

The Delayed Development of Athens in the Bronze Age

Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
Brandeis University  
Ancient Greek and Roman Studies  
Andrew Koh, Advisor

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts  
in  
Ancient Greek and Roman Studies

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May 2016

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## ABSTRACT

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A thesis presented to Ancient Greek and Roman Studies

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Evidence of occupation in the area of ancient Athens suggests inhabitants as early as the Paleolithic Age.<sup>1</sup> Athens is commonly associated as the forerunner to much of ancient Greek culture. During the Bronze Age, however, the Mycenaean culture was late to arrive. While other cities were thriving during this stage of the Bronze Age, Athens was slow to develop strongly in their own center. Like Tiryns and Mycenae, Athens fortified the acropolis with extensive walls and internal access to a water supply, possibly in defense of the so-called Dorian invasion. Unlike Tiryns and Mycenae, Athens was apparently able to successfully defend against invasion at this time. A combination of elements, such as the subjugation to Crete, exclusive trade agreements, and the successful focus on defense tactics against the invasion in the late 13th century BCE, created isolation and were, therefore, the major factors of the static development in Bronze Age Athens.

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<sup>1</sup> Camp, John. *The Archaeology of Athens*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 11.

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**Abbreviations:**

EBA: Early Bronze Age

EC: Early Cycladic

EH: Early Helladic

EM: Early Minoan

LBA: Late Bronze Age

LC: Late Cycladic

LH: Late Helladic

LM: Late Minoan

MBA: Middle Bronze Age

MC: Middle Cycladic

MH: Middle Helladic

MM: Middle Minoan

**Aegean Bronze Age Approximate Chronology, Mainland Greece**

Early Bronze Age or Early Helladic period	EH I	3000 – 2650 BCE
	EH II	2650 – 2200 BCE
	EH III	2200 – 2000 BCE
Middle Bronze Age or Middle Helladic period	MH I	2000 – 1900 BCE
	MH II	1900 – 1800 BCE
	MH III	1800 – 1700 BCE
Late Bronze Age or Late Helladic period	LH I	1700 – 1600 BCE
	LH II	1600 – 1400 BCE
	LH IIIA	1400 – 1300 BCE
	LH IIIB	1300 – 1200 BCE
	LH IIIC	1200 – 1100 BCE

Source: Cline, E.H. and Voutsaki, S. *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **The Archaeological Finds at Bronze Age Athens**

Evidence of the Mycenaean culture as a late adoption at Athens can be corroborated by the archaeological evidence, such as new pottery like Mycenaean fine-ware, new grave sites, and grave types, as well as new architecture. Even Egyptian evidence offers hints to substantiate the late development of Athens: the tour of the major Greek cities by Amenhotep III -- as proclaimed on the column base at the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III in Kom el-Hetan -- includes various cities on Crete and mainland Greece, but Athens is left out.<sup>2</sup> Eric H. Cline suggests that the “Aegean List” represents the change in the power matrix from Minoan to Mycenaean. “An Egyptian embassy sent to the Aegean in the reign of Amenhotep III would probably have had a dual mission: to affirm connections with an old, valued trading partner (the Minoans on Crete); and to establish relations with a new, rising power (the Mycenaeans on mainland Greece).”<sup>3</sup> Either Athens’ late development as a Mycenaean power or its minimal trade with Egypt excluded it from Amenhotep III’s Aegean voyage. The late evolution into a Mycenaean power is supported by Sara Immerwahr’s finds:

It seems likely that the early Mycenaean northern expansion was a coastal phenomenon, involving settlers making their way by sea from the Argolid or Corinthia across the Saronic Gulf and around Cape Sounion and thence into the straits of Euboia and on into the Gulf of Volo. One can plot along this route a string

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<sup>2</sup> Cline, Eric H. *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cline, Eric H., O’Connor, D. and Cline, E.H eds. “Amenhotep III, the Aegean and Anatolia.” *In Amenhotep III: Perspectives on his reign*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 248.

of early Mycenaean coastal settlements – Thorikos, Brauron, Marathon, Dramesi, in Boiotia, Chalkis, and finally the harbor Neleia and the palace site Iolkos in the Gulf of Volo which must have been the goal. Most of these seem to belong to a slightly earlier horizon than is attested for Athens, and one might argue that Athens first became important with the overload northern expansion to Boiotia and the foundation of Kadmeion in Late Helladic II.<sup>4</sup>

During Late Helladic III, there is material evidence to support widespread Mycenaean establishment in the region of Attica, however, there is little to suggest the domination of the region by Athens.<sup>5</sup>

After the adaptation of Mycenaean culture in Athens the city still does not reach the level of advancement that other Mycenaean cities accomplished. The grave goods from the city of Mycenae are part of an earlier phase of Mycenaean culture that indicates wealth that cannot be attributed to Athens at this time or during the later phase of Mycenaean culture. The Shaft Grave period (c. 1600 – 1450 BCE) at Mycenae contains elite burials, even though many of the graves have been robbed.<sup>6</sup> The remaining evidence still represents an elite culture with gold face masks, bronze weaponry, ceremonial daggers with inlaid miniature scenes with precious metals, carved boar's tusks, which were used to reinforce the boar's tusk helmets common to the Mycenaean warrior at the time. Other finds included gold, silver, and electrum drinking vessels, gold jewelry, textile ornaments, and elaborate headdresses.<sup>7</sup> Sara Immerwahr explains, "Of the more sumptuous offerings such as the gold necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings found in the wealthiest chamber tombs of the Argolid, the Agora

