic location for the settlement, would have acted to bring the community together. With so many undercurrents to these feasts, it is worth examining them more closely against the backdrop of the social *milieu* in Nichoria.

Especially in its presumed second phase, Unit IV-1 stands out from the other buildings in the settlement through its sheer size (127.2m<sup>2</sup> including the courtyard: McDonald *et al.* 1983: 33). Combined with its elaborated plan and its monumentalised "altar", this was no ordinary

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<sup>18</sup> This is however questioned by Mazarakis Ainian (1992: 81) as satisfactory reasons for this assumption are not provided by the excavators.

<sup>19</sup> The bones in room 3 included goat, sheep and cattle, plus minor representation of red deer and dog (although it is unclear whether the latter was eaten: Sloane & Duncan 1978: 69; McDonald *et al.* 1983: 36-37).

building, at least in comparison with the local houses, and thus despite the underlying assumptions I feel justified in identifying its owner as someone who held a degree of authority over the other inhabitants of the settlement. Undoubtedly those who attended feasts hosted by the occupant would have had opportunities to recognise his superior status and wealth while seated inside this monumental building and dining upon his food, very probably notable through its quality of preparation (as mentioned above) or quantity (as suggested by two stone-lined storage pits in room 3: McDonald *et al* 1983: 36-37). Quite what type of leadership he embodied is debated; Whitley (1991: 349-350) has categorised Nichoria as exemplifying his 'Big-Man' or 'unstable' model, seeing Unit IV-1 as a gathering-hall in which the leader would attempt to impress his neighbours and gain/maintain their allegiance through his generosity, in order to retain his authority (cf. also Thomas & Conant 1999: 52-53). His categorisation of Nichoria as such has attractive features and certainly there must have been an element through which the occupant of Unit IV-1 attempted to impress his comparative wealth and political superiority upon his neighbours by indebting them to him through feasting and displaying to them the resources he could draw upon. However, the length of time during which Unit IV-1 was in use means that it cannot truly be regarded as 'unstable' or dependent upon the machinations of one leader (Dickinson 2006a: 110-11; Mazarakis Ainian 2006: 187).<sup>20</sup> Hence, while the 'Big-Man' model is partially applicable, it should not be seen as wholly accurate.

In addition, Unit IV-1 acted as a form of community centre for Nichoria during DAII. There is no other obvious cult location in the settlement and the "altar" within may well have played a significant role in community religious life (Mazarakis Ainian 2006: 187). This fact makes it unlikely that it served solely as a domestic shrine, combined with the signs of prolific use, later monumentalisation of the structure to give it greater prominence, and proximity to other features of communal activities (drinking and eating). While it has been suggested that this "altar" gave the occupant of Unit IV-1 a status of local priest, thus augmenting his general authority with a religious dimension (Mazarakis Ainian 1988: 109),<sup>21</sup> it is also possible to stress the more cohesive factors of having a communal ritual location in this building. The local inhabitants were not only united through respect of and indebtedness to their leader, but also through the fact that they came together in this one specified location to celebrate their rituals, bound through the experiences of observing the sacrifices and of drinking and dining together afterwards. In this respect, it is unlikely that diacritica were a strong element of these feasts, and indeed no evidence has been found to suggest that such strategies were employed. The

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<sup>20</sup> As is seen below, the chronological and spatial proximity of Unit IV-5 may suggest that the same family/lineage occupied both in succession, which would further emphasise their stability of power.

<sup>21</sup> Although he does not agree that there is enough evidence to confirm the presence of a *basileus* at Nichoria, Lenz (1993: 170-171, 303, 336-338) however sees EIA 'kings' (*basileis*) as having primary religious authority and perhaps even being priests during this period.

feasts were two-tiered, with the principal division between the leader/host and the people/guests.

Therefore, to summarise what was occurring in Unit IV-1, we see a true multi-faceted feasting style, where the superiority of the leader was emphasised alongside the cohesion of the people who attended. The presence of the “altar” right inside the feasting environs and shielded from wider public view would have generated a markedly strong atmosphere of inclusivity. Yet ultimately, a unified community was beneficial to the leader in order to discourage potential unrest and help him maintain authority. The multi-faceted nature of the feasts is also shown in the direct intermingling of religious and “secular” elements, as they were not separated into different rooms or areas. A remarkably high percentage of the animal bones (c.20%) were astragali, hinting at the occurrence of gaming during feasts held in the main room (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 26), and thus it was a locale both for sacrificial feasting at the “altar” and for more prosaic commensal occasions where drinking and gaming occupied greater attention than the worship of the gods.

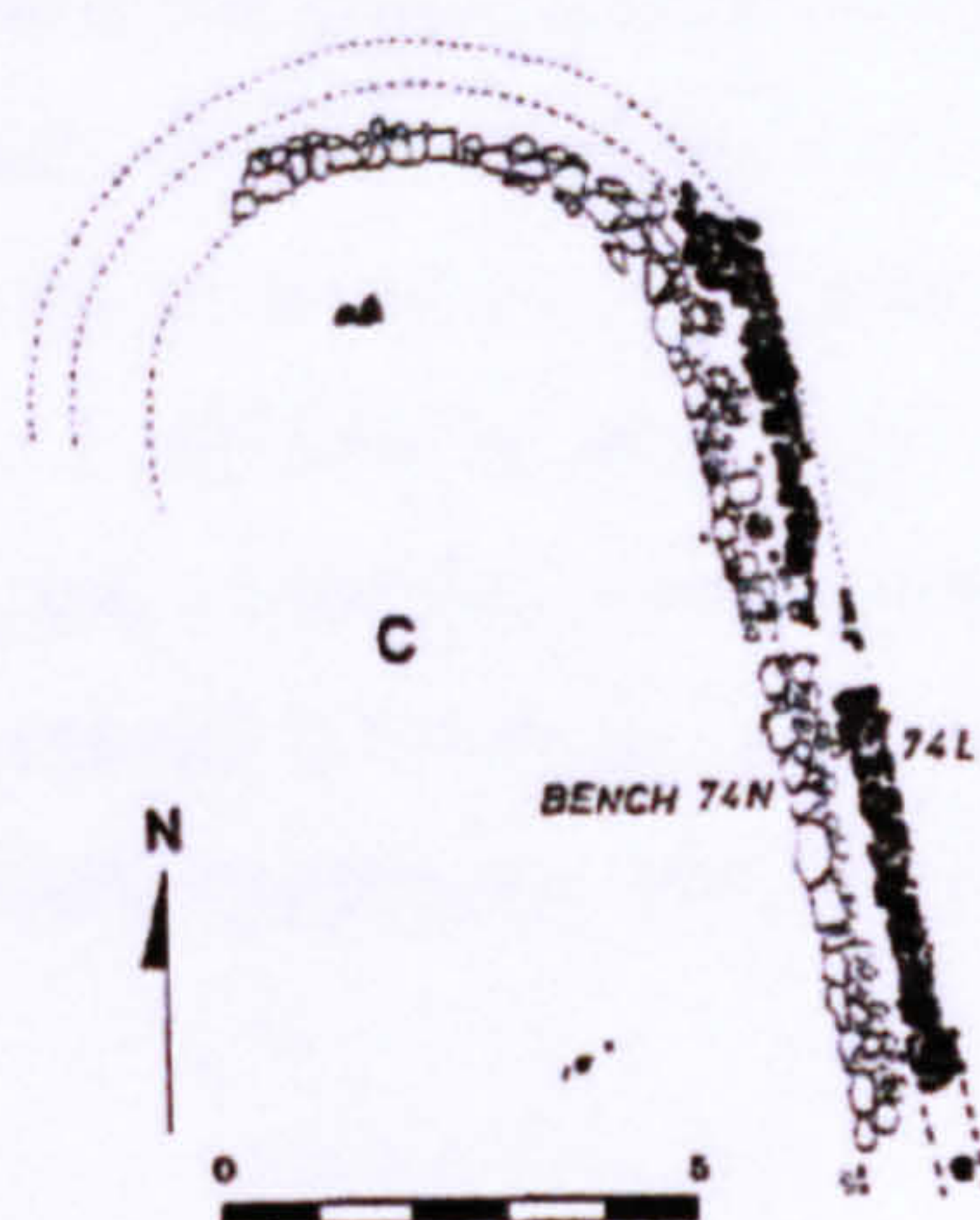
The patterns observed in Unit IV-1 can be noted in other, less well-preserved sites of the EIA. I examine two briefly in order to support the above conclusions. Neither has such definitive evidence for feasting but the similarities with Unit IV-1 in their design make it highly likely that such events would have occurred there also. Firstly, at Asine in the location 74L-N there were remains of an apsidal single-roomed house(s), beset by confused stratigraphy and poor preservation, in size not much smaller than Nichoria Unit IV-1 (c.96m<sup>2</sup>: Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 271). Originally believed to be two buildings, an older outer one based on the features 74L-70L and a later inner one around 74N-71G and the apse IM (Dietz 1982: 43-45; Fagerström 1988a: 23-25), it is now suggested that they belonged to one only (Mazarakis Ainian 1992: 80; 1997: 69).<sup>22</sup> If the current opinion is followed, then the building would have been in use from some point in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, probably MPG, and was certainly in ruins by the LG period in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 69-70), again a long use-life comparable with Unit IV-1. Because of the unclear situation and the lengthy nomenclature instituted by Dietz, I here call it ‘Building C’ for purposes of simplicity, following Mazarakis Ainian’s terminology (Figure 5.7).

Unfortunately few finds were excavated from the building, which had been emptied in antiquity, although there were pithos fragments in the apse area and sherds from drinking and pouring vessels (skyphoi, oinochoai) in the central part (Fagerström 1988a: 127). Although meagre, these are consistent with the pattern of storage/cooking in the apse and feasting in the main area.

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<sup>22</sup> Mazarakis Ainian (1997: 69, n.239) notes that this is an opinion now shared by Dietz (the excavator) as well, who has since changed his mind about the stratigraphy.

There was also a pit hearth in the central part of the building (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 291). Mazarakis Ainian (1992: 80; 1997: 69) proposes that the so-called inner/late foundation was actually an impressively large bench; while this would certainly support the notion of feasting events occurring within, I remain cautious given the uncertainty over the structure.<sup>23</sup> Building C's similarity to Nichoria Unit IV-1 has been noted by a number of scholars (Dietz 1982: 52; Fagerström 1988a: 25; Mazarakis Ainian 1992: 80; 1997: 70), with the reasonable observation that similarity in plan and size could also indicate similarity of practice. I fully agree with this claim; however, it remains to demonstrate Building C's similar position in the sociopolitical milieu.



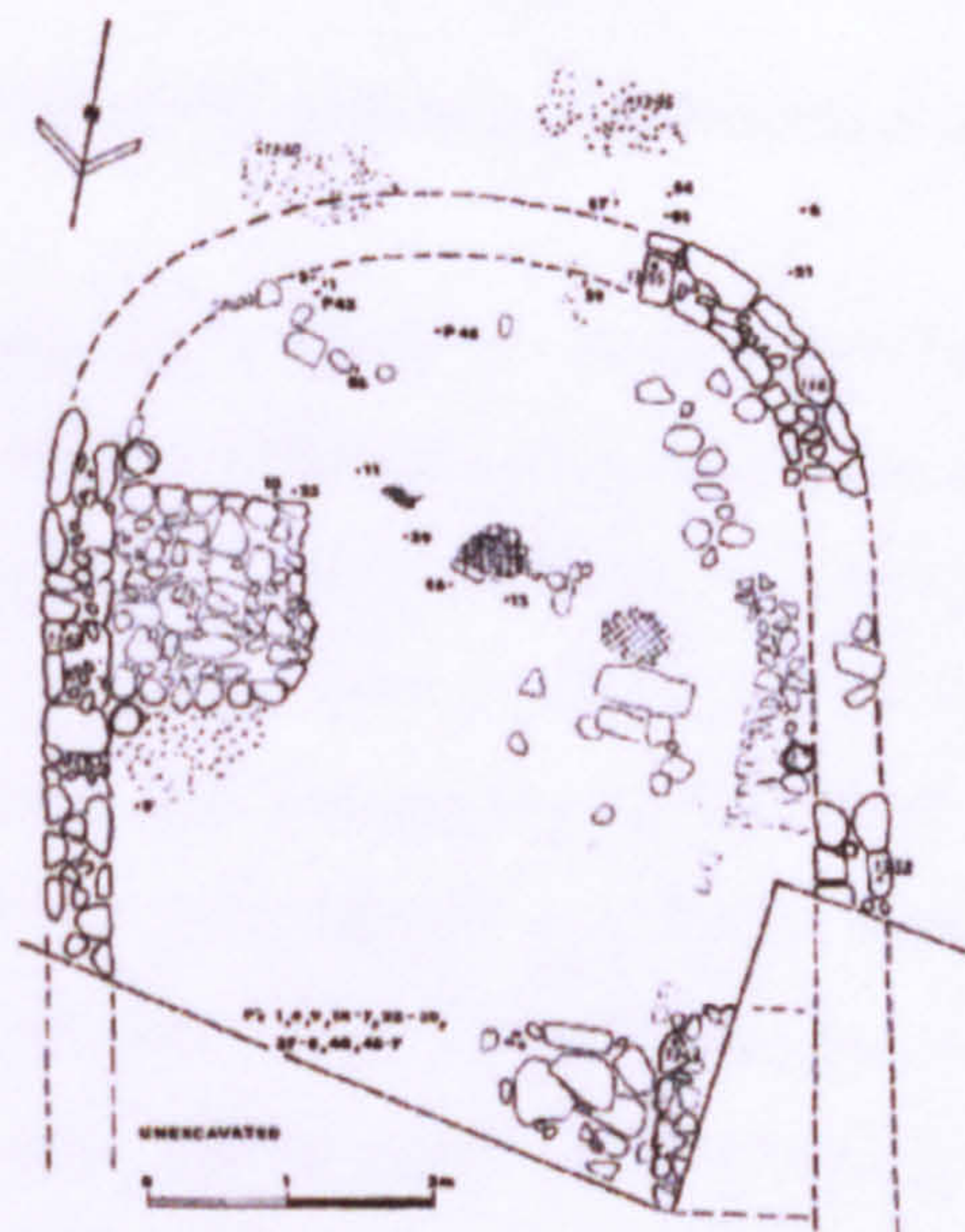
**Figure 5.7: Reconstructed plan of 'Building C', Asine (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: fig. 228)**

A connection with ritual practices can be seen in an area believed to be utilised during the earlier part of Building C's use, less than 20m away, which has been interpreted as a locale for sacrificial meals, on the basis of evidence that includes a pithos containing broken but unworn pots (predominantly skyphoi and other drinking vessels), numerous animal bones (cattle, sheep, goat, pig) and charcoal fragments, near a small enclosure surrounding fatty soil (Wells 1983: 34; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 297; Lemos 2002: 221). The proximity of these rituals to Building C may suggest that the house's occupant had some association with, if not direct control over, what was occurring. As for economic superiority, there were outdoor storage pits belonging to Building C that would have indicated the occupant's surplus of resources (Fagerström 1988a: 137). Finally, as is examined further in 5.5, the memory of the building's occupants must have impacted upon the rest of the settlement, as after the house had fallen into ruins in LG a circular structure was built over its remains (Dietz 1982: 34-36), a feature that has often been connected with ritual activity and veneration of ancestors (e.g. Hägg 1983). The cumulative effect of this

<sup>23</sup> Mazarakis Ainian (1992: 80) also reconstructs a similar bench in Nichoria Unit IV-1 (which was wall Ca of the first phase according to the excavators). This would reveal a further similarity in the two buildings' forms, but is obviously reliant upon following his theories in their entirety.

evidence suggests that a leader (or rather a lineage of leaders) dwelt in Building C, who held sociopolitical, economic and perhaps religious authority over others living in the settlement, and as such they very probably hosted feasts in their abode, as those in the comparable Nichoria Unit IV-1 did.

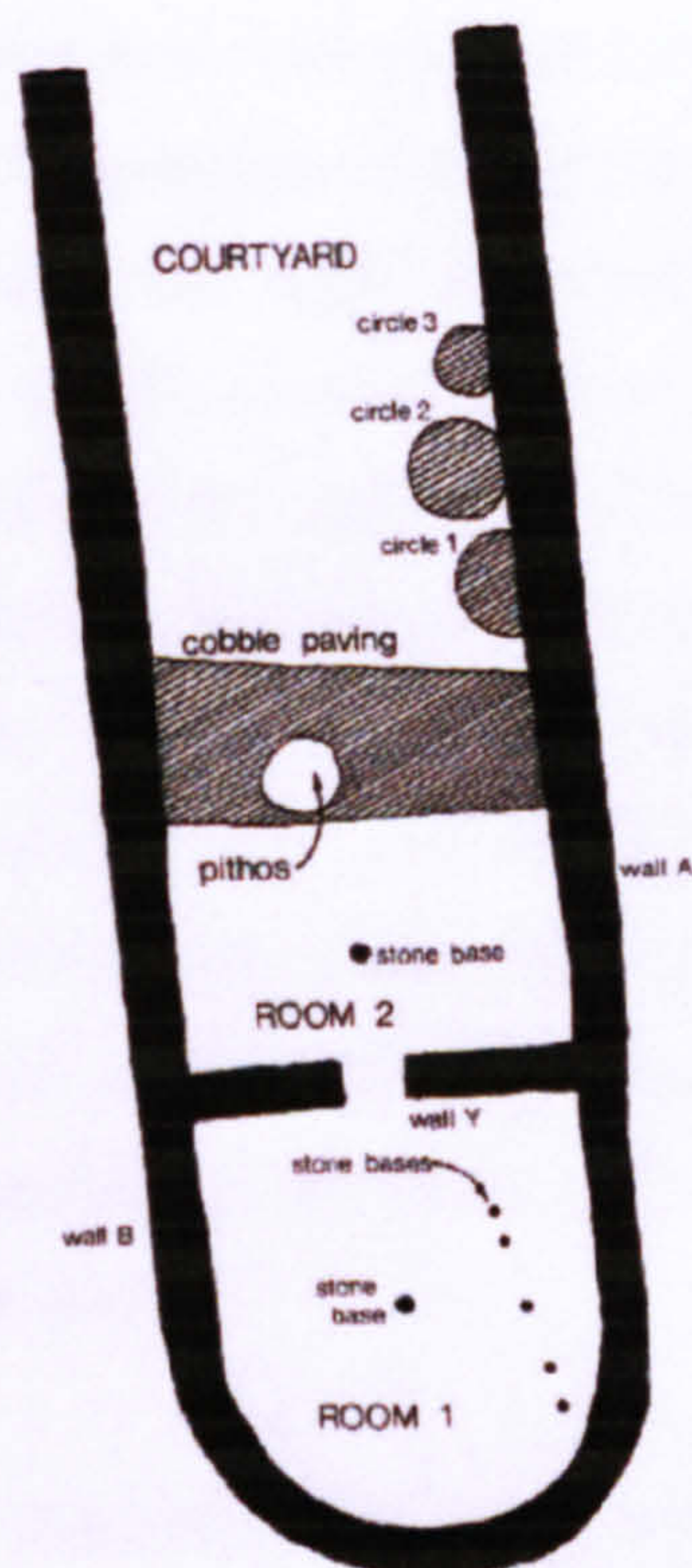
The second supporting example is the LG (later 8<sup>th</sup> century) apsidal house at Xeropolis, a building with a much shorter life-span than either of the previous two and also smaller (42.5m<sup>2</sup>) but in many other ways comparable (Coldstream 1977: 196; Popham *et al.* 1980: 23; **Figure 5.8**). While not as imposing as either Nichoria Unit IV-1 or Asine Building C as a structure, there is direct evidence for feasting within. The remains of vessels distributed around the building once again revealed pithoi in the apse area and commensal equipment in the main part. Most of the vessels were skyphoi, attesting drinking rituals, and other forms support such activities: mugs, kotylai, two kraters and an oinochoe (Popham *et al.* 1980: 14). The occurrence of food preparation in the apse is confirmed by pestles and mortars, a knife and a whetstone (Popham *et al.* 1980: 24). The rest of the finds were domestic in character and support the conclusion that the building was firstly a dwelling and secondly a place where drinking and probably dining occurred. A hearth in the main area marks a further similarity between the three buildings.



**Figure 5.8: Plan of Xeropolis house (Popham *et al.* 1979: pl. 8a)**

As in the case of Asine Building C, a similarity of plan and thus of purpose with Nichoria Unit IV-1 has been proposed for the Xeropolis house (Fagerström 1988a: 129) and I see this as a valid connection. Three circular structures next to the house have been interpreted as remains of granaries (Popham *et al.* 1980: 24-25) and these would once again appear to be advertising the occupant's control over a surplus of resources, demonstrated further by food offered during feasts. Religious elements or installations are however absent from this building. To

summarise therefore, in the Xeropolis house there is evidence for the socioeconomic superiority of the leader dwelling in it and the practising of feasts within, in the familiar pattern of guests gathering in the central part (probably around the hearth) and being served with food prepared in the apse, paralleling the model of feasting constructed from Nichoria Unit IV-1.



**Figure 5.9: Plan of Unit IV-5, Nichoria (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 49, fig. 2-27)**

The Xeropolis house indicates an element of diachronic change in its lack of religious associations and it is worth returning to Nichoria to examine this aspect further. The destruction of Unit IV-1 does not seem to have been particularly violent, and it is presumed that its occupants simply decided to make a fresh construction, at right angles to the previous building. The result was Unit IV-5, which therefore appears to have been its successor during the DAIII period (early 8<sup>th</sup> century, MG). Also apsidal, it differed little in size from its predecessor, although it had an extended courtyard area (111.1m<sup>2</sup> including the courtyard: McDonald *et al.* 1983: 51; **Figure 5.9**). The apse section contained numerous coarseware sherds, much as was observed before (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 49); moreover, as in the case of Unit IV-1, the size and plan were exceptional in the settlement and indicate a distinctive purpose for the building. However, there was a significant difference in layout, as around half the length of the “building” appears to have been courtyard, with a paved area in the section nearer the house.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, it has even been suggested that the leader of Nichoria did not live in Unit IV-5,<sup>25</sup> as the domestic

<sup>24</sup> Here also Mazarakis Ainian (1992: 82) proposes a different interpretation by suggesting that the entire courtyard was in fact roofed. This does not however explain the existence of the paved area part-way, and counteracts the seeming desire to make the storage elements conspicuous.

<sup>25</sup> Unless perhaps on an upper storey (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 53).

finds are much fewer, coarseware predominates excessively, and the concentration on storage is so great (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 53). In the paved section of the courtyard there were fragments of pithoi, and in the frontal part there were structures that have been interpreted as pithos stands (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 52).

There therefore has been some debate as to what purpose Unit IV-5 served and whether it really was the successor to Unit IV-1. The excavators themselves saw it as the obvious replacement but, a few pages later, proposed that it was actually a collection-redistribution centre and not a dwelling (McDonald *et al.* 1980: 47, 53; cf. Morgan 1990: 75-76). Mazarakis Ainian (1988: 106) considered that it probably did hold the same political and religious functions as Unit IV-1, albeit with greater economic emphasis. Fagerström (1988a: 36; 1988b: 43) noted a transfer of importance from ritual to economic elements, and this seems to me to be the essence of what occurred. While I think it likely that Unit IV-5 did serve as the successor of Unit IV-1 and was occupied/owned by the same family, given its immediate proximity, the smooth chronological transition, similarity in basic plan, and notable monumentality (exceptional in Nichoria), I recognise that very different events were occurring in and around Unit IV-5. Indeed there is no longer direct evidence for feasting within.

Why therefore discuss Unit IV-5 at length when it may not even have been a feasting location? I believe that it exemplifies the gradual diachronic shift that occurred throughout the EIA, both in feasting and in the sociopolitical *milieu*, which can be seen in the spectrum of buildings examined. Nichoria Unit IV-1, the earliest of the four buildings so far considered, revealed a very strong emphasis on religious rituals in the context of feasting, alongside more prosaic convivial occasions. Such an emphasis is presumed to have also been the case in Asine Building C, which is chronologically closest to Unit IV-1, indicated by the cult area just to the north during the earlier part of the structure's use. In the Xeropolis house however, not only have the religious elements disappeared, but the emphasis on economic superiority and surplus of resources glimpsed in the storage pits within Nichoria Unit IV-1 and outside Asine Building C becomes much stronger with the granaries outside the house. In Nichoria Unit IV-5, the shift from ritual to economic pre-eminence is exemplified. At the beginning of the EIA, feasts were all-encompassing occasions, combining the religious and the secular, sacrifices and politics. While the commensal evidence from the later part of the period is more patchy, it appears that religious superiority was no longer demonstrated at such feasts but was replaced by an increased emphasis on economic superiority – perhaps due to the increase of major, spatially distinct sanctuaries during the later EIA, perhaps a response to the wider sociopolitical changes or increased unrest of the years before the *polis* developed. The all-encompassing feast developed into an occasion at which the host/leader's dominance over his neighbours was demonstrated in secular realms alone and, one can surmise judging by the indications of conspicuous storage,



this took precedence over the previous sense of community cohesion produced by the people celebrating their rituals with their leader.

The picture offered so far in this section has been cohesive and suggests a smooth development throughout the EIA. However, not all leader's dwellings and feasting locales in this period fit this model and the lack of uniformity across the EIA Greek mainland should be emphasised, as there was no single set way of constructing buildings or performing commensality. Therefore, I conclude this section by examining two apparent anomalies: the Toumba building at Lefkandi and Megaron B at Thermon. Both of these exhibit differences from the scenario constructed in the preceding discussion, in terms of sociopolitical aims and styles of feasting, and hence broaden our understanding of EIA commensality.

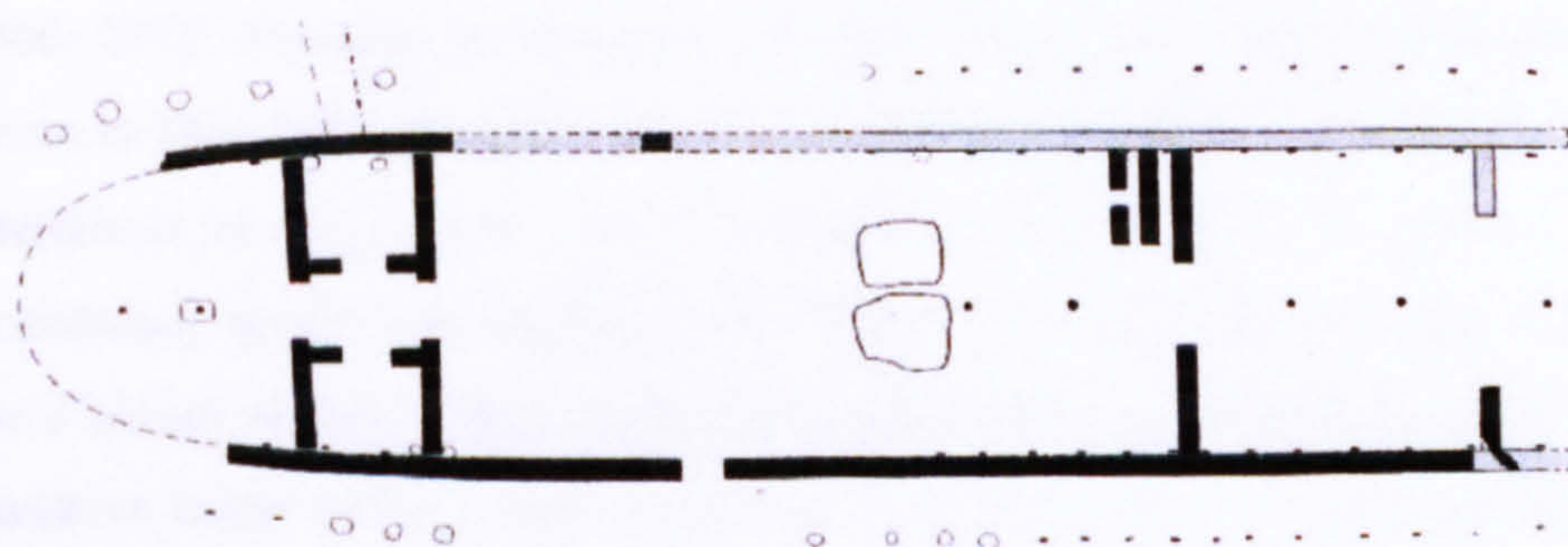
The Toumba building at Lefkandi, used for only a few years in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (MPG), is now so familiar in its layout and finds that it is unnecessary to describe it in detail (Figures 5.10, 5.11). What does however require addressing is an assessment of its purpose and chronology as this affects the overall interpretation of the structure – whether it is a leader's dwelling or a heroön. Interpretation is divided over whether the building was constructed before or after the burials inside. Those who argue that the house was built first see it as an *anaktoron*, dwelt in briefly by the dead incumbent and destroyed after his death as a mark of respect (Lenz 1993: 134-137; Crielaard & Driessen 1994; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 54-57; Thomas & Conant 1999: 94-97; I. Morris 2000: 221; Pakkanen & Pakkanen 2000<sup>26</sup>). Those who argue that the building was constructed after and over the burial shafts see it as a heroön, built in honour of this man who had presumably led the community (Fagerström 1988a: 129; Popham *et al.* 1993: 99-101; Antonaccio 1995b: 10-11; Lemos 2002: 145-146; Dickinson 2006a: 190). I follow the opinion that the building was in existence *before* the death of its owner. Although it seems to have been in use for an exceptionally short time (if at all), for the reasons outlined below I believe that it was intended as a dwelling first and foremost before it was turned into a mausoleum.

The principal piece of evidence adduced for the later construction of the building is the so-called "pyre" remains, or burnt patch under the south-east corner (Popham *et al.* 1993: 99-100). However, there is no actual evidence that this results from a pyre at all or, if it does, from the relevant pyre, especially as other burnt patches were found elsewhere under the building. More telling is the observation that the floor had been laid before the burial shafts were cut into it (Crielaard & Driessen 1994: 258). Again, the fact that the building is in a funerary location should not cause problems, given that it is not certain whether the cemetery around was in

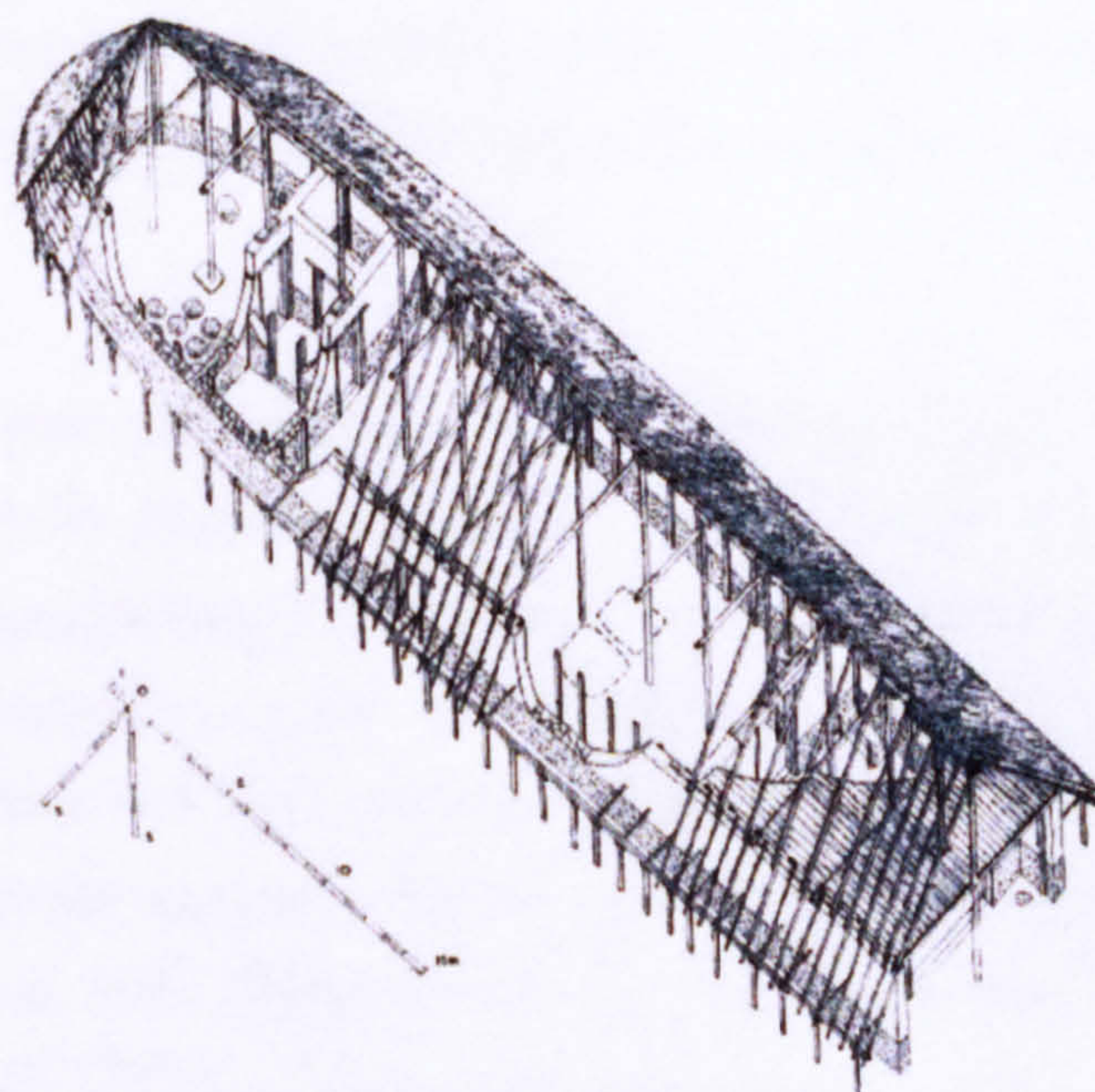
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<sup>26</sup> Calligas also holds this opinion, dissenting from his fellow excavators in Popham *et al.* (1993: 101).

existence when it was constructed and the Toumba building may have instead led to the use of the area for burials (Crielaard & Driessen 1994: 263). Moreover, the careful attention to domestic detail, such as the pithos receptacles in the apse, makes it unlikely that it was solely constructed as a heroön, even if a replica house was intended (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 54-55; cf. Popham *et al.* 1993: 49). As some of the interior decoration was not fully completed, this suggests to me that the owner had hardly had a chance to dwell in it before his death occurred (unexpectedly?); if it had been intended as a heroön, then either it would not have been plastered inside at all to save unnecessary labour, given its future demolition, or conversely it would have been completely finished as a mark of respect to the dead leader. Together, these reasons combine to support the idea of the building's prior construction.



**Figure 5.10: Plan of Toumba building, Lefkandi (Popham *et al.* 1993: pl. 5)**



**Figure 5.11: Reconstruction of Toumba building, Lefkandi (Popham *et al.* 1993: pl. 28)**

Accepting this interpretation therefore, we can examine more closely the relations that the Toumba building had with feasting activities. Its size is unparalleled to date (c.470m<sup>2</sup>; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 271) and reveals the unprecedented capabilities of EIA architects. Its plan resembles the buildings already discussed, but it was developed on a grander scale with a

room between the porch and main room, and another two between the main room and apse. Unfortunately, the building was cleared before it was turned into a funerary monument and almost all domestic objects were removed, making it difficult to reconstruct what occurred within. Several of the circular pits in the apse held a greater concentration of animal bones and pottery than was characteristic of the fill, perhaps indicating some commensal use of the building, although this is meagre evidence (Popham 1983: 14-15). Only 12 vessels from the original occupancy (i.e. not the fill) were recovered (Popham *et al.* 1990: 3-4), giving a sample too small to draw conclusions about activities. The monumental krater in the central room however has received much comment for its grandeur and exotic decoration, and it has been proposed that it stands as a referent to feasting activities that occurred in that room during the occupant's lifetime (Crielaard & Driessen 1994: 260-261; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 55-57; Crielaard 2006: 287). Standing prominently near the burial shafts, and notably one of the few items that seem to have been placed/left inside the building, I would suggest that it certainly is making a statement of some form. As is discussed more fully in 5.3, kraters (particularly decorated) combined symbols of feasting and of the elite lifestyle so that they metonymically revealed one's ability to host feasts, particularly when they accompanied one to the grave.<sup>27</sup> Thus, this massive krater in the Toumba building could represent the man's practice of hosting feasts during his life, possibly even in the very room where he and the krater were laid, which would be likely given the comparable form of the building to the other examples considered above. Few would question the presence of the weapons around the man as symbols of his membership of a warrior class and probable action in military situations; thus the vessels likewise symbolised his capacity to command resources on feasting occasions and to host such events.<sup>28</sup>

In several ways, the commensal activities occurring in the Toumba building would have resembled those in the other examples discussed.<sup>29</sup> The pithos holes in the apse indicate that it was intended as a storage/cooking room, as appears to have been standard, and feasting could have occurred in the central room. The various ambiguous installations in the east room may have had some connection with ritual practices – food preparation area, ritual hearth and some form of container have been suggested – but their lack of use means such assumptions cannot be confirmed (Popham *et al.* 1993: 51-52). However, if they were connected with ritual activities,

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. 3.2 for similar symbolism during the Early Mycenaean period.

<sup>28</sup> The clay box containing charcoal, sherds and animal bones in the central room has been attributed to remains of the funeral rites (Popham *et al.* 1993: 15, 50); however, there is no evidence as yet that it was inserted at a later date when the burial shafts were dug (cf. Crielaard & Driessen 1994: 257). If it was coeval with the building itself, then it may have contained the remains of an earlier feast held within the central room.

<sup>29</sup> It should be borne in mind that the feasts may have only been *intended* to occur and the premature death of the occupant and subsequent destruction of the building may have prevented them from taking place there (although note the animal bones in the circular pits: Popham 1983: 15). However, the intentions of what the host hoped to gain from the feasts would remain the same whether they were planned or had actually taken place several times before he died.

then this would reflect the leader's influence over religion as seen elsewhere. The sheer monumentality of the Toumba building is what differentiates it from the other leader's dwellings – its size, elaborated plan and, to judge from the finds, the wealth of its owner. This would have been reflected in activities occurring within the building; any feasting would have been larger in scale and have placed greater emphasis on the leader's status. Much has been made of this status, at present unique amongst EIA data, from a real-life equivalent of a Homeric *basileus* (Dickinson 2006a: 110), someone regarded as a hero or with special divine access (Mazarakis Ainian 1985: 43; I. Morris 2000: 231-232), to a man who had control over both space through trade and time through heirlooms (I. Morris 2000: 228). All of these explanations could have had elements of actuality. Set against the context of EIA feasting that I have described, it is probable that the leader of Lefkandi did not have to mobilise commensality in quite the same way as leaders of other settlements. It seems highly unlikely that he had to manoeuvre commensal events to gain or maintain authority, or to keep the community content so that he could avoid usurpation. Indeed, the rich burial also granted to the woman, presumably his wife or consort, suggests that their wealth and position were ascribed (Crielaard 2006: 288), and therefore the 'Big-Man' model of hosting feasts in order to form alliances and to keep supporters satisfied is not applicable. Certainly the man demonstrated his authority through his considerable economic superiority, his sociopolitical control and possibly his religious dominance, but he was expressing what was already secure and perhaps constructing for himself a mythologised image that he wanted his people to remember him by.

The final example that I consider is Megaron B at Thermon, which also extends the image of sociopolitical feasting practices during the EIA. The stratigraphy in this area has been notoriously complex and difficult to read, but I accept the new conclusions reached by Papapostolos' (1992; 1993; 1994; 1995) recent re-excavations (summarised by Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 125-135). This places the building's lifespan from probably LHIIIC to the later 9<sup>th</sup> century (MGI), co-existent for a brief time with the much older Megaron A nearby. Unlike the other buildings examined, Megaron B was rectangular and was larger than all except the unique Toumba building (156.2m<sup>2</sup>: Papapostolos 1992: 48; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 271). It replaced Megaron A as a leader's dwelling and perhaps also gathering-hall for the community, and the earlier building was turned into a heroön (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 133). Before Megaron B's construction, a paved area had been laid out which seems to have served as a cult locality with an altar and sacrificial *bothros* (Papapostolos 1993: 49-51). The building overlay part of this pavement, which would have instantly endowed it with sacral overtones and may have indicated the occupant's religious control. The presence of ashes and animal bones imply that sacrificial feasting continued on the part of the pavement that was still outside and also within the front room of the building (Rhomaïos 1915: 247; Drerup 1969: 16; Papapostolos 1994: 44-45). After Megaron B fell into disuse, sacrifices continued over its location and a black layer of *post-*

*festum* deposits built up over the LG-EA period; therefore it is uncertain how much of a domestic role the building played in comparison to its ritual functions.

However, the notion persists that Megaron B served, at least temporarily, as a leader's dwelling, which makes sense in the light of its apparent replacement of Megaron A when that building was converted to purely cultic/funerary purposes, and in comparison with the examples discussed throughout this section (cf. Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 133; I. Morris 2000: 228). Yet, assuming that leaders of Thermon did dwell in Megaron B for part of its long use-life, the character of the building and its associated activities differ from all the other sites examined. This may be partly due to regional differences, as Aetolia is the most northerly of all the areas discussed and was by no means progressive during the EIA. However, it also broadens the scenario of feasting in leader's dwellings during this period by revealing a much stronger religious emphasis than even seen in Nichoria Unit IV-1. If someone dwelt in Megaron B and thus orchestrated the sacrificial feasting occurring in and around it, he would have had strong religious control over the rest of his community, possibly fulfilling a priest-like role, and this may have been from where he derived his sociopolitical position. Religious and sociopolitical superiority are clearly blended in the activities occurring in this building, again attesting that EIA society should not always be seen as unstable and dependent upon achievement. The sanctity of the location, as proved by its exceptionally long use-life, suggests that control of it was not fragile and depended far more upon religious knowledge and access to the gods than upon sociopolitical manoeuvring.