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<sup>4</sup> Immerwahr, Sara. A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages: The Athenian Agora*, vol. XIII. (Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1971). p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> Immerwahr, Sara. A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Neils, Jennifer. *The British Museum Concise Introduction to Ancient Greece*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Neils, J. *The British Museum Concise Introduction to Ancient Greece*. p. 34.

tombs produced little, although it is probable that the body removed from the cist in Tomb 1 was richly bedecked.”<sup>8</sup> There does not appear to be hardly any material from the Shaft Grave period at Athens. The earliest Mycenaean pottery found at Athens is from the Agora and dated to LH IIB (ca. 1450 – 1400 BCE).<sup>9</sup>

Mycenaean remains in Athens are mostly excavated from the Agora. Most of the material has been discovered in tombs, and so the area is generally attributed to be designated as a gravesite during the Mycenaean occupation during the Late Bronze Age. Based on the non-sepulchral deposits and the discovery of terrace walls, however, the area of the Agora has been suggested as a place of habitation as well. Most of the deposits come from trash pits, wells, road fills, and tombs. The graves are mainly chamber tombs, pit graves, and cist graves.<sup>10</sup> There are examples of rich chamber tombs that demonstrate contact with the ruling Mycenaean of Knossos around 1400 – 1375 BCE based on clay vases imitating silver vessels and wooden coffins.<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that the pottery found at these Agora excavations is different from Oscar Broneer’s excavations of the North Slope, which may be explained by the chronological difference or the different nature of the deposits, one being domestic and one being sepulchral.<sup>12</sup>

The Mycenaean gravesites at the Athenian Agora consisted of different tomb types, including two completely unique situations (Graves XXIX and XLI).<sup>13</sup> Sara Immerwahr explains that, “All of the Mycenaean tombs and graves with the exception of the cleaned-out

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<sup>8</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 92.

<sup>10</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 104.

tombs under the Stoa of Attalos (XXX, XXXIII, XXXIV) and another in the central area (XXXVIII), were equipped with at least one funerary gift.”<sup>14</sup> Most of these funerary offerings were in the form of pottery. No chemical analysis was completed on these pottery funerary offerings so the containments cannot be confirmed, although it is likely that at least some of the vessels originally held wine or olive oil. None of the containers contained precious metals, though a small number of vessels were imitation silver pieces.<sup>15</sup> The archaeological finds confirm that the Mycenaean were comparatively late to arrive to Athens, and once they did the wealth of this city was inferior relative to other Mycenaean sites during the Bronze Age.

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<sup>14</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 92.

## Chapter 2:

### The Homeric Mythology of Athens

Great debate looms over the use of mythology to elucidate historical accuracy for ancient Greek culture. Mythology did guide Heinrich Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans to the discovery of Mycenaean and Minoan sites. At the same time, however, the material culture at these sites (Schliemann at Troy and Mycenae, Evans at Knossos) was compromised by the obsession with mythology and inveigled productive research and even the public's perception of history. Schliemann and Evans' abuse of this methodology should not deter current or future scholars from using mythology as source material, as long as critical analysis is exercised. In this sense, Greek mythology becomes a revealing tool for Bronze Age Athens. Dr. Martin P. Nilsson not only argues that, "The mythological cycles in their chief outlines go back into the Mycenaean age,"<sup>16</sup> but also, "a close inspection shows that the mythical importance of a site closely corresponds to its importance in Mycenaean civilization."<sup>17</sup> Using Homer in this vein, Bronze Age Athens is a comparatively inconsequential city. No great adjectives are used for the city of Athens in the *Iliad*. The Catalogue of Ships mentions Athens briefly:

οἱ δ' ἄρ' Ἀθήνας εἶχον ἐϋκτίμενον πτολίεθρον  
δῆμον Ἐρεχθῆος μεγάλητορος, ὃν ποτ' Ἀθήνη  
θρέψε Διὸς θυγάτηρ, τέκε δὲ ζείδωρος ἄρουρα,  
κάδ δ' ἐν Ἀθήνης εἶσεν ἔῳ ἐν πίονι νηῶ:  
ἔνθα δέ μιν ταύροισι καὶ ἀρνειοῖς ἰλάονται

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<sup>16</sup> Nilsson, Martin. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1932) p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> Nilsson, M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 28

κοῦροι Ἀθηναίων περιτελλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν:  
τῶν αὖθ' ἠγεμόνευ' υἱὸς Πετεῶο Μενεσθεύς.  
τῷ δ' οὐ πῶ τις ὁμοῖος ἐπιχθόνιος γένετ' ἀνὴρ  
κοσμηῆσαι ἵππους τε καὶ ἀνέρας ἀσπιδιώτας:  
Νέστωρ οἷος ἔριζεν: ὃ γὰρ προγενέστερος ἦεν:  
τῷ δ' ἅμα πεντήκοντα μέλαιναι νῆες ἔποντο.<sup>18</sup>

And they that held Athens, the well-built citadel, the land of great-hearted Erechtheus, whom of Athene, daughter of Zeus, fostered, when the earth, the giver of grain, had borne him; and she made him to dwell in Athens, in her own rich sanctuary, and there the youths of the Athenians, as the years roll on in their courses, seek to win his favor with sacrifices of bulls and rams; these again had as leader Menestheus, son of Peteos. Like unto him was no other man upon the face of the earth for the marshalling of chariots and of warriors that bear the shield. Only Nestor could vie with him, for he was the elder. And with him there followed fifty black ships.<sup>19</sup>

The largest reference to Athens in the *Iliad* (above) is mythological in and of itself. It makes no allusion to a great city of Athens. The description is of Athens' own foundation myths and no other claim to fame.