In conclusion, while the Lefkandi Toumba building and Thermon Megaron B expand the range of scenarios occurring in EIA sociopolitical feasting, by demonstrating cases where a leader held exceptionally powerful authority or relied upon an unusual amount of religious control, they do not contradict the overall image constructed throughout this section of the all-encompassing feast, blending sociopolitical, religious and economic aspects in one event. Indeed Megaron B serves to highlight how sociopolitical authority could operate in tandem with religious power, expressed tangibly in the commensal activities held concurrently in the building and on a venerated location. The position of leaders during the EIA did not rely on just one source of authority and this is reflected in the multi-faceted feasts they hosted, as the events mingled sacrificial rituals with drinking, dining and gaming. Moreover, the leaders did not have just one motivation in hosting the feasts, but demonstrated their attained authority, tried to gain or maintain it, and aimed to keep the community cohesive and favourable to them. Boundaries between sociopolitical and religious/sanctuary feasting were blurred in these buildings, and these all-encompassing feasts in one location helped to stabilise society in a fragmented era.

### 3. *The Elite Feast – The Ideology of Commensality in the EIA*

It has been suggested several times already in this chapter that the practice of feasting was, although not a preserve of the elite, something that symbolised their lifestyle. The kraters stored in the LHIIIC megaron at Midea or the monumental example that accompanied the burials in the Lefkandi Toumba building revealed an association between elite localities and the practice of commensality. In this section, I examine the complex web of interconnections between elite status, feasting activities and the equipment that symbolised these practices, by discussing three specific facets: the rise of pictorial scenes of aristocratic activities on kraters, the interring of precious metal vessels with the body, and the use of spits as prestige grave-goods. Hence this section acts as a bridge between the sociopolitical and funerary arenas, drawing together a number of aspects that have appeared in the previous two sections in order to synthesise one particular but highly important attitude towards feasting throughout the whole EIA.

The first aspect exemplifying this ideology of feasting is the increase of pictorial pottery in LHIIIC. Figured scenes on vessels did not just survive the palaces' collapse, but actually grew in popularity, albeit with some slight alterations in subject matter as befitted the new *milieu*.<sup>30</sup> With the disappearance of higher art forms in the post-palatial world, pictorial pottery became one of the most important media through which status could be expressed and artists could experiment. Kraters were the most popular vessel on which to paint such scenes, partly because they present a large, relatively flat ground for the image; however, the appearance of pictorial scenes in smaller numbers on other drinking vessel forms suggests that there was an association between drinking rituals and the images (Steel 1999: 805; Thomatos 2006: 141-142). This would have operated in two interrelated directions. Firstly, when used during drinking rituals, the vessels would have been seen by various groups and displayed to those partaking in the feast the owner's wealth to commission/purchase such objects.<sup>31</sup> In this context, it may be the case that they acted as successors to palatial wall-paintings, as displays of wealth but also as aids for oral tales/epics during feasts, based around the images portrayed in the scenes.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, when seen not in use the vessels' forms and pictures would refer to the owner's ability to host feasts and participate in an elite lifestyle. Such complexity of associations meant that pictorial kraters held great symbolic significance as they metonymically represented the owner's wealth, capacity to feast (and hence command of resources and/or people), and ability to participate in the activities portrayed on the vessels.

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<sup>30</sup> Vermeule and Karageorghis (1982) catalogue 11 pictorial pottery examples from LHIIIA1, 34 from LHIIIA2, 123 from LHIIIB, 117 from LHIIIB/C, and 150 from LHIIIC.

<sup>31</sup> The fact that some pictorial vessels bear evidence of having been repaired with lead clamps evidences their value (Steel 1999: 805).

<sup>32</sup> For wall-paintings as inspirations or aids to oral epic, see Davis & Bennet 1999; Bennet 2007.

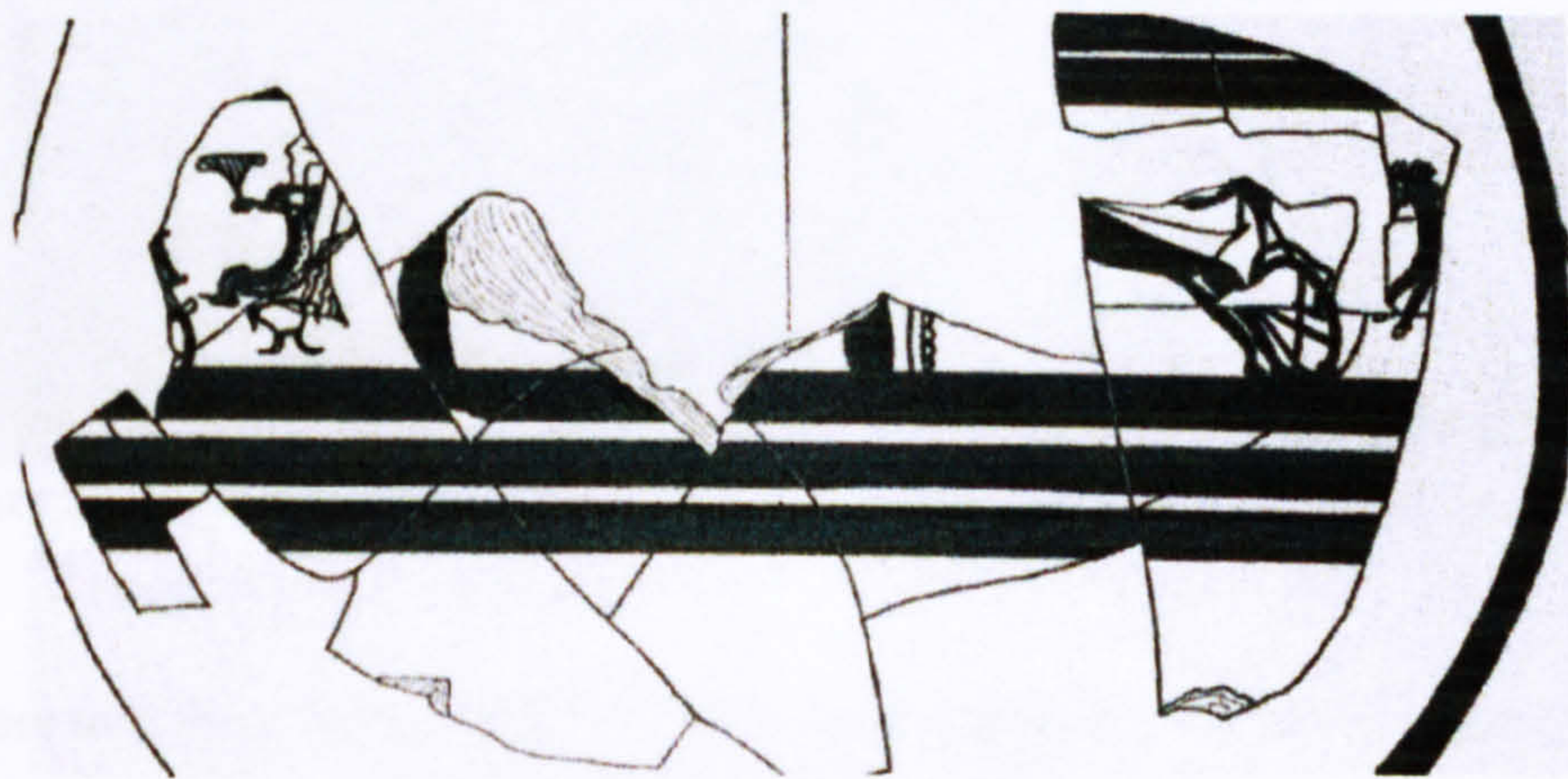
What did these scenes portray? The principal themes current during LHIIC were chariots and soldiers, warriors, soldiers with horses, battle scenes and hunting scenes, alongside a few minor categories such as ships (Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982). New emphases in this era compared to the palatial period included an increase in chariot scenes, an entirely new interest in images of foot soldiers/battle scenes and hunting scenes, and a complete disappearance of palatially influenced iconography such as bull-jumping or boxing (cf. **Table 5.2**; Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982; Rutter 1992: 63; Thomatos 2006: 141). This pattern is totally consistent with the post-palatial environs – those activities that were closely associated with the palatial lifestyle were abandoned, while those that were more timeless emblems of elite occupations were retained/redeveloped and emphasised. It was discussed in 3.2 how status in the Early Mycenaean period was expressed through an elite “package” of references to feasting, warfare and/or hunting, long-distance travel/trade, and ostentatious wealth. In many ways, the EIA had more in common with the smaller-scale, fragmented Early Mycenaean society than with the palatial world that had immediately preceded it, and this “package” appears to have been of value to the EIA elite also in order to represent their social position. Therefore, the images that were most popular were associated with facets of this elite self-fashioning, including warrior processions, hunting scenes and maritime images. For example, the series of kraters portraying sea battles from Kynos, East Lokris (Dakoronia 2006b) blend two of these key symbolic activities, militarism and sea travel, in one image on a vessel used in the third major elite pastime, feasting. One may wonder why feasting itself was very rarely portrayed on pictorial vessels, and this may simply be because it was already referenced through the form of the vessel itself. If the krater (*vel sim.*) was present during drinking rituals, the feasting aspect of elite behaviour was thus being performed and tangibly referenced in the vessel itself; whereas the images on the vessel expanded the concept of the elite self through depictions of other activities that they were supposed to engage in, hence creating a rounded, multi-dimensional persona.

	<b>Chariot scenes</b>	<b>Foot soldiers/battle scenes</b>	<b>Hunting scenes</b>
<b>LHIIB</b>	3.3%	Almost non-existent	Almost non-existent
<b>LHIIB/C</b>	16.2%	11.1%	Almost non-existent
<b>LHIIC</b>	26.3%	11.8%	7.9%

**Table 5.2: Percentages of pictorial vessels showing elite scenes<sup>33</sup>**

<sup>33</sup> All percentages taken from figures listed in Vermeule & Karageorghis (1982). I have not included stags on their own under hunting scenes; as animals they are present in LHIIB pictorial pottery, but scenes of them being hunted do not appear until LHIIC. I have also excluded examples from the islands and Cyprus.

Although feasting was very rarely portrayed, it was not completely absent as a subject. On fragments of a LHIIIC bowl from Tiryns, the main scene is of chariots speeding, perhaps in a race, but in the corner is a seated figure holding a kylix-type cup in a toasting gesture (Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982: 126, XI.19; **Figure 5.12**). Here a drinking ritual is connected with chariots, a symbol of wealth and authority, and the fact that they are racing may refer to funerary games, which only the elite would have participated in or had at their funeral. In LGI, when pictorial scenes reappeared on vases, preparations for a funerary feast are portrayed on an Attic krater (New York 14.130.15: Boardman 1966; **Figure 5.13**). Remarkably, the overall symbolism of the elite “package” does not appear to have significantly altered over the three centuries in which pictorial painting was almost totally absent. Those carrying the supplies for the feast are portrayed as warriors, thus linking martial activity and commensality, and on the reverse of the vessel warriors surround a tripod-cauldron, perhaps to portray the type of activities that the deceased had performed in order to display his status, or perhaps to emphasise again the association between those of warrior status and feasting events.



**Figure 5.12: LHIIIC bowl from Tiryns portraying a drinking ritual (Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982: fig. XI.19.1)**

While kraters and other drinking vessels with pictorial scenes presented a message of elite status to those who participated in commensality around these vessels, this could differ depending on the guests present. If they were of similar status to the host himself, then their membership in this elite group would be emphasised and cohesiveness would be produced; if however they were of lower status (as may have been the case for guests in some of the leader’s dwellings discussed), then the pictorial vessels would represent their host’s social superiority over them. It seems to have been the case that, over time, the pictorial images were no longer what counted and the form of a krater itself was sufficient to allude to feasting and elite status. This may have resulted from the decline of pictorial painting on vessels in general after LHIIIC, or it may have simply been a symbolic reduction as people became familiar with the concept of using feasting vessels to display status. The krater placed in the Lefkandi Toumba building was discussed in 5.2; this was a uniquely monumental example but the message was straightforward and



undoubtedly familiar to achieve its aim – its owner had been of sufficient status to host feasts in that building and should be recognised as belonging to the elite (Crielaard 2006: 287). Its orientalisising decoration (tree of life) may reference the owner’s ability to travel to the East and possibly to trade there (cf. I. Morris 2000: 228). However, despite the trees, the krater is non-figurative and foreshadows the later EIA practice of using vessels as a *sema* or grave-marker.



**Figure 5.13: LGI bowl from Athens showing preparations for a funerary feast (Boardman 1966: plate IIb)**

Such markers may have been placed over graves at Lefkandi from LPG, although the evidence is uncertain (Popham *et al.* 1990: 29); definitely by the Geometric period the practice had become more common and there are multiple examples from the Kerameikos in Athens. Coldstream (1977: 33, 56, 61, 81) lists several of these, including graves 1 and 2<sup>34</sup> in EG, graves 42 and 43 in MGI and five graves from MGII. Interestingly, all these examples are male graves and this may be significant if feasting was viewed as a performative expression of elite identity. I do not think that this implies women’s non-participation at feasts (*contra* Fagerström 1988b: 42), but rather that feasting as a way of displaying one’s elite status as part of the “package” was a method to accrue sociopolitical power and thus more appropriate to the male sphere. As a coda to this issue, the later Geometric practice of using amphorae instead of kraters as grave-markers may be an even further reduction of this symbolism. With the rise of the *polis* and 8<sup>th</sup>-century sociopolitical changes, the former complex web of feasting-martiality-voyaging-elite-vessels may have been weakened, and therefore any large vessel was used as a *sema* because it

<sup>34</sup> The one on grave 2 was too large to have been used in domestic contexts and so does indeed seem to have acted purely as a status symbol (Coldstream 1977: 33).

was believed to be an accepted method of displaying high social status without comprehension of the original set of meanings that a pictorial krater had held.

The symbolic associations of vessels could also be demonstrated through the practice of interring precious metal versions in tombs. This has already been discussed in relation to the Early Mycenaean era (cf. 3.2), where large metal feasting vessels were buried with the deceased in order to display their high social status and reference their ability to host feasts during their lifetime. The implications and ways of performing this deposition changed little in the EIA, with the principal difference being that it was less common in the later period, possibly because of less surplus wealth available for obtaining the metal/vessels, or because other locales were found for expressing status, such as vessel dedications in sanctuaries.<sup>35</sup> However, in general the same basic process was operative and the deposition of metal vessels alongside an individual demonstrated their capacity to feast and allegiance to an upper social tier. Dakoronia's (2006a) study of a selection of burials in two plots at Atalante in East Lokris (late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, MPG-EG) exemplifies this association between the elite and metal vessels on a small, easily visible scale. A bronze bowl was found in three out of the 43 graves excavated. Two of these, Karagiorgos II and III, were amongst the most well-furnished burials of the cemetery, and the bowl accompanied an impressive selection of weapons, ceramic vessels and jewellery (Dakoronia 2006a: 498). Significantly, the man in Karagiorgos II was also buried with an object that has been interpreted as a sceptre (Dakoronia 2006a: 498), so we might surmise that not only was he a member of the elite but was deemed fit to possess a symbolic reference to ruling. The third bronze bowl accompanied a woman who had clearly been very wealthy, to judge by the jewellery that accompanied her (Dakoronia 2006a: 503). The fact that only one out of these three graves was that of a man may suggest that the original associations of metal vessels and elite feasting had been reduced to a metonymic symbolism, where the vessel signified ascribed status without necessarily referring to the accruing of sociopolitical authority that it had initially demonstrated.

The restriction of metal vessels to a very small proportion of the cemetery population can be seen at other sites also. In the LHIIC cemetery at Perati, only two graves out of 279 yielded fragments of metal vessels (a bronze lekane from tomb 1 and a bronze cup from tomb 104: Iakovides 1980: 99). Unfortunately, given the lack of ostentatious burials at this site, it is impossible to make any meaningful statistical conclusions – neither of the graves are the largest tombs in the cemetery, nor are the occupants buried with the greatest quantities of ceramic vessels, although equally both graves are far from being amongst the poorest (cf. Thomatos

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<sup>35</sup> The dedication of large metal vessels, especially tripod-cauldrons, in sanctuaries became very popular in the later EIA, evidenced at sites such as Olympia and Perachora (Snodgrass 1971: 281-283; Morgan 1990: 44-45; 2002: 50).

2006: 282-291). The best conclusion that can be drawn is that metal vessels were reserved for a very select group of people who were presumably felt to have merited that honour. Amongst the PG tombs in the Toumba cemetery, Lefkandi, metal vessels are slightly more prevalent, but the same general pattern can be seen of restriction to a small number of graves only – 11 out of 83 (Popham & Lemos 1996). Overall the cemetery is richer than Perati and this, combined with its later date (not immediately after the collapse of the palaces), may account for the higher percentage. Again however, the principal conclusion to be drawn is that metal vessels were not believed to be appropriate for everyone. Several of the examples were imports from the Near East, including a bronze spouted jug in T.47, a bronze bowl in T.55 that may have come from Syria, and a gilt bronze bowl in T.70 (Popham *et al.* 1989: 118-119; I. Morris 2000: 239). They would have belonged to (or been heirlooms from) someone who was able to participate in long-distance trade, due to their wealth and/or high social position, hence bringing into operation another element of elite symbolism, that of voyaging. Ian Morris (2000: 235) has expanded this concept to suggest that orientalism was a method of defining elite status as one demonstrated one's ability to contact worlds that ordinary people could not reach. This is a highly persuasive argument and can be seen to be exemplified in vessels such as these from the Toumba cemetery, as the elite symbols of commensality, wealth, and access to other lands coalesced in one object that accompanied the owner through eternity and could be viewed by those attending the funeral as an emblem that defined the deceased's actual or projected social status.

In a couple of examples from Lefkandi, the cremated remains of the body were actually placed inside a metal vessel: the leader in the Toumba building, whose ashes were in a bronze amphora (covered by a bronze bowl), and the occupant of the SPGII grave T.79B who was placed in a bronze cauldron. Whilst it may be practical to place ashes in a vessel if they are to be buried rather than scattered, it creates an unquestionably intimate association between the deceased as an individual and an emblem of feasting. Moreover, in the case of T.79B, a cauldron is not the most obvious vessel in which to place ashes, given its open form, and this may have been intended to offer a message to the funeral attendees about the social status and commensal activities of the deceased.<sup>36</sup> The burial in the Toumba building was discussed in 5.2; that in T.79B was accompanied by weapons and various orientalia, including an antique Syrian seal almost a millennium old (I. Morris 2000: 249-250; Antonaccio 2006: 392). Here we see the complete “package” of elite symbolism around one burial, with the conspicuous wealth of the grave-goods, the reference to feasting in the cauldron (a form that could only have been employed in commensal contexts), the martiality of the weapons, and the control over space and

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<sup>36</sup> The accompanying burial, T.79A, in the grave also had a monumental krater in the shaft, which may have acted like the example in the Toumba building nearby to convey elite symbolism and references to feasting activities.

time through the incorporation of Eastern and antique objects.<sup>37</sup> Feasting seems to have been as essential a component of this symbolism as orientalisering, archaising and martial ideologies were, and this suggests that, although in reality it may have been performed by a wide spectrum of the population, the ideal was maintained that it was an activity belonging to the elite alone.

The final aspect that I discuss here to highlight the elite ideology of feasting is the burial of iron spits in well-appointed graves. This was a practice that developed in mainland Greece from the later 10<sup>th</sup> century and, until at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century, spits held a prestigious position of high value due to their placement in low quantities in the most elite burials only (A. Foley 1988: 95; Haarer 2001: 262-263). There has been much scholarly discussion regarding the theory that they grew to represent a form of proto-currency (cf. Courbin 1983), although Haarer (2001: 257) indicates its flaws, particularly the fact that the set from the Argive Heraion around which the proposition was originally based was fragmentary and so exact measurements could not actually be obtained. Along with Haarer, I prefer to see them as valuable objects both symbolically and literally, which were deposited as grave-goods as a sign of honour and representation of the individual's high social status.

Spits in graves are almost always accompanied by a wealth of other grave-goods, particularly other status symbols, and thus form part of an elite assemblage. There especially seems to be an association between spits and warrior burials, where they are interred alongside weapons and armour (Dickinson 2006a: 158, 194). While highly hypothetical, it is possible that this is related to the Homeric image of feasting, where the warriors' principal method of cooking was spit-roasting meat, and thus perhaps there was an association between elite military activity and this cooking procedure (cf. 6.3). If this connection is accepted, it may then be the case that the deposition of spits highlighted the deceased not simply as of elite status, but as part of a particular elite subgroup, who partook in warfare or who were renowned for their martial skills. As discussed in relation to the palace at Pylos in 4.2 and Appendix III, there is evidence for spit-roasting at that site and therefore it cannot be regarded as a new EIA technique of cooking.<sup>38</sup> However, it may be possible that a new ideology formed around this cooking method which saw it as somehow appropriate for or connected with elite warriors, fostered by the development of the undeniably elitist Homeric epics (or other oral poetry of the period) and the association that they portrayed between the heroes and spit-roasting.<sup>39</sup> If those buried with spits were thus assimilated with the image of heroic figures, then such grave-goods would be conspicuously competitive as the status of an epic hero was no small claim to make (de

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<sup>37</sup> Antique heirlooms, followed by imports, were two particularly prestigious forms of grave-goods in the Toumba cemetery (Antonaccio 1995b: 17-18). The pedigree of antiques allowed contact with the past and ancestors; the travel-biography of imports offered connections with the exotic world of the eastern Mediterranean.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. S. Sherratt 2004: 192 for the debate surrounding the adoption of spit-roasting as a cooking method.

<sup>39</sup> For Homeric poetry as elitist, cf. I. Morris 2000: 171-176; also 6.3.

Polignac 1995[1984]: 129-130). Without more evidence, it is impossible to push this proposition further; however, the deposition of iron spits in graves in the EIA is a new phenomenon and thus a new emphasis appears to have developed which did not surround spit-roasting in the LBA (cf. S. Sherratt 2004: 193). Given the literary evidence, it is indeed tempting to connect this emphasis with the concept of spits marking out those who were regarded as warrior elite. At the very least, one can view the incorporation of spits in notably rich burials as a reflection of the importance of commensality in constructing networks of power (de Polignac 1995[1984]: 133).

Examples are not numerous, which may be due to the fact that they accompanied only a small subgroup of the elite, to the necessary wealth required to deposit them (if iron was still a valuable metal during the EIA: Haarer 2001: 263), or to the fact that their deposition was an innovation in comparison to the burial of a metal vessel, which had been practised for centuries. Six were found in the Geometric grave 1 at Argos (Courbin 1974: 11, 13; Coldstream 1977: 146, 148), another six in tomb 17 at the same site alongside other warrior elite emblems, including a helmet, two spears and a krater (Courbin 1983: 155), and an unspecified number in P.13 in the Toumba cemetery, Lefkandi (Antonaccio 1995b: 15). The highest quantity of spits in an EIA grave is 12, all in the MG-LG periods when they had begun to be devalued (Haarer 2001: 263), and these low numbers imply that they were highly valuable objects indeed. The best example, also in Argos, is in grave 45 or the so-called 'Panoply tomb', where the occupant was buried with a full set of bronze armour and gold rings, alongside a pair of iron axes, 12 iron spits and a pair of iron firedogs (Courbin 1957; Coldstream 1977: 146; Haarer 2001: 266-267). The exceptionally rare find of the firedogs (the only set found in a burial on mainland Greece) emphasises that the spits were not merely impressively large quantities of iron but were practical items that were intended to be used in feasting contexts.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, they were shaped into the form of warships, thus again blending together the symbolic activities of feasting, warfare and travel into one object. It is unlikely that this choice of shape was coincidental and the firedogs and spits therefore express a message of elite status through the explicit references to heroising activities embedded in them (Courbin 1957: 384).

Throughout all three classes of objects examined in this section – pictorial vessels, metal vessels and iron spits – a complex and multi-dimensional ideology has emerged. All three types of objects were part of the paraphernalia of feasting activities and could well have been used before their deposition. However, they were also symbolic of elite status and appeared in conjunction with other indicators of high social position, namely warfare, trade/travel and

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<sup>40</sup> The firedogs showed signs of having actually been used in a fire (Courbin 1957: 378-379; 1974: 136). Anne Foley (1988: 95) suggests that the firedogs and spits could have been used in the funerary feast itself, though I suspect this is a little over-optimistic as there is no other evidence for such activities and it would be exceptional in terms of funerary feasts of the period.

wealth, sometimes with all aspects referenced on a single object. Indeed, the popularity of using an item of feasting equipment to signify one's social position is demonstrated through the Geometric practice of dedicating iron spits and large metal vessels (in particular tripod-cauldrons) in sanctuaries, which fostered an atmosphere of elite competition. These commensal objects became an accepted method of demonstrating one's wealth and indeed their dedication was an activity that only the elite would have been able to perform. The conclusion can be drawn that, although the elite were undoubtedly not the only people who practised feasting, an ideology was constructed that presented it as an elite activity. This is supported by the evidence from 5.2, demonstrating that feasting occurred in the houses of the leaders of settlements, so that those who attended must have made a mental connection between commensality and their local elite, a connection that the elite saw as advantageous to propagate in other spheres.

#### *4. The Continuing Feast – Funerary Commensality during the EIA*

This chapter has thus far concentrated upon the sociopolitical sphere of feasting because of its ability to reveal the alterations in social structures that occurred throughout the whole EIA. I now turn to funerary feasting in order to broaden our perspective on commensality during this period. Although there are sufficient data to discuss this practice in some detail, it must be admitted that there is a strong bias in the evidence towards Attica and Euboia, where some of the most thorough and comprehensive excavations have occurred, and thus it is perhaps difficult to generalise the situation on the whole Greek mainland from the evidence presented here. When coupled with the obvious regionalism of the EIA, not just in burial practices but in other spheres such as crafts, and the differences exhibited diachronically during this 500-year period, the task of summarising an important aspect of funerary behaviour in one section alone seems daunting. Therefore, I have chosen to emphasise the continuities that existed above the evident chronological and regional differences. I believe it is significant that – where comprehensive cemetery data exist – a funerary feast was regarded as an important part of the burial process by people all over the Greek mainland throughout the whole EIA.

Therefore, despite differences in styles and popularity, the act of dining during the process of interring a body or its ashes represents a highly significant continuum that runs throughout Greek culture from the first Mycenaeans at the end of MHIII to the Hellenistic Greeks and beyond. Throughout such an extensive period, there were obviously alterations in how the feast was held – where people dined, at what stage of the funeral they feasted, how they commemorated the event afterwards, whether they incorporated culturally specific rites – but it is nevertheless remarkable how the practice was retained despite major changes in sociopolitical structure and *modi vivendi*. In the EIA, this issue becomes especially significant as burial rites altered radically several times between inhumation and cremation and between multiple and single interments. The major surveys of this period have dealt with these changes in detail (e.g.

Snodgrass 1971; Dickinson 2006a), trying to trace patterns in practices and in particular to suggest reasons for the adoption of cremation after the palaces' collapse. The apparently sudden rejection of former practices and adoption of new rites is certainly a remarkable phenomenon, and one for which a wholly satisfactory explanation is still sought; however, equally notable is the fact that throughout these changes at least one core tenet is maintained – using food and drink to commemorate the deceased's passing. Despite the transformations in sociopolitical *milieu* that undoubtedly were a major catalyst in the changes in burial rite, a central undercurrent of belief was retained and altered surprisingly little. The tenacity of funerary feasting over more than a millennium and a half may suggest that, as well as providing an opportunity for the display of social messages, it appealed to something more fundamental in its practitioners, for example a deep-rooted respect of ritual behaviour or a recognition that it served as a cultural identifier.

Unlike in 5.1-2, I do not consider each site individually and in detail, but rather employ the data variously to support the issues that are discussed. The cemeteries that have provided the best evidence (and most numerous reports) are the Kerameikos and the Agora in Athens. These are set against data from Perati, also in Attica, and Lefkandi, plus other relevant individual examples from across the Greek mainland. In the Early Mycenaean period, the fluidity and variety of funerary feasts were stressed, echoing and contributing to the mobile social situation of the era, whereas during the palatial period funerary dining became a sphere in which the sociopolitical leaders (in particular the palaces) could either demonstrate their power or influence others' behaviour. In the EIA it is harder to see such a demonstrable pattern, because of the period's length, regionalism and the various stages that it went through, from survivor-type isolation, to quiet stability, to definite renaissance. Rather than being directly mobilised to express visible social messages, funerary rites served more as a way of responding to contemporary sociopolitical situations – or, more explicitly, were a way of maintaining stability in the face of wide-reaching changes.<sup>41</sup>

This does not however mean that EIA funerary feasts were unchanging fossils inherited from a Mycenaean past. For a start, they underwent noticeable modifications during LHIIC, particularly in the abandonment of the kylix-based rituals that had so characterised palatial period funerary feasts. The smashing of drinking vessels subsequent to the final feast and blocking of the tomb was no longer practised and, even more significantly, the kylix began to gradually disappear (cf. Appendix V; Cavanagh 1998: 107; Cavanagh & Mee 1998: 94, 97,

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<sup>41</sup> I am of course talking here of the average funerary rites of most EIA people, as examples such as the burials in the Lefkandi Toumba building show how the funeral process could be effectively mobilised to express high social status.

115; Thomatos 2006: 168).<sup>42</sup> Whereas in the very recent past kylikes had been an inseparable accompaniment to funerary rites, even the poorer ones, in the whole LHIIC cemetery of Perati there were only four kylikes found, less than 1% of the excavated assemblage (Iakovides 1980: 26). Ordinary cups had taken their place. It was argued in 4.6 that the kylix was a form associated with palatial activities (cf. Galaty 1999b: 31) and therefore the way it was used and/or the very fact of its use may have represented a form of palatial influence, although whether emulation or coercion is unclear. Its relatively abrupt disuse in funerary contexts after the collapse of the palaces not only supports this theory but also reveals that there was a deliberate alteration of rites in the post-palatial world, whether a determined rejection of palatial customs or simply a belief that palatial ways were no longer relevant (cf. Cavanagh 1998: 111). As discussed in 5.1, LHIIC cannot be regarded as an impoverished, bleak period, but a time during which various settlements flourished again, such as Tiryns, as new leaders seized the opportunities presented to them. The disappearance of the kylix-based rituals and indeed of the kylix itself was part of this new horizon, where certain palatial institutions and customs were abandoned and new ways of behaving were experimented with.

It is notable therefore that the cemetery of Perati lacks almost entirely any evidence for funerary feasting, let alone the specific rituals performed in the palatial period. Sadly, as our most completely excavated and published LHIIC cemetery, it is impossible to know whether this represents a unique example or a broader phenomenon. The latter is at least a possibility, given the fact that the Kerameikos in its very earliest periods also yields little evidence of funerary feasting. Iakovides (1980: 19) states: 'There is no indication of funeral toasts drunk, or meals celebrated afterwards' at Perati. This overlooks the likelihood of archaeologically invisible drinking rituals, possibly attested by the fairly high proportion of liquid receptacles and cups excavated from the graves themselves,<sup>43</sup> and the fact that food was certainly left as offerings (there are traces of honey in a jug and bird bones in a lekane); however, there is a lack of explicit feasting or even sacrificial debris, and there seemed to be much greater concern with ensuring the deceased's comfort than involving them in farewell rites.<sup>44</sup> Against this evidence, the LHIIC gr. 5 from Asine (Necropolis I) displays signs of funerary feasting that recall palatial customs. In the *dromos* near the *stomion*, there was a niche containing what appears to be the debris of ritual consumption (vessels, burnt animal bones and an animal figurine), while several other vessels lay in front of the tomb itself (Thomatos 2006: 156). Both the components of the assemblage and the method of deposition bear clear resemblance to palatial practices. As was

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<sup>42</sup> It must be noted that the kylix survived to some extent for ritual use in western Greece, in areas such as Messenia and Elis, another example of the regionalism of the EIA (Eder 2006: 566-567).

<sup>43</sup> Containers of liquids formed 19.1% of the pottery assemblage and drinking vessels 15.3% (Iakovides 1980: 25). These form the second and third largest functional groups respectively, after perfume containers.

<sup>44</sup> Cavanagh and Mee (1998: 94) mention the burnt bones of ovicaprids in grs. 36 and 38 which could derive from feasting rituals; however this is unreferenced and I have been unable to follow it up.



described in 5.1 in relation to sociopolitical structures and feasting practices, there appears to have been a contest between old and new forms of behaviour, with some people unwilling to abandon the former ways of commemorating their deceased, while others (possibly a whole community at Perati) ready to adopt entirely new rites.<sup>45</sup>

The LHIIC evidence may seem to contradict my introductory proposal that funerary feasting was a developing continuum from the Mycenaean eras to beyond the EIA. However, after the temporary flourishing of LHIIC Middle, the mainland moved into a period of insularity and conservatism, as sociopolitical structures became smaller-scale, trade routes diminished and developments in craftsmanship stagnated. It is from this period onwards that our clearest evidence for funerary feasting exists, and this may suggest that after the decline of the LHIIC attempt at renaissance there was a wish to re-employ the old rituals and adapt them to the new situation. This adaptation is best seen in the way in which the funeral meal was incorporated into the novel rite of cremation. The general process may have been as follows: the body was cremated on a pyre, during which the guests dined and/or performed various valedictory rituals; the remains of their feast or other rites, plus any additional offerings, were then added to the pyre and burnt alongside the ashes of the deceased; the human remains were placed inside an urn which was interred; the remains of the pyre and the debris of the offerings on it were then swept into the grave, usually on the upper part but sometimes into the urn itself; finally, the grave was closed and a marker was often placed above it. Clear similarities can be seen with earlier rituals, and the major changes are due to the exigencies of cremation.

The overall sequence can be supported by Breitingner's (1939: 260) observation that the animal bones in the Kerameikos cremations were often of a different colour from the human bones – blue-black as opposed to bright white – indicating that they had been burnt for a shorter period of time. Of course, this does not prove that the meat off the bones was eaten prior to their final burning, but it does suggest that the animals were used for some other purpose during the rites before being cremated. Moreover, in the PG set of graves he studied, almost without exception all the animal bones burnt and deposited were ribs and vertebrae (Breitingner 1939: 260), thus raising the possibility that only selected anatomical parts were burnt. It is not clear whether they were the parts not eaten by the guests or whether they were leftovers, although the fact that they do not comprise all the primary meat-bearing joints may suggest the former. If so, they may have represented the deceased's share of the feast, and the "missing parts" could have been what constituted the funerary meal. Certainly the burning of a specific portion for the deceased

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<sup>45</sup> There is no evidence that this was typical for burial rites in Attica prior to LHIIC, and therefore we may presume that there was a genuine shift in ritual behaviour. Cavanagh and Mee (1998: 115) also refer to a 'chronological discontinuity' in rites at Perati.

accords with the concurrent practice of making other offerings to him on the pyre, such as vessels and weapons.

The graves from the Kerameikos and the Agora support this sequence of events very well and it appears to have been a fairly widespread, if not universal, rite. At the transitional period between Submycenaean and EPG, several graves from the Kerameikos have a burnt layer that appears to be the remains of a pyre, either on the grave floor, packed in around the urn, or sprinkled over the top of the urn (grs. 25, 37, 41, 44). As well as general burnt matter and earth, they contained small splinters of bone and various burnt sherds (Kübler 1943: 33, 38, 42-43; Styrenius 1967: 84). While minor details of where exactly the debris was placed differed, the essential practice of packing the grave with the remains of the cremation rites appears to be the same in each case. The scope of practices widened in the PG period, perhaps simply because our dataset also increases, although again a basic continuum runs through all the examples excavated. In the Kerameikos, the pyre debris could be placed actually inside the urn along with the human remains and this seems to have become common practice for cremation burials (*inter alia* grs. 4, 7, 16, 20; Kraiker & Kübler 1939: 258-260; Styrenius 1967: 84, 110; Andronikos 1968: 88-89). When the burials were inhumations, the remains of sacrificial/feasting practices (i.e. animal bones) were found mingled with the human bones (Kübler 1954: 10, 24; Andronikos 1968: 89). In the PG Agora, there appears to have been a little more diversity, with animal bones and pyre debris at the bottom of the grave (gr. X), on the surface of the fill (gr. XLIII), or in the case of an inhumation placed in a niche above the bodies (gr. IX; Styrenius 1967: 115; Andronikos 1968: 89). In both cemeteries however, despite the depositional differences, the essential components remained the same: animals were killed, perhaps eaten, burnt on a pyre and then buried with the human remains, alongside sherds of the vessels used or offered and the remnants of the pyre.

In the Geometric period, the practice appears to have continued without major alteration and with continued popularity in the Kerameikos, as animal and human remains were buried together in a number of graves along with pyre debris (Andronikos 1968: 89). Likewise, in the Agora it continued to be a typical rite, although again there were differences in the exact way in which it was performed. In grs. XVIII and XX, the pyre remains were used to fill up the graves' shafts (Young & Angel 1939: 19; Andronikos 1968: 90), whereas in gr. XII the debris, filled with vessel sherds and animal bones, was simply thrown over the grave and the nearby parapet wall (Young & Angel 1939: 19-20, 55). Most interesting of all is gr. XI where, in addition to the usual heaping up of debris in and over the grave, an amphora containing animal bones and carbonised organic matter (presumably other food remains) was placed inside at the inhumed body's feet (Young & Angel 1939: 19, 44-46; Andronikos 1968: 90; Coldstream 1977: 122). This seems to be a case where the deceased was being given his own share of food,

although whether it was an untouched offering or the remains of what the guests dined on is unclear. Finally, to broaden the perspective, a group of 11 MGII inhumation graves from Corinth near the Sikyonian Gate also had burnt deposits that included animal bones placed above the bodies (Coldstream 1977: 85). While this is only one non-Athenian example, it does indicate that such rituals were practised elsewhere on the Greek mainland.

In discussing these examples, I have avoided an important but potentially unanswerable question – are we dealing with the remains of a feast being ritually interred, or are the majority of these examples merely the result of offering (cremated?) food to the dead? Answers to this problem have swung, pendulum-style, over the last century. The idea of a food offering exhibits a teleological approach, influenced by the phenomenon that began later in LG and flourished in the Archaic period of *Opferrinne*, or offering trenches where ceramics were dedicated and food was placed for the deceased (e.g. Andronikos 1968: 84-85, 90; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 40, 66; Whitley 1994: 217; Deoudi 1999: 42-43; Lemos 2002: 156). On the other hand, the idea of graveside feasting is clearly influenced by Mycenaean practices, where debris such as animal bones has been interpreted thus (e.g. Young & Angel 1939: 19; Kübler 1954: 24; Coldstream 1977: 122; Popham *et al.* 1980: 215; Dickinson 2006a: 189). In a sense, this disagreement highlights the dichotomy in scholarship between those who study the Bronze Age and those whose academic field is historical Greece. While I undoubtedly bring my own prejudices to this question also, the EIA funerary debris is too similar in its composition and method of deposition to that already examined in the Early Mycenaean and palatial periods for me to reject the idea of funerary feasts, without having to reconsider all the earlier data in the light of Archaic practices (which would surely be a methodological error). Before reaching a conclusion on this matter, I examine some further data to broaden out the image of PG-G funerary rituals and to approach the question from a different angle.

Firstly, to play devil's advocate, there appears to be some clear evidence to support the idea of the dead being given offerings of food. In many of the Athenian graves, storage vessels were buried with the dead, stoppered by smaller vessels in a way that suggests their contents, not the receptacles *per se*, were the reason for the gift. Examples of these in the Kerameikos include the PG graves 38, 40, 43 and 44 (Kübler 1943: 38) and the slightly later graves where the storage vessel was covered with a bowl (11, 22, 23, 30, 89), a kantharos (24) or a lid (51, 58, 90: Kübler 1954: 24). The fact that these are storage vessels makes it difficult to argue that they are merely feast leftovers, as otherwise one would have to assume that a number of families made major catering errors. In Argos, to broaden the perspective beyond Attica, an amphora in tomb 6/1 appears to have held cereals (Courbin 1974: 129), a foodstuff that in its natural state would not have been particularly edible, and thus the idea of an offering or afterlife provision seems more probable than feast remains. I therefore cannot deny that offerings of food were being

made at graves, particularly as this practice became such a key ritual of the Archaic period (to the point that installations were made to accommodate it); however, I am not content to accept that this was the only food-related activity occurring during EIA funerals.

At this point, it is worth turning to the evidence from the Lefkandi cemeteries, where it seems that feasting was indeed occurring. As Popham *et al.* (1980: 215) have highlighted, the presence of pottery fragments unconnected with specific tombs or pyres (and therefore not buried with the dead) suggests that commensality was occurring around the graves, particularly as the sherds are often from consumption vessels such as kraters and plates. Moreover, in the Palia Perivolia cemetery, a large quantity of seashells was found in the boundary ditch, potentially all from edible species (115 shells excavated; Popham *et al.* 1980: 215, 229-230). It seems logical to conclude that they were eaten during the course of funerary feasts in the cemetery and then thrown out afterwards, perhaps because it was believed that the dead could receive no benefit from an empty shell. If these were offerings, then they would have been found in the tombs themselves, not on the outskirts of the cemetery. Finally, an area in the Toumba cemetery has been interpreted as a preparation site for funerary rituals – 22.5m<sup>2</sup>, it was bordered by a wall and held cuttings for the feet of a large tripod (Popham *et al.* 1980: 214). While this raises issues of cultic behaviour in cemeteries, a topic reserved for fuller discussion in 5.5, the excavators' assessment of it as a type of "cooking area" for funerary feasts is not unreasonable.<sup>46</sup> Certainly when viewed in conjunction with the other evidence from the Lefkandi cemeteries, it seems likely that commensality was occurring there and was catered for, thus forming an accepted, fundamental part of the funeral process.

To return to the Athenian data, while it may be impossible to prove definitively the presence of feasting as opposed to offerings, there are still suggestions that commensality was a feature of the funerary rituals. As mentioned, the deposits containing animal bones and sherds are very similar in components to those of the Mycenaean eras, even to the extent that the species are practically the same. While it is natural to choose the most common domesticates to slaughter, the edible remains are almost identical to those surveyed from Early Mycenaean graves in 3.1. Ovicaprids predominate clearly in the Kerameikos (Breitinger 1939; Kübler 1943: 4), and other species found in the Athenian cemeteries include pigs, cattle, birds and hares, in addition to seashells (Young & Angel 1939: 19; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 66). The combination of these zooarchaeological remains with the ubiquitous drinking vessels, alongside evidence for fire (thus indicating the probability of cooking), hardly differs from late MHIII onwards. Similarity of archaeological deposit need not indicate similarity of practice, but the possibility must at least be considered. Moreover, animal remains were not the only organic traces to survive. Gr.