Four other acknowledgements of Athenians or Athens exist in the *Iliad*, and are all in connection to Menestheus. For example, Book IV, lines 327-328: “εὖρ' υἱὸν Πετεῶο Μενεσθηῆα πλήξιππον/ἔσταότ': ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθηναῖοι μῆστωρες ἀϋτῆς.”<sup>20</sup> Agamemnon left, gladdened by his words, and passed on to *Menestheus*, tamer of horses, the son of Peteos, who stood among the *Athenians*, famed for their battle-cry.<sup>21</sup> Book XIII, lines 195-196: “Ἀμφίμαχον μὲν ἄρα Στιχίος δῖός τε Μενεσθεύς/ἀρχοὶ Ἀθηναίων κόμισαν μετὰ λαὸν

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<sup>18</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book II, lines 546-556, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>;

<sup>19</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Butler, Samuel. trans. Book II, lines 546-556, (1898), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>;

<sup>20</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book IV, lines 327-328, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>21</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Butler, S. trans. Book IV, lines 327-328, (1898), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

Ἀχαιῶν:"<sup>22</sup> Amphimachus then did Stichius and goodly *Menestheus*, leaders of the *Athenians*, carry to the host of the Achaeans.<sup>23</sup> Book XIII, lines 685-691:

ἔνθα δὲ Βοιωτοὶ καὶ Ἰάονες ἔλκεχίτωνες  
Λοκροὶ καὶ Φθῖοι καὶ φαιδιμόεντες Ἐπειοὶ  
σπουδῇ ἐπαΐσσοντα νεῶν ἔχον, οὐδὲ δύναντο  
ῶσαι ἀπὸ σφείων φλογὶ εἴκελον Ἑκτορα δῖον  
οἳ μὲν Ἀθηναίων προλελεγμένοι: ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσιν  
ἦρχ' υἱὸς Πεπεῶο Μενεσθεύς, οἳ δ' ἄμ' ἔποντο  
Φεΐδας τε Στιχίος τε Βίας τ' εὖς:"<sup>24</sup>

The Boeotians, Locrians, Phthians, the brave Epeians, and the Ionians with their long tunics, had labored to halt Hector's attack on the ships, unable to drive back that noble warrior, who came on like a fiery flame. Picked men of Athens were fighting there, led by *Menestheus* son of Peteos, with Pheidias, Stichius and brave Bias. Meges, Phyleus' son led the Epeians, with Amphion and Dracius.<sup>25</sup> And finally, Book XV, lines 328-338:

ἔνθα δ' ἀνὴρ ἔλεν ἄνδρα κεδασθείσης ὑσμίνης.  
Ἑκτωρ μὲν Στιχίον τε καὶ Ἄρκεσίλαον ἔπεφνε,  
τὸν μὲν Βοιωτῶν ἠγήτορα χαλκοχιτώνων,  
τὸν δὲ Μενεσθῆος μεγαθύμου πιστὸν ἐταῖρον:  
Αἰνείας δὲ Μέδοντα καὶ Ἴασον ἐξενάριξεν...  
Ἴασος αὖτ' ἀρχὸς μὲν Ἀθηναίων ἐτέτυκτο,  
υἱὸς δὲ Σφήλοιο καλέσκετο Βουκολίδαο.<sup>26</sup>

As the Greek line broke, the Trojans picked them off one by one. Hector killed Stichius and Arcesilaus, the former a leader of the bronze-clad Boeotians, the latter a trusted friend of brave *Menestheus*, while Aeneas slew Medon and Iasus. . Iasus was an *Athenian* leader, the son of Sphelus son to Bucolus.<sup>27</sup>

These references to Athens/Athenians only provide the audience with a limited view of Athens. The Athens presented in the *Iliad* is an Athens with great leaders (Erechtheus,

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<sup>22</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book XIII, lines 195-196, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>23</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Butler, S. trans. Book XIII, lines 195-196, (1898), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>24</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book XIII, lines 685-691, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>25</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Butler, S. trans. Book XIII, lines 685-691, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>26</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Book XV, lines 328-338, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

<sup>27</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Butler, S. trans. Book XV, lines 328-338, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/iliad>

Athena, Menestheus), and a warring culture, determined from the “ἐκτίμενον πολίεθρον” or well-built citadel and the “ἀμφὶ δ’ Ἀθηναῖοι μήστωρες ἀΰτης” or masters of the battle-cry.

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **The Development of Athenian Relationships**

The *Iliad's* image of Athens is not a depiction of the city in its heyday. The city is still of some repute, however. Thucydides firmly attested that Theseus synoecised Attica into the polity of Athens before the Trojan War.<sup>28</sup> He was said to have incorporated twelve Attic townships under the political rule of the capital city of Athens. Anthony Snodgrass defines synoecism as, "It covers everything from the notional acceptance of a single political center by a group of townships and villages whose inhabitants stay firmly put, to the physical migration of a population into a new political center, which could be either an existing or a purpose built city. The crucial element in all cases is the political unification."<sup>29</sup> Besides the Theseus myth cycle, heroic mythology in the region of Attica is scanty.<sup>30</sup> Nilsson suggests, "It is generally and justly recognized that the mythical fame and glory of Theseus grew and developed together with the power and glory of the state of Athens and the self-consciousness of its people. Theseus was made the national hero of Athens, the aspirations of which were, as usually happened, projected back into the mythical age."<sup>31</sup> Plutarch reports that,

Theseus conceived a wonderful and far-reaching plan, which was nothing less than to concentrate the inhabitants of Attica into a capital. In this way he transformed them into one people belonging to one city, whereas until then they had lived in widely

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<sup>28</sup> Thucydides: 2.15.2

<sup>29</sup> Snodgrass, Anthony. *Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980). p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Nilsson. M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 162.

<sup>31</sup> Nilsson, M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 163.

scattered communities, so that it was difficult to bring them together for the common interest, and indeed at times they had even quarreled and fought one another...He then proceeded to abolish the town halls, council chambers, and magistracies in the various districts. To replace them he built a single town-hall and senate house for the whole community on the site of the present Acropolis, and he named the city Athens and created a Pan-Athenaic festival as a ceremony for the whole of Attica.<sup>32</sup>

Archaeological evidence does not appear to support Thucydides' and Plutarch's claims. Sarah Immerwahr firmly states, "One certainly cannot claim Athenian synoecism or even domination of Attica in early Mycenaean times."<sup>33</sup> So, although Athens may have been well-known the city was not yet a great power as indicated by this portion of the Theseus myth implying synoecism. What Thucydides does indicate is that a separatist mentality was maintained after the alleged synoecism, possibly affecting the strength of Athens as an organized city center. "The Athenians thus long lived scattered over Attica in independent cities. Even after the centralization of Theseus, old habit still prevailed."<sup>34</sup> By definition the Athenians of these "independent cities" were citizens, although they did not necessarily cooperate as one townspeople.

There are other portions of the Theseus cycle that may be rooted in historical events.

Nilsson argues,

The myth telling how Theseus, with the help of Ariadne, entered the Labyrinth, slew the Minotaur, rescued the Athenian children, and sailed away, taking Ariadne with him, is well known. Of all the myths from the Greek mainland, it has the most numerous and evident relations with Crete and the Minoan world, so that there cannot be any reasonable doubt that it goes back into the Mycenaean age and moreover to that early part of this age in which Crete and Cnossus still flourished and were powerful. It is generally recognized to contain reminiscences from the Minoan age.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Plutarch. Scott-Kilvert, Ian. trans. "Theseus." *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1960), p. 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> Immerwahr, S. *Neolithic and Bronze Age*. p. 151.

<sup>34</sup> Thucydides, 2.16.1

<sup>35</sup> Nilsson, M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 171.

Plutarch asserts that Athens used to pay tribute to Crete, specifically King Minos, in the form of seven boys and seven girls every nine years, because his son, Androgeus, was “treacherously murdered.”<sup>36</sup> This element of the myth, which goes back to Mycenaean and even Minoan times,<sup>37</sup> suggests that the city of Athens was subjugated by Minoan power on Crete. This suzerainty imposed on Athens may explain at least one reason why Athens was economically inferior to other cities during the first half of the Bronze Age.

The Minotaur may be purely legend but the connection of Athens with Crete was not. Evidence already suggests a relationship between Athens and the Mycenaean warrior aristocracy ruling at Knossos on Crete. Similarities in tomb forms and burial practices, such as the silver imitating vessels and wooden coffins suggest this connection. Of course, this link does not confirm that Theseus returned from Crete after defeating the Minotaur (representative of the Cretans) with innovative ideas and newly acclaimed wealth from the Minoans. During the 1933 excavation a gold signet ring (VIII-6) was unearthed.<sup>38</sup> “Although the Theseus connections of the gold signet ring (VIII-6) have generally been denied since they were first proposed by Shear, it is indeed curious that the only representation of a male ministrant wearing a bull-mask should occur on a Mycenaean ring from Athens if it does not recall some memory of Cretan rites which in turn gave rise to the legend of the bull-headed Minotaur.”<sup>39</sup> This curiosity does not confirm the validity of Theseus but it serves as an additional Crete – Athens connection.

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<sup>36</sup> Plutarch. Scott-Kilvert, Ian. trans. “Theseus,” p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Nilsson, M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 179

<sup>38</sup> Immerwahr, S. *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 107.

<sup>39</sup> Immerwahr, S. *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 156.

Crete was a prosperous island that enjoyed luxurious imports and extensive exportation to many different cultures. Although the Minoan thalassocracy is debated,<sup>40</sup> established trade routes and trade agreements provided raw materials and wealth for the participating cities. Athens' subjection to Crete could have delayed the economic development that other mainland cities such as Mycenae, Pylos, or Tiryns achieved before the LM IB destruction of Knossos. Plutarch reports after Theseus went to Knossos, traversed the Labyrinth, killed the Minotaur, and defeated Taurus at wrestling, Minos "restored the Athenian youths to Theseus and released Athens from the tribute."<sup>41</sup> The emancipation of Athens does not indicate that a direct trade agreement was set up, however, it does imply that Athens was no longer indebted to Crete.