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<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the quality of the soil means that bones survive very poorly in the Lefkandi cemeteries (Lemos 2002: 166), so we lack zooarchaeological evidence to confirm this theory.

XXVII in the Agora yielded carbonised figs and grapes (Blegen 1952: 280), and figs were also contained in a burial just to the south-west of the Agora and in D16:2 on the Areopagus (Young 1949: 282; Coldstream 1977: 30, 53). Eggs have been discovered in the Athenian cemeteries as well (Young & Angel 1939: 19). If these were all merely offerings to the dead, then the deceased were certainly dining on a grand scale in the afterlife.

At the risk of making a sophistic argument, I would like to expand on the issue as follows. It has been accepted that the slaughtering of the larger domesticates, such as ovicaprids and pigs, was regarded in the Mycenaean eras as suitable practice *either* for consumption by people *or* as offerings to the gods.<sup>47</sup> One therefore requires, at some point during the EIA, a change in mindset whereby the sacrificing of animals to the contemporary dead became acceptable, a sea-change that is unlikely given the relatively late occurrence of hero cult. It may be pertinent to observe that the first recent dead to be heroised and thus worthy of such honours were said to be Harmodios and Aristogeiton in Athens, at some point shortly after 514 and thus considerably later than the period examined here. Moreover, it is still necessary to explain the offering not only of a slaughtered beast but also of all the other accompaniments of a complete meal, such as fruit, seafood and eggs. From this, it should follow that the dead were regarded as requiring full sustenance in the Underworld, a tenet that cannot be upheld in light of the contemporaneous view of Homer, where all the dead seem to need is to drink the blood of sheep (*Od.*11.23-50).

Moreover, while storage vessels with provisions/offerings in have been mentioned, this does not take into account the consumption vessels that also bear organic traces. Of course, they could have been employed to supply the dead with extra food in the afterlife, but the possibility must be raised that they were used during the funeral and left as a respectful reminder of the event. At Argos, cups in tombs 89, 90 and 163 bore a greenish, spongy material that was derived from organic contents;<sup>48</sup> other vases at the same site had clearly held wine (Courbin 1974: 129). Carbonised organic matter, presumably the remains of food, was found in a number of graves in the Agora, for example in a kantharos in gr. IX and in a skyphos and jug in gr. XXV (Young & Angel 1939: 17, 101). The fact that these examples are consumption vessels, as opposed to storage vessels, increases the probability that they were the remnants of a commensal event as opposed to offerings. Could these be an EIA equivalent, albeit less violent, of the palatial custom of destroying the used vessels after the funerary rites were over, in order to remove all traces of the occasion rather than bringing them back to haunt quotidian life? The concurrent practice of smashing other vessels and burning them on the pyre implies that closure was still

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<sup>47</sup> Evidence for the former can be seen across the range of sociopolitical sites examined in the previous two chapters, plus in the records of the Linear B tablets; evidence for the latter can be seen *inter alia* in the burning of piglets at Ayios Konstantinos in the deity's worship.

<sup>48</sup> Courbin (1974: 129) interpreted this as coming from oil, milk or honey, but no organic residue analysis has been performed to support his conclusions.

sought at the end of a funeral in order that the liminal zone of the cemetery could be left behind. Similarly, the practice of placing carbonised organic matter actually inside the cremation urn with the human remains is unlikely to have been either an offering or provision for the afterlife, but rather a way of closing the rites through ritual clearing away of the remains (e.g. Agora grs. I, IV, VI: Young & Angel 1939: 17, 21, 25). Agora gr. XI contained an amphora that bore the bones of small animals and carbonised matter (Young & Angel 1939: 44-46; Andronikos 1968: 90), which may also have been a form of ritual deposition in order to give the dead his share of the feast and to ensure that all traces were buried with him.

I have not proved decisively that feasting did occur around graves, but I have given a number of reasons to support the occurrence of commensality during the course of funerary rites and to suggest that some of the food debris found in, on and around tombs derived from feasting activities. Cavanagh and Mee (1998: 111) suggest that funerary feasts could sometimes have been held at the home of the deceased and this agrees not only with ethnographic examples (e.g. the Nyakyusa of Tanzania: Huntingdon & Metcalf 1979: 34-42), but more importantly with later Greek practice and the *perideipnon* (Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 146). In the Archaic period and later, the act of feasting to commemorate death became increasingly separate from the graveside rites, where offerings to the deceased in the form of vessels took precedence. Sourvinou-Inwood (1981; 1983) has seen this shift in locale in the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries as an indication of a major change in attitude towards death, from accepting an inescapable and universal phenomenon to fearing the loss of one's individual *persona*. Therefore, the transfer of the funerary feast to the home after the burial rites, rather than being performed around the tomb (and the corpse itself), reveals a distancing of the reality of death from the funeral attendees (Sourvinou-Inwood 1983: 41-42). This model is certainly highly persuasive, given the changes that occurred in burial rites from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards,<sup>49</sup> and from a feasting perspective the modified nature of Archaic funerary commensality is clearly visible. However, it has been criticised by Ian Morris (1989), who disagreed with the concept of a fundamental shift in mindset and rather saw the death rituals as employed to express different social aims in the Archaic period. From a methodological viewpoint, despite the attractiveness of Sourvinou-Inwood's conclusions, I am unhappy with her almost exclusive use of the Homeric epics as evidence for a major change in thought processes in the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Morris' employment of numerous ancient authors alongside archaeological data means that his critique is more strongly supported and plausible. There were indeed significant modifications of the funerary process in the early Archaic period, in the burial rites themselves, in the feast and where it was held, and in the hardening of the boundaries between the living and the dead; none of these factors should be overlooked. However, there was also strong continuity with what preceded,

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<sup>49</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood (1981: 34-35; 1983: 43-45) mentions the decline of intramural burials, the increase in family plots, and the decrease of differentiation in children's burials.

both in terms of mental attitude (cf. I. Morris 1989: 306-313) and in the rituals themselves, which had been changing gradually throughout almost the entire EIA.

Therefore, rather than viewing EIA funerary rites as experiencing an abrupt change at some point from preceding Mycenaean customs and into succeeding Archaic practices, it would make far more sense to see it as a transitional period, where the continuum of funerary feasting was gradually altered over half a millennium until it took a form that was very different from its manifestation during the LBA. To clarify, assuming that we are correct in reading Mycenaean graveside deposits from MHIII to LHIIIB as representative of feasting in and around the tomb, then this custom continued past the collapse of the palaces, with only perhaps a minor interruption in LHIIIC occasioned by the social fluidity of the period (depending on how characteristic the evidence from Perati is). However, burial customs in the Archaic period were dramatically different, although still incorporating recognisable funerary feasting, and therefore the EIA acted as a bridge between the two during which behaviour slowly changed. As I hope to have proved, I believe that funerary feasting was a major part of EIA burial rites and probably did often occur at the graveside, although there is also no doubt that the idea of making offerings to the dead became increasingly important, as shown by the stoppered vessels interred in tombs. Even if the funerary feast gradually changed location, it seems that the deceased was still incorporated into the event, as the mourners left the used vessels and various food matter in the tomb and sometimes even in the cremation urn itself. I suggested in 3.1 and 4.6 that the dead in the Mycenaean eras were believed to have partaken in the funerary feast along with the guests; this practice may be a remnant from such a tradition and seems to support the idea that death and the dead were still accepted and regarded as familiar (cf. I. Morris 1989). Funerary feasting certainly did not remain static during the EIA, but changed to meet new burial rites, social conditions, customs and mindsets; however, these alterations were so gradual that funerary conservatism may well have offered to the people of Submycenaean-Geometric Greece a form of stability and a way of identifying themselves through a connection with their past.

##### *5. The Mnemonic Feast – Tomb and Ancestor Cult in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century*

Before considering sanctuary feasting and thus concluding the three spheres of EIA commensality, I examine an amorphous dataset lying inbetween the funerary and the sanctuary-based. This group has an intimate link with the dead, often occurring directly in a cemetery, and in almost all cases celebrating someone who has died; yet on the other hand, it has more overtly religious overtones and greater formalisation than a simple meal to commemorate the passing of a family member. It includes the ritual behaviour that has been categorised as tomb and ancestor cult, depending on the recipient, the level of investment, the location and the frequency of rites. I do not include hero cult here, as that did not flourish until after the end of the 8<sup>th</sup>

century.<sup>50</sup> Due to the fact that much of the evidence rests on the boundaries of my thesis, both chronologically and in terms of feasting data, I have made two methodological decisions. Firstly, I have included sites that stand at the temporal limits of my research period, such as those that were first used at the turn of the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> centuries; however, I have excluded all that did not show *any* evidence of activity prior to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This may have produced some unexpected lacunae, but it is necessary in order to preserve my chosen chronological boundaries as far as possible. Secondly, I have included sites where it is hard to prove the presence of feasting *per se*. The main criterion for inclusion in this section has been an emphasis on food and drink, even if a token offering as opposed to a large-scale meal. The significant point is that food and drink were being ritually employed in ways that extended beyond their nutritive value.

The evidence in this section falls into three groups, based on the forms of the structures employed for the rituals. All other criteria for categorisation remain unsatisfactory – defining by recipient is negated by the fact that they all had in common a figure from the past, the frequency of rites is extremely hard to judge from the sometimes scanty evidence, and the purpose of the rituals was multifarious and overlapped between sites often classified separately. Therefore, my categorisation is based simply on the types of installations provided for the celebration of the food and drink-based rites: firstly, those that were practised in tombs of the distant past, usually the LH period; secondly, a closely-knit group of circular stone structures; and thirdly, those that were based in a building resembling an actual house. My three groups do not fall neatly into the categories of tomb and ancestor cult and I believe it is more important to bear in mind that both types of cult had in common the veneration of someone in the past, whether they be unknown, personal or famed.

In the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, a new phenomenon developed and spread across the Greek mainland of performing rituals in visible Mycenaean tombs. This ranged from leaving a few votives in or over the chamber to larger-scale food and drink-based rituals held at the tomb. In only a minority of cases, such as the Menidhi tholos in Attica, did the tomb become a much-frequented site and receive repeated rituals that endured beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Blegen (1937a: 263; 1937b: 388-389; 1939: 412) was the first to recognise this phenomenon during his excavations at Prosymna and, noting the similarity between the objects left in the tombs and those deposited at the nearby Argive Heraion and terrace shrine, supposed that the purpose was votive and did not represent reuse of the graves. Since then, instances of similar behaviour have been identified in other cemeteries and there have been slight alterations in interpretation; however, Blegen's original theory has been retained by practically all those studying these LG

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<sup>50</sup> The earliest examples of hero cult are moreover uncertain and it has been argued that they were not attributed to named heroes till the Classical period (Hall 2002: 96); cf. chapter 7.



deposits, which do indeed seem designed to venerate the original inhabitants of the tombs (e.g. Coldstream 1976; I. Morris 1988; Whitley 1994; 1995; Antonaccio 1995a; Deoudi 1999).

Activity at Prosymna seems to have ranged from deposition of a few pots and other votive objects to probable drinking rituals to actual sacrifices (and presumably subsequent feasting). Out of the 52 tombs excavated, 13 showed evidence of activity in the LG-EA period. The rationale for selection of tombs at which to pay one's respects is unclear – it is possible that these were the only ones visible at the time, due to accidental discovery during ploughing or the collapse of the roof, which undoubtedly would have left a minor alteration in the landscape. I examine only those tombs where evidence for drinking/feasting rituals is more certain. T.XXVI held a nest of LG drinking ware at the back of the chamber (Blegen 1937a: 93; Antonaccio 1995a: 63); as a coherent assemblage, both in overall purpose and in locale, one might surmise that they had been used in drinking rituals in honour of the tomb's occupants prior to deposition. In T.L, as well as a quantity of LG sherds, there was a heap of stones at the back of the tomb that appeared to form a purposeful construction and was covered with a thin layer of carbonised material (Blegen 1937a: 140; Antonaccio 1995a: 63-64). As discussed later in this section, stone-built constructions in and around tombs often have a connection with feasting rituals and it is probable that this structure had a similar purpose, particularly in view of the ashes found on top of it. T.IX had the most evidence of feasting debris; at the back of the chamber there was a distinct layer of black earth and carbonised matter (originally interpreted by Blegen as a 'sacrificial pit': 1937a: 164-165) around which votives were placed, including four bronze vessels, four coarseware vessels, a jug and a cup.<sup>51</sup> Whether one indeed interprets the burnt area as a sacrificial locale, an area in which food was cooked to be consumed in honour of the tomb's occupants, or more likely a combination of both, food substances were being used as a means of revering the ancient dead, in a way not dissimilar to the treatment of the recently deceased. It is notable that all these cases, the most definite ones at Prosymna where votive deposition was accompanied by food and drink-based rituals, occurred at the back of the chambers. To me, this suggests that the LG people were not simply leaving a few cups, pins or figurines to pacify the tombs' occupants (which could easily have been achieved by depositing the gifts on top of the grave), but were making a concerted effort to worship these long-departed figures by entering the chambers and performing rituals directly inside, as attested clearly by T.L and T.IX. This recalls the practice highlighted since the Early Mycenaean period of performing funerary rituals inside the tomb in the presence of the deceased.

Examples can be drawn from other parts of the mainland to demonstrate these practices; however, I select a few cases to discuss where the activity definitely seems to go beyond simple

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<sup>51</sup> Deoudi (1999: 93) mentions animal bones mingled with the ashes, although this is not stated in Blegen's original publication.

votive deposition. At Volimidhia, there are similar assemblages to those found at Prosymna, principally dating from the third quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Angelopoulos 4 and 5 both had a wide variety of pottery deposited, in numbers that appear too high to be merely accidental or token gifts (Coulson 1988: 73). In both tombs, the emphasis is on pouring vessels or those for the storage of liquid, with only two out of 12 and three out of 11 respectively being drinking/consumption vessels (Coulson 1988: 56-57, 65-66). Certainly this should act as a *caveat* that the rites practised in tomb cult do not always correspond with commensality, although drink/liquid did play a key role here. In Angelopoulos 6 however, not only were there a few LG vessels, but also the bones of large animals (boar, cattle and deer: Marinatos 1953: 243). It is impossible to tell whether these were simply sacrificed and deposited in the chamber, or whether they played a part in commensal rituals at the tomb; however, again it can be seen that food was regarded as an appropriate means to honour the ancient dead.

Chamber tomb 222 at Mycenae, which is examined further below, had a stone construction over the chamber surrounded by LG-PC sherds, echoing that in Prosymna T.L; plus, the fill of the tomb itself had distinct black/ashy layers containing animal bones, which can also be dated from the sherds within to the LG-PC era (Papademetriou 1952: 465-467; 1953: 208). It seems hard to doubt the existence of at least sacrifices here, if not feasting itself. As mentioned above, the tholos at Menidhi was also a locale for tomb cult. The chamber itself was never opened, perhaps out of respect for the inhabitants, but the *dromos* was filled with pottery dedications from LGII onwards. This does not seem to have been a site for feasting, due to the lack of burnt areas or animal bones, but drinking vessels formed a respectable proportion of the votives (although behind the louterion in terms of numbers: Whitley 1994: 223; Antonaccio 1995a: 104-109). Drinking rituals and/or libations may have occurred here, or the vessels could simply have been deposited; however, an association again can be drawn between the substance of drink and the worshipping of the long dead. Similar evidence appears at the tholos at Medeon, Phokis, where there seems to have been late 8<sup>th</sup>-century activity involving drinking, to judge from the numerous cup and skyphos fragments (Morgan 1990: 123).<sup>52</sup>

It is hard to tell whether the tombs at which these rituals occurred had been visible for some time during the EIA and interest in them was suddenly fuelled in the LG period, whether they were newly discovered by chance at this time, or whether they were actively sought. The pseudo-Cyclopean structure at the Argive Heraion, probably constructed in the later 8<sup>th</sup> century, indicates how great the interest in the Mycenaean past became at this time (Wright 1982: 191-192; Morgan & Whitelaw 1991: 85; cf. Antonaccio 1992). It was as if the general renaissance

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Antonaccio 1995a: 134-135 for the uncertainty surrounding some of the data from Medeon.

of the 8<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied by reawakened remembrances of a past that appeared glorious through hindsight. It is not coincidental that this was also the period of the Homeric epics, which referred back to an ostensibly similar era to that of the tombs being venerated. Coldstream's (1976) well-known proposition that directly explained the rise of tomb cult through the influence of the epics is no longer universally agreed upon (Hiller 1983: 13; A. Foley 1988: 152; *contra* Whitley 1988: 174); however, it is difficult to deny that the two were part of the same general phenomenon (cf. de Polignac 1995[1984]: 139). Moreover, they should be seen in the wider context of dramatic changes in social structure, as the Greek mainland moved away from the EIA pattern of isolated settlements headed by a leader in an all-purpose major dwelling to the Archaic/Classical models of societal organisation, such as the *polis* and the *ethnos*. It is often in times of major change that people seek to reconnect with their past, in order to install stability into one area of their lives. I suggest that the tomb cults examined above fulfilled two major, non-mutually exclusive purposes in this social context.

Firstly, as Alcock (2002: 146) has concisely defined, tomb cult serves 'to link contemporary society with a form of power located in the past', thus 'creating and cementing a sense of belonging'. Those who were alienated or bewildered by the rapid sociopolitical changes developed their own memories in order to give themselves roots, and to draw for themselves 'power and comfort' (Alcock 1991: 447). Monuments, such as tombs, appear to offer continuity and stability due to their very materiality, and this is particularly the case in the massive construction of some of the chamber tombs and tholoi mentioned above (cf. Alcock 2002: 28). It was noted in 5.2 how, despite some diachronic changes, sociopolitical structures, settlement patterns and house plans remained essentially unvarying from EPG onwards throughout the EIA, a period of c.300 years; therefore it should not be surprising that major changes during half a century or so caused a desire to reconnect with the past, a constant that did not alter. In one sense, Ian Morris' (1988: 752, 758) assessment of these tombside activities as 'crisis cults' can be seen as valid, although it should not be over-stated. It was discussed in 3.1 and 4.6 how rituals, including commensality, in a tomb chamber can produce an intimate sense of having undergone a shared experience and a feeling of community, and the similarities in practices between tomb cult and funerary rites indicate that equivalent sensations were probably sought and undoubtedly produced.

With the possible exception of Menidhi, where the popularity and longevity of dedications verge on anonymous hero cult, we have no evidence that any of the tombs mentioned were believed to belong to specific heroes or even to known ancestors. What was important was the 'Past' as a concrete entity. In fact, it may even have been beneficial to keep the ancient dead anonymous as then *personae* could be projected onto them as desired (de Polignac 1995[1984]: 140). It has been suggested that those being honoured were not seen as connected with the

(Homeric) epic past but rather as members of the Silver Race (à la Hesiod), which would explain their complete anonymity and the focus on Bronze Age tombs as opposed to settlement remains (I. Morris 1988: 755). While I do not think the Homeric epics can be completely divorced from the late 8<sup>th</sup>-century interest in the past, I am persuaded by a developed version of the Silver Race theory, which suggests that those who inhabited the tombs were somehow seen as protectors or *numina* of the surrounding land (Whitley 1995: 58). In an increasingly urbanised world (comparatively speaking), the assistance of past, semi-divine inhabitants of the land could offer stability. The short-lived, non-institutional nature of these rituals suggest that, in many cases, they were the work of individual families or small communities who were finding their own way of responding to the 8<sup>th</sup>-century renaissance.

Secondly, it must be considered how much 8<sup>th</sup>-century people could truly claim to “remember” their past, especially with such a lengthy hiatus. Although oral epic retained elements of a Mycenaean past, these competed with intervening and contemporary facets and were very much viewed through the prism of 8<sup>th</sup>-century views, as is discussed in chapter 6. It is more than likely that memories were being fabricated in order to fit current needs, particularly as it seems that a number of the tombs were rediscovered at this time as opposed to remembered. The case of Prosymna here is relevant. As mentioned, the Heraion’s Cyclopean terrace appears to have been “faked” in the later 8<sup>th</sup> century and the particularly enthusiastic ritual behaviour at the nearby cemetery of Prosymna may well have been to compensate for the fact that Argos was lacking Mycenaean remains on the scale of, for example, Mycenae herself (Wright 1982: 199; Strøm 1988: 178; Morgan & Whitelaw 1991: 85; cf. Antonaccio 1992: 95-98, 103-105). This has been reconstructed as a period of aggressive expansion for Argos, during which nearby Asine was destroyed (c.710), and the blatant reuse and fabrication of Mycenaean ruins appears to have been part of a strategy through which she could present her claim of superiority over the area (Morgan & Whitelaw 1991: 83-85). Therefore, while tomb cult could simply be a small-scale way of responding to sociopolitical changes, it could also be a method of generating them by ambitious larger groups, particularly those laying claim to territory.

As well as serving the aggrandising requirements of settlements or proto-*poleis*, the performance of tomb cult could be employed by individuals or families to support their personal claims of superiority. It has been observed that the quality of the pottery dedicated at Menidhi (including the iconography) suggests that those performing the rituals were predominantly aristocratic (Whitley 1994: 224). Cheap, small and poorly-made vessels could have been dedicated more easily (and indeed were at other sites); therefore the high quality reflects a particular strategy and I would suggest that those offering votives there were staking their claim as being associated with the owner of the tholos – who was presumably regarded as rich, perhaps even “royal”. Pedigrees and ancestors could be claimed for oneself thus, which would

be useful in a time of shifting sociopolitical structures. Autochthony was a particular strategy employed in Attica to develop this idea even further, where great emphasis was put upon the people's timeless link with the land (cf. Thucydides 1).<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, these cults had a multi-layered set of purposes and aims, bonding small communities together in times of stress and change, and serving the goals of those who were more ambitious, whether on a personal level through the establishment of glittering ancestry or on a larger scale through claims of superiority or territorial ownership (cf. I. Morris 1988: 757; Whitley 1995: 56). The particular dataset that I examined employed food and drink in the context of such rituals (whether consumed or not) to serve each of the above purposes effectively. The shared consumption of food and drink bound people together, both in the companionship of the event and in the bodily memory that it created, thus helping them to deal with unstable situations. For settlements claiming territory or superiority, the expenditure of consumables made the rituals more noteworthy, through the investment involved and again through their mnemonic properties. As for individual families who claimed ancestry, food and drink-based rituals echoed those performed in contemporary funerary rites for their own relatives and therefore stated the assertion that these ancient dead were somehow kin.

I have given a lengthy excursus on the purposes and aims of the cults based in ancient tombs because I feel that many of the principles involved are equally relevant to the other two categories of ritual structures that I discuss in this section. All three groups used food and drink-based rites for overlapping reasons, as they were born out of the same *milieu* and concentrated on venerating the dead. The second category of structures that I discuss comprises the enigmatic stone circles, found across the Greek mainland, that were first highlighted by Hägg (1983). He interpreted them as structures associated with ritual feasting in order to worship the ancestors (Hägg 1983: 193) and I see no reason to disagree substantially with this conclusion, although my refinements are presented below. Indeed, my own assessment of the Early Mycenaean horseshoe-shaped structures in cemeteries (cf. 3.4) as used for ancestor cult feasting serves to support the theory that the EIA stone circles were used for similar purposes, with slight alterations in form and ritual practice inevitable given the chronological span between the two phenomena.

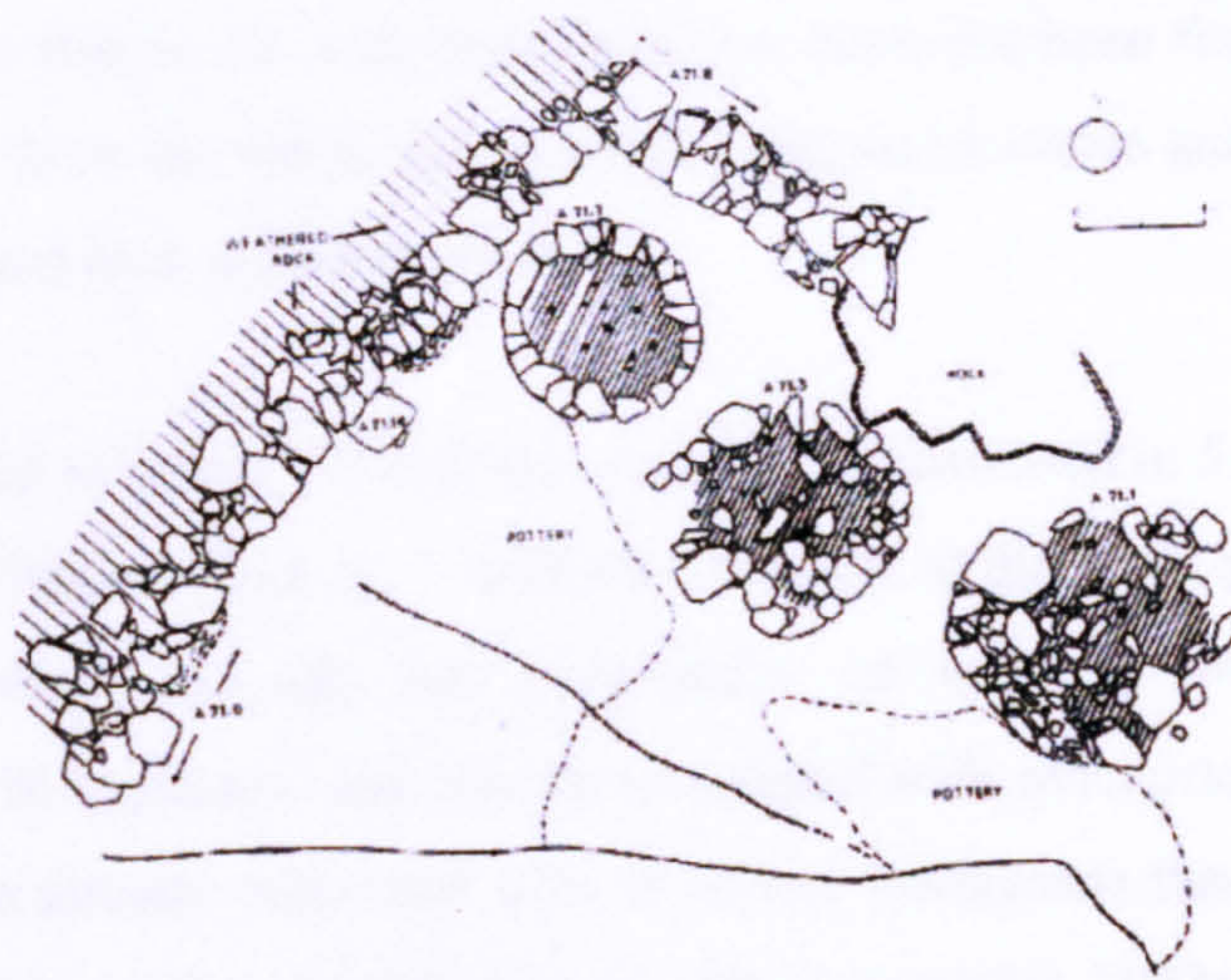
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<sup>53</sup> On a comparative note, deliberate aristocratic association with the Bronze Age past can also be seen in EIA Crete, where wealthy votives at Minoan ruins indicate their dedicators' intentions to mark out their social status through conspicuous display and association with a legendarily great past (Prent 2003: 88-89). It is interesting to observe that feasting was also associated with these 'ruin cults', at sites such as Knossos, Amnisos and Kommos (Prent 2003: 83, 85).

There are seven clear sets known at present on the mainland, in the Argolid, Messenia and Euboia, although the stone construction in Prosymna T.L suggests that other structures less obviously circular may warrant inclusion in the dataset. Four of these sets were found in cemeteries, two were in leader's dwellings, and the final one was constructed over a former leader's dwelling. This variation in locale has raised queries as to whether they can realistically be considered a distinct group and whether they were used for the same purpose. I believe that close examination shows that at least six of the seven sets were indeed used in the context of ritual feasting and drinking, and moreover that all of them hold an association with what might be very loosely termed ancestor cult.

Asine has the greatest proliferation of stone circles, with three separate sets discovered across the settlement and its cemeteries. The first set excavated lay in the cemetery in the lower city; two stone circles were positioned on either side of tomb P.G.23, and a further one at the nearby tomb P.G.21. All three were surrounded by charcoal and ashes, and the one near P.G.21 contained a thick layer of ashes, with a few pieces of animal bone and sherds (Frödin & Persson 1938: 133-134, 426). Such assemblages are consistent with the practice of feasting around these structures, possibly using the construction as a kind of hearth on which to burn/cook the meat. Frödin and Persson (1938: 426-427) believed that these 'tomb-altars' were contemporary with the PG tombs near which they were built (Antonaccio follows this, 1995a: 199), which would make them a highly formalised method of paying respect to the recent dead. While the diagnostic criteria for this conclusion are unfortunately nowhere described, the proposed early date of these structures should raise no difficulties, as the stone circles are much more dispersed in time and appear to be part of a longer-lived phenomenon than the cults at Mycenaean tombs.

The second set at Asine was likewise associated with graves, in the Barbouna cemetery. Here there were also three circles, although they were not connected with particular tombs, but bounded by two walls at right angles to form a distinct, sheltered area (Figure 5.14). A few animal bones and sherds were found inside the stone circles (Hägg 1983: 189). More significantly, there was a pit in the bounded area filled with ashes and ovicaprid bones that appears to have served as a hearth (Hägg & Hägg 1972: 233; Hägg 1983: 190). Also in the same locality was a sizeable deposit of LG pottery, consisting of c.40 vessels with a concentration on one-handled cups and bowls (Hägg & Hägg 1972: 233; Hägg 1983: 189). The presence of the hearth and the consumption vessels makes it clear that we are dealing with the remains of feasting episodes. The investment in the rites has been taken even further than in the lower city set, with a distinct area in the cemetery separated off for their performance.



**Figure 5.14: Stone circles in the Barbouna cemetery, Asine (Hägg 1983: 190, fig. 1)**

The third example in Asine was found over the ruins of the MPG-MG(?) Building C, built in the LG period when the house was no longer in use and had disintegrated (Dietz 1982: 34, 36; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 70). This circle was not associated with any finds (Dietz 1982: 34), possibly a result of the poor preservation of the area in general, or possibly because it served a different purpose from the others. However, the fact that it was built directly over Building C, which I interpreted as a leader's dwelling in 5.2, raises the prospect that the choice of site was deliberate – after all, while dating of the building is difficult, there does not appear to have been too long a hiatus between its use and the construction of the stone circle and thus memories of the house may have remained (probably also along with some visible traces of the building). There may have been a desire to venerate the former inhabitants of the house, perhaps by later descendants who had lost influence and authority (cf. Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 70).

Asine therefore yields three different sets – associated with specific graves, in a purpose-built enclosure in a cemetery, and over a former leader's dwelling – although all have in common the aim to venerate those who had died. The other examples associated with graves also come from the Argolid. At Mycenae, a couple of stone circles were found over the collapsed chamber of tomb 222, as mentioned above.<sup>54</sup> LG-PC sherds lay around the structure(s), attesting drinking rituals or food/drink votives (Papademetriou 1952: 466-467). It may well also have been the case that the black, ashy layers containing animal bones that filled the tomb were connected with whatever occurred at the structure(s), and hence the result of feasting around the stone circle(s). At Argos in the Deiras cemetery, a further stone circle was found in *dromos* XIX, which seems to be dated by sherds to the SG period (Deshayes 1966: 54-55, pl. 27.5). While

<sup>54</sup> Distinguishing the two is not easy; Papademetriou (1952; 1953) appears to mention only one in his original reports. Hägg (1983: 191) states that there were two, although one was poorly preserved. The existence of two would explain the differences in describing where exactly the structure(s) was supposed to be located (Papademetriou says over the south part of the tomb, 1953: 208; Antonaccio over the north-east part, 1995a: 48).

further finds to associate this circle with feasting *per se* have not been found, the votives in the *dromos* resemble those from the tomb cult examples discussed above and thus there may have been food and drink-based rites occurring here.

The other two sets, found in leader's dwellings, were both mentioned in 5.2 and so are discussed only briefly here. In Nichoria Unit IV-1, a stone circle lay at the back of the main room, later granted added significance through the construction of walls around it. Covered with carbonised material in both phases, and clearly associated with ovicaprid bones and skyphoi in the later period, I have already examined how it served a religious function in the context of feasting activities (McDonald *et al.* 1983: 29-30, 38; Fagerström 1988a: 128). Finally, in the Lefkandi Toumba building, the east room contained a stone circle in the south-east corner, alongside two other enigmatic installations that were interpreted as a storage box and a food preparation area (Popham *et al.* 1993: 51-52). The stone circle had not been used, as there were no traces of burning and a lack of finds associated with it; however, the excavators still believed that it could be ascribed to Hägg's definition of circular structures for ancestor worship (Popham *et al.* 1993: 51-52; cf. also Lenz 1993: 140; Antonaccio 1995b: 13-14). Given the other ritual elements of the Toumba building, particularly regarding the honour of the dead, it would not be unreasonable to make this suggestion although the fact that it was never used should induce caution. Antonaccio (1995a: 239) proposed that its handy location at the building's entrance meant that it could be accessible from the cemetery around and thus used for ancestor rituals subsequent to the owner's death; however, again the lack of any evidence for its actual use and the fact that the building was covered by a mound render her theory implausible. On the other hand, the fact that such a stone circle was found in Nichoria Unit IV-1 (and used) makes an intended parallel use at least probable.

In summary, the stone circles reveal a variety of locations and a fairly wide chronological span, with four sets concentrated in the LG period (contemporary with the tomb cult instances) and three spread out across the EIA from at least MPG onwards. This temporal depth appears to support my proposition that they may be the successors of the Early Mycenaean horseshoe-shaped structures, albeit of slightly different form, as those were also found regularly associated with earlier tombs or sacred locations and seem to have served for the veneration of ancestors through feasting rituals. Indeed, Snodgrass (1971: 383-386) has highlighted the parallels between features of MH life and those of the EIA, including house forms, burial practices and handmade pottery, suggesting a deep cultural continuity that underlay the changes of the palatial period. Hence it would not be impossible for a tradition of ancestor cult to be revived as well and the stone circles may be part of a larger phenomenon, yet they also appear to have increased in intensity concurrently with the late 8<sup>th</sup>-century renewed interest in the past and in descent. As a long-standing method of paying respect to known or unknown ancestors, I would suggest that



the construction of stone circles was at this point employed as a more formalised or ostentatious way of re-igniting contact with the past and/or laying claim to illustrious forebears than the simple deposition of votives in a tomb. The Barbouna examples, given their own enclosure, hearth and votive pit, illustrate the investment that such activities could reach. As additional support for this proposition, it is worth comparing the Geometric stone circles from Grotta, Naxos, which clearly hosted ancestor worship and appear to have gradually transformed the relatively recent dead into semi-legendary family-founders, associating them with the Mycenaean past due to the fact that they were buried in Bronze Age ruins (Lambrinoudakis 1988: 245). The size, construction, location and assemblages of these examples correspond with those on the mainland and therefore it appears that they may have all been part of the same phenomenon, metamorphosing the dead through their veneration into ancestral figures that could be employed to justify one's current position in the 8<sup>th</sup>-century sociopolitical *milieu*.

However, do the Nichoria and Lefkandi examples, both earlier than the LG interest in the past and placed in non-mortuary contexts, fit into this overall explanation? I believe that they do, although it is important to stress that not all the stone circles I have discussed can be explained as one distinct mode of ritual behaviour, but rather as variants on a common theme. Others have seen actual ancestor cult performed at the Nichoria and Lefkandi stone circles (e.g. Hägg 1983: 192-193; Popham *et al.* 1993: 51-52<sup>55</sup>), but I would resist this interpretation as it makes the dataset too coherent, overlooking different locations, regions and dates. If my assessment of these two leader's dwellings is valid, then their role as locales for rituals based on the importance of the leader and his lineage agrees with this overall scenario of respect for familial connections, although it would be expressed differently here as they were in a non-mortuary context. Rather than seeing ancestor cult *per se* as occurring at every stone circle found across the mainland, I suggest the following: they were locales for ritual feasting,<sup>56</sup> which had an underlying association with celebrating a primary lineage (the recently deceased, the long-dead ancestors or the current leaders), and thus their use and meaning were intensified in order to meet the demands of the later 8<sup>th</sup> century when competition for sociopolitical position, connections with illustrious kin and an association with the past were more actively sought. The continuum is the consumption of a meal around these circles, an event that could be mobilised to express further meanings as needs of time or place dictated.

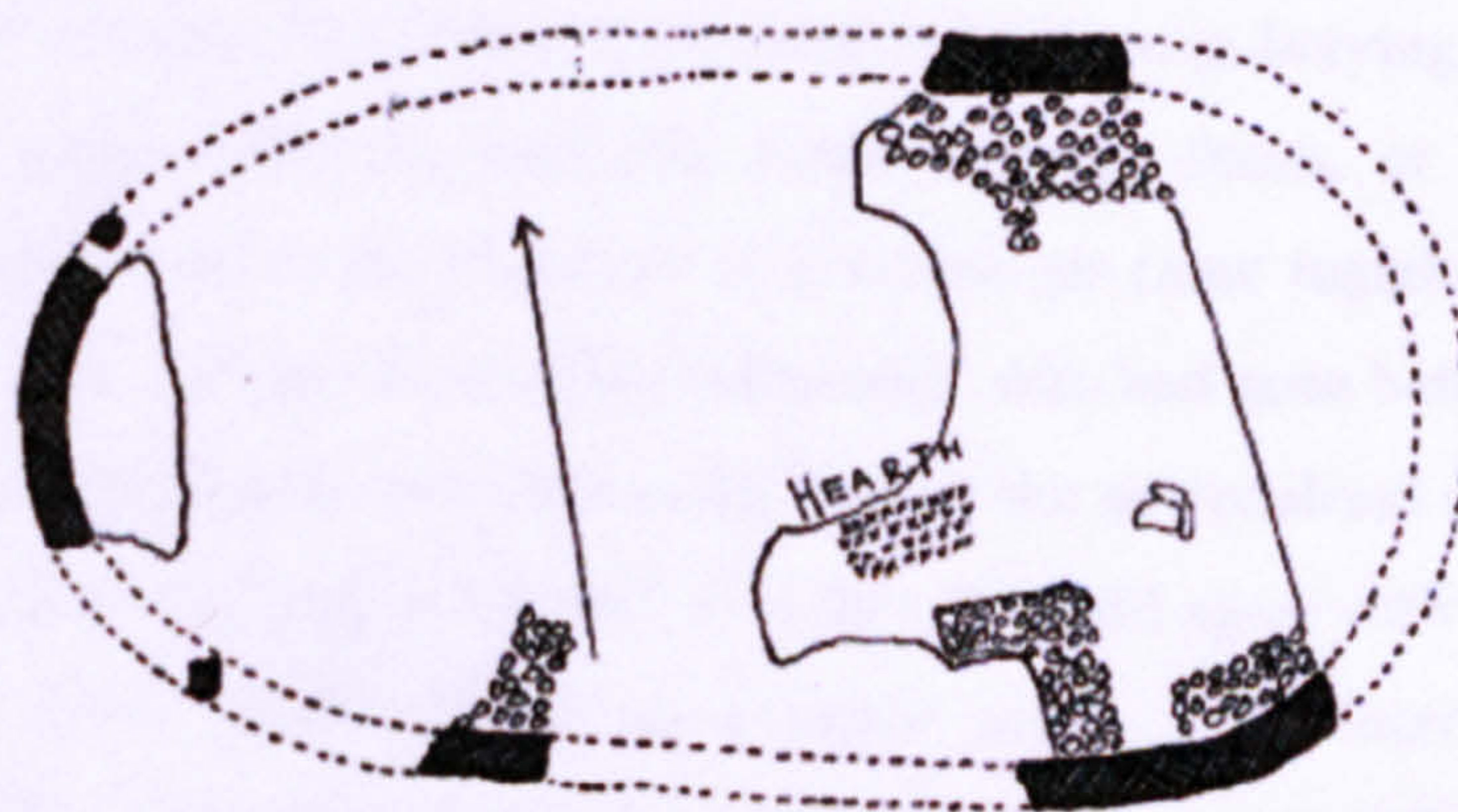
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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Fagerström (1988b: 41) for a completely secular interpretation of the Nichoria Unit IV-1 stone circle.

<sup>56</sup> The fact that the stone circle in the Lefkandi Toumba building did not have a chance to be used means that it cannot be definitively explained, particularly as it lay in the corner of the east room and not in the main room, where it would be more logical for rituals to be celebrated. However, the use of the whole building as a ritual location in veneration of a preeminent leader suggests the viability of rites celebrating his lineage having been performed in or around it.

The final group of structures are amorphous in design, but all have in common a house-like form, a cemetery location, and the performance of ritual meals within. The emphasis that has been seen throughout this section on commemorating the dead is present here also, as even greater investment was put into their veneration with the construction of actual buildings in which to hold the rites. It is not coincidental that all the sites in this group came into use in the Geometric period, thus according with the developments outlined above of greater awareness of the past at this time.

These buildings were situated, like the majority of the stone circles, in cemeteries amongst the graves, although they represent a larger investment in the rites, a greater formalisation, and presumably an increase in the amount of people who could participate. For example, the Areopagus oval building in Athens, used throughout the majority of the Geometric period, was located in a cemetery amongst contemporary graves (as well as built over an EGI grave). It appears to have been a building for the hosting of feasts in honour of the dead surrounding it. There was an off-centre hearth and what have been interpreted as bases for benches (Burr 1933: 546-547; **Figure 5.15**). While it has been argued that it was a normal secular house (Burr 1933: 637; Fagerström 1988a: 44-46), its location in the middle of a currently used cemetery makes that explanation very unlikely (cf. Thompson 1968: 60; Antonaccio 1995a: 123-125; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 86-87). Moreover, it appears designed for communal feasts, with one large room provided with benches and hearth, as opposed to equipped for the requirements of a domestic dwelling, and the flimsy construction (cf. Burr 1933: 547) would also be more appropriate for a shelter to perform communal activities than a permanent living space.