With all this being said, evidence advocates that the delayed development of Athens was not for lack of trying. In LH II (16th – 15th centuries BCE), "Mycenae and Pylos are two early success stories inasmuch as both show important contact with Crete, while other areas with rich and/or imported finds from this period include Laconia, Corinth, Athens, Marathon, Thebes, and Orchomenos, Kirrha, and Krisa near Delphi, as well as coastal Thessaly."<sup>42</sup> The elite culture at Bronze Age Athens confirms the undertaking of Athens to establish trade partnerships.

Athens was part of the Calaurian Amphictyony. Amphictyony is defined as "an association of neighboring states in ancient Greece to defend a common religious center;

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<sup>40</sup> P.A. Mountjoy, T.J. Ponting, "The Minoan Thalassocracy Reconsidered: Provenance Studies of LH II A/LM IB Pottery from Phylakopi, Ay. Irini and Athens," *The Annual of British School of Athens* 95 (2000): p. 141-180.

<sup>41</sup> Plutarch. Scott-Kilvert, Ian. trans. "Theseus," p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> Shelton, Kim. "Mainland Greece," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*. ed. Cline, E.H. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 141.

*broadly*: an association of neighboring states for their common interest.”<sup>43</sup> The league also included Hermione, Epidaurus, Aegina, Prasiae, Nauplia, and Minyan Orchomenos. While the origin date is still debated, some scholars<sup>44</sup> suggest that the league can be ascribed to the Mycenaean age. J. Penrose Harland suggests, “that we may plausibly assign its formation to the last period of the Bronze Age, that is, to the Late Helladic Period (ca. 1400-1100 B.C.).”<sup>45</sup> The original establishment of the amphictyony was most likely a unification of cities that held a common worship of Poseidon and showed interest in sea-travel. The motive for joining the Calaurian Amphictyony was not initially related to trading or suppressing piracy for trading,<sup>46</sup> but later engulfed those priorities still in the Bronze Age.

Another example of Athens’ ventures at international trade is the LH II A pottery finds at Phylakopi on Melos in the Cyclades. P.A. Mountjoy and M.J. Ponting conducted ICP-AES analysis of previously designated LM IB pottery. Their results clarified that the most of the imports were actually Mycenaean and not Minoan. Mountjoy explains, “It seems that close relations between Crete and the Cyclades did not continue until LM IB destructions, but finished well beforehand. The inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES) analysis suggests that much of the so-called LM IB pottery at Phylakopi is not Minoan but Mycenaean, and from Athens not the Argolid.”<sup>47</sup> A large amount of Acropolis Burnished Ware, attributed to Athens, was found at Ay. Irini on the island of Kea. Mountjoy

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<sup>43</sup> “Amphictyony,” Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed March 16, 2016. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/amphictyony>.

<sup>44</sup> Harland, J.P. “The Calaurian Amphictyony,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 29 (1925), p. 164. And Nilsson, M. *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, p. 145. And Frickenhaus, A. and Müller, W. *Athenische Mitteilungen* XXXVI (1911), p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Harland, J.P. “The Calaurian Amphictyony,” p. 164.

<sup>46</sup> Harland, J.P. “The Calaurian Amphictyony,” p. 168.

<sup>47</sup> Mountjoy, Penelope A. “Knossos and the Cyclades in Late Minoan IB,” *British School at Athens Studies* 12 Knossos: Palace, City, State (2004), p. 402.

and Ponting suggest, “The imported LM II pottery from Phylakopi is Mycenaean not Minoan, that is LH IIA not LM IB, and that it was exported from Attica, probably from Athens or Aigina, and went to Kea and then down the island chain Kythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, and Kimolos to Melos, rather than coming from the Argolid, as is usually thought to be the case with Mycenaean exports.”<sup>48</sup> In addition, high quality sherds found in LH II level of the Acropolis and the south slope connotes a burgeoning pottery production center at Athens.

The Mycenaean Athenians pursued greater expansion by joining other Mycenaean forces in the seizing of Knossos on Crete. Greg Nagy refers to this concept as the “Athenian connection.”<sup>49</sup> The Knossos Linear B tablet, V 52, with “a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja” should be understood as “Lady of Athens,” not “our Lady, Athena.”<sup>50</sup> Nagy expands on the significance of recognizing a goddess of Athens: “If it is true that the goddess who is featured so prominently in the pantheon of divinities recorded in Knossos tablet V 52 is ‘our Lady of Athens’, then we see here a direct reference to the goddess of the acropolis of Athens in mainland Greece, specifically, in Attica.”<sup>51</sup> The fact that the Linear B tablets at Knossos referenced “our Lady of Athens” signifies that the Linear B tablets allude to the city of Athens itself, not simply the goddess.

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<sup>48</sup> Mountjoy, Penelope A. and Ponting, T.J. “The Minoan Thalassocracy Reconsidered: Provenance Studies of LH IIA/LMIB Pottery from Phylakopi, Ay. Irini and Athens,” *The Annual of British School at Athens* 95 (2000) p. 143.