**Figure 5.15: Plan of Areopagus oval building, Athens (Burr 1933: 545, fig. 3)**

Other buildings that housed ritual feasts in cemeteries include a LG apsidal building in the Barbouna cemetery, Asine (Building S according to Mazarakis Ainian's terminology, 1997: 71). Due to its location and lack of domestic features, a funerary character has been attributed to it and the presence of more than 90 vessels from in and around it (mainly cups and jugs) supports the idea of commensality occurring within (A. Foley 1988: 27; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 71).

The Geometric house in the west necropolis at Thorikos may have served a similar purpose, located as it was in a contemporary cemetery, with clear evidence of burning and a bench inside (Deoudi 1999: 74-75). A further example is the late 8<sup>th</sup>-century building on the Academy at Athens. It appears to have been a key cultic area (*contra* Fagerström 1988a: 46-47) to judge from the various deposits found. Across the whole multi-roomed building there were various layers of what appear to be sacrificial debris (ash, broken vessels and animal bones); plus there was a presumed *eschara* in room ζ and an iron knife amongst another heap of sacrificial remains at the back of the main corridor (Stavropoulos 1958: 7-8). The cultic elements of the building (including miniature vessels), the lack of normal household assemblages, and the fact that it was located in a cemetery indicate its use for ritual feasting. Moreover, various other intriguing deposits have been located in the vicinity, including more than 200 EGI kantharoi stacked up just to the south-west of the house, and around 40 LG vessels deposited in the remains of an EH house close by (Stavropoulos 1958: 8-9; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 142). It has been suggested that this ancient house was regarded as that of the hero Akademos and therefore that this was a location for the performance of hero cult (Snodgrass 1982: 111; Hiller 1983: 13), but it is unlikely that the remains were still visible in the LG period (cf. Deoudi 1999: 66-67). The use of the site for tomb/ancestor cult rituals appears more probable as its location echoes those of the other sites examined.

These cemetery buildings were principally surrounded by contemporary graves and so they may not have been intended for the performance of ancestor cult *per se*. Only in the Academy building and its proximate EH remains may there have been a recognition of a past that greatly preceded the present activities. It is not clear exactly how these structures operated – whether they were spaces that could be employed (“rented”?) by anyone burying their relatives in the cemetery for the performance of unusually grand funerary feasts, or whether they served communal functions in which the members of a settlement came together to commemorate a more generalised dead, perhaps those of the community who had gone before them. The second option appears perhaps slightly more plausible,<sup>57</sup> given the personalised and small-scale nature of funerary feasts as considered in 5.4, and if so then it would agree with the types of activities occurring at the stone circles, albeit on a larger scale. The increased investment in commemorating the recent dead at the stone circles and cemetery buildings echoes the sudden contemporary veneration of the ancient dead at their tombs, and indicates a (re-)awakening of memory and a search for real or fabricated connections that were concurrent with late 8<sup>th</sup>-century sociopolitical changes.

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<sup>57</sup> Langdon (1997: 116) supports a view closer to the first option, by suggesting that the buildings were used by kinship groups worshipping their own deceased. However, it is difficult to see how this functioned in actuality – it would either suggest that the entire group of graves around belonged to one kinship group, or that one lineage was so differentiated from the others in terms of wealth, power and position that their neighbours allowed them to impose on the general cemetery in this manner.

I have drawn conclusions throughout this whole section, so it simply remains to unite all these strands of data together. There can be no single overriding explanation for all the different types of food and drink-based rituals that have been examined, although they should all be seen as part of the same general phenomenon. The earliest examples of feasting activities performed in honour of a specific lineage can be seen from the PG period, at the first stone circles. As the Geometric era began, the construction of some of the cemetery buildings (such as those on the Areopagos and the Academy) accompanied a rapidly increasing interest in venerating the dead members of a prominent lineage as opposed to the living. In the LG period, there is a sudden burst of data, with increased numbers of stone circles, further cemetery buildings erected, and ritual behaviour performed around LH tombs. The increase in both quantity and variety is noteworthy and it is not coincidental that this occurred at a time of major sociopolitical change, when the societal structures on which life in the EIA had been based altered significantly, village leaders lost authority, settlements grew in size through synoicism, and the institution that would grow into the *polis* began to develop. The various food and drink-based rites in honour of the dead were a way of responding to these changes and of searching for one's roots, whether for constancy and comfort, or for propagandistic motives and legitimisation of status. They were an arena in which some of the conflict and uncertainty surrounding the new sociopolitical structures could be expressed and possibly resolved (Alcock 1991: 460). It is noticeable how short-lived many of these rituals were; indeed, the veneration at LH tombs seems to have been principally of a mere generation's extent (cf. de Polignac 1995[1984]: 141-152), and they should therefore be explained as a transitional phenomenon, a method seized to mark out one's place in a rapidly changing world.<sup>58</sup> The accessing and/or creating memories of the dead and the past, often employing the substances of food and drink to aid this, was performed in order to influence the present in ways favourable to the participant.

#### 6. *The Transformed Feast – Sanctuary Commensality during the EIA*

In comparison to the preceding periods, the EIA saw a veritable burst of sanctuary activity, including a noticeable increase in sacrificial feasting. While it is a lengthy period of some 500 years, longer than the other two eras under consideration combined, I believe that what we are seeing here is a genuine pattern of increased activity and investment in sanctuaries during the EIA (as argued by e.g. Morgan 1990; de Polignac 1995[1984]). In the Early Mycenaean period, only one sanctuary could be defined as such (Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros), while I discussed six examples from the palatial period, plus the textually-attested *pa-ki-ja-na*. However, for the EIA, I have selected 14 sanctuaries for discussion where there is unambiguous evidence for feasting. It should moreover be noted that there were several others that held feasting activities

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<sup>58</sup> Larger, more formalised examples such as Menidhi did endure through to the Classical period, but the majority of tombs were visited only for a few years in the later 8<sup>th</sup> century.

which could also have been considered, such as that of Aphaia on Aegina or of Hyakinthos at Amyklai, but which were excluded solely because the data were not so plentiful or unambiguous. When the three eras are put into perspective like this, it becomes clear that this increase in sanctuary activity was a genuine phenomenon. Of course, it is possible to argue that excavation bias is a cause of this, as the majority of the EIA sanctuaries I discuss continued into the Classical period and have thus received greater academic interest. However, while this could explain the lack of Early Mycenaean sanctuary data, there has been a considerable amount of excavation and survey focused on the palatial period and as yet few relevant sites have been identified.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, certain sites such as the Argive Heraion or Delphi saw Mycenaean activity and yet were only transformed into sanctuaries during the EIA (Morgan 1990: 107-112; Hägg 1992: 14). I therefore agree with those who suggest that what was occurring was a genuine shift in religious practice in the centuries after the palatial period. A delimited, heterotopic area grew to become a more fundamental requirement for the performance of religious rituals, gradually taking precedence over executing them in a leader's dwelling (for example, Nichoria Unit IV-1). In addition, the sanctuary became regarded as a valuable arena in its own right not just for ritual purposes, but for achieving competitive, unifying or territorial goals, so that its significance increased in other spheres. Both of these aspects are discussed in greater detail below.

As so many sites are relevant for inclusion in this section, I have taken a different approach and presented the essential information in tabular form (Table 5.3). This avoids lengthy digressions to explain the evidence for feasting at each site and descriptions of the various cultic buildings and/or installations present. All the sites under discussion are widely recognised as having hosted feasting activity during the EIA, and thus there is no need to justify their inclusion here. What follows is consequently not a site-by-site analysis, but rather a synthetic discussion of the issues involved surrounding sanctuary development and the role of sanctuary feasting in the sociopolitical *milieu* of the EIA. I follow a roughly chronological sequence, as there were inevitably changes during the half millennium under consideration, and the same issues are not applicable to every phase.

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<sup>59</sup> It should be noted here that there was considerable religious activity in the palatial period, as attested by Linear B records of festivals and offerings (cf. Bendall 2007a; Lupack 2008). However, as archaeological finds of sanctuaries and shrines are comparatively rare, it is possible that rites did not require a delimited, purpose-specific area in order to be performed. As examined in 4.5, sanctuaries did indeed exist, but they may not have been as fundamental a part of religious practice as they became during the EIA.

Feasting evidence from EIA					
Sanctuary	Total period of use	Pottery	Faunal remains	Cult buildings	Installations
Cult Centre, Mycenae	LHIIB1 – LHIIC Middle	Mainly open vessels (kraters, basins, kalathoi, kylikes, deep bowls); sherds found in all areas.	Small animal bones in room over former room 28; also in front of that room's facade.	Two complexes over former rooms 38/36 and 28/25.	Complex over 38/36: hearth in main room; round podium (altar?) by SE entrance. Complex over 28/25: hearth.
Rooms 119, 117, 110 and 110a, Tiryns	LHIIC Early – Late	In 117/110/a, mainly drinking vessels such as skyphoi and bowls (a few also in courtyard outside).	Numerous animal bones in 117/110/a (cattle, sheep, goat, pig).	Two small one-roomed cult buildings: 119 and sequence of 117/110/110a (110/a was connected to 115, possibly also with a cultic function).	119: hearth. 117/110/a: bench along back wall; hearth; oval stone construction (altar) in courtyard outside, replaced in period of 110a by stone-lined hearth.
Room XXXII, House G, Asine	LHIIC Late	Wide range of vessel forms although not high in quantity ( <i>inter alia</i> cups, bowls, cooking pots); clear deposit to W of platform in burnt layer.	Animal bones and ash in front of platform. Bird bones also in large coarseware jar.	Room within large house; at present unclear how it relates with rest of building.	Stone platform at N wall and benches along both sides of room.
Apollo Maleatas, Epidauros	Early Mycenaean – LHIIC, hiatus, 8 <sup>th</sup> century – Classical and beyond	Cups are main form in fineware; also comprise high proportion of coarseware.	Numerous animal bones in black, fatty strata, particularly around altar area (mainly cattle and goat).	LG building below Classical temple and above Mycenaean cult building.	Large terrace.

Feasting evidence from EIA					
Sanctuary	Total period of use	Pottery	Faunal remains	Cult buildings	Installations
Artemis Elaphebolos and Apollo at Hyampolis, Kalapodi	LHIIIC – Classical and beyond	Skyphoi and cups are main forms in every phase (kraters, bowls, amphorae, kylikes, pithoi, coarseware jugs also represented).	Animal bones present in all periods (principally sheep and goat, also cattle, pig and minor/wild species); concentrated in refuse deposit areas ('ash hill'). Calcinated bones present from G onwards.	8 <sup>th</sup> century building(s) below Archaic temple – possibly two 'temples' at this period.	Altar-type structure in LHIIIC; new hearth/altar area following 9 <sup>th</sup> -century reorganisation, possibly covered by light wooden construction. Terrace also constructed in LPG.
Olympia	EPG (at least) – Classical and beyond	Small open vessels predominate (cups, kantharoi, skyphoi); kraters and pouring vessels also represented.	Animal bones in black stratum around later Pelopion.	None from EIA.	Altar in the Altis.
Isthmia	EPG – Classical and beyond	Forms overwhelmingly those for consumption/open vessels (cups, bowls, jugs).	Large amount of burnt animal bones (sheep, goat, cattle, pig, fowl), selectively deposited; concentrated in refuse deposit areas to side of terrace.	None from EIA.	Ash altar; terrace constructed in 8 <sup>th</sup> century. Temporary structure also built for shelter in 8 <sup>th</sup> century.
Zeus Ombrios, Mt. Hymettos	PG – 6 <sup>th</sup> century	Forms predominantly oinochoai, skyphoi and other types of cup.	Many burnt animal bones found with the pottery.	None.	Altar and open-air enclosure with benches.
Athena Alea, Tegea	PG – Classical and beyond	Small, open forms predominate (cups); oinochoai and kraters also represented.	Animal bones, some burnt (cattle, pig, sheep, goat).	Wattle-and-daub 8 <sup>th</sup> - century building; it lay over a smaller building destroyed in 8 <sup>th</sup> century.	Possible bench along N wall of building; possible altar underlying later monumental one.

Sanctuary	Total period of use	Feasting evidence from EIA				
		Pottery	Faunal remains	Cult buildings	Installations	
Heraion, Argos	PG – Classical and beyond	Bowls and skyphoi represented in earlier layers. Some sherds, not described further.	Animal bones and teeth to W of first temple. Large ash layer with animal bones covering remains of Megaron B and area around.	First temple may be late 8 <sup>th</sup> century. Flimsy structure built in later 9 <sup>th</sup> century over remains of Megaron B.	Cyclopean terrace constructed in later 8 <sup>th</sup> century; probably an altar. Hearth inside area of Megaron B (probably made after destruction); <i>bothros</i> .	
Area of Megaron B, Thermon	EG/MG – Classical and beyond		Burnt debris – from animals?	First temple built around 750 or slightly later.	<i>Hestiatorion</i> and terraces from end of 8 <sup>th</sup> century or slightly later.	
Perachora	MGII – Classical and beyond	High concentration of drinking vessels (skyphoi and cups, oinochoai); amphorae and cooking vessels also represented.				
Apollo Daphnephoros, Eretria	MGII – Classical and beyond	Quality mainly high; forms not noticeably votive.	Numerous burnt animal bones around altar (almost exclusively sheep and goat). Selective anatomical deposition; cuts also displayed on bones.	Daphnephoreion built mid-8 <sup>th</sup> century (could be leader's dwelling as opposed to temple); larger apsidal temple possibly built before end of 8 <sup>th</sup> century.	8 <sup>th</sup> -century circular altar; succeeded MGII <i>bothros</i> -type altar; hearth within Daphnephoreion.	
Terrace shrine, Prosymna	LG – 7 <sup>th</sup> century.	Sherds badly preserved and forms hard to reconstruct; cups, jugs, pyxides, aryballoi, alabastra represented.	Carbonised matter – from animals?	None.	Terrace; in centre was hearth area. Spits also found.	

**Table 5.3: Sanctuaries with clear evidence for feasting activity during the EIA<sup>60</sup>**

<sup>60</sup> References for the information included in Table 5.3 are given when the sites are discussed in the text.



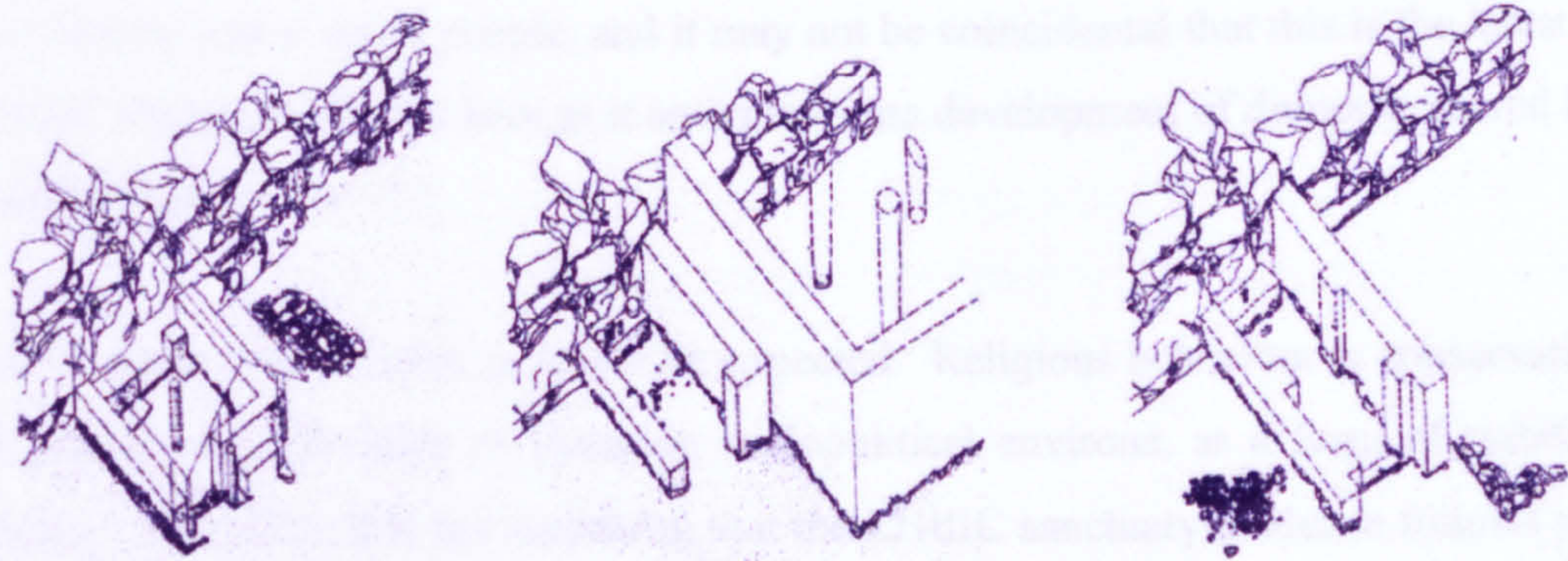
In his influential study on cults and the *polis*, de Polignac (1995[1984]: 21-23) drew distinctions between sanctuary types depending on their location, dividing them into urban, sub-urban and extra-urban. The sub-urban, or peri-urban, category is not relevant to this current study, as none of the examples he gathered has yielded sufficient evidence on feasting practices to warrant inclusion here.<sup>61</sup> I am therefore dealing with the two very different categories of urban and extra-urban sanctuaries, both of which had unique characteristics and thus engendered dissimilar environments for rites to be performed in. Excepting Eretria and the unusual cult area at Thermon, the only urban sanctuaries in my dataset were those in use in LHIIC: the Cult Centre at Mycenae, the two cult rooms in the Unterburg at Tiryns, and House G at Asine. If not an accident of investigation, the concentration of urban sanctuaries during the immediate post-palatial period may well be due to the centripetal movement towards settlement centres after the palaces' collapse, as security and stability were sought in areas where people could agglomerate.

In 5.1, I emphasised the blend of the old and the new in sociopolitical feasting practices and indeed in the wider social *milieu* during LHIIC, as elements of the old ways were retained for stability or because they were deemed satisfactory, while other facets were either actively rejected or simply abandoned. The same trend can be observed in sanctuary feasting. Regarding preservation of the old, at Mycenae and Tiryns sacred locations were retained and the rites performed in them appear to have differed little from what preceded. New shrine complexes were built over the Cult Centre at Mycenae, directly over parts of the Room with the Fresco Complex (RFC), and the cultic assemblages in the lower LHIIB and higher LHIIC sets of rooms differ little in composition (Albers 1994: 51-52; Thomatos 2006: 215). In the room over the former area 36, there were a number of precious items in ivory and gold, recalling similar pieces from the RFC and suggesting that the replacement cult building served the same group of people, or those closely associated with them in status or by kinship (Albers 1994: 51-52; cf. Wardle 2003: 321). Likewise at Tiryns, room 119 was built directly over the LHIIB room Kw7. It was built at the very beginning of LHIIC Early, was small and irregular, and may have been designed to be a temporary structure (Albers 1994: 105), all factors indicating a desire to revive a former cult locale for use before confidence in the post-collapse situation led to the establishment of a new building (the sequence of rooms 117/110/a nearby; Figure 5.16). Finally, although room XXXII in House G at Asine was not built on the remains of a palatial forerunner, its basic form (small megaron-style plan, platform/cult bench at one end) and contents (varied collection of vessels, figurines, animal bones and ash) are clearly in a LHIIB tradition and recall the material from palatial urban shrines such as the RFC and the Temple Complex at Mycenae (Frödin & Persson 1938: 104, 298-300; Hägg 1981; Albers 1994: 112-

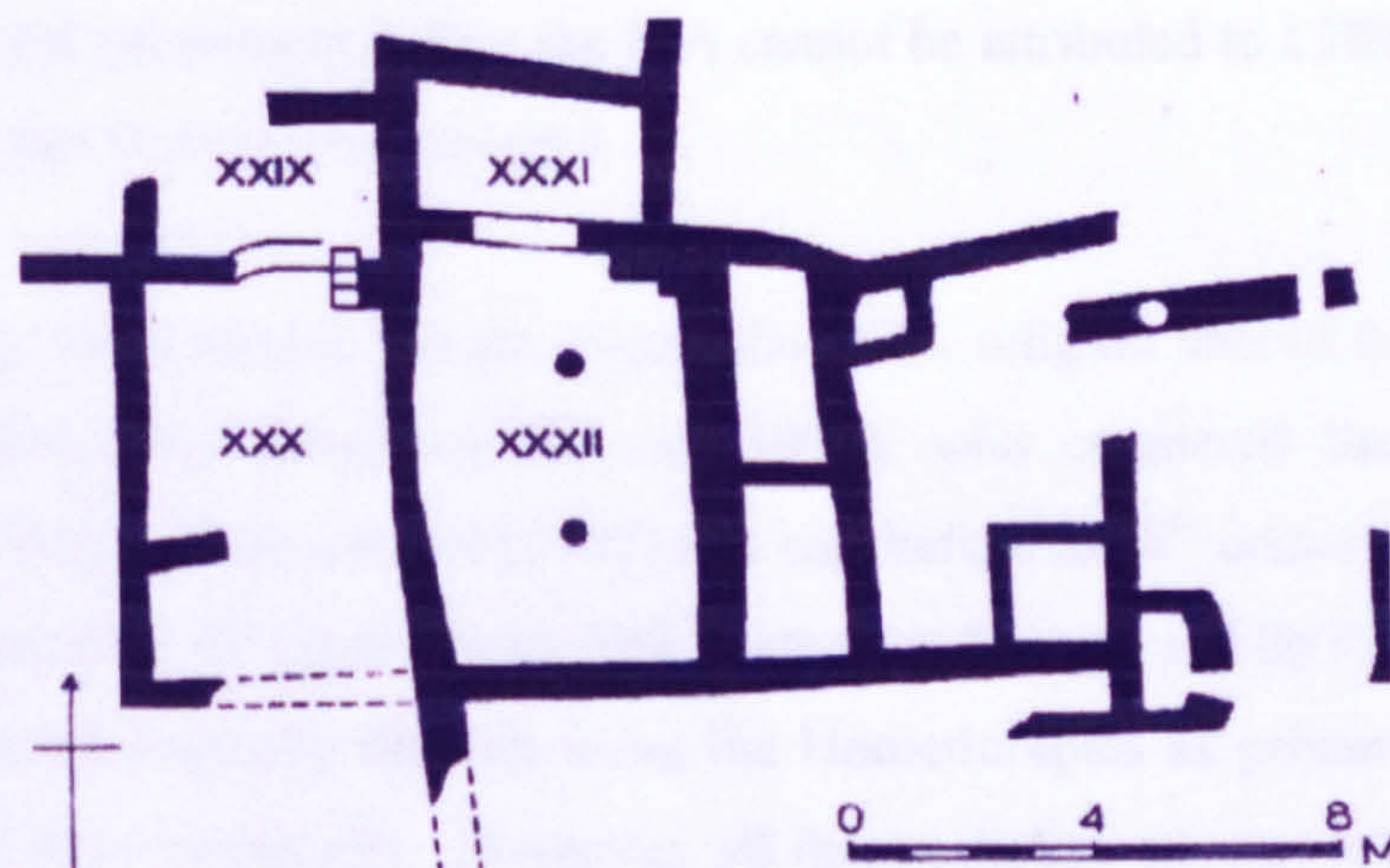
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<sup>61</sup> The sanctuaries of Apollo at Thebes, Deiras and Halieis, of Artemis at Sparta, and of Athena at Delphi (mainland, southern examples only: de Polignac 1995[1984]: 22).

114; **Figure 5.17**).<sup>62</sup> It can be seen that, as with sociopolitical feasting practices, sanctuary feasting persisted past the invisible LHIIB/C division – it was performed in the same locations, in the same type of cult rooms, with the same equipment and votives, probably by the same people, and very likely in honour of the same deities. While religion is inherently conservative and people as a group rarely (if ever) completely abandon their beliefs, the careful preservation of cultic locations and shrine designs suggests a conscious imitation of how things were before the palaces' collapse.



**Figure 5.16: Isometric reconstructions of cult rooms 117, 110 and 110a, Tiryns (Albers 1994: fig. 45)**



**Figure 5.17: Plan of House G, Asine (Hägg 1981: 92, fig. 1)**

On the other hand, there were subtle developments and religious behaviour did not remain static. Room 119 at Tiryns was not directly replaced, and thus the chain of exact location was broken as room 117 was built in the vicinity instead. The new cult complexes in the Mycenae Cult Centre were fairly rapidly abandoned, lasting only until LHIIC Middle, and it is unclear what (if anything) took their place. As for House G at Asine, it has already been stated how it was not a ritual location in the palatial period. It was one of the most important houses of the

<sup>62</sup> Rooms 117/110/a at Tiryns also have a similar layout and assemblages (the final room 110a was even remodelled to make it appear more like a megaron) and therefore likewise seem to preserve the LHIIB tradition (cf. Kilian 1981: 53; Albers 1994: 105).

LHIIC town, to judge from its elaborate plan and the presence of the shrine itself (Frödin & Persson 1938: 104); however there is no evidence at present that it was a leader's dwelling and it seems simply to be a wealthy domestic structure.<sup>63</sup> While house shrines were certainly known in the palatial period, this happens to be the most significant religious locale so far found at Asine during LHIIC. This fact may be due purely to excavation biases and not reflect anything noteworthy; however, if our evidence replicates reality, then it would signify that religious rites were loosened from palatial control and could be dictated by those with sufficient influence, wealth or status. House G represents not a revival of a palatial shrine, but rather a new cult place directed by a new set of people, and it may not be coincidental that this is the latest of the three LHIIC shrines examined here as it anticipates the development of domestic sacred locales in the major houses of the EIA.

The LHIIC pattern is therefore as might be expected. Religious behaviour is conservative and is often preserved in the face of changing sociopolitical environs, as a form of stability and permanence. Therefore, it is not surprising that the LHIIC sanctuary evidence follows patently in the palatial period tradition and that the changes made are more minor than the facets retained (and where there are changes, these are due to natural exigencies of new people obtaining authority or practical constraints such as space or repair). Hence the notable increase of sanctuary activity and investment during the EIA cannot be attributed to LHIIC and it is in the subsequent phases that it should be explored.

Before proceeding, the academic debate surrounding EIA religion should be noted. This has been best summarised by Sourvinou-Inwood (1993), who countered the proposals of de Polignac (1995[1984]) and Ian Morris (1987) that cult before the 8<sup>th</sup> century was characterised by spatial indeterminacy. To some extent, both Sourvinou-Inwood and de Polignac's arguments are weakened methodologically through using the Homeric epics as primary evidence for the (non-)existence of EIA sanctuaries. Moreover, all three scholars attempt to fit all the disparate EIA evidence into a universalised model and I do not think that any one theory can, or should, be taken as the "correct" version, but rather that a continuum of practices should be recognised (cf. Morgan 1999: 375). As I have stressed several times throughout this chapter, the EIA data cover a wide chronological range, are still poorly understood in certain areas, and are affected by the regionalism characteristic of the period. Sourvinou-Inwood (1993: 7) is correct to draw attention to shrines or areas that *were* spatially defined for cultic behaviour (*contra* Coldstream 1977: 317), and Table 5.3 indicates that there were delimited sanctuaries fully active during the so-called 'Dark Age', which were set apart for the specific purpose of performing cultic rituals. On the other hand, de Polignac (1995[1984]: 16-20) is also correct to note that there was a

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<sup>63</sup> Hägg (1981: 94) has raised the possibility that it may be part of a larger cult complex, although the assemblages from the rest of the house are not indicative enough to support this.

distinct movement during the 8<sup>th</sup> century to monumentalise the sanctuary area by building on it, whether an actual temple or simply a delimitation of the locale through a terrace or a *temenos* wall. The 8<sup>th</sup>-century shift cannot be regarded as unimportant (as Sourvinou-Inwood appears to propose, 1993: 10-11), yet a defined sanctuary area for the performance of cult was a feature of religion before that period also, and therefore aspects of both models should be retained. As for Ian Morris (1987: 189-190), he focuses more on an alteration of religious practice in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, as domestic shrines were replaced and rustic ones were transformed into architecturally embellished sanctuaries (cf. Hall 1995: 593). While he also is guilty of ignoring the evidence from the earlier sanctuaries that do not fit into his model, more recent research has proved that he seems to have highlighted a real trend. It has been demonstrated how apparently rustic shrines did receive a major transformation in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Olympia: Morgan 1990: 191-192), and moreover it has also been shown how cult in leader's dwellings played a significant role in the religious world of the earlier EIA (cf. 5.2; Mazarakis Ainian 1997; *contra* Sourvinou-Inwood 1993: 6, who denies its importance). To summarise therefore, the stance that I take in this chapter is as follows: pre-8<sup>th</sup>-century religion was practised in delimited sacred areas, either in open-air sanctuaries or in a leader's dwelling, yet there was a genuine shift in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, as sanctuaries were monumentalised and usurped the former importance of domestic shrines.

In 5.2, I demonstrated a model that seems to be familiar, if not universal, in the EIA – that of a leader holding not only social, political and economic superiority over the rest of the settlement, but also religious authority. This was seen first in House P at Korakou in LHIII C and evidenced during the EIA in Nichoria Unit IV-1, Asine Building C, Megaron B at Thermon, and undoubtedly also in the Lefkandi Toumba building. In all of these examples there was evidence for ritual feasting performed within or near the building,<sup>64</sup> whether around the hearth, at specifically cultic installations, or at sacred areas close to the house. As I discussed, this could operate dualistically by uniting the people of the settlement through ritual behaviour, hence strengthening their social ties, and by demonstrating the leader's authority over them, in this case in the religious sphere. Significantly, the two latest leader's dwellings that I examined, Nichoria Unit IV-5 and the Xeropolis house, both built and used during the 8<sup>th</sup> century, did not have these same ritual elements. While sociopolitical feasts appear to have still been held in the Xeropolis house, neither of these constructions held any evidence for cultic rituals performed within, either in terms of debris or purpose-built installations. On the other hand, the leader's economic superiority was brought to the fore, through the construction of additional, conspicuous storage areas. I thus highlighted how there appears to have been a shift from the religious to the economic sphere, whilst maintaining the leader's sociopolitical authority. When set against the context of the rise of sanctuary investment and activity during the 8<sup>th</sup> century, it

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<sup>64</sup> As discussed in 5.2, the Lefkandi Toumba building may not have actually seen use, but I have argued that it was certainly designed for the same purposes as the other leader's dwellings.

appears highly likely that the two phenomena are linked. Mazarakis Ainian (1997) has seen a direct transformation from 'rulers' dwellings' to temples, as the activities performed within moved from one to the other, and the temple's form drew upon that of the former leaders' houses. While I am hesitant to accept such a smooth transition (cf. Morgan 2003: 143), I certainly agree with his overall proposition that sanctuary activity gradually replaced the ritual meals occurring within leader's dwellings. The focus of pre-8<sup>th</sup>-century religious life appears to have been within the settlement, in leader's dwellings and probably also at minor urban shrines. An example of the latter has been found at Asine, with the small enclosed area mentioned in 5.2 that seems to have been the site of sacrificial feasts, evidenced by burnt, fatty soil, animal bones, and a pithos full of deposited pottery (mainly skyphoi and other drinking vessels: Wells 1983: 28-29, 34). It is probably not coincidental that Building C was less than 20m away, and therefore there is the possibility that it was under the leader's jurisdiction. Even if it was not, the presence of this mini-shrine in the heart of the settlement of Asine supports the practising of religious rituals, particularly feasts, in the urban environment.

While religious behaviour seems to have been focused in settlements in the 'Dark Age', this does not mean however that it all occurred within towns or villages, and Table 5.3 indicates the existence of extra-urban sanctuaries with feasting rituals from before the PG period. It is noticeable that all these sanctuaries were situated in relatively isolated areas, apparently not connected with any one settlement. These early examples were therefore employed as meeting centres, where those from the settlements around could come and celebrate ritual feasts together, performing worship on a larger scale than would be possible in a leader's dwelling (cf. Morgan 1990: 29, 83, 192; 1999: 375-376, for Olympia, Tegea and Isthmia as central foci of their region). They served two principal purposes, which need not be mutually exclusive, although before the 8<sup>th</sup> century it appears that most sanctuaries put greater emphasis on either one or the other. Firstly, they could serve as unifying centres, like a religious equivalent of a market-town, where people from the various settlements in the region could meet, enjoy a festival together, and make contacts and social bonds (cf. de Polignac 1994: 5). Isthmia is an ideal example of this type of sanctuary, located near communication routes, and with few early votives and no early cult buildings, so that attention was focused on communal dining (Morgan 1994: 113; 1998: 77; 1999: 305). As far as one can tell archaeologically, there was no serious attempt to divide social groupings during these feasts or to place significant investment into differentiated dining equipment before the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In the earliest phases at Isthmia, the vessels used were standardised in form, suggesting that attendees at the feasts were not diacritically distinguished through the equipment that they used (Morgan 1999: 382).<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the large terraces at Apollo Maleatas and Kalapodi, built in the Early Mycenaean

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<sup>65</sup> Likewise, in the earliest phases of Kalapodi, the vessels used were monochrome, which would have produced the same effect (Morgan 1999: 382).

period and in LPG respectively, were hypaethral communal areas on which people could gather and dine together (Lambrinoudakis 1981: 59; Felsch 1987: 5). As it appears that neither of these sanctuaries had a temple or other cult building prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, this would mean that all social tiers had the opportunity to share in the feast in the same general area.<sup>66</sup> On a smaller scale, it may have been that the sacred area on top of Mt. Hymettos in Attica also served as a location where people could worship the same god together (here Zeus) without feeling pressure to make outstanding dedications. It has been noted how the pottery used/dedicated is simply made and of inferior quality (Langdon 1976: 77-78). From this one could either assume that it was not used by the local elite or, more likely, that the emphasis at this sanctuary was on communality and the experience of feasting and worshipping together.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, sanctuaries could serve as a meeting place at which elite members of the local settlements could compete for comparative sociopolitical position and status. It is possible that sanctuaries such as Apollo Maleatas and Kalapodi, which appear to our eyes today as inclusive and relatively communal, hosted undercurrents of competition that are difficult to trace archaeologically. For example, there may have been certain areas of the terrace on which those of elite status were permitted to sit, different species may have been sacrificed and consumed by them, certain people only may have supplied the meat for the sacrificial feast, there may have been temporal diacritica over who could perform the rituals first, and they may have employed conspicuously different equipment that is now archaeologically invisible or that they took home with them (e.g. knives of different material, chairs and/or stools, special vessels). However, a more visible way in which one can trace elite competition at sanctuary feasts is through the dedications made during the context of the festival. Olympia, Athena Alea at Tegea and Perachora all seem to have served as a local focal point at which status could be asserted or competed for through the votives offered (Morgan 1990: 29, 83; 1994: 133). At Perachora, a number of the votives were of precious materials (such as gold) or imported, and therefore expressed the wealth of the donor and/or his family (Morgan 2002: 50). As all of these sanctuaries stood in relatively isolated locations, unconnected with one town at this period, such dedications would be an effective method for the local elite to broadcast their position to a number of other leaders around, or to vie for authority amongst those of similar social status. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the size and ostentatious nature of these offerings had increased significantly and the dedication of a bronze tripod-cauldron at a sanctuary such as Olympia was a conspicuous method of ensuring that one's wealth and command of resources were viewed by

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<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that there was a hiatus of activity at Apollo Maleatas after LHIIIC, therefore the cult building may have been erected fairly soon after the resumption of activity. The large terrace would have remained an inclusive area to feast upon however.

<sup>67</sup> I accept Morgan's (1990: 28-29) proposition that feasting was occurring on top of Mt. Hymettos. Langdon's (1992: 120-121) theory that the pottery was simply dedicated because of a lack of structure for dining in does not hold up – the amount of open-air dining discussed in this section should demonstrate that.

numerous others (cf. Morgan 1990: 44-45; Dickinson 2006a: 236). Moreover, this choice of votive recalls the issues discussed in 5.3, where a large, valuable feasting vessel symbolically referenced the owner's (or dedicator's) ability to host such feasts, thus emphasising available resources or authority to acquire the necessary food and manpower, and expressing the ideology that feasting defined elite identity. In a sanctuary context, as opposed to a tomb, the tripod-cauldron would be viewed by even more people and thus the statements it was intended to make would be conveyed even further.

Moreover, social competition could be expressed not just in the actions surrounding the feast, but in the context of dining itself. This intensified during the 8<sup>th</sup> century and appears to be concurrent with individual settlement leaders losing power as new sociopolitical structures developed. The change can be best seen at Isthmia, where the previous emphasis on equality was transformed in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century into a formalisation of divisions amongst the festival attendees. It can be traced in several ways, firstly by the creation of a separate dining area for those of presumably higher status. A terrace was constructed (East Terrace 1) and along its south side was discovered a series of postholes, which have been reconstructed as belonging to a temporary shelter for this area (Gebhard & Hemans 1992: 13-14; Gebhard 1993: 158; Morgan 1994: 125-126; 1999: 320; 2002: 47). It is a fairly small part of the overall terrace and therefore only certain privileged people could have used this structure, perhaps a tent for their personal use or a shelter for their offerings. Whether practical benefits such as shelter or privacy were emphasised or whether it was simply a method of distinguishing a small sector of the attendees, it must have created an automatic division between those within and those on the rest of the terrace. Secondly, there were also changes in the pottery assemblages around this time. At the west end of the terrace, the sherds were fewer and yet of higher quality and this may also indicate spatial division of the attendees by social status (Gebhard 1993: 158; 1999: 203, 206; cf. Morgan 1994: 126). In addition, there was a concurrent increase in the 8<sup>th</sup> century of more elaborate skyphoi and painted kraters, differentiated from the standardised vessels commonly used, and possibly employed as a visible method of displaying one's wealth and investment in the feast (Morgan 1994: 114; 1998: 79; 1999: 403; 2002: 47). All this suggests an increasing desire by the elite members of the settlements surrounding the sanctuary to use the sacred locale as a neutral ground for competition of their comparative statuses and authority.

It can thus be seen that during the 8<sup>th</sup> century sociopolitical manoeuvring at sanctuaries increased in archaeologically visible ways and very probably also in scale. It was during this era too that sanctuary activity became politically motivated on a scale beyond the individual leader. This is an unsurprising development, given the loss of all-encompassing authority experienced by settlement leaders (their decreasing religious authority was discussed above as an example) and the concurrent increase in power of other social groupings, such as the *ethnos*

and the forerunners of the *polis*. This is not to say that power passed from one man to the people, as it took several further centuries for this to occur in certain city-states alone, but rather that the main unit of society altered from a small, tightly-knit, pyramidal village structure with a preeminent leader at its head to a larger, more inclusive township exercising its overall authority as opposed to that of its leader. This development appears to be too major a phenomenon to omit entirely, yet it also moves away from sanctuary-based commensality *per se*; therefore, I discuss a couple of the principal examples only briefly here.

The Argive Heraion formed a meeting point between the settlements of Argos, Mycenae and Tiryns (8km, 5km and 9km distant respectively: de Polignac 1995[1984]: 37). While there is much debate surrounding if and when Argos seized hegemony over the sanctuary (Wright 1982; Strøm 1988; Morgan & Whitelaw 1991: 83-85; Antonaccio 1992; 1994b: 94-96; Hall 1995), the city did have some primary interest in and influence over the Heraion in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and appears to have concurrently tried to justify her presence in the area through use of the Prosymna terrace shrine (cf. Antonaccio 1994b: 94). This does not mean that Argos monopolised the sanctuary and its surrounding area, but rather that by attempting to have some control over it she was able to vie with Mycenae and Tiryns, which had major urban sanctuaries of their own (cf. Strøm 1988: 199; Antonaccio 1994b: 95-96).<sup>68</sup> Similarly, theories have surrounded Perachora as to which city-state controlled it in its earliest phases, seeing it as representative of and a pawn in the transfer of authority from Megara to Corinth (cf. Salmon 1972 for a comprehensive summary of these proposals). More recently, Tomlinson (1990: 325) has moved the emphasis away from a change of authority, by suggesting that the sanctuary originally served a group of local, independent rural communities, and it was only through Corinth's appropriation that it became a site-specific cult place (cf. Morgan 1999: 420). The sanctuary was viewed as a valuable locale in the expansion of Corinthian authority, as ownership of a sanctuary and the rituals occurring there constituted a prime method of demonstrating a town's power and influence in a region.

It is difficult to assess the effects that such political manoeuvring would have had on the average experience of sanctuary feasting. Certainly the scale of religious festivals increased rapidly from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards, at the Heraion, Olympia, Perachora and at other sanctuaries across the Greek mainland, but this need not be solely or indeed at all attributable to their appropriation by one particular town. The changes already outlined in religious practice in the 8<sup>th</sup> century make it clear that it was a period of transformation anyway. It was never the case

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. Gadolou 2002 for similar arguments surrounding Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros. In addition, a comparable development can be seen at Olympia, when Elis was resettled in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the Eleans realised the potential of the site, thus transforming it into their regional sanctuary, as opposed to a generalised meeting place for the area (Morgan 1990: 54-56).



that one town provided for sanctuary feasts, for example in the way that the palaces staged large feasts on their premises, even if they did control the site and the festivals. Therefore, the attendees would never be indebted to the town that held authority over the sanctuary, although they would be made aware of its sociopolitical power by how much it invested in the cult buildings/other installations and in the scale of the festival itself. For example, if it was indeed Argos that sponsored the building of the massive Cyclopean terrace at the Heraion, then its sheer scale and heroic/mythic overtones would have impressed visitors to the sanctuary, especially if they feasted on the terrace itself, with mental images of the nearby town that could afford to organise such a construction.

Overall, throughout the EIA, it is possible to see a basic continuity in sanctuary-based feasting practices, maintaining certain customs and actions that had been performed during the Mycenaean eras also. Religion is inherently a sphere which changes very gradually and adheres to tradition, in order not to anger the gods and to preserve stability in people's lives. The act of sacrificial feasting itself attests to this, as the basic rite seems to have changed little over the centuries from the earliest meals at Early Mycenaean Apollo Maleatas to its formalisation at early Archaic Perachora, where a *hestiatorion* was built specifically to house feasts possibly as early as the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century or shortly after (Tomlinson 1977: 199; 1990: 330).<sup>69</sup> The animal was slaughtered and dismembered so that it was divided into separate portions for the deity and for the worshippers; the divinity's allotted share was burnt on the altar while that for the humans was taken away to another part of the sanctuary for cooking and consumption.<sup>70</sup>

However, despite the superficial similarity seen in the fundamental practice of sacrificial feasting, we cannot assume from this that exactly the same belief system persisted across the invisible LBA/EIA boundary. There is no proof that the same gods were being worshipped, indeed it is likely that some at least were different (cf. Coldstream 1977: 327-332; Dickinson 2006a: 223), and some of the specifically palatial modes of worship, such as restricted-access elite cult rooms, were abandoned soon after the structures that nourished them had fallen. Those that did survive somewhat longer, such as room 117/110/a at Tiryns, did not outlive LHIIIC and can perhaps be seen as a failed experiment to revive the old ways. Moreover, there were changes and development in sanctuary feasting during the EIA itself. There were

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<sup>69</sup> It was proposed in an influential article by Bergquist (1988) that burnt sacrifices were not performed in the palatial period, but recent zooarchaeological work performed on faunal deposits from Ayios Konstantinos (Hamilakis 2003; Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004) and the palace at Pylos (Isaakidou *et al.* 2002; Stocker & Davis 2004) has shown this to be an erroneous conclusion.

<sup>70</sup> This is clearly attested in the zooarchaeological record at Eretria, where there are butchery cuts on the animal bones and selective deposition of certain anatomical parts only around the altar, suggesting that the rest was carried away by the worshippers for consumption (Chenal-Velarde & Studer 2003: 216-219). Similar patterns can also be seen in the Archaic-Classical zooarchaeological remains at Isthmia, where the forequarter parts are absent from the sacrificial deposits but present in a separate area of the sanctuary with apparent feasting remains (displaying butchery marks and less evidence of burning: Gebhard & Reese 2005: 126, 140-141, 144-147; cf. Gebhard 1999: 210-212).

variations in whether communality or competition was emphasised during the feasts, affecting whether people left feeling unified with their fellow festival attendees or newly aware of a local power, and an overall gradual increase in sociopolitical contestation (particularly towards the end of the period).

In the LG period, increased investment in sanctuaries led to the construction of early temples, or cult buildings, at several sites, such as Kalapodi, Apollo Maleatas and Tegea (and probably also the Heraion, Perachora and Eretria, depending on dating). This reflected a shift in how sanctuaries were treated, as a hypaethral, communal area was no longer deemed sufficient for satisfactory ritual behaviour, and also produced differential worship, as certain people only were permitted to enter or (in a few cases) to dine within. The re-appearance of restricted-access cult buildings recalls the situation in the palatial period, and is likely to be due to the development of a stronger, more unified sociopolitical structure from the end of the EIA onwards. Such a development, and the increase of conspicuous dedications in sanctuaries, may also be connected with the decline of ostentatious grave-goods (cf. I. Morris 1987: 141; Morgan 1999: 395-397, 406-409) as a new sphere for competition was recognised and mobilised. There is no neat transfer from one to the other, but a gradual shift in employing the sanctuary and its associated feasting rituals as a locale for expressing status and position in a way that had previously been done at a grave or in a leader's dwelling, a development which was very probably associated with changes in sociopolitical structure as the concept of the individual, all-encompassing leader declined. The rapidly increasing growth of sanctuaries was linked to their convenience as a location where sociopolitical negotiations could be performed – in the context of a shared feast and thus an ostensibly amicable occasion, originally often in neutral locations, in a place where large numbers could come together and witness the outcome, and in a centre that had become significant also in the economic sphere (cf. Morgan 2003: 108, 135, 153). In a century when power was extending beyond the individual settlement leaders and states began to come into being, the benefits of sanctuaries and their accompanying sacrificial feasts as arenas in which to play out these power shifts were recognised and resulted in an expansion and transformation of sanctuary commensality.

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To conclude therefore, the period after the collapse of the palaces to c.700 can be seen to incorporate two major phases of change in feasting practices: LHIIC and the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Between these lay a longer period of a more static nature, inheriting certain elements from earlier eras and altering other aspects to suit the greater insularity of the time, but essentially remaining remarkably unchanging over the three centuries that it comprised. These phases of change and continuity can be seen to correspond closely with the sociopolitical situation, as major transformations occurred in LHIIC after the collapse of the palaces, and in

the later 8<sup>th</sup> century preceding the rise of the Archaic city-state. The period inbetween was one when units of society were focused on the individual settlement and its leader, with strong recognisable similarities between the ways those leaders maintained authority at the beginning of the period (e.g. House P at Korakou, Nichoria Unit IV-1) and at its end (e.g. Xeropolis house). This overall correspondence between feasting practices and sociopolitical changes highlights the use of commensality both to respond to the social *milieu* and to generate modifications. When there were major moments of instability in the political regime, whether large-scale or on the level of an individual village, feasting was employed as a method of restoring security, constancy and familiarity. Examples of this include the re-use of palatial locations for feasting after the palaces' disappearance, the generation of community cohesiveness around a leader's hearth or in the celebration of communal religious rituals, the continuing styles of funerary feasting that were only very gradually changed throughout the EIA, and the search for a stable past in the food and drink-based rites performed in Mycenaean tombs. At the same time, feasting was not merely a way of responding to a rapidly altering world, but could be harnessed to bring about sociopolitical changes in its own right. The rejection of specifically palatial styles of feasting in the reordering of the megaron's commensal space, the demonstration of a settlement leader's authority through his ability to host feasts, the employment of sanctuary dining to display individual status or make territorial claims, and the propagation of the elite ideology of feasting are all examples of the active nature of commensality.

As the last of the three major diachronic divisions of this thesis, it is perhaps fitting that the issues of change and continuity should be so prominent. While LHIIC demonstrated such aspects most clearly, due to its chronological juxtaposition with the Mycenaean past and the need for people in that period to face the realities of a post-palatial world, the intertwining nature of change and continuity in feasting practices was maintained throughout the whole EIA. As major changes occurred between the Early Mycenaean and palatial periods in feasting styles, the same can be expected to have occurred again in the EIA, as new models were developed and practised – such as all-encompassing feasting in leader's dwellings, large-scale dining in sanctuaries, and the rise of tomb cult. On the other hand, the past influenced the EIA present very strongly and elements of continuity can be clearly seen, most strongly in funerary feasting and ancestor cult rituals, but also in specific aspects that were borrowed from earlier ages, such as the idea of sacrificing and consuming an animal in honour of a deity, feasting around a central hearth, and feasting as part of an elite "package". Both the changes and the continuities can also be seen to have played a role in the formation of Archaic styles of feasting. Tomb and ancestor cult presaged the way for hero cult; offerings of food to the dead gradually transformed into a division between the funerary feast and the grave itself; sanctuary feasting was formalised further in the building of *hestiatoria*; and the elite symbolism of being able to host a feast and

use it to display status was demonstrated most explicitly in the *symposion*. The EIA was a distinct era of feasting in its own right, in its unique blend of former elements and new styles; however, it also served as a lengthy transition between the LBA ways of performing feasts and those practised in the Archaic-Classical period. It was a bridge, when feasting styles changed gradually enough to offer stability to people, yet sufficiently to make the practice of commensality in the 7<sup>th</sup> century completely transformed from what had been current before the EIA began.

## Chapter 6: Feasting in Homer and Hesiod

*'And be not of bad grace at the feast thronged with guests: when all share, the pleasure is greatest and the expense least.'* *Works and Days* 722-723

Despite the laconic data provided by the Linear B tablets, the later EIA is the first period for which one can truly employ literary evidence to investigate feasting activities, due to the practice of recording epic poetry in written form potentially from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards. While there are many uncertainties surrounding this evidence, such as the date of the poems' composition in the form in which they survive today, their poetic and hence non-documentary character, and the perennial debate regarding what, if any, society they portray, to omit them would be a greater methodological error in my opinion than to include them. Provided that one constantly remembers that they are literary creations, complete with biases and inventions, and hence that they are not an exact reproduction of any one particular society, it would be foolish to exclude our sole opportunity to examine how feasting was regarded – in other words, to consider a mental perspective on commensality alongside the archaeological debris. Such an omission would be unthinkable in historical archaeology and at this period, the transition from protohistory to a true historical era, I likewise intend to use every available source of evidence. The poems that I discuss in this chapter are both Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and Hesiod's *Works and Days*. According to Janko's (1982: 189, 231) now conventional dating, which is what I follow here, all three were composed and probably also committed to writing from the mid-8<sup>th</sup> to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, in the following order: *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Works and Days*. Whilst I acknowledge the arguments placing the Homeric poems' final development in the form that we have them in the later 6<sup>th</sup> century (Nagy 1992: 42-45, 49-52; Seaford 1994: 147, 150-151), these imply either that the texts were still being developed during the 'static era' of the *rhapsodes*, or that Homer was a literate poet as opposed to a truly oral one, which are conclusions I cannot accept.<sup>1</sup>

Before approaching the texts themselves, it is necessary to engage with the critical debate surrounding the poems, specifically the Homeric epics. For my purposes here, certain elements of the 'Homeric Question' need not be argued further; for example, whether we see one genius poet or a combination of lesser composers at work makes little difference to how we interpret the mentions of feasts in the poems. Conversely, the issue of Homeric society is fundamental to

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<sup>1</sup> The role of the *rhapsodes* was to memorise and repeat others' songs, not to compose them in performance, and it would be highly unlikely to have both a creative and a static oral tradition at the same time. It has been shown that, once other means of singing than creation-in-performance have been introduced, the quality of oral poetry rapidly declines, yet Homer appears to represent the apogée of the tradition (Lord 2000[1960]: 124-128). As for Homer's orality, both Lord (2000[1960]) and Reece (2005) have produced linguistic studies showing clearly that he worked in a fully non-literate tradition.

my following interpretations, and hence must be considered – what date that society might be, or whether it even is a coherent historical society. It is also helpful to understand what kind of audience the poet(s) was composing for.<sup>2</sup>

Since Schliemann's discoveries at Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns, the overriding interpretation up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was that the Homeric poems depicted the Mycenaean palatial world that he had excavated. Scepticism of this viewpoint was shown by Lorimer (1950: 497-498) in relation to the *Odyssey*, although in many ways she still subscribed to the majority view. However, in more recent years, particularly influenced by major works such as Finley's *The World of Odysseus* (2002[1954]), scope for dating Homeric society has increased significantly. The only consensus to have been reached is that the epics do *not* portray Mycenaean society accurately.<sup>3</sup> Those who see Homer as describing a coherent, historically verifiable society place it anywhere from LHIIIC (Hood 1995), to somewhere in the 'Dark Ages', particularly 10<sup>th</sup> century (Finley 2002[1954]; Dickinson 1986), to the more recent past in the 9<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Qviller 1981; Raaflaub 1997; E. Cook 2004), to the contemporary 8<sup>th</sup>-century world (I. Morris 1986; 1997; Powell 1991; Van Wees 1992; Crielaard 1995; Raaflaub 2006). Conversely, there are those who see the society in the poems as a literary construct, an amalgam of practices and objects that can never be situated in a specific era (Kirk 1962; Bowra 1972; Snodgrass 1974; Murray 1980; S. Sherratt 1990; 2005; Seaford 1994).<sup>4</sup> I follow this latter group in interpreting Homeric society as a cultural amalgam; it is clear that in terms of material culture the poems reference all eras from before the palatial period, the supposed *milieu* of the characters, down to Homer's own time (cf. S. Sherratt 1990). Those studies that are dedicated to locating material markers in specific eras seem ultimately futile (e.g. Powell 1991; Crielaard 1995), as it is impossible to select one period in which all the tangible objects surrounding the heroes in the poems can be identified. Certain items can be linked with relevant historical periods, such as specific arms, the use of the chariot, the appearance of Phoenicians, or the Gorgoneion; however, even these limited examples show a range of dates from the Mycenaean era down to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and thus exemplify how it is impossible to identify one specific coherent society from the material culture.

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<sup>2</sup> While I follow a broadly Unitarian perspective, I admit the likelihood of more than one poet being involved in the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Henceforth, I refer to Homer as the poet for ease of expression, not as a definitive statement of this particular individual's sole role in composing both poems.

<sup>3</sup> The decipherment of Linear B by Michael Ventris in 1952 aided this shift away from interpreting the poems' world as Mycenaean, as it became clear that the tablets recorded a very different society from the one that Homer portrays (cf. Finley 1957b: 139-141).

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that recently Dickinson (forthcoming) has moved towards this viewpoint also.

Going beyond artefacts to social institutions, again it is impossible to attach all the elements in the poems to one particular period. The overall concept of palaces may bear a very distant memory of Mycenaean prototypes, although much distorted through time; the strongest impression gained is that of EIA 'Big-Men'-type leaders (cf. Finley 2002[1954]); yet concurrently there may also be indications of the *polis* in the poems (Crielaard 1995: 242-247; Raaflaub 1997: 645-646). Significantly however, it should be noted that institutions appear to have survived less well in the epic memory than artefacts, an unsurprising fact given the possibility of objects' *Nachleben* as heirlooms and the difficulty of referencing an unfamiliar intangible concept in the audience's mind (cf. I. Morris 1986: 90). Hence the appearance of Mycenaean weapons but complete silence regarding palatial administration. From this, one can conclude that social institutions and practices, while not necessarily contemporary with the poems' composition, would be features of the more recent past.<sup>5</sup> They would have to be sufficiently comprehensible to the audience so that they could concentrate upon the plot without having to decipher the cultural specifics; while concurrently the more archaic artefacts (such as bronze weapons) helped to give the story a sense of heroic verisimilitude. Interwoven with this would also be elements of fantasy or epic distance, designed to captivate the audience and to emphasise the characters as from an ancient, semi-divine era (Raaflaub 2006: 455-456).

Given this cultural amalgam, one cannot correlate the references to feasting in Homer directly with the archaeological evidence discussed in the previous three chapters, although there are parallels between the ways meals are prepared, served and consumed in the poems and the concrete data, particularly from the EIA. Sue Sherratt (2004) has already produced a detailed examination of Homeric feasting and cooking methods that compares them with the archaeological evidence, and therefore I do not intend to repeat her work here (cf. also Van Wees 1995). Rather, I look beyond the material parallels to consider how feasting might have been *regarded* by Homer's audience – what I have highlighted as the primary justification for including poetic evidence in this thesis. This approach works on the assumption that descriptions of Homeric feasting are sufficiently recent to be comprehensible to the poems' audiences, but without the necessity of limiting them to one particular point during the EIA. Ian Morris' important paper of 1986 sees the epics as philosophical constructs, a presentation of how 8<sup>th</sup>-century *aristoi* wanted their society to function (cf. also 1997: 557-558). To some extent, I agree with this interpretation, as the *Odyssey* in particular emphasises opposing

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<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that the songs performed in the epics themselves, with the exception of the Ares and Aphrodite myth in *Od.*8, go no further back than the exploits of the previous generation (Raaflaub 2005: 60). While these meta-textual examples obviously differ from the Homeric poems themselves, which describe a heroic world in the distant past, they may preserve a belief that oral poetry was intended to be relevant and immediately comprehensible to the contemporary audience.

paradigms of how feasting should/should not be performed, and therefore it is possible to derive the mental conception that 8<sup>th</sup>-century Greeks held of commensal practices.<sup>6</sup>

The poems were originally performed to a certain set of people at a specific point in time, despite their later Panhellenic status, and thus the images and institutions they contain had to be recognisable and understandable to this audience. Moreover, the social behavioural norms seen in the poems must have been applicable to the original listeners. Unfortunately, there is as yet no consensus regarding the particular region that Homer performed in (Chadwick 1990); while Ionia is still a strong contender for this location (Kirk 1975; Horrocks 1987; 1997), the recognition of west Ionic dialectical features has meant that Euboia is also a very reasonable proposition (West 1988; Powell 1991; Bennet 1997). Certainly its central geographical location and flourishing EIA societies, such as that of Lefkandi, make this likely if not definite.<sup>7</sup> Of course, the burgeoning tendency towards a Panhellenic outlook in the poems, as the characters and locations are spread across the entire Greek world, may imply that the beliefs and norms presented by Homer might not necessarily have been specific to one region alone (S. Sherratt 2005: 134-135). However, the safest conclusion at present is to maintain that the conceptual images of feasting in the poems were probably rooted in the practices of one particular area that is as yet unidentifiable.

Furthermore, the social status of the original audience is somewhat opaque, with some proposing that the poems were sung to the elite only (I. Morris 1986; Latacz 1996[1985]), and others maintaining a more varied group of listeners (Kirk 1962; Dalby 1995; Scodel 2002). Both arguments draw upon internal evidence; those positing that the epics were a form of elite self-validation indicate that the two bards in Homer, Phemios and Demodokos, were both court singers who performed to predominantly aristocratic audiences (Latacz 1996[1985]: 32), while those preferring a socially heterogeneous audience identify such features as the meaning of Demodokos' name and the vagueness surrounding elite dwellings and diet (Dalby 1995: 273-278; Scodel 2002: 176-177).<sup>8</sup> While the aristocratic slant of the epics themselves cannot be denied, given the status of the majority of the primary characters, this does not necessarily mean that the audience was of equivalent social position. I think it more plausible that Homer (and other oral poets) performed to a heterogeneous group, probably a gathering of local people as attested for Slavic epic (Lord 2000[1960]: 14-16; Jensen 2005: 48). A likely location for these

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<sup>6</sup> I do not subscribe to the entire argument, which proposes that such a philosophical society was part of an agenda of political self-validation by the elite (I. Morris 1986: 124-125). The idea of the Homeric poems presenting paradigmatic social practices is however an influential one and relates well to my argument here. Cf. *contra* Dalby 1995.

<sup>7</sup> It is perhaps significant in this context that the sole documentary account of an epic performance is sited in Euboia, when Hesiod sang at Chalkis at Amphidamas' funeral games (*Works and Days* 654-659).

<sup>8</sup> Demodokos = 'the people' (or the *demos*) + 'opinion'.



performances is a leader's dwelling (cf. 5.2), which would have been large enough to hold all the men of a village or representatives of each family.<sup>9</sup> If epic performances were held at specific events, such as a funeral (cf. Hesiod's winning song at Amphidamas' funerary games: *Works and Days* 654-659), then the audience may have been larger and more inclusive, although it is much less likely that long poems on the scale of the Homeric epics would have been performed at such busy occasions. The meta-textual references to oral song in the epics support these varied reconstructions, even if they are aggrandised or idealised to make them more appropriate to their heroic context – while Phemios sings principally to the aristocratic occupants of Odysseus' palace, Demodokos performs in *Od.* 8 to most of the inhabitants of the Phaiakians' town. It is therefore difficult to envisage that the Homeric poems were principally a product of elite propaganda and class consciousness, and it is more likely that they appealed to a wide range of people, although possibly with different listeners on different occasions. Hence if we accept a socially mixed audience, the inference can be drawn that the attitudes towards practices such as feasting in the poems represent those of several sectors of society.

Turning to the poems themselves, an examination of the texts supplements the archaeological evidence from the previous three chapters, by providing us with a mental image of feasting that offers a completely different angle from the debris of commensality. While only directly applicable to the later EIA, some of the tenets surrounding feasting are likely to have been time-honoured and thus give a broader insight into how both ordinary and elite people regarded and performed commensality. The first three sections deal with the Homeric epics exclusively, concentrating initially on the *Odyssey* due to the greater role that feasting plays in that poem. The topics considered are: the use of the paradigmatic feast to illustrate behavioural norms, commensality as a sociopolitical device, and feasting as a heroic activity revealing status. The final section of this chapter deals with Hesiod and references to feasting in the *Works and Days*.

### ***1. Good Feast/Bad Feast: Paradigms of Dining in the Odyssey***

The principle that the Homeric poems offer insight into the mental attitude towards feasting of at least one sub-set of people, the poet's audience, is particularly demonstrated in the *Odyssey*, where it has been recognised by a number of scholars that Homer appears to have deliberately constructed opposing forms of feasts in order to offset the ideal against the perverted (Gunn 1971; Scott 1971; Saïd 1979; Most 1989; Slater 1990; Reece 1993). Hospitality, including offering a meal, is one of the key themes of the epic and thus the regular feasts that the

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<sup>9</sup> The majority of the leader's dwellings were not large enough to hold all the inhabitants of an entire village. Therefore, some restriction must have operated to select who were permitted to come and hear the bard (and feast concurrently?). Ethnographic comparisons suggest that sex is a common determining factor, although not universal (Jensen 2005: 48).

characters consume explore the varied kinds of *xenia* that might be experienced. To some extent, all the meals in the *Odyssey* can be categorised as either “good feast” or “bad feast”, although Homer carefully retains ambiguity and a spectrum of how distorted or idealised a feast is.<sup>10</sup>

When Telemachos is leaving Sparta in order to return to Ithaka, Menelaos summarises almost gnominically the duties of a perfect host: ‘It is equally bad when one speeds on the guest unwilling to go, and when he holds back one who is hastening. Rather one should befriend the guest who is there, but speed him when he wishes’ (15.72-74).<sup>11</sup> This serves as a measurement for all instances of hospitality in the epic, with the two principal faults identified as excess of and lack of generosity.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the whole of the *Apologoi* can be seen as based around these paradigms, with an intricately designed structure dividing the individuals Odysseus meets into those who detain him (excess of generosity) and those who try to eat him (lack of generosity: Most 1989: 22-24). As a feast is a fundamental part of the hospitality process, offered on a guest’s arrival before information is sought from him, the same basic principles apply to commensality. Lack of generosity is seen when the guest is not given food quickly enough or at all; conversely, excess of generosity produces a situation in which the guest is made to feel over-indebted to his host or unable to fulfil the social negotiations that should be performed during/following a feast. Such ideas have already been explored in relation to oral formulaic theory (Gunn 1971; Reece 1993; J. Foley 1999), and I do not repeat the specific conclusions drawn. Rather I here examine each of the principal hosts and the feasts they offer in order to discover what was considered normative commensality in the Homeric world.

I deal first with the paradigm of the “bad feast”, best exemplified by the suitors’ behaviour throughout the entire epic. Their commensal activity is presented as breaking the rules in almost every possible way, right from their first appearance where they are so intent on their own pleasure that they are oblivious to the appearance of a guest (1.106-120), and even when Athene-Mentes is feasting in the same room as them they pay no attention to her.<sup>13</sup> The immediate repetition of the feast type scene at this point indicates that these two meals (Telemachos and Athene-Mentes; the suitors) should be read as occurring spatially together, but

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<sup>10</sup> The use of the type scene as an oral device has proved fundamental in the exploration of the hospitality motif, given that subtle adjustments to the formulaic scene alter its tone and emphasise perversions of the norm (Gunn 1971; Reece 1993).

<sup>11</sup> All quotations from the *Odyssey* are taken from Richmond Lattimore’s (1991[1965]) translation, and all those from the *Iliad* from Martin Hammond’s (1987).

<sup>12</sup> While excessive generosity may not immediately seem so harmful, in the context of Odysseus’ *nostos* its threat of indefinite detainment becomes obvious.

<sup>13</sup> The rudeness of this can be seen in 4.30-36, where Menelaos is appalled that newly arrived guests are waiting outside and have not been invited to partake in the feast.

that the suitors are markedly ignoring the guest and continuing their activity regardless (Scott 1971; Reece 1993: 50-51). Such selfishness here can be paralleled by their greed subsequently throughout the epic, and it should be understood from the condemnation of their behaviour at every available opportunity that feasting is not an activity to be performed solely for one's own gain. Although profit can rightly be expected, it must be accompanied by personal outlay to be acceptable. Telemachos makes this explicit in the Ithakan assembly, when he tells the suitors to 'go away from my palace and do your feasting elsewhere, eating up your own possessions, taking turns, household by household' (2.139-140).<sup>14</sup> Feasting should be a process of both gift and gain, with reciprocity the key principle operative behind it. Instead, the suitors are behaving as if they are dividing up booty, and thus making the inhabitants of Odysseus' house victims (Saïd 1979: 23). As is seen in 6.2, at the suitors' level of interaction the correct code of conduct is *balanced* reciprocity (cf. Donlan 1982: 144, 148), and we see here a model by which those in the uppermost tiers of Ithakan society were expected to maintain equality in their feasting activities. If an elite individual gave a feast for his fellow-*aristoi*, then he could expect to be entertained reciprocally in the future. Such a process is made clear by the frightened Eurymachos' promise to Odysseus, shortly before his death, that he would offer 'public reparation for all that has been eaten and drunk in your halls' (22.55-56); evidently the restitution of material goods was intended to serve as a substitute for reciprocal feasting.

Additional examples of the suitors' greed and selfishness in their feasting are plentiful, such as the way they regularly requisition animals from Odysseus' flocks and herds for consumption (e.g. 14.81, 17.212-214, 20.173-175).<sup>15</sup> In addition, they do not bring their feasting to a satisfactory end – as Menelaos stated, a "good" host is not only one who is generous but one who knows when to conclude a festive occasion (16.110-111; Seaford 1994: 54-56). The interminability of the suitors' feasting is one reason why it distresses Telemachos so much and why it is portrayed as unacceptable to the impartial observers in the Ithakan assembly. Furthermore, the suitors' general impiety and obnoxiousness are deemed inappropriate for a festive context.<sup>16</sup> Instead of organised games and dancing (as seen at the Phaiakians' feasts), they are entertained by the brutal spectacle of two beggars fighting; they hurl items of furniture

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<sup>14</sup> This is earlier stated at 1.374-375, when Telemachos tries to give the suitors a final warning before the assembly.

<sup>15</sup> This recalls the process by which animals were recorded in the Linear B tablets as brought to the Mycenaean palaces for feasts (e.g. TH Wu series). Although some animals were given as donations, others were requisitioned and the fact that the palatial administration was in charge of this process indicates how the suitors may be viewed as usurping the position of those in authority.

<sup>16</sup> For the way that the suitors repeatedly fail to honour the gods in their feasting, cf. Saïd 1979: 32-40; Lateiner 1993: 183.

around on a regular basis;<sup>17</sup> additionally, there seems to be little unity amongst the suitors and they are often bickering or arguing. Such an atmosphere should be alien to a feast; as the suitors themselves say after Eurymachos throws a footstool at Odysseus, ‘and now we are fighting over beggars; there will be no pleasure in the stately feast at all, since vile things will be uppermost’ (18.403-404). Two faults can be identified here – the more obvious is the violence, which is patently unacceptable, but there is also the disruption of a harmonious atmosphere.<sup>18</sup> The ideal feast is explicitly described by Odysseus as an occasion of pleasure and concord (9.5-10), and the suitors’ behaviour should be viewed in the context of this paean to perfect feasting.<sup>19</sup> The joy that “good feasts” provide can be contrasted with the pain that the suitors’ feasts cause Odysseus’ family and the general dissatisfaction experienced by the suitors during them.

It should be clear that the suitors’ feasts are the paradigmatic “bad feasts” of the *Odyssey*, and this is made even more explicit by the manner of their deaths, which occur actually during dining (Reece 1993: 180-181; Clay 1994). Odysseus sinisterly compares the forthcoming slaughter to a feast, suggesting that he will serve them their ‘dinner’ (21.428-430). Their dead bodies lie amongst the debris of their feasting, and Antinoös’ fatal wound is appropriately situated in his throat (Lateiner 1993: 192). An explicit link can therefore be drawn between their crime and their execution; they broke every rule of commensality and the moral conclusion of the poem is that the way they were feasting should be avoided at all costs. If the poem’s audience were expected to accept that the suitors’ feasts were “bad” to the extent that their slaughter was justified, one can assume that the suitors would be understood as performing a highly perverted version of the correct feast.

Other “bad feasts” are depicted with different varieties of distortion. The most extreme example is obviously that of the Cyclops, who eats his guests in a parody of the usual feast type scene (Reece 1993: 132-136; J. Foley 1999: 179-180). His cannibalism is as far from the normative feast as it is possible to go. Additionally, like the suitors, Odysseus’ men consume a feast out of greed and pervert the correct mode of consumption, by dining on Helios’ cattle without the

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<sup>17</sup> It should be observed that the items they hurl (footstools, an ox-hoof) are intimately connected with the feast, through being either consumed or employed as commensal furniture, therefore revealing how the suitors are directly inverting the norms of feasting events (Reece 1993: 170).

<sup>18</sup> The ostensible reasoning behind moving the weapons from the megaron – that the drunk suitors might fight – fits into this image of violence as antithetical to the feast: ‘with the wine in you, you might stand up and fight, and wound each other, and spoil the feast’ (16.292-293; 19.11-12). The same thought processes can be seen in the *Iliad* also, when Hephaistos says, ‘This will be a grievous business, and beyond endurance, if you two are to quarrel in this way over mortal men and set the gods to wrangling: and we shall have no pleasure in the feast, since unworthy things shall be foremost’ (1.573-576).

<sup>19</sup> ‘...for I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant than when festivity holds sway among all the populace, and the feasters up and down the houses are sitting in order and listening to the singer, and beside them the tables are loaded with bread and meats, and from the mixing bowl the wine steward draws the wine and carries it about and fills the cups.’

presence of the host. They help themselves to his livestock in much the same way as the suitors do to Odysseus' animals. The incorrectness and perversion of this feast is emphasised through the disturbing portents that occur when the meat is being prepared (11.394-396), as well as the associated punishment that follows (cf. J. Foley 1999: 182-183). Other hosts who significantly break the rules of hospitality are Kalypso and Circe, although, unlike the suitors, Polyphemos and Odysseus' men, their error was an excess of generosity. Both sought to detain Odysseus against his wishes, whether through power or through magic. Circe in particular used a feast as a concealing device for poisoning Odysseus' men and attempted to do the same to Odysseus himself. This utilisation of a commensal occasion for evil means is shown to be wrong, through the gods' intervention to oppose Circe's designs.

While the "bad feasts" are presented negatively by Homer as the opposite of the norm, there are also "good feasts" in the *Odyssey* that act as exemplars of commensality. In addition to its dramatic and character-revealing purposes, the *Telemacheia* allows the poet to present a range of normative hospitality to offset the subsequent *Apologoi* (Most 1989: 25-26). A balance of "good" and "bad" is carefully constructed, on the micro-scale at the very opening of the epic, as was mentioned with Telemachos' and the suitors' feasts in book 1, and on the macro-scale with a travelling tale of ideal hospitality followed by Odysseus' voyage of nightmarish feasts. Such a pattern is repeated in the latter half of the poem where Eumaios' outstanding generosity is contrasted with the suitors' behaviour. Telemachos himself is portrayed as an exemplary host in intentions, although he is hampered by his lack of control over his own resources. His hospitality to Athene-Mentes and his feast for Theoklymenos in 17.84-95 reveal his generosity and courtesy, although it should be noted that in both these cases he is only able to host one guest and not offer a large-scale feast. While his manners cannot be faulted, it is clearly not the ideal situation, and it is at the feasts offered by Nestor and Menelaos that we see what Telemachos is aspiring to. By experiencing "good" large-scale consumption, he is able to recognise what a perfect feast is and it is not coincidental that when he returns home he begins to take charge of the suitors' commensality by choosing to whom he offers food (20.260-262) and dismissing his guests at the end of the feast (18.408-409). Therefore, it should be understood that an ideal host does not only offer abundant food and display excellent manners to his guests, but also has the authority to orchestrate the occasion smoothly.

The visits to Pylos and Sparta are constructed around a series of commensal occasions, and in many ways these are presented as the ideal "good feasts" and a standard against which the other meals during the epic can be compared (Reece 1993: 59). While both Nestor and Menelaos potentially threaten to detain Telemachos through excessive kindness, on both occasions such

an outcome is successfully averted.<sup>20</sup> Despite this risk, the emphasis is principally upon the generosity shown in the course of the feasts provided. Telemachos is immediately invited to partake of food, which is provided in abundance, even though in Sparta he accidentally arrives during a wedding feast. The richness of Menelaos' banquet (and palace), although probably due to the double marriage celebration, is surely designed to impress the poet's audience and to support the image of a highly idealised feast. Additionally, he selects the choice part of the meat for his newly arrived guests, revealing great generosity (4.65-66).

Comparable munificence is seen in Eumaios' humble feast, where he ensures that Odysseus has the portion of honour (14.437-438), and gives abundantly out of the little he has. As he is of low status, he does all the cooking and serving himself, yet this also reveals his courtesy and generosity. The unique features of this feast are attributable to the fact that it is the only "good" one that does not occur in a heroic setting; therefore, the poet could not rely upon the full set of formulaic feasting descriptions and drew upon more vernacular language and images (Reece 1993: 161). Hence it may be that this feast was the most familiar and/or comprehensible to Homer's audience; certainly as a character Eumaios was the one that non-elite listeners could most identify with. This may possibly have been the closest to a real "good feast" that an 8<sup>th</sup>-century individual understood, and the preceding examples in the poem were heroised versions of it, with their precious vessels and grander scale.

As for the Phaiakians, by immediately bracketing the *Apologoi* and their varied examples of "bad feasts", they act as a contrasting example of "good" hospitality. The ambiguity of some moments on Scherie has been stressed, such as their delay in welcoming and feeding Odysseus and their questioning of his identity before he dines (Most 1989: 26-27; Reece 1993: 104-106). Certainly there is an element of risk during the whole of Odysseus' sojourn there, highlighted by the ways in which they depart from conventionality (such as Arete's prominent role). It has also been suggested that the Phaiakians themselves provide a "good" and "bad" feast contrast, in the double commensal session in book 8 – the first feast leads to Odysseus' weeping and is speedily concluded, while the second resolves the conflict induced by the games and is a joyful occasion (Slater 1990: 218). As was mentioned above, an ideal feast should be a pleasing event without strife or sorrow, and this fact is expressed through the direct juxtaposition of the two banquets. However, overall the feasts hosted by the Phaiakians fall into the "good" category, as even the gods are happy to dine with them (7.201-203). They say that feasts are an occasion at

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<sup>20</sup> Telemachos fears to return to Pylos on his journey home because of the delay Nestor would cause (15.199-201) and it is clear that Menelaos had detained him for longer than he wished through his stories and hospitality, emphasised by the final feast that he insists upon giving before Telemachos departs (Reece 1993: 60, 74-75).

which to 'rejoice' (8.429) and that 'always the feast is dear to us' (8.248). Such genuine pleasure in commensality is sufficient indication that the Phaiakians aim to offer an ideal feast, and this is supported by their overall generosity to Odysseus, offering him meals, entertainment, gifts and honour.

To conclude, in the *Odyssey* Homer presents a carefully constructed study of what a "good" and "bad" feast consisted of, by describing them in detail and structuring the poem so that opposing examples are juxtaposed, and also by giving the characters explicit statements of how commensal behaviour was expected to operate. The "bad feasts" are directly condemned, particularly the suitors' banquets by the characters who still supported Odysseus; while on Scherie both Odysseus and Alkinoös discuss the elements that a "good feast" consists of. The cumulative image is of a fair, generous and pleasant event, where balanced reciprocity is the operative principle, the host provides amply from his resources, and all parties delight in the harmoniousness of the event. Moreover, it was understood that it would end at an appropriate point, as too much could lead to satiety and thus spoil the sense of pleasure. Although it is impossible to define exactly Homer's audience, to his listeners the code by which feasting operated should have been comprehensible on a first hearing, without the luxury that we have of reading the text to examine the intricacies of the poem's structure. Moreover, as Homer was working with traditional material, albeit presenting it afresh, it is likely that he was describing practices and norms that were familiar to his audience. It is difficult, if not impossible, to decipher which parts were heroised practices (how the listeners thought characters of heroic stature should act) and which were contemporary (how the audience themselves performed commensality), and perhaps such a distinction is not appropriate to a poetic text. What is clear however is that the fundamentality of normative hospitality and feasting to the entire plot of the *Odyssey* indicates an acceptance of what a "good feast" should be, and from this we can gain an insight into the mental conception that Homer's audience had of commensality.

## ***2. Basileus' Feast: Dining as a Sociopolitical Device in Homer***

An issue related to commensal codes of conduct is the understanding of what feasts could/should be used for, specifically in the arena of sociopolitical negotiations. For this section I employ both Homeric epics, as together they show a variety of feast types, reflecting the archaeological evidence for different modes of feasting practices. As has been recognised in both the texts and the archaeological data, feasts were opportunities for social negotiations, including the acquisition of authority over subordinates, the maintenance of existing social hierarchies, and the formation of community bonds. Rather than attempting to link explicitly the two spheres of evidence, by finding exact archaeological parallels for the various feasts in Homer, I concentrate upon examining the assorted types of commensal events in the epics, in

order to delineate how in the (presumed) 8<sup>th</sup> century people understood the different uses and purposes that feasts could have.

It was mentioned in 6.1 that the suitors' violation of the norm revealed that feasts were expected to be reciprocal occasions, as Telemachos unequivocally states at the assembly (*Od.*2.139-140). This suggests a level of inter-elite interaction, whereby a certain level of society (Homer's *basileis*) hosted each other in turn in a system of balanced reciprocity, perverted by the suitors into negative reciprocity. However, while this principle was clearly regarded as important and familiar enough for the plot of the *Odyssey* to hinge on it, most feasts in Homer do not fall into this category and operate rather upon what Donlan (1982: 163-164) terms generalised reciprocity, or chiefly redistribution. This phenomenon, familiar from the archaeological examples discussed in the previous three chapters, entailed a leader having sufficient authority to mobilise resources that were then employed in feasts given to the people under him. The ideal role of a leader in hosting feasts is highlighted by Antikleia in the Underworld, when she tells Odysseus that 'Telemachos administers your allotted lands, and apportions the equal feasts' (*Od.*11.185-186). Obviously, Telemachos is not actually doing this, but the hope held by Antikleia and Odysseus that he is suggests that it was part of the responsibilities of an effective leader. Significantly, the fact that the suitors are seizing control of Telemachos' resources (particularly food reserves) means that he cannot host feasts himself, and hence cannot win for himself a support base through his generosity, which would enable him to gain back power on Ithaka (Lateiner 1993: 178). When seen in this context, the suitors' incessant and greedy feasting is not simply a violation of good conduct, but is also an intentional stratagem to undermine Telemachos' source of power (Lateiner 1993: 192). If he was able to host feasts, as Antikleia erroneously envisions, he would therefore be able to fulfil a leader's duties in generously provisioning the people and thus gain increased sociopolitical authority for himself.

The concept of a leader's responsibilities incorporating the provision of feasts is seen repeatedly throughout both epics, and is explicitly stated when Nestor tells Agamemnon to offer a meal for the other *basileis*: 'Give a feast for the elders: it is right for you to do this, and quite what is proper' (*Il.*9.70). As a *primus inter pares*, Agamemnon here is expected to assume the role of a leader feasting his subordinates, with the aim of being able to maintain harmony and his position after his authority had been undermined. Menelaos also notably invites 'many townsmen' and neighbours to his children's wedding feast (*Od.*4.4, 15-16), which one might presume was a tactical move in order to uphold support and peace amongst the people he ruled over. Moreover, it is significant that Odysseus tries to preserve this system even when he is divorced from the realities of everyday life; when he was on Aiaia, he provided a feast in the



form of a hunted stag for his men, and this ability to give them food indicated that he was still worthy of being their leader (Scodel 1994: 533-534; cf. also Rundin 1996: 201-202).

While this sounds somewhat harmonious, and on occasions the host/leader indeed reached into his own stores for the feast, it is also suggested that at times he would requisition food from the people, in much the same way as is recorded in the Linear B feasting supplies tablets. Nestor reveals that Agamemnon's huts contained 'wine that the Achaians' ships bring daily over the broad sea from Thrace' (*Il.9.71-72*), and in a Cretan tale Odysseus explains that he entertained "Odysseus" out of his own stores, but for his companions 'I collected from the public' barley, wine and cattle (*Od.19.198*). Clearly the generosity of the host/leader should not be overstated, as they were ready to requisition supplies from their people if necessary. The second feast at Sparta, on the day after the wedding, should likewise be seen in this mode, as the banqueters themselves appeared with sheep, wine and other supplies, and even involved themselves in the cooking (*Od.4.621-624*).<sup>21</sup> Therefore, a leader's role in organising these feasts displayed not a surplus of resources (as when he hosted them), but rather political control over manpower and other people's stores.

However, feasts could also take a more balanced direction, when they were given by a leader in return for favours or work done by the recipient(s). In other words, a leader did not just host feasts in order to maintain a support base, but incorporated the process into an active exchange that kept the social matrix operating smoothly. There are several examples of this mode of feasting: on Achilles' shield, the king's heralds organise a feast for the harvest labourers, in a process directly resembling *corvée* labour (*Il.18.556-560*);<sup>22</sup> Agamemnon reminds Menestheus and Odysseus that their participation in the feasts offered to them meant reciprocal keenness on the battlefield (*Il.4.338-348*); in his first Cretan tale, Odysseus tells how he attracted people to his expedition by offering them six days of feasting, also recalling the use of feasting to pay for military service (*Od.14.248-251*); Eumaios reminisces how the farm workers would be rewarded by a meal in Antikleia's presence (*Od.15.376-378*); and Telemachos insists that the men who took him by ship to mainland Greece should receive a feast in repayment for their services and companionship (*Od.15.506-507*).

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<sup>21</sup> This feast has been seen as a form of pot-latch, or communal feast/ἔρανος (Van Wees 1995: 171); however, I disagree with this interpretation as its occurrence in the *basileus*' palace does not seem to bear resemblance to the ἔρανος as I understand it from Homer and Hesiod's references. It is highly unlikely that Menelaos allowed the feast to occur in his dwelling without managing it in some way.

<sup>22</sup> Rundin (1996: 191) sees two separate meals occurring in this passage, with the main feast (δαίς) not for the workers' consumption, who have to be content with a dinner (δεῖπνον). Despite the use of these two different words in the same description, it appears to me that both sets of preparations are part of the same large-scale event, perhaps a form of harvest festival.