<sup>49</sup> Nagy, Gregory. “From Athens to Crete and back.” *Classical Inquiries: Studies on the Ancient World from CHS*. September 10, 2015. <http://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/from-athens-to-crete-and-back/#sdfootnote4sym>

<sup>50</sup> Gulizio, J., Pluta, K., and Palaima, T.G. “Religion in the Room of the Chariot Tablets.” In: *Potnia: Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age*. (2001). [https://www.academia.edu/1638091/Religion\\_in\\_the\\_Room\\_of\\_the\\_Chariot\\_Tablets](https://www.academia.edu/1638091/Religion_in_the_Room_of_the_Chariot_Tablets)

<sup>51</sup> Nagy, Gregory. “From Athens to Crete and back.” *Classical Inquiries: Studies on the Ancient World from CHS*. September 10, 2015. <http://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/from-athens-to-crete-and-back/#sdfootnote4sym>

Greg Nagy argues that the “Athenian connection” does not end here. The Theseus myth cycle, once again, illuminates the efforts of Bronze Age Athens. Pausanias writes, “When Minos was taking Theseus and the rest of the company of young folk to Crete he fell in love with Periboea, and on meeting with determined opposition from Theseus, hurled insults at him and denied that he was a son of Poseidon, since he could not recover for him the signet-ring, which he happened to be wearing, if he threw it into the sea. With these words Minos is said to have thrown the ring, but they say that Theseus came up from the sea with that ring and also with a gold crown that Amphitrite gave him.”<sup>52</sup>

Nagy analyzes this mythology as symbolic of the Athenian thalassocracy appropriating the previous Minoan thalassocracy. Theseus dives after the Ring of Minos, where the goddess of the Aegean, Amphitrite, offers it to him. Nagy explains, “the Ring of Minos can be seen as a signet ring that seals documents of state written in parchment...Accordingly, the signet ring is a visible sign or symbol of empire.”<sup>53</sup> This element in the Theseus myth serves to explain a paradigm shift in Aegean trade.

The Athenian usurpation of the sea is corroborated by P.A. Mountjoy and T.J. Ponting’s findings mentioned earlier. ICP-AES analysis confirmed that the majority of imported LH IIA pottery was not Minoan, but Mycenaean, a significant portion being from Athens specifically. They explain, “The appearance of the fabric of much of the so-called LM IB pottery on Phylakopi and the present clay analysis suggests it is Mycenaean of the pseudo-Minoan class with the consequence that, if a Minoan thalassocracy existed in LM IA, it did not

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<sup>52</sup> Pausanias. 1.17.3. *Description of Greece*. trans. Jones, W.H.S.  
<http://www.theoi.com/Text/Pausanias1B.html>

<sup>53</sup> Nagy, Gregory. “The idea of ‘finders keepers’ as a signature for two sea-empires.” *Classical Inquiries: Studies on the Ancient World from CHS*. August 25, 2015. <http://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/the-idea-of-finders-keepers-as-a-signature-for-two-sea-empires/>

survive into LM IB, probably owing to the loss of trading routes as a result of the destruction of Thera, the first port of call on the way from Crete to the Cyclades, and of LM IA destructions on Crete.”<sup>54</sup> This archaeological data combined with the Theseus/Minos myth suggests that the Minoan domination of the sea was taken over by the Mycenaean Athenians.<sup>55</sup> The extent of Mycenaean Athenian pottery across ancient Greek territory does not match that of previous Minoan trade, however, the evidence conveys that the Athenians endeavored to do so.

This Late Helladic trade expansion by Athens matches with the competitive rivalry of other Mycenaean cities. Mycenae, especially, developed into a prosperous exchange center. Tiryns, also, maintained a successful trade network during this palatial period. The material culture shows that Mycenae had a specific trade agreement with Egypt, while Tiryns conducted heavy trade with Cyprus.<sup>56</sup> Imported materials were not the sole domain of palatial administrations, elite individuals also pursued their own trade relationships.<sup>57</sup> The fact that rival Mycenaean cities pursued their own trade agreements substantiates Athens’ trade presence in the Cyclades. The major difference in material remains is the rate of exchange. The finds confirming the trade agreements at Mycenae and Tiryns are confirmed with the Egyptian imports at Mycenae and the Cypriot imports at Tiryns. The trade agreement between Athens and the Cyclades is confirmed by Athenian ware exported to the

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<sup>54</sup> Mountjoy, P. and Ponting, T.J. “The Minoan Thalassocracy Reconsidered: Provenance Studies of LH IIA/LM IB Pottery from Phylakopi, Ay. Irini and Athens.” p. 184.

<sup>55</sup> Koh, A.J. “Mycenaean Archaeology, Archaeological Evidence for the Athenian Connection,” *Classical Inquiries: Studies on the Ancient World from CHS*. In press.

<sup>56</sup> Cline, E.H. *Sailing the Wine Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean*. (Oxford: Bar International Series, 1994, reprinted 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Burns, Bryan. *Mycenaean Greece, Mediterranean Commerce, and the Formation of Identity*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

islands. This, in no way, means that goods were not exported and imported at each location, however, it does indicate a different business model. Although Mycenae and Tiryns may have been more prosperous than Athens at this time, it was not for lack of effort on the part of Athens.

Underwater archaeology, examining the wrecks of Bronze Age sites sailing the seas between mainland Greece, Cyprus, the Levant, Egypt, and Crete, also illustrates the flourishing Mycenaean economy. The wreck of Uluburun produced an array of goods indicative of the thriving international trade of the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean. Two sets of personal belongings imply that there were two Mycenaean warriors on board when the ship sank.<sup>58</sup> The ship included 150 Canaanite jars filled with terebinth resin, olives, and glass beads.<sup>59</sup> Ten tons of ox-hide copper ingots and evidence of one ton of tin make up the 10:1 ratio to create bronze. These shipwrecks exemplify the successful international trade of the Mycenaean economy that provided the major Mycenaean cities with an elite culture of such wealth that Athens lacked.