Conversely, while feasts offered by leaders could repay subordinates for services or obligate them to perform duties in the near future, it is also apparent in Homer that the system could work the other way around as well, which is much harder to trace archaeologically. It appears that at times the leaders feasted at public expense; rather than the *basileis* providing commensal events for their people, the people gave feasts for their leaders. The reasoning behind these meals at public expense is complex – a leader who felt appreciated by his people would undoubtedly keep their best interests in mind; it could be a way of rewarding the leader for his previous services in protecting or governing his people; or it could even be a requirement by the leader in an inverse way of demonstrating his authority through an apparently harmonious social system. In any case, Homer clearly states that at times the *basileis* feasted on public provisions, rather than drawing upon their own resources (*Il.*17.248-251). This then entailed obligations drawn *from* the leaders *to* the people, one example of which is explicitly stated by Sarpedon, who realises that the generosity and honour shown to him and Glaukos by the Lycian people, ‘with pride of place, the best of the meat, the wine-cup always full’, meant that they ‘should now be taking our stand at the front of the Lycian lines and facing the sear of battle’ (*Il.*12.310-311, 315-316). The expectation was that, if the public paid out to honour their kings, the response would be to protect the people and make them proud (so they could say ‘These are no worthless men who rule over us in Lycia’, *Il.*12.318-319; cf. Van Wees 1995: 165-166). This model is intertwined with the more conventional form of the leader provisioning the people, without explanation that they were two diametrical modes of feasting, and thus it may be presumed that Homer’s audience was equally familiar with both styles and took these distinctions for granted (cf. Raaflaub 2005: 61).

Public feasts need not solely be to honour and extract services from leaders, but could also act for the benefit of those who contributed to them. Such a mode appears rarely in Homer, although again the allusive references to these events may suggest that they were easily recognisable to his audience and needed no explanation. The public feast is signalled by the elusive term ἔρᾱνος, seen when Athene-Mentes asks Telemachos what is happening in his palace, ‘What feast is this, what gathering? How does it concern you? A festival or a wedding? Surely no communal dinner [ἔρᾱνος]’ (*Od.*1.225-226), and also when Agamemnon describes his companions’ murder as ‘like pigs with shining tusks, in the house of a man rich and very powerful, for a wedding, or a festival, or a communal dinner [ἔρᾱνος]’ (*Od.*11.413-415). It is noticeable that on both occasions the ‘communal dinner’ is associated with weddings and festivals (the latter would certainly be a public occasion; the former may also have had wide participation, as seen at Menelaos’ children’s wedding feast), and therefore it should be

understood as an event at which the whole local community gathered together.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the assumption that the audience would be familiar with such events means that they are not described in any further detail. Possibly they bore relation to the great public sacrifice held at Pylos (*Od.*3.5-9), where the people from the surrounding nine settlements all provided the victims and it is implied that some at least were also present to be recipients of the meat. Conversely, they could have been much smaller-scale, the type of village feast that remains relatively elusive in the archaeological evidence. It is intriguing to note Athene-Mentes' certainty that the suitors' feasting was *not* a 'communal dinner' – perhaps because she could tell that they were all of elite status, suggesting that the ἔρανος was genuinely a more inclusive, lower-status event?

Finally, feasts appear as arenas in which the guests' social statuses could be negotiated and reaffirmed through the use of diacritica, such as has been seen in the archaeological data of the previous three chapters. Relative social standing could be indicated through the seating positions of the guests; as Odysseus notes in his description of an ideal feast, the diners were seated in a specific order (ἐξείης, *Od.*9.7-8). Clay (1994: 36-39) has studied the seating order of the suitors and noted that they are always in the same place, so that Odysseus begs from the lowest to the highest, culminating at Antinoös, the accepted leader of the suitors; the bow contest follows the same pattern, when they are explicitly directed to take their turns in order (ἐξείης, *Od.*21.141). It is evident that one's seat at a feast was determined by one's status, and it is reasonable to assume that this was reliant upon social position.<sup>24</sup> In addition, special honour could be shown to a favoured individual at a feast through the use of diacritical food or vessels (cf. Saïd 1979: 21; Griffin 1980: 14-15; Rundin 1996: 188).<sup>25</sup> The best portion of meat was an effective method of selecting someone for particular honour – Aias is given 'the whole length of the chine' for his excellent performance in battle (*Il.*7.321-322), and Odysseus is also granted 'the long cuts of the chine's portion' when dining with Eumaios (*Od.*14.437-438). Another means was through the amount served; as Agamemnon tells Idomeneus, 'The other long-haired Achaians drink only as their ration allows, but your cup always stands full beside you, as does mine, to drink at your desire' (*Il.*4.261-263). Additionally, conspicuously grand vessels indicated favour, such as when Telemachos gives the beggar Odysseus wine 'in a golden drinking cup', thus proving to the suitors that the vagrant's status was being significantly raised in their host's eyes (*Od.*20.260-261). All of these diacritical methods would have been highly

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<sup>23</sup> Although Hesiod does not use the term ἔρανος, this seems to resemble closely the mode of feasting he describes in the *Works and Days* (cf. 6.4).

<sup>24</sup> Connected with this is the seat of honour, where a newly arrived guest is given the prime position next to the host (e.g. *Od.*4.51, 7.169-171).

<sup>25</sup> Sometimes even attendance at the feast itself was an honour, for example when Antinoös promises the winner of the beggars' fight that 'he shall always have dinner with us' (*Od.*18.48; cf. Moreau 1894: 141).

visible to the other participants and would have indicated to all attendees how the privileged social position of selected guests was being markedly reaffirmed or conspicuously altered during the course of the feast. Hence, as has also been seen archaeologically, feasts were an arena for modifying and for propagating the *status quo*.

It can therefore be noted that there were a number of modes of feasting in Homeric society, all of which appear to have been familiar to the audience, due to their casual introduction and the lack of distinction drawn between them. It was apparently assumed that the poet's listeners would know the difference between these feasts, such as who provisioned them and what aims they were expected to achieve, and hence one can surmise that at the period of Homer or in the recent past there were several active feasting styles, not all of which are easily identifiable from archaeology alone. Previous studies of sociopolitical feasting in the epics have concentrated on disentangling these various modes in order to find dominant styles which can be classed as "Homeric", often while connecting them directly with archaeological evidence (Moreau 1894; Van Wees 1995; Rundin 1996; S. Sherratt 2004). I am indebted in the above discussion to all these works, and the comprehensive analyses that they contain. However, the sheer multiplicity of feasting modes in Homer is often not emphasised enough; as should be clear from the above examination, feasts were arenas for every type of sociopolitical negotiation. Rundin (1996: 199) has noted that feasts were the dominant element in the exchange network of Homeric society and, as that society was built on principles of exchange and reciprocity, it can be said that the practice of feasting was fundamental to the smooth operation of the entire social matrix. Feasting in the poems is peaceful when the sociopolitical system is operating effectively (such as on Scherie) and disorderly when there is near-anarchy (such as amongst the suitors), so that the centrality of feasting activities to sociopolitical networks is visible (Seaford 1994: 48-49; Rundin 1996: 202-204).

Moreover, while parallels can certainly be found with the archaeological data, including distorted versions of palatial commensality and connections with EIA feasts in leader's dwellings, it is as yet impossible to supply evidence for all the feasting modes in Homer. This is due to the subtlety of the obligations and reciprocities created through feasting in the epics. Although in the palatial period the Linear B records explicitly identify who hosted feasts and how supplies were gathered, these refer to one particular type of commensality only. Elsewhere it is often unclear what results were being aimed for and feasts such as the public provisioning of leaders are extremely difficult to distinguish from other modes. Therefore, it is through the epics' evidence that we can discern the existence of such feast types and, as already stated, the casual way in which they are referred to suggests that they were a familiar part of life or at least remembered from a few generations before.

### 3. Heroic Feast: Dining as an Elite Activity in Homer

In the introductory section to this chapter, I discussed the issue of how far the Homeric poems depict an aristocratic viewpoint. This is partially connected with where the epics were sung and who listened to them, although there is no reason why lower-status people could not appreciate poems chronicling the lives of elite or heroic individuals (indeed, it may even have appealed to them in giving them a glimpse of a life they did not experience).<sup>26</sup> A more significant issue, however, is that of elite self-validation propagated through the performance of the Homeric epics, as proposed by Ian Morris (1986; cf. also Latacz 1996[1985]: 48-49, 65-66). As noted earlier, I agree with Morris' (1986: 124-128) idea that the poems depict a world that was how contemporary *aristoi* wanted it to function. There is no doubt that overall Homer depicts an aristocratic world of heroes, in which those of non-elite status are often nameless and shadowy individuals. When the poems are compared with Hesiod's *Works and Days* (cf. 6.4), there is a clear difference between the two viewpoints and Homer's elite bias is evident. However, I am less comfortable with Morris' concept of the epics being used as pseudo-propaganda by the elite to justify their position in a changing world. Homer criticises the behaviour of certain *basileis*, particularly Agamemnon in the *Iliad* and the suitors in the *Odyssey*, and occasionally gives prominence to low-status but attractive characters such as Eumaios. While this could be due to his poetic skill at verisimilitude, it is more likely it was designed to appeal to a wider range of listeners and thus not project the poems as propagandistic texts of class consciousness (Scodel 2002: 179-180). In summary therefore, I assume in this section that the Homeric epics are focused towards the elite, and to a certain extent are influenced by 8<sup>th</sup>-century aristocratic considerations of how life was/should be, but that they did not function as texts of elite self-validation.

Because they are poetic texts and not documentary evidence of EIA life, it is impossible to understand exactly how far feasting activities in the epics were viewed as elite practices by Homer's audience. As I have already discussed, social institutions are more likely than material objects to be features of the recent past, and the way that feasting practices are introduced in the poems suggests that they were familiar to the audience. However, were they familiar because the audience themselves carried out similar practices (or remembered that their grandfathers had)? Or because it was common knowledge that the elite performed such activities? In order to investigate this in more detail, I consider how far feasting in the poems is presented as an indicator of high social status. While there is no doubt that Homer's characters are principally

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<sup>26</sup> Again, comparisons with Slavic epic are instructive, as the tales of warrior heroes and aristocrats appeared to be just as enthusiastically received by the inhabitants of small villages as by the wealthy elite, if not more so (Lord 2000[1960]: 14-16). Additionally, Dalby (1995) has argued that, given the vagueness surrounding various aspects of elite lifestyle in the poems, the poet and his audience were both drawn from the poorer tiers of society.

elite, was feasting a specific marker of this status or was it a more widespread activity that they happened to perform because it was functional?

Participation in feasts appears to have been somewhat restricted, and exclusion was practised. The beggar Odysseus is only permitted to request scraps, and does not sit and dine until Telemachos, as the host, specifically invites him to (*Od.*20.260-262).<sup>27</sup> Similar reasoning can be seen in Andromache's predictions for Astyanax' future, when she foresees that he will be abusively expelled from feasts for being fatherless and hence presumably disgraced (*Il.*22.492-501). Therefore, while feasters may not have been required to be of elite status (as the various herdsmen are not barred from joining the meals), those of particularly low status were prohibited from participating and hence it appears that to some extent feasts operated on principles of social position. Furthermore, the exclusion of women has been noted (Van Wees 155-160; Rundin 1996: 189-190); for example, Penelope never participates in the feasts that occur in her husband's palace.<sup>28</sup> This emphasis on feasting as a male activity is also noticeable in the preparation and serving of food – while women are involved (such as the ubiquitous 'grave housekeeper'), they are restricted to serving bread and side-dishes, while only men deal with the meat (Van Wees 1995: 158). A male carver (*δαιτρός*) has the task of slicing and serving the meat to the guests. One might presume that this was a specified and fairly highly regarded role, from the fact that Menelaos requests his neighbour Eteoneus to come and fulfil the task for him (*Od.*15.95-98).<sup>29</sup> Meat was integral to Homeric feasts; the description of it being prepared and cooked is often lengthy, while (apart from bread) other food is very rarely mentioned by name. There thus seems to be a tripartite connection constructed between feasting-meat-men, discussed further below. Overall therefore, it appears that there were certain requisites for participation in a feast (middle to high status, male), so that on a broad level the act of commensality was a status marker.

It should be noted that even those of particularly high status were willing to get involved with the preparation of a feast, the best example being Achilles when the embassy visits him (*Il.*9.199-228). He is the one who actually cooks the meat, fillets it and serves it to his guests.

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<sup>27</sup> This may well be because, as a beggar, he could not reciprocate the generosity he was receiving and thus was unable to enter into a 'feast exchange' relationship (J. Bennet pers.comm.). Hence one might presume that only those who had something to offer in return were permitted to partake in feasting activities.

<sup>28</sup> The two exceptions, Helen and Arete, have been explained on account of their special characteristics: the Phaiakians themselves are unique and close to the gods, hence their conventions may differ, and Helen is half-divine as well as an unusually liberated woman (Rundin 1996: 189-190).

<sup>29</sup> When Kalypso feasts Odysseus, it is notable that the food she puts before him is not specifically mentioned but is 'all manner of food...such things as mortal people feed upon' (*Od.*5.196-197). This successfully obviates the potential difficulty of having a female host, as it is not stated that she deals with meat. The description of the meal Circe's maids give Odysseus and his men is similarly elusive (*Od.*10.356-373).

As one might have expected him to leave these tasks to servants, his active role suggests that the whole process of feasting, not just consumption, was elevated enough for a high-status *basileus* to perform it without shame. Achilles had no reason to abase himself before his visitors, and therefore it must be assumed that this was standard behaviour and feasting preparations as well as dining were regarded as suitable for heroes (Knox 1973: 3). The fact that this was not an exception can be seen in Nestor's active part in the alimentary sacrifice at Pylos by burning the meat and mixing the wine (*Od.*3.390-391, 459-460). Likewise the suitors, who are still *basileis* even if not as heroic as Achilles, are content to deal with the meat personally during their feasts (*Od.*20.250-253). As elsewhere they are perfectly willing to be waited on and to enjoy another's property, their lack of passivity here again suggests that feasting and its preparations were appropriate for those of high status. This can be explained by the fact that feasting was a demonstration of wealth and sociopolitical standing. As was mentioned in 6.2, the ability to host a feast acted as proof that one was worthy of being a leader (Scodel 1994: 533-534). This was due to the display of resources and one's control over them that a feast offered, as well as the fact that a leader who could provide for his men appeared to have their best interests at heart and so would presumably be worth following. When a feast is viewed as symbolic in this way, it is comprehensible why involvement in the preparations was not seen as servants' work but could be performed by the leader himself without shame. The intimate connection between the leader, his resources and his (apparent) lack of self-interest would be made explicit to the guests.

Thus we have established that feasting was restricted on a very broad basis by status and sex, and could act much more narrowly as a symbol of leadership. However, could a feast operate as a marker of the elite tier as a whole? The inclusion of boys (such as the young Achilles and Odysseus: *Il.*9.486-489, *Od.*16.442-444) at commensal events suggests that participation was based on ascribed status, supporting this conclusion (Van Wees 1995: 175). Likewise, in the *Iliad*, it is always the *basileis* who are shown feasting, while the ordinary infantry are simply given their 'dinner' or 'supper' in the camp. The conclusion therefore has often been drawn that feasting in the epics is a marker of elite status or possibly even restricted to those of aristocratic standing (Moreau 1894: 136; Van Wees 1995: 174-175; Rundin 1996: 191, 201-202), and this is true to the extent that only one individual of non-elite status *hosts* a feast in the epics, Eumaios.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, it is hard to explain away the attendance of Eumaios, Philoitios and Melanthios at the suitors' feasts, all of whom sit and dine with their social superiors, and whose ease at doing so suggests that it is not a unique occurrence (*Od.*17.256-260, 330-335). Possibly it is because they share a special status in the eyes of the suitors and Telemachos for the help

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<sup>30</sup> Moreover, this is exceptional in its language and components, as discussed in 6.1, and is required by the plot's exigencies.

they offer, and thus their cases may be seen as exceptional due to the plot's exigencies. It is perhaps significant that when they assist in feast preparations, it is the suitors who deal with the meat, and the three herdsmen are relegated to bread, wine and vessels (*Od.*20.250-256). However, one can adduce Menelaos' many neighbours who come to his children's wedding feast, and the workers on Achilles' shield who are to be rewarded with a feast for their labour. It cannot be assumed that all these are of elite status. It appears that the correct conclusion to be drawn is that, although feasting is often presented as an elite activity, in reality it was not restricted to the upper tier of society and there were opportunities for others to participate (S. Sherratt 2004: 184).

However, although this may have been how feasting was practised in reality, an ideology appears to have been propagated by which the performance of commensality was intertwined with elite status. In other words, feasting was presented as emblematic of elite status, but in actuality members of other social tiers could also feast if they had the resources to or were invited. This accords very closely with the archaeological situation in the EIA, discussed in 5.3, where it was argued that an elite "package" was promoted, by which the combination of feasting, martial activity, travel and wealth served to define elite status, even if in reality other groups also partook in such practices. The Homeric poems therefore converge fairly closely with the archaeological data, in preserving the ideology of elite feasting, while also recognising that it was an activity performed by a wider sector of the population.

The ambiguity existing between the elite promotion of feasting and the more inclusive reality, seen in both Homer and archaeology, is best exemplified through the cooking methods used in the poems. It is a familiar fact that the meat is spit-roasted on every single occasion (cf. S. Sherratt 2004: 186). The amount of detail varies in the descriptions, but there is no exception to the actual method: after slaughtering, the animals are sliced into portions and threaded onto spits for cooking. As was discussed in 5.3, the inclusion of metal spits in well-furnished EIA tombs was a method of marking the occupant's status, and I suggested that an ideology may have developed during this period surrounding spit-roasting, which saw it as a cooking method appropriate for "heroes" (de Polignac 1995[1984]: 129-130; S. Sherratt 2004: 192-194). Therefore, being buried with these spits signalled the claim being made that the deceased held a warrior elite status, strongly resembling that of the Homeric heroes. The only mention in the poems of another cooking method is in *Il.*21.362-364, where boiling is described in a simile: 'As a cauldron comes to the boil with a good fire speeding it, melting down the lard of a fatted hog which bubbles up all round'. Similes are the epic components that are most liable to change over time and are most likely to draw upon contemporary images, as they explained to the listeners any objects or concepts that were unfamiliarly archaic (S. Sherratt 1990: 813);



therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that this description of boiling referred to a non-elite, contemporary practice to intensify the audience's mind-picture of what a river-god fighting would be like. The image is particularly non-epic and it is possible to see the construction of a cooking dichotomy between projected elite practices and the almost accidental inclusion of a vernacular method.<sup>31</sup> The presence of boiling reveals how a specific ideology was being created and promoted, by which those of elite/heroic status are seen to dine on spit-roasted meat; other methods are deliberately excluded and the bubbling cauldron creeps in only through the more contemporary language of a simile.

A similar deliberate strategy can be seen in the way the heroes eat meat continually, despite the fact that this was very probably not the case for most people in Homer's time. The owning of animals that could be slaughtered for meat was a statement of wealth, so that feasting on them was a declaration of socioeconomic superiority (S. Sherratt 2004: 184-185). Indeed, the consistent consumption of meat in the poems, albeit apparently monotonous, could be explained by the fact that to non-wealthy/non-elite people this literally was the best, most high-status diet that they could imagine (Dalby 1995: 276-277). Although the whole spectrum of domesticates is consumed (cattle, pigs, sheep and goats), there is an emphasis on cattle, presumably because their size and the investment required to slaughter them made them emblematic of wealth and heroic values (Saïd 1979: 11; Griffin 1980: 19; S. Sherratt 2004: 185; Whittaker 2007: 178). This recalls the tripartite association mentioned above between feasting-meat-men. By consuming meat – itself a symbol of wealth and social position – that had been cooked in a heroic manner, seated in an exclusively male company, it is comprehensible how feasts were viewed as suitable activities to employ in promoting elite masculine values. This does not mean that feasts were always performed in such ways, but rather that the poetic descriptions, by excluding women and low-status individuals, non-heroic cooking methods and quotidian foodstuffs, defined and propagated an ideology that made feasting the activity of a certain group of people alone.

To conclude, it appears that the Homeric epics promote the concept of feasting as the preserve of the elite tier of society, a specifically male and heroic activity. To some extent, participation in feasting was genuinely restricted and it was an accepted method through which a leader could display his status. However, elements of other scenarios that can be glimpsed indicate how much this was an ideology rather than an actuality, such as the occasional inclusion of lower-status individuals and the brief appearances of non-heroic cooking methods or foodstuffs. This

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<sup>31</sup> The use of different cooking methods to distinguish between different social tiers was proposed in 4.2, for feasts at the palace at Pylos, although there intriguingly the majority of meat appears to have been roasted, with boiled dishes reserved for elite guests (cf. also Appendix III).

is not to state that the Homeric poems were directly promoting this mindset in a process of elite propagandistic self-justification; if so, it is likely that the elements of other, actual feasting practices would have been more carefully excised, such as the multiplicity of feasting styles and the non-elite individuals who dine. Rather, they were echoing a set of beliefs that had been propagated throughout the EIA, and can be seen archaeologically, whereby an elite “package” was constructed to symbolically convey status. Therefore, the Homeric poems offer a companion-piece to the archaeological evidence, by revealing how the mental image of feasting was idealised and reduced into one specific type of commensality.

#### ***4. Peasant's Feast: Dining in Hesiod's Works and Days***

The aristocratic viewpoint in Homer's poems is indisputable and, despite the occasional appearance of evidence to the contrary, practices such as feasting are presented as elite activities. Therefore, to represent fully the range of commensal practices attested in literature at the end of the EIA, in this final section I consider feasting in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.<sup>32</sup> Hesiod presents himself in the poem as a peasant farmer from a very specific location, Askra in Boeotia; therefore, his social position and geographical location are ostensibly more definite than Homer's. Inevitably, Hesiodic scholarship has centred around whether this is simply a poetic *persona* and how far his dispute with Perses can be considered to have influenced the poem's composition (if it occurred at all: e.g. West 1978: 34-40). Moreover, the main theme and purpose of the poem are regularly discussed, with few still accepting the view that it genuinely serves as a didactic text from one farmer to another and a documentary record of agricultural life in the late 8<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century (Nussbaum 1960: 214, 217). The themes of work and righteousness/justice (δικη) are often stressed as being central to the poem, above the purported straightforward didactic purpose (Østerud 1976: 16-17, 23; West 1978: 47; Jones 1984), and certainly Hesiod appears to take a moralistic tone at times. Stephanie Nelson (1996; 2005: 340) has argued that the poem serves as a poetical description of farming – an attempt to capture how the agricultural year was experienced by peasants, couched in a didactic tone to involve the reader. A further interpretation is offered by West (1997: 306-307), who sees the poem as drawing heavily upon Near Eastern traditions in both subject matter and stylistic genre. While this is a convincing argument, it does not invalidate Hesiod's value for exploring Greek practices, given his adaptation of his sources to fit his own worldview (such as the inclusion of the Heroic Race in the Five Ages myth).

While the dispute with Perses may indeed be fictionalised for the purposes of the poem's composition, I follow here Edwards' (2004: 23) view, who concludes that, even if this was the

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<sup>32</sup> I have not included the *Theogony* for discussion, as it concentrates upon the gods and other supernatural entities, and therefore cannot be fully representative of human activities.

case and Hesiod was not even a farmer himself, he has presented such details to be believable and therefore they *could* have occurred in a small-scale society like that of Askra. Moreover, the impracticality of the “farming manual” at points supports the conclusion that Hesiod is creating an image of peasant life rather than just informing his listeners (S. Nelson 1996: 45, 48-49). His practical information may not be comprehensive, but he has credibly captured the realities of life for a lower-status farmer and thus the activities he portrays can be employed as evidence when investigating the social practices that peasants performed. The world that he describes is very much in the present, in comparison to Homer, where it is often stressed how bigger, stronger and better the characters were than people in the poet’s own time (S. Nelson 2005: 335). In addition, as Hesiod’s several references to feasts are unconnected with the alleged dispute with Perses or the moralistic parts of the poem, they are not integral to the “plot” and are therefore more likely to be genuine observances of real life.

As feasts are mentioned comparatively rarely, it is possible to discuss each reference in turn in order to construct a comprehensive image of commensality from a peasant’s perspective. Firstly, in 113-116, the Golden Race are said to have ‘enjoyed themselves in feasting’ amongst other blessings.<sup>33</sup> While this is a mythical instance, it agrees with the evidence from Homer, where feasts are presented as occasions of pleasure and joy; Odysseus describes feasting thus: ‘for I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant than when...the feasters up and down the houses are sitting in order’ (*Od.*9.5, 7-8). The myth of the Golden Age as blessed was firmly part of the popular imagination (West 1978: 179; 1997: 314), and the connection between it and feasting thus further emphasises the concept of commensality as a highly desirable activity. One can conclude that, whether one was an aristocrat or a farmer, feasting was appreciated as delightful. Similarly, Hesiod notes that ‘straight-judging men...feast on the crops they tend’ (230-231). From its moralising perspective, this can be seen as uniquely Hesiodic; as discussed in 6.1, in Homer those who were “bad” indulged regularly in feasting and even employed it for evil ends.<sup>34</sup> However, again an association can be drawn between a good, blessed life and the ability to feast. The blissful state of the righteous man (225-237) echoes that of the Golden Race’s existence, and both times the same components make their lives perfect: good/righteous living → agricultural abundance → feasting → happiness. The connection is explicit and, as in Homer’s “good”/“bad” feasting paradigms, the contemporary mindset is visible: good living and good feasting are associated and a feast is intended to be an ideal occasion that brings joy to all participants.

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<sup>33</sup> Quotations are taken from M.L. West’s (1988) translation.

<sup>34</sup> It could be argued that all the “bad” feasters get their just reward, but Hesiod is more explicitly moralistic in noting that famine spares those who are just and righteous, and they are therefore the ones who have the resources upon which to feast.

So far, Hesiod has accorded with Homer's portrayal of feasting on the philosophical level; however, the other references in the *Works and Days* are more specifically related to the peasant's experience. A feast, particularly a religious one, is an auspicious occasion and therefore should be associated with the right actions. Specifically, it is good to father a child after a feast (735-736) and bad to cut your nails at the event (742-743). These rather odd proverbs reveal the way that major events in a peasant's year, such as alimentary sacrifice, were bound with superstition. Because a feast was a joyous occasion, it was also auspicious and hence good for conception; plus it is likely that such events were not common affairs for the average farmer (as is suggested by the predominance of elite feasting in Homer), and thus merited a celebratory attitude (West 1978: 337-338). As for the nail-cutting, that is less explicable, although the general thought appears to be that feasts were not occasions for ritual impurity (West 1978: 339). In many ways, this connects with the previous idea that feasts were idealised, pleasurable occasions; however, it is intensified by the fact that large-scale consumption of meat probably would not have been a regular event for a peasant, and thus was treated as a major occasion in the farmer's year.

Feasts in Hesiod were also occasions where social negotiations could be played out. He instructs his listeners to 'Invite to dinner him who is friendly, and leave your enemy be; and invite above all him who lives near you' (342-343). Obviously, this operates on a much smaller scale than the sociopolitical negotiations of Homeric feasts (cf. 6.2), although the principle of commensal events being grounds for expressing social relationships remains the same. The standard here appears to be balanced reciprocity, although on a personal friendship basis (Edwards 2004: 89-90). It should be noted that these feasts (and consequent reciprocity) were organised at the level of the *oikos* as opposed to the community as a whole (Edwards 2004: 94-95). The impression given from Homer is that feasts were either an aristocratic affair of inter-elite interaction or were more communally based; this reference in the *Works and Days* adds another layer to the picture of late EIA feasting, by indicating that households organised their own feasts with each other. Hesiod emphasises inviting one's neighbours; the scale is indeed a small, local one. The likely outcome of this type of feast was the construction of relationships between the various households, not only to build friendships but also to create support bases in time of need.<sup>35</sup> It could lead to an expression of one's status, in that one had enough surplus to host a feast, but this would only be understood amongst the neighbours who attended and would not necessarily affect or even be known by the village society as a whole.

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<sup>35</sup> Such support bases could be used as genuine risk buffering, in the case of an individual household's crop failure or other personal disasters such as a family death, but could also be used cooperatively so that several *oikoi* might assist each other at key moments of the agricultural year (e.g. harvest).

However, this is not the only feasting style that Hesiod mentions; in 722-723, he seems to be referring to a larger event ('thronged with guests') and says 'when all share, the pleasure is greatest and the expense least'. This appears to be an occasion similar to an ἔρανος, where all the villagers participated by bringing food and feasting together (cf. West 1978: 333). Unlike the previous *oikos*-based meal, this was a true communal event and served to bind the settlement together. It is likely that it was not presided over by a leader; Hesiod gives no hint that the occasion was orchestrated on any other basis than the communal, and Edwards (2004: 120-123) has proposed that Askra was unlikely to have supported a *basileus* of the type that Hesiod criticises. In this reference also, Hesiod tells the attendee to 'be not of bad grace at the feast', which partially recalls the ideology already discussed that a feast should be a harmonious, happy event. However, it has also been connected with a similar prohibition not to 'find fault' with sacrifices (755-756) and suggested that criticism of distribution – whether to the gods in their portion, or to villagers of lesser status – should be restrained (Robertson 1969: 168-169). At such a communal feast, all were entitled to receive their portion of food, otherwise the balance of relationships in the small settlement would be upset.

In conclusion, Hesiod's references to feasting in the *Works and Days* support and enhance the picture gained from Homer's poems. Both poets present an idealised image of feasting as it *should* be, whether through the construction of paradigmatic "good" and "bad" feasts or through more direct moralising. It is clear that people at the very end of the EIA had a lucid image of a feast as a peaceful, joyous event, whether their social position was elite or peasant. However, Hesiod also introduces styles of feasting that are elusive in Homer, due to the latter's aristocratic bias, and hence broadens our understanding of the types of commensality practised in this era. The obscure ἔρανος reappears as the communal feast in the *Works and Days*, so that it is possible to gain a greater comprehension of how it operated, and Hesiod also refers to feasting occurring between individual households, a mode that on a low-status level is absent from Homer. Peasants and the elite both feasted and their views on commensality were surprisingly similar, but the types of feasts that the farmers performed were relevant to their lower social position.

At the end of this discussion, the reasons for using Homer's and Hesiod's texts as evidence for late EIA feasting should be clear; although they are poetical and are surrounded with ambiguity, the insight they provide into commensality is invaluable. They broaden our perspective on styles of feasting that are not obtainable solely from the archaeological record, particularly for occasions that were small-scale or non-elite. A wider range of feasting modes can be obtained

from these three poems, with differing hosts, aims and natures, and thus it is possible to view the complexity of feasting during the later EIA. Moreover, the poems also provide information on how feasting was viewed by 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-century individuals, a mental attitude and image that cannot be derived at all from archaeological data. Both ends of the social scale idealised feasting and had clear conceptions of how it should be performed. Additionally, they surrounded feasting with their own social mindset – the elite constructed a complex ideology around commensality which presented it as the preserve of aristocrats and a sign of their status, and the peasants bounded the occasion with superstition, its significance derived from its position as a major event in the farmer's year. Both poets represented feasting as they saw it, and the fact that they surrounded it with the dominant ideologies of their period and ostensible social position should not make the evidence any less valuable. The way that both poets casually introduce their references to feasting indicates that the audience was familiar with these forms of commensality, both in terms of practical operation and mental conception, and hence that Homer and Hesiod were drawing upon recent or contemporary, real practices.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

*'They, when they had finished their work and got their feast ready, feasted, nor was any man's hunger denied a fair portion. But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking, they thought of going to bed, and accepted the gift of slumber.'* *Odyssey* 16.478-481

Throughout this thesis, a diverse range of data and case studies, of trends and styles has been examined and, in order to make all these comprehensible, conclusions have been consistently drawn in the course of each chapter. To summarise and expand upon these separate conclusions therefore, I commence by tracing the diachronic patterns seen in each of the three principal feasting arenas, followed by a discussion of how feasting in general terms was understood and employed by the individuals who partook in it throughout my research period, before concluding with a brief consideration of how it developed after c.700 and how far this continued trends already in existence.

Funerary feasting is by far the most stable sphere, and changes remarkably little over the nine centuries under discussion. This lack of development is even more surprising given the diversity of tomb types (shaft graves, chamber tombs, cists, tholoi, pit graves), treatment of the body (inhumation, cremation, secondary burial rites), and grouping of corpses (multiple family tombs, individual graves). While funerary feasting was not completely unchanging, its stability is thus emphasised against the backdrop of such varied burial rites. In all three eras, there was an apparent belief that consuming a meal at the graveside was appropriate behaviour when laying the deceased to rest. In some tomb types, particularly chamber tombs and tholoi, it appears that the deceased were deemed to have partaken in the feast themselves, as the meal occurred directly in the chamber alongside the body, and these were presumably highly emotive occasions where the dead individual was given his/her last opportunity to share in the activities of the living. However, while the personal, emotional nature of these feasts was a prime reason to hold them so close to the deceased, their location at the graveside was also an opportunity to display a whole web of social messages, from an elaborate display of grave-goods to careful selection of who could dine around the body. By being disconnected from the ordinary world of the settlement, the cemetery was a fresh arena to renegotiate status in the society of the living.

The move to feasting directly within the tomb occurred fairly early in the Early Mycenaean period, and it is very likely that it was connected with both an increase in tomb space and a sudden prior rise in rich grave-goods (as exemplified in the Mycenae Shaft Graves). Interring a body with great wealth would be futile if no one knew that it was there. Therefore, a ceremony around the body, where it would be impossible to miss such a display, would give the guests occasion to see the gifts and interpret the bid for status being made. This is relevant to the

larger tombs, as it would be impossible to fit more than one or two people in the smaller ones (and none at all in certain grave types), but these lower-status funerals may well have been more personal affairs anyway, prioritising grief over display. The funerary arena was never directly controlled by any leadership or regime (*contra* Voutsaki 2001), although it was influenced by it during the palatial period; therefore it was an ideal location for personal expression and status claims. The fact that, despite this freedom, conformity in practices is seen throughout almost nine centuries is explicable by the natural conservatism of the funerary sphere and the need to respect the dead by treating them as their ancestors had been.

Towards the end of the EIA, there is the beginning of the first major shift in practices, where food was left for the dead and the feast was consumed at the family's house instead, a ritual that became standard practice in the Archaic period. This has been explained by a change in attitude towards death (Sourvinou-Inwood 1981; 1983), whereby it was feared and thus divorced from the feasting activities. While this may have some validity, as discussed in 5.4, it may also be that there was no longer a need for the guests to view the tomb and grave-goods during the funerary feast. Personalised stelai and monuments, which could be seen long after the funeral, were coming into fashion and conspicuous displays of status were regularly being made in another heterotopic location that would hold them visible for "posterity", the sanctuary. The funerary feast, in the form of the *perideipnon*, remained fundamentally enshrined in burial rites after the EIA, yet the previously long-held practice of allowing guests to view the tomb, body and grave-goods during the meal was gradually abandoned.

Sanctuary-based feasting, in contrast, increased dramatically in scale and popularity over the nine centuries under study. The religious practices of the Early Mycenaean period are shrouded in obscurity and, as yet, Apollo Maleatas is the only identified sanctuary whose use goes back into that era. The clearest conclusion appears to be that sanctuary-based worship existed and incorporated feasting, but was a minority choice out of several ways of honouring supernatural entities. More popular appear to have been the horseshoe-shaped structures that housed feasts, generally in cemetery locations, in connection with a form of ancestor worship. The apparent reluctance to adopt specifically defined sanctuaries as a locale for religious activity could be due to a variety of reasons, including conservatism and unwillingness to abandon age-old practices, prioritising ancestor worship over that of a pantheon of gods, or their lack of suitability for the type/scale of rituals that people performed. However, it should be noted that in both the rare sanctuary evidence and the more frequent horseshoe-shaped structures feasting was a key component of the religious rituals. Whoever was being worshipped, the consumption of a meal was understood to be a fundamental element.



While sanctuaries are not numerous in the palatial period, they are certainly more so than in the Early Mycenaean era, and they can be subdivided into palatially-associated shrines, cult buildings connected with settlements, and open-air sanctuaries. Although there was a greater variety of sanctuary types, feasting remained a principal rite and was performed by all levels of society to worship their gods. However, it is in the EIA that sanctuaries truly increased in popularity; after LHIIIC small room-type urban shrines seem to disappear and the majority of sanctuaries are large, heterotopic locations, either set apart from the town they were attached to or properly rural and interregional. In both the palatial period and the EIA, sanctuaries reveal flexibility in how they were employed – claims of access to the gods gave certain elite individuals eligibility to partake in the rites (to the exclusion of others); they were effective neutral grounds for displaying status through expensive conspicuous dedications; they could be an arena free from sociopolitical authority, genuinely offering opportunities for all levels of people to venerate their gods together. Feasting in particular could be mobilised in similar ways, as the more exclusive or elite sanctuaries are likely to have permitted only a restricted number of selected individuals to dine on the sacrificial meat, while at the more open sanctuaries cohesion would have been created amongst groups of people dining together, often in the same hypaethral location. These factors follow sociopolitical trends to some extent, as during the palatial period the restricted-access cult buildings seem to have been under elite, or even palatial, surveillance; similarly, when a number of towns grew stronger in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, certain sanctuaries were taken under the control of one settlement (such as the Argive Heraion and Perachora) and conspicuous dedications in the form of tripod-cauldrons increased notably in quantity.

As a coda to sanctuary feasting, it should be noted that there was a reappearance of ancestor worship during the later EIA, with food and drink-based rituals at Mycenaean tombs and the construction of “houses” and circular structures in cemeteries for feasts. The stone circles in particular recall the horseshoe-shaped structures in the Early Mycenaean period, through their curvilinear form, their location in cemeteries, and their use for feasting rituals. The two phenomena cannot be directly connected, as they developed around half a millennium apart; however, they both express a desire to reconnect with the past, even if the individuals being honoured through the feasts were not known by name or attributed with a fabricated identity. It is not coincidental that both practices appeared at periods of sociopolitical change, preceding the development of strong authoritative structures (the palaces and the *polis* respectively), and were abandoned during the interim period. Such activities may have offered a form of stability through their intimate nature and their association with an apparently permanent past.

The final arena, that of sociopolitical feasts, is the most flexible and changeable in nature and is unsurprisingly associated closely with social structures and political regimes. Despite this, there are some fundamental constants running through all three periods: the preferred location for feasts was in the dwelling of the leader (whether a mansion, a palace or a smaller building); they were consistently employed by the leader to gain, maintain or reinforce his authority through a display of his generosity and wealth; the whole experience was managed in order to convey the correct social messages applicable to the relevant attendees invited, through choice of guest-list, food, vessels, decor, location or participation in additional activities (e.g. gaming, sacrifices). Even though the size of the buildings where feasts were held varied significantly, and the number of people invited likewise differed considerably, the overall basic patterns of what was occurring and what was aimed for remained consistent. Hence the differences were due to the type of social structure in existence and the amount of authority held by the leader hosting the feast. In the Early Mycenaean period, mansion-based feasts were hosted in order to project claims for power amongst rival elite and to display conspicuous levels of wealth; in the palatial period, feasts in the palaces maintained the *status quo* of both the palatial administration's authority and the guests' places in the social matrix; in the EIA, feasts in leader's dwellings reinforced the community's acceptance of the leader's dominant position and re-emphasised his economic and social superiority. The broad pattern is displayed in **Table 7.1**; it obviously is a simplification, but it can be noted that there are patent similarities between Early Mycenaean and EIA feasting practices, due to the fact that both societies were unstable, bids for status were made through a combination of ancestry, power and wealth, and leaders held authority over relatively small areas.

	<b>Early Mycenaean</b>	<b>Palatial</b>	<b>EIA</b>
<b>Location</b>	Feasting in leader's main hall	Feasting in various locales around palace	Feasting in leader's main hall
<b>Purpose</b>	Obtaining power	Maintaining power	Obtaining/maintaining power
<b>Sociopolitical structure</b>	Multiple small-scale leaders	Major wide-scale authority	Multiple small-scale leaders

**Table 7.1: Sociopolitical feasting patterns from the Early Mycenaean period to the EIA**

However, while these broad patterns are satisfyingly neat, they do not account for all the evidence. It is true that in terms of feasts hosted by major leaders, those during the palatial period are the exception in style and motives; yet, this only considers one feasting mode and does not include those held by lesser leaders. In the Early Mycenaean period, there appears to

have been a wide range of feasts, depending on the type of site. Those with mansions hosted feasts as discussed above, and to some extent sites with smaller leader's dwellings (such as Malthi and Nichoria) employed similar styles on a reduced scale, suggesting that there were standard ways of performing feasts that could be adapted to one's resources and the size of the dining locale. However, there were also anomalies: Voroulia suggests provision for feasting on a scale not seen elsewhere during this period; Mitrou indicates feasts focused around religious rituals where participation was highly restricted; and Tsoungiza has evidence for communal, inclusive feasts. It is clear that sociopolitical feasting in this period incorporated a range of styles, encouraged by the lack of a strong, far-reaching authority. During the palatial era also, there is evidence for feasting at smaller sites, such as Malthi; they appear to follow general palatial styles of commensality and Linear B records indicate that their feasts were at times provisioned by the palaces. The lack of diversity seen, despite the small dataset, may indicate that there was some palatial influence over outlying feasting events, though whether through control or emulation is unclear. As for the EIA, the majority of sites I examined were small-scale anyway. Here the evidence of epic poetry is of use, as it clearly indicates that there was a considerable variety of contemporary feasting styles, in terms of participation, motives and hosts. These were familiar to the poet's audience, if not always traceable archaeologically, and therefore require us to broaden our understanding of types of sociopolitical feasting in this era.

Having examined the diachronic patterns to be seen in the three feasting arenas, I turn now to a more synthetic summary of how feasting was used and understood by the individuals who performed it from the LBA-EIA. In chapter 1, I stated that my aims included not only producing a diachronic study of feasting across three major eras of Greek prehistory, but also studying specifically the association between commensal practices and sociopolitical developments. This connection has formed a major component of the entire thesis, and certain of the principal conclusions have been highlighted above. However, while I have traced such patterns consistently in each chapter, what I have not discussed directly are the constants of feasting – in other words, how commensality itself was understood, given its adaptive nature and the long period of time under consideration. As feasting was employed at fundamental moments in life (funerals, worship, expressions of power), and was continually being altered in order to adapt to new sociopolitical surroundings, there must have been certain constants that people understood to be true of feasting for it to hold such a major role and for it to be so flexible and yet consistent. I concentrate upon a select few topics that have regularly appeared as major themes in the preceding chapters.

Firstly, feasting was associated – mentally if not actually – with the leading groups of society. I have emphasised continually that the performance of feasting was not restricted to the elite, and

that anyone could host a feast if they had a small amount of surplus and some friends to invite. Indeed, this style of feasting appears in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (342-343), where he instructs the individual *oikos* to invite neighbours to dinner in order to strengthen their bonds of social relationship. Similarly, there is evidence in the three epic poems studied and in sites such as Tsoungiza for community-wide feasts, where it appears that everyone in the village contributed in order to enjoy a meal together with their neighbours. It cannot be doubted that these were a regular part of life in all three chronological periods, and our lack of emphasis on them is due to the paucity of data attesting such practices. However, despite this reality, feasting was presented as an elite activity and as a practice that was indicative of status. Similarly, it was often associated with the leaders of the time, as they were the ones with the resources and authority to host the most memorable and abundant feasts. It can therefore be seen that there was a division between the mental perspective of feasting and its actual performance.

The presentation of feasting as an elite practice was seen in the construction of an elite "package" in the Early Mycenaean period, where it formed a major component in a series of activities serving to define high status. Under this code, when feasting was performed or referenced using conspicuous wealth, or was associated with at least one of the other selected elite activities, then it marked the individual as of elite status. The resonance that this must have had with the public imagination can be seen in the fact that the elite "package" reappeared with exactly the same components in the EIA, several centuries later. Moreover, at the end of the EIA, Homer's poetry captures the concept of feasting as an elite practice, with indications that this was a deliberate construct echoing the creation of the "package". For such a perspective to have been so persistent over nine centuries, it must have appealed strongly to several groups of people. Clearly it benefited the elite, as even a symbolic reference to feasting, if incorporated with allusions to other elements of the "package", would be sufficient to display their high social standing. Furthermore, those of lesser status may have employed this set of ideas to make bids for social position or to deliberately emulate the elite. On this smaller scale, if only one man in a village could afford to host a feast for his friends, then he was utilising the same social value of feasting as the elite did and aiming for the same overall set of messages, albeit on a much lower level. Hence, the continuous popularity of feasting may be partially due to its presentation as a high-status activity, effectively expressing real and projected status claims. During the palatial period, the elite "package" did not feature so visibly, undoubtedly because of the stronger, more centralised authority of the palaces, when it was less simple to gain status simply through the activities that one performed. However, it can still be seen that commensal practices were a method through which people tried to emulate their superiors in the palaces – as lesser-order sites attempted to perform palatial styles of feasting, or non-elite funerals incorporated the palatially-associated kylix-based drinking rites. Feasting was still associated

with the leading regime and expressive of social superiority, even if it was not used in such flexible ways during this period.

Secondly, feasting proved an activity suitable for a wide range of occasions and it appears that this fact was recognised throughout all three eras. The basic rites of killing an animal(s), cooking it, bringing additional food for cooking or consumption, dining with a group of people, and drinking (often alcoholic) beverages were perpetuated not only in houses and palaces, but also at the graveside and at shrines/sanctuaries. The archaeological evidence attests that each of the three separate arenas of commensality incorporated a whole range of styles and motives; plus the literary evidence indicates an additional array of feasts that are difficult to trace from material remains alone (Table 7.2). The sheer multiplicity of combinations of location, host and aims, not to mention styles, reveals how feasting was continually flexible and adaptable to requirements. Yet, despite this variety, there was considerable coherence in fundamental practices and the aims expected to be achieved. In basic terms, a feast can be understood as fulfilling one of humankind's essential needs, that of daily sustenance, thereby combining social expression with primitive requirements. If a feast had no practical purpose, it is possible that it may not have had such enduring popularity and consistency. It is not purely a pastime, in a way that gaming, sports and music-making are. In addition, although not every feast had a specified host, as there were potlatch-type events where all participants contributed,<sup>1</sup> a host's presence replicates the basic biological situation of a parent providing food for its child. By constructing a reflection of this fundamental contrast between superior provider and inferior recipient, the guests are thereby indebted to their host as young children are to their parents. Hence, the opportunity for obligations and assertions of status are imbedded in the very process of giving food to another. Furthermore, due to its emphasis on consumption, a feast is a sensory occasion that offers multiple chances for the whole event to be masterminded in the direction required by the host, through such features as exotic food, differently textured vessels, tempting smells, the darkness of a tomb or restricted shrine, the performance of songs, or views of narrative wall-paintings. A feast is not simply the moment of putting food into one's mouth, but an event that even in its smallest incarnation, such as the members of an *oikos* hosting their neighbours, is intended to exceed the ordinary meal and to arouse all of one's senses. While further reasons could be adduced, it is to be hoped that these discussed assist in explaining why feasting in LBA-EIA Greece was so varied, yet so consistent, and such a powerful force. Those who feasted saw it as an activity that was applicable for practically every occasion.

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<sup>1</sup> These appear to be documented in both Homeric poems and in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (cf. 6.2, 6.4) and may also be what was occurring during the community feasts at Tsoungiza.

	<b>Sociopolitical</b>	<b>Funerary</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
<b>Location</b>	Palaces, leader's dwellings, mansions, hypaethral in villages, <i>oikoi</i>	At graveside, in tomb itself, in deceased's home (usually after interment)	Inside shrines or sanctuary rooms, hypaethral in sanctuaries, in and around structures/installations in cemeteries
<b>Host</b>	Elite individuals, leaders, <i>wanax</i> , the people as a group, non-elite individuals	Deceased's family	Food brought along by participants, leader/priest controlling rituals
<b>Aims</b>	To gain power, to compete against rivals, to maintain authority, to mark out high status, to emulate higher authorities, to keep people content/controlled, to hire a work force, to honour leaders, to enhance community cohesion, to form bonds with friends	To display status, to negotiate new status, to unite participants, to assuage grief	To honour gods/ancestors, to bring communities together, to display status

**Table 7.2: Variety of feasts from the Early Mycenaean period to the EIA**

Thirdly, and attested most in the literary evidence, there seems to have been a clear understanding of how feasting was to be performed. In other words, a good feast was codified. The contrasts between Homer's "good" and "bad" feasts were discussed in detail in 6.1, and these appear to have been familiar to the audience to the extent that the entire plot of the *Odyssey* hinges on the performance of "bad" feasts. The "bad" feasts act as warnings, the "good" feasts as exemplars, and the pleasure that is experienced at a "good" commensal occasion is emphasised (cf. *Od.*9.5-10). While Hesiod does not make feasting such a key element of the *Works and Days*, his inclusion of commensal behaviour in his list of proverbial prescriptions indicates that he also believed there were set ways in which feasting should be performed. The perspectives of both poets are principally based on moral and ethical approaches to feasting, but on a more practical level the archaeological evidence also indicates a codification of commensality. On the macro-scale, these include such features as the remarkable consistencies in funerary feasting over nine centuries, the regular occurrence of sociopolitical feasts in the leader's residence (especially in the main hall and often around a hearth), and the formation of a "drinking set" employed in feasts (including the elaborated element of a mixing bowl). It is also possible to adduce examples of codified feasting that were more specific to one particular era, such as the pervasiveness of kylix-based drinking rituals in

the palatial period, clearly considered the “correct” or elite way to perform certain rites. The fluidity of feasting rituals in the early phases of the Early Mycenaean period (cf. 3.1) indicates that this codification was a gradual process and that commensality was not formalised as soon as it began to play a major role in mainland Greeks’ lives. However, even in this period, there were still accepted conventions, such as displaying metal vessels to convey that one could afford to host impressive feasts. The “correct” way to feast included using the appropriate material components and acting in ways that accorded with the mental conception of how a feast *should* be, in other words echoing the ideal feast.

Finally, while it is patently clear that feasting was a major sociopolitical tool and fundamentally intertwined with the social environs, it also appears to have offered a facility by which one could approach supernatural entities. By focusing upon the connection between feasting and its sociopolitical *milieu*, it is easy to overlook its more sacralised elements. However, a large proportion of the evidence for commensality is located in cemeteries and sanctuaries and, while sociopolitical aims were important secondary motives in these feasts, they remained subordinate to the principal purpose – the worship of the gods/ancestors or the respect of the deceased. When examining funerary and sanctuary evidence in chapters 3-5, I concentrated upon such topics as the ways in which funerary feasting could display the deceased’s status or how communal feasting in sanctuaries could produce cohesiveness amongst the participants. This is only part of the picture however, and it is far more likely that the primary reasons for hosting/participating in funerary and sanctuary feasts were focused upon both personal emotion and showing honour to supernatural beings. It appears that the act of feasting was regarded as a method by which one could gain closer access to these entities. In the case of funerary feasting, it seems that the deceased was believed to partake in the meal, thus bringing him/her close for one last time to those left behind. Communal dining united the living, grieving crowd with the deceased, who was in the process of entering another world. While I would not necessarily suggest that actual contact in a spiritual form was believed to have been made, it appears to have symbolically represented contact between the dead and the living in a way that may have assuaged the grief of relatives and friends. As for sanctuary feasting, which covers the worship of both the gods and the ancestors, it is noticeable how alimentary sacrifice is a repeated feature of all types of religious ritual from the LBA-EIA. Once again, the idea of sharing food is key. By sacrificing the animal first and giving the god/ancestor its blood in libation form and/or its flesh as a burnt offering, a meal was thus constructed in which both the worshippers and the supernatural being took part. The worshippers consumed the parts that the god/ancestor did not, often simultaneously with the supernatural entity “dining” on the burnt offering. As the deceased and his/her relatives were believed to eat together, so were the god/ancestor and the worshippers. The act of sharing a meal brought both sets together, the supernatural being or the

deceased and the diametrically opposed group of normal, living humans. In a way, this is an intensification of the use of feasting for sociopolitical purposes, as cohesiveness is often a principal aim of commensality due to the bonds that are created when people dine together. This facility of feasting appears to have been recognised and employed for purposes in other spheres, as a way of offering contact between people and beings that they could not otherwise approach.

As stated above, these are a selected range of issues that illustrate certain constants from the LBA-EIA in the ways that people regarded and used feasting. It was both flexible and codified, hence suitable for an array of purposes and motives, and brought about both social division and cohesion between participants. In the final part of this chapter, I turn now to the future and how feasting developed after my chronological limit of c.700. Archaic feasting is a huge subject in its own right, as this era saw the development of the *symposion*, the *perideipnon* and hero cults, plus a continued expansion and formalisation of sanctuary-based feasting. Therefore, I do not discuss it in detail, but highlight two major directions in which I see feasting developing as mainland Greece moved from the EIA to the Archaic period.

Firstly, there was greater diversification in feasting practices. To some extent, this is already seen in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in the sphere of sanctuary feasting, as commensality occurred in the major sanctuaries, both extra-urban/rural and urban, around ancient tombs, on and around circular stone structures in cemeteries, and in purpose-built “houses” also in cemeteries. This trend continued in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, as both the locations and the recipients of feasts proceeded to diversify further. Hero cult, as opposed to ancestor cult, can be identified and formed a major category of feasting activity from the Archaic period onwards. While one of the earliest hero cult sites, the Agamemnoneion at Mycenae, was functional before the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, it is not certain that the recipient of the rites was the eponymous hero at this early period and it may have been a more generalised (ancestor?) cult site (Cook 1953: 33; Morgan & Whitelaw 1991: 89). However, the Archaic period saw a huge expansion in genuine hero cults, dedicated to the heroes of epic and the most popular myths, but also to obscure local heroes and occasionally nameless ones. This phenomenon lay inbetween the large-scale worship of the gods and the more personal reverence paid to ancestors (anonymous or not), both of which continued after the EIA. Other, possibly new, divine recipients of feasting activities were deities excluded from the standard Greek pantheon, such as chthonic gods. It has been proposed that commensality occurring in the eastern oval building at Tourkovouni, Attica was in honour of a vegetation god, with rites tailored specifically to this recipient by the consumption of porridge-type dishes (Lauter 1985: 133-134; Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 88-89). These chthonian feasting rituals in honour of a somewhat mysterious god lay outside regular sanctuary activity, yet Tourkovouni is



not unique in its omission of the alimentary sacrifice and the appeal of unconventional, mystical rites to historical Greeks can be seen in such examples as the Eleusinian Mysteries.

As well as a spectrum of religious feasting, there was diversification in other arenas. In the EIA, sociopolitical feasting was principally manifested in leader's dwellings, but in the structure of the *polis* a range of new feast types developed. The *symposion*, discussed further below, allowed elite male members of the community to dine in a restricted environment and hence to intensify social cohesion amongst themselves. Opposed to this was the civic sacrificial meal, an institutionalised version of the communal feasts that Hesiod mentions in the *Works and Days*. At these, members of the community would dine together on the same sacrificed animal(s) in an expression of isonomy (Schmitt-Pantel 1990: 15). Village shrines offer a rural version of these civic banquets, such as at the tholos (VIII) at Lathouresa, Attica, which was apparently a location for hypaethral communal feasting until the 6<sup>th</sup> century when the tholos was constructed for the formalised continuation of such rituals (Seiler 1986: 20; Mazarakis Ainian 1995: 149-153). However, this did not mean that the old style of feasting in a leader's dwelling completely disappeared. At Lathouresa also, room II of the 'anaktoron' held feasts well into the Archaic period and this building can reasonably be considered to have belonged to the leader of the village (Mazarakis Ainian 1992: 112-113; 1995: 153-154). It is possible that the continuation of this model at Lathouresa was due to its rural setting and hence lack of need/desire to adapt to the new patterns of feasting performed in the larger towns. Overall, in each arena of commensality,<sup>2</sup> it can be seen how the beginnings of diversification in the EIA expanded rapidly in the Archaic period and beyond to include new recipients and new styles – some of which were developments from what preceded, while others were innovative. This may be partly due to the concurrent formation of the *polis* and the altered social structure that it offered, yet it may also be an inevitable process given how feasting was already changing throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> century and religious beliefs appear to have been expanding and diversifying.

Secondly, and specifically a feature of sociopolitical commensality, feasting became intertwined with the city as opposed to the individual host. Throughout all three preceding periods, with the relatively rare exceptions of communal feasts, the dominant model was that of a powerful leader or member of the elite hosting feasts in order to express superiority over the guests. On the larger scale, such as feasts held in the palaces, this indicated control over people from a wide area of the polity; it could also operate on a much smaller scale when the leader of a lesser-order settlement (such as Malthi or Nichoria) invited his neighbours to dine in his dwelling.

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<sup>2</sup> The increased diversification in funerary feasting was briefly discussed in 5.4, where it was noted how the meal changed location from the graveside to the deceased's house, and how new ways of leaving offerings for the dead were developed (e.g. *Opferrinne*).

However, from the Archaic period, this model lost its dominant position; the individual host was replaced by the *polis* and the expression of authority gave way to the reinforcement of community.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, the civic sacrificial meal was one element of this changing pattern, in which the isonomy of the participants was emphasised (Schmitt-Pantel 1990: 15). While obviously the feast would have been organised by individuals, the impression given to the diners was that of civic unity (expressed through equal shares of food), not of authority wielded by one or a few people. Participation was based on citizenship in the *polis* and hence, if a greater power was noted by the diners, it would have been that of the city itself, an entity entirely different from the visibly present leader in previous models.

The other major type of feast in the *polis* was the *symposion*. It complemented the ostensibly inclusive unity of the civic meal by providing an exclusive and restricted arena for the elite to dine in. While there were individual hosts, as is recorded clearly in Plato's *Symposium*, and they may have made displays of their wealth, they did not try to extend authority over the guests but rather hosted each other reciprocally. These cycles of elite parties therefore distinguished the participants from all who were not socially high enough to be involved. Through this exclusionary process, those who did participate had their elite identity reinforced and were bound more closely to their fellows (Murray 1990: 7; Schmitt-Pantel 1990: 15). While the idea of elite individuals dining together in a restricted environment is not new (for example, the feasting in room 6 of the palace at Pylos), the concept of secular feasts held purely for elite guests is somewhat novel and it is likely to be due to the fact that these Archaic-Classical high-status men did not have to achieve position in the *polis* through the method of feasting. Those of lower status would know that *symposia* were occurring, and hence feel inferior and excluded, but they did not need to have the participants' wealth and high status spelt out for them diacritically, as the symposiasts were not obtaining sociopolitical control this way. Although many of the elite symposiasts did hold political positions in the *polis*, they did not act as all-encompassing leaders like those in the EIA, and therefore the *symposion* was an opportunity for these high-status men to withdraw into their own society and emphasise their bonds with each other (Murray 1983: 198). This major change in feasting mode, from a style that had been consistent if not unchanging from the Early Mycenaean period to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, has to be due to the formation of the *polis*. It is unlikely that such developments would have occurred without the new *milieu* of the city-state and the altered social structure that it presented. Both the *symposion* and the civic meal, with their emphases on equality and cohesion, were products of

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, this is not to say that the whole model became extinct, as lesser-order settlements continued to host feasts in leader's dwellings. Moreover, individuals of course continued to give feasts for other people. What I am saying instead is that the pattern seen in the previous three eras is no longer the dominant sociopolitical feasting model in historical Greece.

the *polis*, as the city adopted the role previously played by individual leaders. The members of the elite, who previously could have competed for leadership, now had to remind themselves of their status through exclusive activities in order to define themselves against the remainder of the city. As their role had changed, so their feasting styles adapted to fit the new scenario.

It would be of interest to explore Archaic feasting further, particularly how different groups in the *polis* related to each other through commensality, and to apply to it the more anthropological approach that I have taken in this thesis. However, the aim of my research was to explore the LBA-EIA period, and I believe that it has both contributed to the field of feasting in this era and also highlighted certain areas that would benefit from future study. It is difficult to see how much further one can examine feasting in the palatial period without discovering a new site or feasting assemblage; certainly, if such a site were excavated, it would be beneficial to compare it with the work that I and many others have performed on Pylos in order to learn whether the palace of Nestor is an anomaly or part of a wider pattern. On the other hand, feasting practices in both the Early Mycenaean period and the EIA would certainly profit from additional research, as it has been impossible in this macro-scale diachronic study to pay these eras the same amount of detailed attention that was performed in the sensory approach taken to Pylian feasts. Now that feasting sites are being identified in all three eras, and interpretations are being offered on them, perhaps the most profitable direction of future research lies in the application of scientific techniques, such as closer zooarchaeological examination and organic residue analysis on vessels. Without the additional information that these can offer, there is only so far that the present evidence can be interpreted; however, if these were carried out, they would offer the most valuable insights into how feasts were performed and bring us closer to the original experiences.

Overall this thesis, including the extremely brief consideration of feasting in the Archaic period, has revealed that there was indeed a close association between modes of commensality and the sociopolitical *milieu*. Feasting as a practice does not proceed independently on a teleological course, but rather the people who perform it change it according to their social environs, their political structures, and their religious beliefs. It can be employed to actively bring about sociopolitical change, but it is always ultimately affected by the styles of leadership and society already in existence. As I have tried to highlight, a range of factors shape the ways that feasting is performed, including the deities that people choose to worship and beliefs about the afterlife, but in the end it is impossible to deny the wide-scale influence of contemporary societal structures – such as using the funerary arena as a field for display or restricting religious feasting to those with “access” to the gods.

I stated at the beginning of this thesis that a feast is a sensory, sacralised and social event. By exploring some of the sensory experiences and the sacred rituals that form a commensal occasion, it has been possible to reach a greater understanding of how feasts operate, how they would have been perceived by the original participants, and how they differed from quotidian meals. However, above all a feast is a social event, partly because it brings people together, sometimes from different groups or settlements, and obliges them to readjust their relationships with each other during the course of the meal; partly also because it is intimately connected with the society that forms the backdrop to the feast and acts as an arena for that society to play out its mores and its search for security, its beliefs and its power struggles.

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## Appendix I: Comparison of Ceramic and Metal Vessel Forms in the Mycenae Grave Circles

As is noted in 3.2 (Table 3.2), the forms of precious metal vessels interred in the Early Mycenaean graves I have selected for study are overwhelmingly for purposes of drinking and pouring. From this it is possible to draw conclusions about the association between metal vessels for purposes of status display and the practice of drinking rituals. However, here I perform a more detailed analysis by examining both the ceramic and metal vessels from the Mycenae Grave Circles, in order to investigate whether the same patterns exist in both materials and to interpret the distribution of the vessels in the tombs.

I commence with data from GCB, because it is a unique example of an almost complete Early Mycenaean assemblage spanning a clearly delimited group of tombs. It has also undergone careful recording and study by Mylonas (1973) and I use his figures for the analysis that follows. As a brief *caveat*, I have included only those vessels that were described in Mylonas' catalogue; however, as this appendix is essentially a study of the presence of forms and not a complete quantitative assessment, this should not unnecessarily distort any patterns that may exist. There has unavoidably been personal judgement involved in deciding what purpose a vessel may have had, but I have divided the forms into six categories:

1. Drinking. This includes all forms of cups (Minyan cups, one-handled cups of various kinds, skyphoi, kantharoi and kantharoid cups, and Vapheio cups). It is the most unambiguous category.
2. Pouring. This includes those vessels that appear to have been used for decanting liquid into smaller containers (jugs, ewers, hydriae). I have defined jugs as those with wide mouths, much like our modern version, and ewers as those with narrow spouts, as the forms fall naturally into these two groups.
3. Mixing. This is a small category into which I have placed only those vessels that have a wide enough mouth to permit stirring of the contents (kraters, small krater-type vessels). Parallels with later forms suggest that it is a reasonable assumption that mixing was a purpose of these vessels.
4. Transport/Storage. This is a somewhat ambiguous category, due to the difficulty in tracing the exact purpose for which the vessels in it were employed (stamnoi and pithoid stamnoi, amphoriskoi). The forms would have been suitable either for transportation of provisions for the funerary rites (liquid or food) or for longer-term storage of goods for the deceased. The generally wider mouths of the amphoriskoi suggest that long-term storage of the contents was not a primary function.

5. Storage. This is another small category that includes only those vessels that seem more likely to have been used for long-term storage than for short-term provisioning (amphorae). The greater size of these vessels means that they are not so easily transportable to and from the graveside.
6. Other. This includes all those forms that do not fall into one of the above categories, usually those that have some specialised or ritual purpose (askoi, alabastra, phialai, lekanai).

As **Table I.1** shows, the forms of the precious metal vessels in GCB are exclusively connected with drinking rituals, with almost equal numbers of drinking and pouring shapes. The krater in E is likewise intimately part of drinking activity. As for the two vessels in the 'Other' category, a lekane and a phiale, their form is ideal for pouring libations (indeed this was the purpose of the phiale in historical Greece), and it is very probable that libation rituals comprised part of the drinking activities occurring around the graveside. If so, all the precious metal vessels interred would have had some connection with drinking rites.

Grave	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
A		1				
Γ	2					
Δ	1					
E		2	1			1 (lekane)
I	1					
N	1	1				1 (phiale)

**Table I.1: Forms of precious metal vessels in GCB**

**Table I.2** plots the ceramic vessels into the same six categories as the metal vessels, although with some noticeable differences. The emphasis seen in **Table I.1** on drinking and pouring vessels is repeated amongst the ceramic data, with all 21 grave-good assemblages tabulated containing at least one drinking vessel and 17 out of 21 containing at least one pouring vessel. It is also noticeable that the numbers of drinking vessels either exceed or equal the pouring vessels in 19 cases, with E and K the only exceptions. This makes sense in terms of drinking customs, as not every participant would require personal use of a jug or ewer, but it could be shared between several people. Also as seen amongst the precious metal vessels, mixing forms

remain somewhat rare, appearing in only five out of 21 graves.<sup>1</sup> This would suggest that, while mixing activities had a role in drinking rituals, they were not essential to performing them correctly at this period.

However, whereas the metal assemblage was purely connected with drinking activities, the ceramic assemblage shows a much greater proportion of vessels associated with other functions. Storage forms *per se* remain relatively rare, appearing in only six of the 21 graves and with only the late tomb P having more than one example. On the other hand, the ambiguous 'Transport/Storage' category is noticeably prominent. Examples appear in over half the graves (12 out of 21) and in some cases are obviously numerous (particularly Γ and O with 12 and 10 vessels respectively). Much of these are accounted for by the form Mylonas terms 'πιθόσχημος στάμνος', which I have translated above as 'pithoid stamnos'. They are not large vessels, generally between 30 and 50 cm high, and hence would not have been too difficult to transport to the graveside. While I do not rule out the possibility that they could have been left alongside the body with provisions for the afterlife, their size is ideal for bearing immediate comestible supplies to the tomb and the narrow neck could have been easily sealed to preserve the contents during the journey. Without organic residue analysis, it is impossible to discover what they may have held, but both liquid (i.e. wine) and small dry food provisions (e.g. figs, olives, meal) are reasonable suppositions.<sup>2</sup> If this proposition is correct, then the ceramic assemblage would provide evidence on the funerary meal that the metal assemblage does not.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that some of these are not strictly kraters, but smaller examples in a krater-type shape. While their wide mouths would allow for stirring or mixing to occur, it should not be immediately assumed that they were employed in exactly the same way as Archaic/Classical Greek kraters.

<sup>2</sup> Traces of oil and flour were found in two of the stamnoi from I (vessels 97 and 98: Mylonas 1973: 113-114; Alden 2000: 26).

Grave	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
A	3	3		2		
B	4		1	2		
Γ	17	13		12	1	4 (1 alabastron, 1 askos, 2 phialai)
Δ	2	2	1	3		
E	2	4		6		
Z	4	2				
H	3	2				
I	6	2		3	1	1 (askos)
K	1	2		2		
Λ	12	1		4		
Λ1	1	1				
Λ2	1	1	1			
M	9	4	2	1		5 (4 askoi, 1 phiale)
N	4	3		6	1	1 (askos)
Ξ	6	1			1	1 (askos)
Ξ1	2	2				
O	10	1	3	10	1	3 (askoi)
Π	3	1				
P	4				3	
Υ	6			2		1 (askos)
Φ	2					

**Table I.2: Forms of ceramic vessels in GCB**



It now remains to compare the two assemblages, in the cases of those graves where both metal and ceramic vessels were found interred (Table I.3). In a dataset of only six graves, it is of course difficult to make definitive conclusions; however there are points of interest to note:

- The metal vessels augment the ceramic assemblage; they do not replace it. The krater in grave E is the only metal vessel form without a comparable example in the ceramic repertoire.<sup>3</sup> This appears to indicate that the metal vessels were not used for separate rituals, but rather to diacritically distinguish those who were permitted to use them from those performing the same rites with ceramic vessels – whether they were the most privileged guests at the funeral or the deceased himself during his lifetime. As would be expected, due to their value, the metal vessels are in every case fewer in number than their ceramic counterparts and hence would have demonstrated the user's status.
- Transport and storage vessels are only attested in ceramic examples. It should be noted that this was not because metal storage vessels were never made (as demonstrated by the metal amphorae in GCA I and III). To some extent, practical reasons could account for this patterning – if, as I have suggested, the majority of the vessels in the 'Transport/Storage' category were used for carrying provisions for the funeral feast, then it may well have been more convenient to use less valuable containers for what was essentially a mundane task. As the transport vessels would not have been a focus of the graveside rites once their contents were removed, unlike those used in the drinking rituals themselves, they were not ideal for display purposes.<sup>4</sup>

However, there also could have been symbolic reasons behind the choice of ceramic transport/storage containers. The significance of drinking rituals to the elite, and to Early Mycenaean elite in particular, has been raised in 3.2 (cf. A. Sherratt 1995; Whittaker 2008), along with the use of metal vessels for display of one's status and power. Is it at all possible that the consumption of alcohol at this point took precedence in funerary rituals over the consumption of food? In other words, while food was an integral part of the funerary rites, drinking was central and this significance was materialised through the employment of metal vessels whose forms were designed for drinking activities.

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<sup>3</sup> Kraters were both valuable and symbolically significant, as discussed in 5.3, which may explain why it was a prominent enough form to be featured in metal only in this dataset.

<sup>4</sup> Nordquist (2002a: 132) has noted that these transport vessels only appear in adult graves, and thus may also symbolically reflect the deceased's ability to provision feasts, as well as raising issues regarding the differences between an adult's and a child's funeral.

➤ The 'Other' category is worth examining more closely, as it appears that the metal examples have a greater focus on ritual purposes than the ceramic ones. In the six graves tabulated in **Table I.3**, the ceramic 'Other' vessels are: one alabastron, three askoi and two phialai. The metal ones are: one lekane and one phiale. As mentioned above, the metal examples were very probably used for libation purposes during the course of the drinking rituals. The ceramic phialai likely had this purpose as well, but the remaining ceramic 'Other' vessels are all connected with specialised forms of storage, undoubtedly as grave offerings to the deceased to accompany him into the afterlife, and hence were not focal points of the funerary activities. It is reasonable to assume that the metal vessels that were not drinking/pouring/mixing equipment were intended for purposes that were to be visible to all participants and/or were highly ritualised, both requirements being fulfilled by the performance of libations.

Material	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
<b>Grave A</b>						
<b>Metal</b>		1				
<b>Ceramic</b>	3	3		2		
<b>Grave Γ</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	2					
<b>Ceramic</b>	17	13		12	1	4 (1 alabastron, 1 askos, 2 phialai)
<b>Grave Δ</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	1					
<b>Ceramic</b>	2	2	1	3		
<b>Grave E</b>						
<b>Metal</b>		2	1			1 (lekane)
<b>Ceramic</b>	2	4		6		
<b>Grave I</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	1					
<b>Ceramic</b>	6	2		3	1	1 (askos)
<b>Grave N</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	1	1				1 (phiale)
<b>Ceramic</b>	4	3		6	1	1 (askos)

**Table I.3: Comparison of precious metal and ceramic vessel forms in GCB**

It is now appropriate to examine the data from GCA in order to see whether these uphold the patterns just viewed, although it should be borne in mind that its assemblage was considerably richer than GCB and appears to have belonged to a different kin-group. I use the catalogue of finds assembled by Karo (1930) for what follows and, as for GCB, a *caveat* applies in that I have only included vessels whose form is recognisable. As this is a study based on forms, those vessels that are able to be reconstructed are more suitable for inclusion than every single fragment. Due to the different (and slightly less clear) cataloguing methods used by Karo, I have again relied upon personal opinion as to how the vessels should be categorised into the six groupings defined above. This is particularly enforced by Karo's lack of technical terms to define the vessels, unlike Mylonas, and thus judgements were made from the illustrations alone.

The ceramic vessels in GCA are much less numerous than those in GCB, but they reveal the same overall patterns (**Table I.4**). Drinking and pouring are still the most popular categories, although it should be noted that in each case only four out of the six graves held examples. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that they were equipped with examples of these forms in precious metal. Apart from the exceptional grave I with seven ceramic kraters, mixing forms remained rare, as observed in GCB. A difference to be noted in this dataset is the presence of a ceramic rhyton, a highly ritualised form.

Grave	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
I	2	2	7			
II		1				1 (rhyton)
III	1					
IV	4			2	2	
V		1		1	1	
VI	4	5	1	1	1	1 (askos)

**Table I.4: Forms of ceramic vessels in GCA**

In **Table I.5**, I have divided the material of the vessels into categories, as the number of examples in GCA is so much higher. I have also included faience and alabaster which, while not strictly precious metals, are sufficiently numerous and valuable enough to warrant their inclusion here. Once again, the patterns are similar to those seen in GCB. The only transport and/or storage vessels evidenced are two amphoriskoi with lids in graves III and IV that are

unlikely to have had any connection with food or drink; otherwise these categories are unrepresented. Drinking and pouring vessels remain very popular, with the drinking category represented in every grave and pouring in four of the six. Mixing vessels also appear in four of the six graves; however, it should be noted that only three of these vessels are actually kraters and the remaining 22 are cauldrons, which would have been used for feasting instead of drinking rituals.<sup>5</sup> Rather than a shift in drinking rituals therefore, it may have been that food consumption in the form of feasting was being emphasised and employed more regularly as a method by the occupants of GCA to accrue allegiance and authority to themselves. As a final note, the prevalence of rhyta in the 'Other' category recalls the appearance of the ceramic rhyton and, while this form is not seen in GCB, it continues the emphasis on precious metal ritual vessels that was seen in the other dataset.

The final comparison of vessel forms in GCA can be seen in Table I.6 and conclusions are drawn as follows:

- As might be expected, storage vessels are only attested in ceramic form. Likewise, the only metal examples in the 'Transport/Storage' category are the two gold amphoriskoi already mentioned and it is highly likely that they would have served a pyxis-type role. Together with the GCB evidence, this pattern therefore implies that metal vessels were unsurprisingly reserved for prime roles in drinking activities and libation rituals.
- Apart from the one ceramic rhyton in grave II, the ritual vessels are again all of precious metal. By putting together the evidence from both Grave Circles, it seems reasonable to assume that libation rituals in MHIII/LHI Mycenae were a central part of funerary rites and were given prominence through the employment of valuable metal vessels that would have been a focal element.
- It appears that, with the exception of the poor grave II, the bulk of the grave-goods were *either* ceramic *or* metal and whichever material was less well represented simply complemented the other. Grave VI has ceramic examples in every category, and grave I has the full drinking set in ceramic (drinking/pouring/mixing); the metal vessels found in these graves appear to be showpiece additions. On the other hand, in graves III, IV and V, it is in precious metal that the majority of the equipment appears and the ceramic vessels fill out the assemblage in the 'Transport/Storage' and 'Storage' categories where metal vessels would be less appropriate. This may be due to the differential wealth of

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. 3.2 for a discussion of cauldrons.

the individuals buried in the graves. One may surmise that the ideal was the full complement of grave-goods in precious metal, excepting those vessels forms best suited to being ceramic, but that those who could not afford this luxury equipped their dead fully in ceramic vessels and reserved the metal examples for “statement pieces” that would have been widely viewed in the course of the drinking rituals. The poorer graves of GCA echo the burials in GCB, where the metal vessels augment the ceramic ones, while the richer graves reveal what it was possible to achieve when wealth and command of resources were much greater.

While this investigation may have pushed the dataset to its limits, the capsule-type nature of the Grave Circle assemblages means that they are ideal sets of evidence on which to test hypotheses such as these. The conclusions reached above may not be tenable for every Early Mycenaean high-status grave, let alone every tomb from the period. However, it appears that the choice of material (precious metal or ceramic) was not random, but was related to the function that the vessel was supposed to fulfil and the visibility that it would have during the course of the funerary rituals. Moreover, a closer examination of the forms of the vessels interred has illuminated further the activities that surrounded burials in the Grave Circles and supported the other archaeological evidence excavated from around the tombs, such as the remains of funerary feasts above the fills.

Grave	Material	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing <sup>6</sup>	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
I	Gold						
	Silver	2					
	Bronze/ Copper						
	Faience/ Alabaster						2 (alabastra)
II	Gold	1					
	Silver						
	Bronze/ Copper						
	Faience/ Alabaster						
III	Gold	1	1		1		3 (2 pyxides, 1 alabastron)
	Silver	2					
	Bronze/ Copper	1		4 (cauldrons)			2 (pans)
	Faience/ Alabaster	1	1				2 (rhyta)
IV	Gold	9 <sup>7</sup>			1		1 (rhyton)
	Silver	10	2				3 (2 rhyta, 1 stag- shaped vessel)
	Bronze/ Copper	1	7	12 (11 cauldrons)			
	Faience/ Alabaster						1 (rhyton)
V	Gold	5					
	Silver	8	1				
	Bronze/ Copper		4	3 (cauldrons)			
	Faience/ Alabaster	1		1			
VI	Gold	1					
	Silver	1					
	Bronze/ Copper		1	1 (cauldron)			
	Faience/ Alabaster						
III, IV or V <sup>8</sup>	Gold						
	Silver	1					
	Bronze/ Copper	2	1	4 (3 cauldrons)			
	Faience/ Alabaster						

**Table I.5: Forms of precious metal vessels in GCA**

<sup>6</sup> I have highlighted where cauldrons comprise part of the mixing category, because they appear to have been used for feasting as opposed to drinking rituals (unlike kraters).

<sup>7</sup> An electron cup was also found in grave IV.

<sup>8</sup> These were not attributable to any particular grave but lay inbetween these three.

Material	Drinking	Pouring	Mixing	Transport/ Storage	Storage	Other
<b>Grave I</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	2					2 (alabastra)
<b>Ceramic</b>	2	2	7			
<b>Grave II</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	1					
<b>Ceramic</b>		1				1 (rhyton)
<b>Grave III</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	5	2	4	1		7 (2 pyxides, 1 alabastron, 2 pans, 2 rhyta)
<b>Ceramic</b>	1					
<b>Grave IV</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	20	9	12	1		5 (4 rhyta, 1 stag-shaped vessel)
<b>Ceramic</b>	4			2	2	
<b>Grave V</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	14	5	4			
<b>Ceramic</b>		1		1	1	
<b>Grave VI</b>						
<b>Metal</b>	2	1	1			
<b>Ceramic</b>	4	5	1	1	1	1 (askos)

**Table I.6: Comparison of precious metal and ceramic vessel forms in GCA**

## Appendix II: Minimum Number of Diners at a Feast at Pylos

In order to understand more fully the experiences of guests at a palatial feast, this appendix offers a preliminary analysis to assess the minimum number of diners at Pylos (much in the manner of zooarchaeological studies of minimum number of individuals). At the outset, it must be stated that such figures are hypothetical, based as they are on the quantities of vessels recorded by Rawson (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 355-418) in the initial site report and therefore subject to her judgement and assessment. However, despite this, it is intended for this short study to give a rough indication of the figures that may have been involved.

The following decisions were taken in this analysis:

- Only pottery from pantries 18-22 were taken into account. As the palace at Pylos had clearly defined storage areas for feasting equipment, it seemed reasonable to assume that this was where the majority of dining vessels for feasting occasions were located, and that ceramics elsewhere could have had different uses. The exclusion of pantry 60 is explained by the fact that its heterogeneous collection of forms and its difference in fabric from the other pantries may indicate different purposes (cf. 4.1).
- Figures were deemed significant when they totalled over 100 examples. It is to be assumed that vessel forms attested by less than 100 examples would not play a major role as serving/dining vessels in large-scale feasting scenarios. If they were used by elite guests to distinguish them, these diners would be of a relatively low number anyway and would not significantly affect the overall figure.

Rather than taking an overall pottery count, the vessels should be divided into “dinner services”, as it is highly likely that each guest would have had the use of more than one vessel during the course of a feast. The constitution of this “dinner service” is considered here as it can shed light upon dining practices during a palatial feast, as well as the potential number of feasters present. When examining the pottery figures, it is almost immediately apparent that very few vessel forms are present in the high quantities appropriate for a large-scale feasting event, and those that are would therefore seem to constitute the components of a “dinner service”.

The shallow angular bowl or SAB (FS 295) has been considered suitable for eating out of (Dabney *et al.* 2004: 82), as it is deep enough for a stew or food cooked in liquid, and shallow enough not to hinder consumption of drier food, such as slices of roasted meat. It is likely that this vessel would have served as the equivalent of a modern plate, i.e. a general food receptacle. Its capacity is between 0.2-1.4 litres, therefore totally compatible with an individual serving. Over pantries 18-22, 1,325 SABs were counted (Table II.1).



	18	19	20	21	22	18-22 doorway
SAB	2	0	75	1,099	147	2
Total						1,325
'Teacup'	0	0	72	1,024	55	0
Total						1,151
Medium dipper	13	0	7	7	399	0
Total						426
Standard kylix	?	c.2,853?	?	?	?	?
Estimated Total						c.2,853
Small angular kylix	0	0	0	12	174	0
Total						186

**Table II.1: Vessels in pantries 18-22 with over 100 examples**

Similar figures are seen in the form nicknamed 'teacup' (FS 220/222), or a shallow cup with one low handle, as 1,151 of these were counted from pantries 18-22 (**Table II.1**). What purpose these may have served is more difficult to define. As the kylix seems to have been the liquid container *par excellence*, it is worth considering whether the 'teacups' were used for purposes other than drinking. Although they were suitable for consuming drink from (Tournavitou 1992: 195-196), their shallow and open bowl was equally applicable for holding other substances. I would suggest that they might have contained some extra comestible to accompany whatever was consumed from the SAB. Once preconceptions induced by the 'teacup' name are removed, the options for what the vessel might have held are widened: additional food deemed suitable to be kept separate from the main dish (perhaps because one was liquid and one dry?), condiment or garnish to be mixed with the main dish as required, a sauce to be added according to taste, or even a "second course" given to the guests after whatever was held in the SAB was consumed. Its small size, between 0.13-0.28 litres, confirms that it would be suitable for holding something that was secondary to the main dish served.

The figures for the SABs and the 'teacups' roughly tally, supporting a proposal of c.1,000 diners, if one assumes that each diner had one of each form and did not share. As discussed in 4.1, the spatial analysis of dining areas in the palace would suggest that this is very much a maximum figure, and it is possible that not all these vessels were used simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Whitelaw (2001: 58) estimates a maximum of 800 people in courts 63/88. It should however be noted that this is a particularly high figure and Bendall (2007b: 92) prefers a maximum of 500 people in courts 63/88. To both of these figures should be added the diners from halls 6 and 65, who may have constituted perhaps about 160 people.

size of the vessels also agrees with what one person could have consumed at a single meal – the SABs held a mean amount of 0.85 litres and the ‘teacups’ a mean amount of 0.21 litres. In a feasting (and therefore quantitatively abundant) scenario, such amounts are unlikely to have been shared even between two people.

The third ceramic form represented in large quantities is a medium dipper (FS 236), defined as having a broad, high handle and a raised base/flat bottom. Unlike the low numbers of other forms of dipper, presumably used in kitchen activities, 426 were counted of this particular shape (Table II.1). When compared to the figures just discussed, it seems highly probable that one dipper would have been shared between two people. The size of the dipper’s bowl (the mean amount is 0.48 litres<sup>2</sup>) is surprisingly large and therefore would suggest that guests were entitled to dip into a large communal bowl of something abundant, as opposed to employing the dippers to add a refinement to their meal, such as a sauce. Whether the guests were thus acquiring food (a dish in liquid form) or alcohol is harder to tell.