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<sup>58</sup> Neils, J. *The British Museum Concise Introduction to Ancient Greece*. p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> Neils, J. *The British Museum Concise Introduction to Ancient Greece*. p. 38.

**Chapter 4:**  
**The Defense of Athens**

In the history of the incursions into Greece at the end of the Mycenaean age, possibly from the Dorian invasion or invasions by the Sea Peoples, Athens holds a peculiar place. Ancient writers attest that Attica was by-passed when the Dorian invaders descended into the Hellenic peninsula. The Athenians were reminded constantly by their Archaic Age orators that Athens had never been subject to a foreign power, that its citizens had never seen their properties invaded.<sup>60</sup> Regardless of the claim, Athens was not exempt from the “Dark Age” that was to follow. Ian Morris and Barry Bowell describe the end of the Bronze Age, “The Mycenaeans and Hittites were stronger than ever, and trade routes pulsed with life. But in the thirteenth century, Mycenaean metalworkers started using raw materials more sparingly, and Linear B tablets suggest shortfalls in tax collection. Fortifications at major sites expanded, and populations drifted from vulnerable villages to the security of defended settlements. Then, between 1225 and 1175 B.C., fires gutted the palaces all over Greece.”<sup>61</sup> This was the time after the legendary Trojan War: The Dorian Invasion, and the invasion of the Sea Peoples. Regardless of what combination of mythic invasions are attributed to the collapse of the Bronze Age the archaeological evidence confirms that invading forces breached the Mycenaean palatial complexes, except at Athens.

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<sup>60</sup> Thucydides, 2.36.1

<sup>61</sup> Morris, I. and Powell, B. *The Greek: History, Culture, and Society*. Pearson Education: Prentice Hall, NJ. 2010. p. 67.

Athens was not spared from danger, however. In the excavations on the slope outside the walls archaeologists found conclusive evidence that the postern gate at Athens was purposefully blocked up and that this took place about the middle of the thirteenth century BCE.<sup>62</sup> Immediately after the rear entrance was blocked, a congeries of small private dwellings was built in the area formerly occupied by the stairway leading down to the water source.<sup>63</sup> The floors and walls of some of these houses extended across the still preserved steps of the stairway. The houses, which are small and of irregular shape, were probably erected by squatters who at the time had not been able to find shelter within the wall itself. Their houses, however, were suddenly abandoned not long after their construction. In several of the rooms the pottery was found standing on the floor, most of the vases in fragments but complete, and one kylix was found completely unbroken standing upright on the floor.<sup>64</sup> In one room, which seems to have served as a combined kitchen and storeroom, a cooking pot on three feet was discovered standing in the ashes of the fire over which presumably the last meal had been cooked when the occupants suddenly had to rush away without taking time to salvage their household goods.<sup>65</sup> Archaeologists conjecture that some type of imminent danger caused the house dwellers to leave their belongings and take shelter within the Acropolis itself. The archaeological evidence does not suggest that the houses were looted nor was there any indication that they were destroyed by fire.

Large quantities of late Mycenaean pottery including some of the so-called Granary ware, which shows up well into the twelfth century, were discovered in the fill below the

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<sup>62</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens." *American Journal of Archaeology* 52 (1948), p. 112.

<sup>63</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens." p. 112.

<sup>64</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens," p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens," pp. 111-114.

classical level. The city of Athens was fortified in a similar fashion as Mycenae and Tiryns. At these three cities internal access to water sources was built and Cyclopean walls barricaded the cities from invaders in similar design. A Cyclopean wall, as described by Pausanias, “is a work of the Cyclopes made of unwrought stones, each stone being so big that a pair of mules could not move the smallest from its place to the slightest degree. Long ago small stones were so inserted that each of them binds the large blocks firmly together.”<sup>66</sup> The stairway, leading down into the water cistern after it fell out of use was covered over and the great Cyclopean wall in its final form was constructed. The passage extended down to tremendous depths. The bottom was determined to be around 110 feet below the Acropolis level. The winding stairway consisted of eight flights. The stairway was constructed in such a way so that the water could be reached and controlled from the Acropolis, without going outside of the safety of the walls.<sup>67</sup> Oscar Broneer, excavator of Athens during the 1930’s, suggests that the entrance to the cave would have probably been walled up in the time of danger, so that the only approach would be from the Acropolis itself.

The construction and use of the stairway could be dated accurately from pottery. The pottery at the bottom of the shaft and sherds extracted from the fill beneath the steps of the stairway correlated to the period of use. The pottery type matched the pottery found in the abandoned houses on the northeast slope as well as in the fill of the Acropolis wall, which was dated to the late Bronze Age.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Pausanias, 2.25.8, *Description of Greece*. <http://www.theoi.com/Text/Pausanias2B.html>

<sup>67</sup> Broneer, O. “A Mycenaean Fountain on the Athenian Acropolis,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 8 (1939), p. 317.

<sup>68</sup> Broneer, O. “A Mycenaean Fountain on the Athenian Acropolis,” pp. 317-318.