Finally, as is well known, huge quantities of kylikes were found in pantries 18-22. Although there was a range of kylix forms and variations, most types yielded very few examples and only two in particular stand out as well-represented. The first is the standard kylix (FS 274; Table II.1) of which c.2,853 were found, with a capacity between 0.75-1.2 litres. Unlike the other vessel forms from the palace, an estimation of the amount of standard kylikes was produced and a room by room breakdown was abandoned; it was simply stated that the majority came from room 19. Despite this rough figure, it is clear that there were many more drinking vessels than there were those for dining. This continues to be so even if one assumes spares in the case of drunken breakages. It could of course be argued that each diner used 2-3 kylikes during a feast, with a different vessel for refills or for a different type of liquid refreshment. However, I doubt this conclusion, preferring to see each diner retaining their kylix during the course of a feast, and instead interpret this disparity as there being many more drinking guests than dining. Their possible location in court 58 is developed more fully in 4.1.

The only other form that appeared in significant quantity was a small angular kylix with one low handle (FS 267; Table II.1). There were 186 of these between pantries 20 and 21, and they held considerably less than the standard kylix – 0.15-0.3 litres. The purpose of these small kylikes is unclear, although my quantitative analysis indicates that if they were used in a general dining context they would have been shared between perhaps five individuals. This, combined with their low capacity, suggests that they had some special or perhaps even ritualised purpose, that they held valuable, restricted contents, or that they were used diacritically and only given to certain people.

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<sup>2</sup> They measured between 0.25-0.7 litres.

With the exception of the small kylix, which hints at the employment of diacritica, the other four vessel types to appear in high quantities in pantries 18-22 display a satisfying regularity. A “dinner service” seems to have consisted of a SAB, a ‘teacup’, a standard kylix and the shared use of a medium-sized dipper, which could have catered for around 1,000 dining guests and the drinking entertainment of almost 2,000 more. Spatial analysis and cooking capacities suggest that these figures were absolute maximums and it is more likely that not all the vessels were used at a feast simultaneously. However, the ability existed for the palace at Pylos to cater for that amount of guests.

## Appendix III: Thoughts on Mycenaean Cooking Methods

Much attention has been paid to the role played in consumption by the Pylos ceramic assemblages, with the preparation and cooking aspects largely ignored – a situation undoubtedly due to the impressive quantities of consumption vessels excavated from pantries 18-22. However, the less striking assemblages of cooking vessels may themselves be informative about the culinary practices that could have been achieved in a palatial “kitchen”, which can also shed light on the employment of diacritica in food. I here put forward some preliminary remarks, building on the work of Hruby (2006; 2008) and Isaakidou (2007) on *haute cuisine*, and by Lis (2006; 2008) on Pylian cooking vessels.

McGee (2004: 156-165) has listed the different ways in which meat can be cooked:

- With flames, glowing coals and coils (i.e. grilling/broiling, spit-roasting and barbequing)
- With hot air and walls (i.e. oven roasting)
- With hot metal (i.e. frying/sautéing)
- With hot oil (i.e. shallow and deep frying)
- With hot water (i.e. braising, stewing, poaching and simmering)
- With water vapour (i.e. steaming)
- With a microwave

In terms of Mycenaean cooking capacities and the assemblages we have, I would like to re-list the possible methods into the following:

- Grilling
- Frying
- Spit-roasting
- Braising/stewing
- Oven baking
- Steaming

All of these methods could have been achieved in Greece during the later 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC with the available equipment; what remains to be investigated is whether the ceramic assemblage at Pylos can provide evidence that they *were* practised.

*Grilling*: In room 105 was found an unusual ceramic form that was termed a ‘broiling pan’ by Rawson (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 418; her form 79) and ‘souvlaki tray’ by Hruby (2006: 145). Both terms describe the same concept – a rectangular container that may have contained coals or been placed on coals, with small notches for c.10 miniature spits (or σούβλες) to grill over the top of the heat source. Although only one was found in the palace, the relative fragility of the form may mean it is under-represented in the surviving assemblages (Hruby 2006: 146).

Moreover, the presence of at least nine grills of several different types in the Panagia Houses at Mycenae (Mylonas Shear 1987: 111) suggests that, even if “souvlakia” specifically were not a regular feature of cuisine, the idea of grilling food was familiar to Mycenaean cooks.

*Frying:* Unlike grilling, frying does not need a specialised form and can be achieved in any vessel that is open enough to allow easy access for frequent stirring, shallow enough so as not to trap water vapour, and large enough to allow maximum contact with the vessel’s heated walls. Isaakidou (2007: 13) has suggested that tripod cooking pots with wide mouths could have been used for frying; however, it appears that the Pylos assemblage contains a form that would have been even more suitable. This is Rawson’s form 78, the ‘pan’ (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 417; cf. Lis 2006: 15), of which three were found in room 68 (the “cooking quarter” of the palace). Although it is not recorded whether traces of burning were found on the underside of these vessels, the form is certainly suitable for frying – shallow and open with two small handles instead of the long one on a modern frying pan.

*Spit-roasting:* Fragments of what appear to have been terracotta spit-supports were found in rooms 71 and 76 and on the slope south of the Southwestern Building (Blegen & Rawson 1966: 266, 273, 288). The poor preservation of the area around rooms 71 and 76 makes it uncertain whether roasting would have been performed there or whether it was simply a storage place for extra equipment.<sup>1</sup> The lack of spits themselves can be explained by the probability that they were metal, which was later melted down and reused.<sup>2</sup> In any case, spit-roasting would have been an ideal way of cooking a large quantity of meat at one time. The discovery of several large burnt areas in the northwest part of the palace, described as locations for “pyres” and as yet unpublished, could very well be the result of spit-roasting episodes (J. Davis pers.comm.).

*Braising/stewing:* The preparation of food as a liquid-based concoction is well attested in the ceramic assemblage by the so-called ‘tripod-cups’ (Rawson’s forms 69 and 70: Blegen & Rawson 1966: 413-414). There were 34 one-handled examples and 18 with two handles in and around the cooking quarter in room 67. As sturdy coarseware, they were suitable for standing over a heat source such as a brazier, with wide mouths for easy stirring access and (on form 69) a pour-channel to decant the contents into individual containers. The two-handled ‘krater’ (form 59) could also have been employed for stewing food (cf. Lis 2006: 10-12). All examples of this krater type from the palace are larger than the tripod-cups (ranging between 1.6-12.8 litres in capacity) and so could have held more, although they were not so suitable for pouring

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<sup>1</sup> The remains from outside the palace would be debris, whether pushed down during building works on the hilltop or as a result of later environmental processes.

<sup>2</sup> Another possibility is that they were wooden, in the manner of small σούβλες today, and soaked in water first to prevent them from burning (J. Bennet pers.comm.). In this case, the lack of survival of spits would be unsurprising.

into other containers.<sup>3</sup> Lis (2006: 14) has suggested that the kraters were used for the initial cooking, after which the food was decanted into the tripod-cups to be kept warm, for final touches, or for actual serving. On present evidence and knowledge, this proposal is just as plausible as viewing the kraters as holding an independent dish. On a final note, it is worth remembering the cauldrons described in the PY Ta tablets which, although in a damaged state, could still have been employed for stew preparation (Ta 641 and 709; cf. Palaima 2003: 198-199).

*Oven baking:* This technique is much harder to trace, due to the complete absence of preserved built ovens from the Peloponnese in the palatial period.<sup>4</sup> There are several options to explain this lacuna. Hruby (2006: 148) has suggested the use of large lids for baking (of which several were found in the palace), placed over cooking trays and banked with coals. The more traditional method of slow-baking in a pit in the ground could also have been employed, which would leave little archaeological trace (unless this also can be linked with the burnt areas at Pylos mentioned above). Or it could simply be the case that the Mycenaeans, or the Pylians at least, did not bake their food. The griddles found in several rooms across the palace (71, 76, 77, 97, 102, 103, 105; Blegen & Rawson 1966: 267, 273-274, 312, 332, 340; Hruby 2008: 153) certainly would support the idea of flatbreads being cooked, as opposed to oven-baked loaves.

*Steaming:* The ability to steam food would have been well within the Mycenaeans' capabilities; however the evidence at present does not exist to suggest that they used this method. The specialised equipment required would be a perforated bowl of small enough size to fit inside a larger cooking pot. Perforated vessels do exist at Pylos, but they are not of suitable form and are for highly specific purposes (e.g. form 71, the so-called 'incense burner'; form 24, the perforated dipper). Therefore, the conclusion on our present evidence must be that this was a method either unemployed by Mycenaean cooks or one that has as yet left no trace in the archaeological record.

To summarise the above, we have evidence in the Pylos ceramic assemblage of grilling, frying, spit-roasting and braising/stewing being practised. While oven baking and steaming could have been carried out, the evidence at present is insufficient to state this conclusively. I would now like to relate these conclusions to the faunal evidence from the palace and the issues of diacritical feasting discussed in 4.1-2.

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<sup>3</sup> The tripod-cup form 69 held between 0.45-0.85 litres, and form 70 held between 0.6-1.65 litres.

<sup>4</sup> Ovens seem to have slowly risen in popularity after the palatial period; for example there are several ovens, one at least containing an ashy fill (showing it was used), in the LHIIIC settlement at Xeropolis-Lefkandi (e.g. Evely 2006: 119). This is however from Euboea and not the Peloponnese.

The six selective faunal deposits from the palace contain between 2 and 19 cattle each, with two of the deposits also containing the remains of a red deer (Isaakidou *et al.* 2002; Halstead & Isaakidou 2004). As examined in 4.2, this appears to indicate large-scale beef consumption, with venison reserved for a smaller group (perhaps the elite). As beef and venison are two very different meats and may have been prepared for two completely different sets of people, it is worth examining the material record to see if this pattern is reflected in the cooking equipment. All comments on meat suitability in **Table III.1** are taken from McGee (2004: 156-164).

Cooking Method	Suitable Meat	Catering Capacity
Grilling	Thin and tender cuts	Very limited – 10 “kebabs” per ‘souvlaki tray’/‘broiling pan’ and only one example of this form excavated.
Frying	Thin and tender cuts	Very limited – average content of pan is 6.29 litres and only 3 examples excavated. <sup>5</sup>
Spit-roasting	Large, bulky cuts, including whole animals	Potentially very large – a spit-roast can cook a large quantity of meat and there are several burnt locations in the palace’s northwest vicinity.
Braising/stewing	Tough meat with a significant amount of connective tissue	Limited to fairly large – 52 tripod-cups have been excavated but the largest holds only 1.65 litres; 66 two-handled kraters also excavated (only 30 from the rooms 67-68 cooking area) with great variation in capacity; the two types may have been used in conjunction to prepare the same dish, thus reducing overall volume; if cauldrons (cf. Ta tablets) were used, catering capacity could have been increased.

**Table III.1: Cooking methods at Pylos**

The conclusions presented in **Table III.1** can be interpreted as follows. Venison is well-known as being a tough meat and hence the most suitable method for cooking it is via braising or stewing, so that the high connective tissue content can be broken down most effectively. The average capacity of tripod-cup form 69 has been calculated at 0.69 litres, and that of form 70 at

<sup>5</sup> This figure is based on an average diameter of 0.27m and an average height of 0.11m. It should be remembered however that frying is a technique that requires the food to have contact with the heated base, and therefore it is likely that the average amount fried would have been significantly less.

0.96 litres (Hruby 2006: 147), making an estimated total capacity of the 52 vessels at 40.74 litres. This is of course an extremely rough figure, yet it gives some indication of the scale. The scenario becomes a little more complex when the two-handled kraters (form 59) are taken into account, which were also posited above as stewing vessels. Even if only those from the cooking area of rooms 67-68 are considered, there are 30 examples and this potentially broadens out the amount of guests that could have been catered for.<sup>6</sup> It is however impossible to work out a rough estimate of the kraters' total capacity, given that they ranged between 1.6-12.8 litres.

A very plausible solution to understanding the tripod-cups and two-handled kraters is to accept the basis of Lis' (2006: 17) suggestion that these cooking vessels should not be seen in terms of a cumulative capacity but as "sets", with several vessel forms employed in the creation of one dish (as indeed a modern cook does). It is true that the 30 kraters would have held a greater quantity than the 52 tripod-cups;<sup>7</sup> however, as suggested above, it may be reasonable to view the stew concoction prepared in the kraters as decanted into the tripod-cups for final touches. Two principal solutions can be suggested, although it is impossible to select between them. Firstly, the stew prepared in the kraters could have been decanted into tripod-cups that were then served to the elite guests in hall 6 and/or hall 65.<sup>8</sup> The one-handled tripod-cup form 69 is ideal for self-serving (with the placement of the spout at a 90° angle to the handle), could have been kept warm over braziers to ensure maximum enjoyment of the contents,<sup>9</sup> and had an individualistic nature that no doubt would have emphasised further the exclusiveness of the elite guests who dined from them. It is also notably the smaller of the two forms and therefore more appropriate for individual use. Secondly, Lis (2006: 14, 20; 2008: 148) envisages the tripod-cups containing a separate "dip" that could be kept warm over a brazier and shared between several guests (cf. Hruby 2008: 154-155). If the cauldrons recorded in the Ta tablets were also used for cooking stews, then far too much would have been prepared to be decanted into the tripod-cups and they may have been used in this way as a side-dish between several people.

As for the 18 examples of the two-handled form 70, the position of the spout differed on these, making them more suitable for serving by an attendant, and the lower number of this form also supports the idea that they were not employed individualistically but shared between several guests. These could have held something like a sauce that was poured over or added to the dishes that the elite guests were dining from.

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<sup>6</sup> Another 31 were found in room 60 but, as discussed in 4.1, the assemblage from that pantry is sufficiently diverse that it appears to indicate a different purpose.

<sup>7</sup> The medium- and large-sized varieties of the kraters were principally found in room 67, with average capacities of 3.4 and 10.5 litres respectively (B. Lis pers.comm.).

<sup>8</sup> Given that the two halls together could have held anywhere between 40-280 elite guests, the possibility should be considered that those in hall 6 were served with metal consumption vessels (no longer extant), while the tripod-cups were given to those in hall 65.

<sup>9</sup> There were 51 braziers found in the cooking room 67, so there would have been more than enough to ensure that each tripod-cup (whether both forms or just form 69) had its own brazier.



Having examined how the venison may have been cooked, I turn now to the beef and to the other cooking techniques. Spit-roasting would have been the simplest way of cooking several cattle – each faunal deposit represents a huge quantity of meat and in the ceramic assemblage there is no significant quantity of cooking vessels that could suggest it was prepared in any other way. Beef would also be very suitable for cooking in this manner with its high temperatures, and the presence of several large burnt areas to the northwest of the palace support its occurrence. The only other method for successfully cooking this amount of meat that agrees with the archaeological record is to bake it in a pit in the ground, but predictably there is no evidence that this occurred. It should also be noted that there were many more smaller animals consumed than the faunal deposits attest, as the Linear B feasting supplies tablets record multiple ovicaprids. These were probably also cooked in this manner, as the large numbers of them could not have been prepared with the comparatively limited cooking assemblage in rooms 67-68.

The other techniques (grilling and frying) appear to have occurred on a very limited scale, even allowing for the uncertain survival of ‘souvlaki trays’/‘broiling pans’. Their suitability for tender meat would indicate that they were not employed for cooking venison. Several options therefore remain: those of elite status enjoyed beef “souvlakia” (or something fried) alongside their venison stew when the cattle were slaughtered for the rest of the guests; small parts of the sheep/goats were also prepared in this manner and again probably served to more elite guests only; or these cooking methods played no part in feasting scenarios and were used in everyday food preparations for those living and/or working in the palace.

While it is difficult at present to make firm conclusions about cooking methods during feasts at the palace at Pylos, it is however possible to make these suggestions which enlighten both the techniques that were being employed and the ways in which guests of elite status were distinguished from the others attending. The ceramic record supports the conclusion that those who were elite were being served food cooked in different ways from that prepared for the other guests.

## Appendix IV: Animals Consumed at Sanctuary Feasts During the Palatial Period

While to some poorer members of society a feast at a palace would have been like entering another world, sanctuary feasting can truly be said to be separate from the quotidian, a space of powerful impressions and of special activities or food. In this context, it would be fascinating to discover whether certain types of cuisine were served at ritual occasions and regarded as appropriate for the deity worshipped during the rites. Unfortunately, this is an unexplored area at present and thus the comments I make here are preliminary. I examine three of the most important sanctuaries from the palatial period, all of which have had recent zooarchaeological studies performed on their faunal remains: the Mycenae Cult Centre, the Midea Shrine Area, and Ayios Konstantinos on Methana (Table IV.1).

Species	Mycenae (Cult Centre) <sup>1</sup>	Midea (Shrine Area) <sup>2</sup>		Ayios Konstantinos <sup>3</sup>	
		Rooms VIII and XXXII	Rooms XXXII and XXXIII	Room A	Rooms B and C
Cattle	19.6%	28.9%	35.7%	0%	2.4%
Ovicaprids	45.9%	41.2%	50.0%	34.1%	74.7%
Pigs	34.5%	32.2%	14.3%	53.7%	7.2%

Table IV.1: Percentages of species represented at three sanctuary sites

The most immediately apparent feature is that ovicaprids are consistently (apart from room A at Ayios Konstantinos) the most popular species to be consumed. This is unsurprising, given that sheep/goats are constantly prominent at both cultic and settlement sites throughout the LBA-EIA. They are cheaper to rear than cattle and are more productive than pigs, giving wool and milk as well as meat. The general dominance of ovicaprids can also be seen in the Linear B feasting supplies tablets, where they regularly appear in higher quantities than other species. PY Un 2 lists 36 ovicaprids alongside one head of cattle and seven pigs; Un 138 has 29 ovicaprids (plus eight 'yearlings', probably also sheep/goat) with 13 pigs and three cattle.

The relatively low proportion of cattle is also noticeable at every site, apart from rooms XXXII-XXXIII in the Midea Shrine Area, where they outnumber pigs. As discussed in 4.2, cattle appear to have some symbolic importance in the palatial period and may have been associated with elite status, due to the investment that would be required to raise one and the conspicuous

<sup>1</sup> Figures from U. Albarella (pers.comm.). They are currently NISp as MNI still have to be calculated prior to publishing the finds.

<sup>2</sup> Figures are MNI from Walberg & Reese (2008).

<sup>3</sup> Figures are NAU from Hamilakis (2003) and Hamilakis & Konsolaki (2004).

consumption that would be displayed when one was slaughtered. The special depositional treatment of the cattle at Pylos indicates their significance to the Mycenaean mindset, although what this might be is not fully clear, beyond the fact that the lowest-status groups in society may not have been able to own a cow/bull due to the cost of rearing it. Like the ovicaprids, the cattle's representation here is consistent with the Linear B tablets, where they are regularly recorded in low quantities and are often supplied by prominent individuals (Nikoloudis 2008: 377). While the restricted, highly elite nature of the dining area in the Midea sanctuary means that the raised proportion of bovine bones is not unexpected, this does not explain why such results are not seen at other elite shrines also.

However, room A at Ayios Konstantinos displays an unusual result, with 53.7% of the animal bones from pigs and only 34.1% from ovicaprids, a figure that contrasts sharply with the immediately adjacent rooms B and C, where 74.7% of the bones were ovicaprids and only 7.2% pigs. In addition, there was a clear preference amongst these assemblages for neonatal/juvenile piglets, with the majority of specimens being very young, while the ovicaprids were adult animals (Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004: 143). Two unusual features can therefore be observed at this site; firstly, there was a marked division between the animals consumed depending on which room one was in. It is possible to suggest two separate rituals occurring with two separate groups of people participating, differentiated by the cuisine consumed (maybe even worshipping two different gods?). Secondly, a very specific category of animals was consumed in room A, that of extremely young pigs. Such animals would not provide much meat, and therefore this suggests that they were selected by ritual rather than practical considerations and/or that a very limited group of people were expected to consume their flesh.

While the ratios are less striking from the Cult Centre at Mycenae, it is noteworthy that here also there was a high percentage of neonates/juveniles amongst the pigs consumed. Around 30% of the pig remains came from very young animals, a figure that is high enough to reveal intentional selection (U. Albarella pers.comm.). While no definitive statements can be made on a sample of only two sanctuary sites, the unusual predominance of one particular type of one particular species would be worth investigating further. It is true that pigs generally have large litters and thus it could be a cheap option to offer a piglet for sacrifice and consumption (Hamilakis & Konsolaki 2004: 143), but it could also be the case that young piglets had some significance in LBA Greece that we can no longer trace and that consumption of their flesh was seen as integral to some religious rites. In this context, it is interesting to note that the rhyton discovered in room A at Ayios Konstantinos appears to have a pig's head (Konsolaki 2002: 30).

Piglets had specific roles to play in certain Classical rituals in Greece, including the Thesmophoria and the Eleusinian Mysteries, although they were not consumed as well. They

seem to have been selected for fertility purposes (no doubt due to their large litter) and for purification, which appears less easily explicable to our modern eyes (Burkert 1985[1977]: 242-45, 286). Another example of piglets playing a major role in religious rituals is at the Archaic-Classical sanctuary of Apollo Halieis, where the *hestiatorion* was full of their bones (Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 164). To return to the Mycenaean palatial period, pigs were mentioned as part of the supplies in PY Un 2, a feast held at the Pylian sanctuary *pa-ki-ja-na*, although there is no indication as to their age. It appears probable that different species of meat were consumed on different occasions, or in different locations, and hence that the 'Otherness' of a sanctuary feast as opposed to a sociopolitical feast would be signalled to a participant, *inter alia*, through the cuisine – possibly through pork. The idea of animals being selected as ritually appropriate is supported by the textual evidence, where those listed for sacrifice and consumption are sometimes qualified by various terms, such as their colour (e.g. *re-u-ko*, white: PY Cn 418), age (e.g. *wetalon*, yearling: TH Wu 74 & 78) or condition (e.g. *po-ro-e-ko-to*, superior: TH Wu 67 & 92; Killen 1994: 79; Nikoloudis 2001: 13), thus indicating that only animals of certain types were suitable for sanctuary feasting. While we cannot at present trace the emic significance that selection of species had to people in the palatial period, it may be possible to suggest tentative criteria, whereby ovicaprids were consumed as standard in all spheres of feasting, cattle were employed when statements of social superiority were required to be made, and pigs may have had a uniquely religious significance that made them a deliberate choice in certain sanctuary contexts.

## Appendix V: The Decline of the Kylix

The significant observation was made by Cavanagh (1998: 111) that the kylix's connection with funerary drinking rituals was restricted to only a short period around the palaces' *floruit*. The custom of depositing kylikes in the *dromos* of a tomb, extremely widespread during the palatial period, was not evidenced before LHIIIA and disappeared with the collapse of the palaces. Cavanagh proposed that the practice was closely bound up with the palatial regime, although he wisely did not offer a solution as to whether it was actively rejected or simply abandoned in LHIIIC. The following year, Galaty (1999b) also explored the relationship between the kylix and the palaces, placing it in a wider context by suggesting that the vessel symbolised elite drinking activities and the palace's control over ritual behaviour. According to this theory, the kylix's form would recall to the user palatially-sponsored drinking rituals, offering an opportunity to emulate the higher tiers of society and a reminder that the palace held a degree of control over the ritual sphere. These two studies have produced an awareness that the kylix was in some way connected with the palaces, borne out by the fact that the vessel's period of greatest popularity coincided neatly with the time when the palaces held power (cf. Mountjoy 1993: 120).

I discussed the role of kylix-based drinking rituals around tombs in 4.6, how they emulated or conformed to a *modus operandi* propagated by the palaces, and how they abruptly ceased once the palaces had fallen in LHIIIC. Here I concentrate upon the kylix itself, by studying a selected group of sites to see by how much its popularity declined after the palaces' collapse and what took its place. I have chosen only those sites which have easily accessible ceramic information for the periods under question; to do a more comprehensive study would be rewarding yet would constitute a research question in its own right. I have however tried to present a range of sites of different types and sizes, as the kylix's popularity appeared to pervade every area of life during the palatial period. Inevitably, due to the varied recording methods used by different excavators, it is impossible to align all the data gathered; for example, some reports detail only catalogued sherds while others record all those excavated. Therefore, the data should not be taken in absolute terms – the value of this short study is in describing general trends, as these are observable whether a representative sample or the whole is presented.

In Table V.1, I have selected four LHIIIB settlement sites to examine the percentage that kylikes form of the pottery assemblage. Obviously, there is major variation in the size of the sites: Pylos is an exceptionally well-preserved palace, the figures from Midea and Isthmia are taken from LHIIIB settlements (as much as has been excavated), while House H at Korakou is

one small domestic dwelling. However, **Tables V.1 and V.2** display two broad trends which seem to apply to all sizes of site and justify the coexistence of such disparate evidence. Firstly, in three out of the four sites, the percentage of the most popular drinking vessel is around or above 50%, attesting to the universality of generalised drinking practices. The lower percentage to be seen at Isthmia is undoubtedly due to the fact that the LHIII B material was not found *in situ* and thus had suffered from a number of post-depositional processes (Morgan 1999: 177). Secondly, in three out of the four sites, the kylix was the drinking vessel of choice; Midea is the exception and this is probably due to the excavators' selection of decorated vessels for statistical analysis only.<sup>1</sup>

Site	Number of kylikes	Number of vessels	Kylikes as percentage of whole
Palace of Nestor, Pylos	c.7,106 <sup>2</sup>	c.11,122 <sup>3</sup>	63.89%
Midea <sup>4</sup>	16	651	2.46%
Isthmia <sup>5</sup>	25	74	33.78%
House H, Korakou <sup>6</sup>	6	12	50.0%

**Table V.1: Percentages of kylikes at selected LHIII B sites**

Site	Most popular drinking vessel	Number of this vessel	Percentage of whole assemblage
Palace of Nestor, Pylos	Kylix	c.7,106	63.89%
Midea	Deep bowl (all types)	322	49.46%
Isthmia	Kylix	25	33.78%
House H, Korakou	Kylix	6	50.0%

**Table V.2: Percentages of the most popular drinking vessel at selected LHIII B sites**

<sup>1</sup> Deep bowls provide a much better ground for painted decoration, as they offer a larger and flatter field.

<sup>2</sup> All types of kylix included in this figure.

<sup>3</sup> Figures taken from Blegen & Rawson 1966. They were complete numbers of recognisable vessels at the time of excavation, although further work on the site means that these figures may have increased slightly.

<sup>4</sup> Figures taken from Giering 2007. These figures are complete ones from both seasons of excavation (1985-1991, 1994-1997); however, they are based on sherds rather than complete vessels and on decorated ware only.

<sup>5</sup> Figures taken from Morgan 1999. They are based on catalogued sherds.

<sup>6</sup> Figures taken from Blegen 1921. They are based on the complete number of recognisable vessels.

So just how popular was the kylix during LHIIIB? It has already been observed in more comprehensive studies that it was the dominant ceramic form in settlement contexts in LHIIIA2-LHIIIB and it was one of the most common forms in funerary contexts in LHIIIA1-LHIIIB (Mountjoy 1993: 120, 127). With the exception of Midea, **Table V.3** shows the second most popular drinking vessel at each of the sites. While the percentages of kylikes were generally high albeit not particularly close (63.89%, 33.78%, 50.0%), the percentages of the next most common drinking vessels were in a very comparable and much lower range (10.43%, 16.22%, 16.67%). It can be seen that at each of these three sites – a palace, a settlement and a house – the kylix was outstandingly more popular than any other drinking vessel employed. As the second most popular vessel varies in each case, the conformity to the kylix as the form of choice is even more noticeable.

Site	Most popular drinking vessel after the kylix	Number of this vessel	Percentage of whole assemblage
Palace of Nestor, Pylos	Shallow one-handled cup ('teacup')	1,160	10.43%
Isthmia	Deep bowl	12	16.22%
House H, Korakou	Shallow bowl	2	16.67%

**Table V.3: Percentages of second most popular drinking vessel at selected LHIIIB sites**

However, this does not prove anything new, although it supports the accepted belief that the kylix was the dominant ceramic form during LHIIIB. What is more significant is the shift away from this vessel after the collapse of the palaces. **Table V.4** presents the percentage of the kylix in the ceramic assemblage of selected LHIIIC sites. Excepting Midea, which appears to remain unique in its consistent preference for deep bowls, it can be seen that at the sites that had continuous activity of some form (Korakou and Isthmia), the percentage of kylikes declined sharply – from 50.0% to 27.87% and from 33.78% to 9.09% respectively. At the sites displaying new LHIIIC activity (Xeropolis and Perati), the amounts of kylikes are even lower than those from the settlements with LHIIIB use (4.53% and 0.33%). It should be noted that the selected LHIIIC examples include a site that was to become a sanctuary if it was not one already at that point (Isthmia) and a cemetery (Perati); therefore the decline of the kylix appears to have featured in every arena of commensality.

Site	Number of kylikes in LHIIC	Number of vessels in LHIIC	Kylikes as percentage of whole (LHIIB)	Kylikes as percentage of whole (LHIIC)
Midea <sup>7</sup>	4	86	2.46%	4.65%
Isthmia	1	11	33.78%	9.09%
Xeropolis <sup>8</sup>	c.100	c.2,208	N/A	4.53%
Perati <sup>9</sup>	4	1,225	N/A	0.33%
House P, Korakou	17	61	(50.0% in House H)	27.87%

**Table V.4: Percentages of kylikes at selected LHIIC sites**

Xeropolis allows us to study this decline more closely, due to the excavators' division of LHIIC activity into 6 sub-phases. **Table V.5** shows clearly how the kylix experienced a gradual decline in popularity throughout the whole of LHIIC, from being 15.84% of the drinking vessel assemblage in Phase 1a to 2.47% in Phase 3b. However, what took its place? Were the people of Xeropolis still performing drinking rituals? In 5.1, I discussed how commensal activities were occurring in Xeropolis during LHIIC, some of which can be described as feasting as opposed to domestic dining by Phase 2a, and therefore the continuation of drinking rituals is likely. **Table V.6** shows the concurrent rise in popularity of what appears to be the kylix's replacement, the deep bowl. For the first two phases at least, the rise of the deep bowl is striking, from comprising just over half (59.28%) of the drinking vessels assemblage in Phase 1a to almost three quarters (71.43%) in Phase 2b. When these figures are compared with those of the kylix in **Table V.5**, the greater popularity of the deep bowl is conspicuous. The apparent slight decline of the deep bowl in Phases 3a and 3b can be attributed to the increased use of the conical bowl as well during those periods. If the two bowls (deep *and conical*) are considered together, then the percentage rises to 81.01% in Phase 3a and 96.30% in Phase 3b. The replacement of the kylix by the bowl (*principally* the deep bowl) should therefore be seen as certain and **Table V.7** illustrates its popularity in comparison to the kylix at the other selected LHIIC sites.

<sup>7</sup> Figures are taken from Walberg 2007. They are total figures but are based on sherds rather than complete vessels and on *decorated* ware only.

<sup>8</sup> Figures are taken from Evely 2006. All sherds were recorded during the excavation. However, they should not be taken as quantitatively accurate due to the excavators' practice of recording a sherd several times under different criteria. I have taken the most diagnostic sherds for each vessel only (principally handles and bases; stems and feet for kylikes). While this may omit some sherds that were from the body of the vessel, it may also count some vessels twice if both parts were preserved. I hope therefore that it is not too far from the correct number, but quantitative figures should be taken with extreme caution.

<sup>9</sup> Figures taken from Iakovides 1980. They are based on complete numbers of recognisable forms excavated.



Phase	Number of kylikes	Number of drinking vessels <sup>10</sup>	Kylikes as percentage of whole (drinking vessel assemblage only)
1a	35	221	15.84%
1b	28	189	14.81%
2a	31	513	6.04%
2b	2	49	4.08%
3a	2	79	2.53%
3b	2	81	2.47%

**Table V.5: Percentages of kylikes at Xeropolis during LHIIC**

Phase	Number of deep bowls	Number of drinking vessels	Deep bowls as percentage of whole (drinking vessel assemblage only)
1a	131	221	59.28%
1b	120	189	63.49%
2a	349	513	68.03%
2b	35	49	71.43%
3a	51	79	64.56%
3b	41	81	50.62%

**Table V.6: Percentages of deep bowls at Xeropolis during LHIIC**

<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in footnote 8, these figures are very inaccurate due to the excavators' chosen method of recording. I have counted handles and bases for deep bowls and cups, and stems and feet for kylikes, as these are the most representative parts.

Site	Number of deep bowls	Deep bowls as percentage of whole	Kylikes as percentage of whole
Midea	31	36.05%	4.65%
Isthmia	5	45.45%	9.09%
Xeropolis	727	32.93%	4.53%
Perati	78 skyphoi (0 deep bowls)	6.37%	0.33%
House P, Korakou	14	22.95%	27.87%

**Table V.7: Percentages of deep bowls at selected LHIIC sites**

Before analysing these figures more closely, it is worth briefly examining Nichoria, which suffered a break in occupation during LHIIC and therefore provides evidence on the decline of the kylix during the subsequent phases of the EIA. **Table V.8** shows the difference in quantity between the numbers of kylikes and of deep bowls and skyphoi at this site. Once again a notable decline can be seen, continuing beyond the LHIIC period, to the extent that by the later part of the EIA the kylix in its Mycenaean form was no longer existent at Nichoria. The deep bowl and its smaller relative, the skyphos, were by far the most popular drinking vessels employed at Nichoria; although cups were present also, they were in much smaller quantities and so should not be seen as the replacement drinking vessel of choice.

Period	Numbers of kylikes <sup>11</sup>	Numbers of deep bowls and skyphoi
DAI	27	180
DAII	15	554
DAII/III transitional	3	79
DAIII	0	346

**Table V.8: Numbers of kylikes and deep bowls/skyphoi at Nichoria from DAI to DAIII**

Having presented the principal data, it remains to draw conclusions – how can one interpret the rate at which the kylix was abandoned, and did the adoption of the deep bowl signal a change in drinking practices? Firstly, it should be noted that, while the kylix was clearly associated with

<sup>11</sup> Figures are taken from McDonald *et al* 1983. The number of kylikes was derived by the excavators from the stems found. Similarly, the number of deep bowls/skyphoi was derived from the rims, the most characteristic parts. I have followed this here.

the palaces and their *modus operandi* in some way, once the palaces fell there was no mass destruction of every kylix in existence. In the dataset I have used here, the first time when no kylix is found in a pottery assemblage is DAIII at Nichoria, near the end of the EIA and so several centuries after the collapse of the palatial regime. This fact, along with the reuse of palatial symbols of power in LHIIIC (as discussed in 5.1), indicates that the fall of the palaces was not primarily due to revolution and there was no deep-rooted desire by the populace to purge themselves of every reminder of their former authorities. The kylix's decline was highly visible but not immediate and total. Indeed at Midea, the kylix was already overtaken by the deep bowl in popularity before the end of LHIIIB, although this should be seen as an exceptional case and may be affected by recording methods, as mentioned (cf. Mountjoy 1993: 81). Therefore, it may be surmised that, at least in the arena of sociopolitical dining, the kylix was abandoned because it recalled particular palatial ways of performing commensality that were no longer relevant in the changed social environment of the post-palatial period.

I discussed in 5.1 how House P at Korakou blended both reactionary and progressive elements in the sociopolitical feasts performed in its main room. While in some ways it forecast the styles of commensality seen in leader's dwellings throughout the EIA, it also retained elements of palatial feasting, such as dining around a central hearth, that had been abandoned in the higher-order sites such as Tiryns and Midea. One can observe that its percentage of kylikes was the highest out of the selected LHIIIC sites (27.87%), and this may well be due to its rather rural nature, possibly clinging to certain palatial features at a time when the higher-order, larger sites were experimenting with new political structures and styles of feasting. Similarly, the fact that Nichoria did not abandon the kylix totally until DAIII may be due to its location on the western edge of the mainland. Eder (2006: 566-567) has noted that the Mycenaean kylix died out after LHIIIC in all areas except the western part of Greece, such as at Olympia. Hence Nichoria may in fact be an anomaly rather than a typical EIA site, and may have retained the kylix much longer than other locations in the eastern and central mainland. It can hence be seen that not only was the kylix not immediately rejected, but its abandonment occurred at different rates, depending on the region a site was in, its size and whether it was rural or urban.

On the other hand, Perati indicates that this fast but gradual abandonment seems to have been a feature of sociopolitical feasting only. As the sole cemetery I consider here, it obviously cannot be taken as representative of the entire mainland funerary dataset of the period. However, it is one of the most fully excavated and recorded cemeteries from LHIIIC and therefore offers abundant evidence. At Perati, the kylix seems to have almost vanished during this period, comprising only 0.33% of the entire pottery assemblage. I discussed in 5.4 how there may have been a concurrent and temporary abandonment of the rite of funerary feasting in LHIIIC, at this

site at least, and therefore there may no longer have been a need for the kylix if commensality was not being performed. The lack of kylikes excavated also accords with the simultaneous abandonment of the kylix-based drinking ritual that was characteristic of the palatial era (where the mourners drank from the kylix and then smashed it against the *stomion*), as such a practice cannot be attested at Perati at all. It would be methodologically erroneous to generalise from one cemetery alone, yet the evidence here suggests that the kylix and its associated rituals proved more offensive in the funerary sphere and were abandoned more rapidly than in the sociopolitical arena. Reasons for this are difficult to establish – was the funerary sphere dictated by the palace more than we have previously assumed, thus leading to a genuine rejection of practices associated with them after they had collapsed?<sup>12</sup> Did the fall of the palaces mean that people no longer had a higher authority to emulate and thus the kylix-based rituals were no longer relevant in the post-palatial world, particularly in the more personal arena of funerals? Did practices surrounding funerals change so dramatically in this short period that the kylix no longer had a role in the burial process? Could one link this with other changes in burial rites to suggest that eschatology had somewhat shifted, so that the ritual farewell to the corpse was no longer seen as essential for a proper interment? Whatever the reason, the possibility should be considered that there were different undercurrents to funerary commensality that led to the much quicker decline of the kylix in this sphere.

As has been demonstrated, the deep bowl and its smaller form, the skyphos, took the kylix's place. The 'standard' kylix at Pylos (FS 274), which appears to have been the drinking vessel primarily used by palatial feast attendees, held between 0.75-1.2 litres (Blegen & Rawson 1966). This is considerably more capacious than a modern pint glass, which holds 0.57 litres, and even more so than the largest modern wine glasses, holding c.0.25 litres. However, in a festive scenario, the kylix's capacity was certainly appropriate for individual consumption. McDonald *et al.* (1983) provide only rim and base diameters for the Nichoria vessels, and thus comparable capacities cannot be obtained from the data there. However, by considering modern bowls with a similar profile to a deep bowl, one with a rim diameter of 15cm (at the cut-off point between large skyphos and small deep bowl) holds 0.8 litres and one with a rim diameter of 21cm (thus equivalent to a large deep bowl) holds 2.15 litres. From this, one can see that the smaller skyphoi would certainly be designed for individual consumption and the larger examples/smaller deep bowls were consistent with the amount contained in the standard Pylian kylix – therefore, they could be reconstructed as holding a generous amount for an individual drinker. Despite their wide mouth, they were not unwieldy to drink from and indeed may even have been easier than a kylix, given the fact that they could be grasped around the body rather

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<sup>12</sup> Possibly there was some sumptuary control by the palaces over grave-goods (cf. Voutsaki 2001), but this need not necessarily affect people's acceptance of palatially-influenced funerary rituals.

than balanced by the handles. However, the large deep bowls were excessive for one guest to drink alone, and their size would make them impractical to raise to one's mouth for drinking as well as heavy when full. Assuming they were indeed used for drink, only one of several purposes they could have fulfilled (cf. Mountjoy 1993: 123), it could have been the case that they performed a more communal function, perhaps akin to a small krater. The idealness of the deep bowl's body for decoration meant that they could well have been the centrepieces of a feast, into which the smaller skyphoi were dipped.

One cannot propose a complete change in drinking rituals, given the variation in size of the deep bowls/skyphoi, some of which could have been used much as the kylix was formerly. However, there does seem to have been a subtle shift in how drinking rituals were performed in the post-palatial period. The plain standardised kylikes at palatial feasts at Pylos could be mobilised to reduce guests to one or two tiers of status (given the differentiation between fine and coarseware), while those privileged enough to dine elsewhere in elite areas may have employed metal vessels (Bendall 2004: 123-124). The diacritical distinctions were extremely clear to anyone present. However, the possibilities for individuality and finer nuances of status were much easier to attain through the employment of the deep bowls/skyphoi. Not only was there great differentiation in size, but they could also be decorated individually in order to show additional degrees of diacritica. The experiences of dining with these vessels would have been quite different from the palatial feasts, as the varied displays of status were much more subtle and perhaps more flexible also.

Furthermore, the possible use of the larger deep bowls as mixing vessels coincides with an increase in numbers of kraters in LHIIIC, notably pictorial ones, as noted in 5.1 and 5.3. It is highly likely that the largest deep bowls played similar roles to kraters in feasting contexts, as displays of status, wealth and elite membership, as foci of attention, and as catalysts for oral tales. The numerous deep bowls at Midea and the examples at Nichoria were all decorated, a prerequisite for fulfilling the krater's roles. Such deep bowls, smaller than most kraters, were thus perhaps a sign of emulation of these drinking rituals by the lesser elite, as this style of commensality became prevalent in LHIIIC and spread down through the social matrix. An emphasis on mixing rituals was not a major feature of palatial drinking activities, and its more frequent appearance therefore represents the adoption/elaboration of new elements of commensality, with the concurrent increased production of suitable equipment that signalled its formalisation.

To summarise therefore, the kylix declined from its LHIIIA-B position of great popularity, gradually disappearing during and after the LHIIIC period (depending on region). While its

decline is highly conspicuous in the archaeological record, and particularly abrupt in the funerary arena, it was not instantly abandoned in the sociopolitical sphere. One may thus presume that it was no longer relevant in the post-palatial world rather than actively rejected. On the other hand, the adoption of the deep bowl as the drinking vessel of choice reflects experimentation with new elements of commensal ritual and the expression of diacritical levels of social status in more nuanced ways, appropriate to a new sociopolitical *milieu* where authority was more flexible. The variety to be seen amongst the deep bowls and skyphoi, and the altered rituals that they accompanied, reflect the attempt of the new authorities to place their own mark upon commensality – previously heavily influenced by the palaces – and to employ it for their own sociopolitical purposes.