Evidence indicates that the stairway may have only lasted half of a century. The stairway passage was constructed with rubble masonry reinforced with wooden beams. It appears that the wooden beams decayed and that the supporting masonry collapsed taking a portion of the steps of the stairway with it, tumbling into the hole.<sup>69</sup> Since the Athenians did not rebuild the stairwell, the danger appears to have passed. After the destruction of the stairway the chasm became a convenient dumping ground for broken pottery and other discards. The contents of this fill turned out to be of particular importance for the study of Athens at the end of the Mycenaean period. Oscar Broneer sums up the building program in Athens at this time, "There can be little doubt that the fountain is part of an elaborate program of defense against the oncoming struggle with the invaders, possibly from the north. To make the citadel impregnable the wall was strengthened and largely rebuilt, the bastion flanking the main entrance on the west side was constructed, the postern gate was blocked up, and a secure water supply provided with direct access from within the walls."<sup>70</sup> The history of the Athenian Acropolis at this time is parallel to that of Mycenae and Tiryns.

At Mycenae the main entrance was reinforced, the existing fortifications were restored and renovated to include an extension made toward the east, increasing the land area within the walls. The fountain, Perseia, also reached by an underground stairway from within the safety of the walls, is a close parallel to the fountain under the Athenian Acropolis. Mycenae incorporated an additional safety measure, although a counterpart has not yet been found at Athens, that being the construction of the granary or magazines near the main gate. These same precautions against invaders were integrated at Tiryns as well. At Tiryns

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<sup>69</sup> Broneer, O. "A Mycenaean Fountain on the Athenian Acropolis," pp. 324-325.

<sup>70</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens," p. 113.

galleries were constructed, the lower citadel on the north was fortified, and a watchtower was built on the west side that protected the stairway leading to their water supply.

In Athens, unlike Tiryns and Mycenae, these safety measures appear to have been effective. The abandoned houses on the slope indicate that the population lived outside of the walls longer than other locations but eventually sought shelter within the walls. The pottery discovered on the floors of the houses pinpoints that these events took place somewhere between the middle and the end of the thirteenth century.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Athenian Myths**

The Athenians of the Athenian Empire during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries would claim that they were autochthonous, or born from the land. More so, the Athenians never changed their place of habitation, been conquered in their land by foreign invaders or experienced an influx of heavy migrations since their soil was so poor.<sup>71</sup> Erechtheus or Kekrops are most often the personified forms of the autochthonous notion, who wore golden *tettiges*, or ornaments formed in the shape of cicadas in their hair as a symbol representing their belief that, like cicadas, Athenians were born from the soil and thus had always lived in Attica.<sup>72</sup> Veritably, archaeological evidence does not entirely correlate with the Attic tradition of origin. As Sara Immerwahr summarizes,

Despite the Athenian claim of being autochthonous settlers of Athens there were several periods in which substantial population changes must have taken place, certainly in the Middle Helladic period, perhaps in the ruling caste in the early Mycenaean period, and again in the newcomers who were responsible for the Sub-Mycenaean cist cemeteries. Yet there must have been enough continuity of settlement and culture to have encouraged the belief in an unbroken tradition, to which legends of the earth-born kings Kekrops and Erichthonios are made to conform.<sup>73</sup>

This “continuity of settlement” does adhere to the archaeological evidence that Athens was never breached during the Bronze Age.

Several ancient writers discuss the “Return of the Herakleidai”, descendants of Heracles, in their first attack upon the Peloponnesus, three generations before their final

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<sup>71</sup> Thucydides, 1.2.1. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War.*

<sup>72</sup> Thucydides, 1.6. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War.*

<sup>73</sup> Immerwahr, S., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 158.

subjugation of the land. According to one legend, Hyllos son of Herakles, came from the north to the Isthmus where he fought a duel with the Arcadian hero Echemos, king of Tegea.<sup>74</sup> Hyllos said that if he won the Herakleidai would be restored to their ancestral kingdoms, but if he lost they would withdraw from the Peloponnese for fifty (or a hundred) years. When the invaders lost their leader in this battle, they withdrew under the agreement not to return for a hundred years. The Herakleidai invaded the Peloponnese after their designated one hundred years passed. By this time the Herakleidai had adopted the Dorians as their allies. After the death of Herakles, Hyllos was adopted by the Dorian king Aigimios as a child, and the Herakleidai lived for a time in the portion of Dorian territory which Herakles told Aigimios to preserve in trust for his descendants. So, when the Herakleidai returned to restore their ancestral kingdom that now made up the Peloponnese it was the invasion which led to the final overthrow of the Achaean princes and lasted approximately a hundred years. This became known as the Dorian invasion.

In reality, the Dorian Invasion was not a coordinated attack by the Herakleidai, but more likely an “overwhelming movement of peoples who swept out of the north and engulfed the ancient world at the end of the Bronze Age.”<sup>75</sup> Thucydides also blames the Greeks’ return from the Battle of Troy for the revolutions and upheavals in addition to the Dorians and the Herakleidai.<sup>76</sup> At the first approach of the invaders, Athens was apparently able to withstand the assault, either because their defensive measures proved sufficiently effective, or because Athens and the well-known poor soil of Attica, did not seem important

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<sup>74</sup> Apollodorus, 2.8.1, *The Library*, Frazer, Sir James George. trans.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Apollod.%202.8.1&lang=original>

<sup>75</sup> Daniel, J.F., Broneer, O, and Wade-Gery, H.T. “The Dorian Invasion: The Setting,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 52 (1948), p. 107.

<sup>76</sup> Thucydides, 1.12.1

enough for the attackers to waste their energy in the capture of the citadel. Danger to the city was real and impending, however, as may be concluded from the abandoned houses on the Acropolis slope. Whether any actual fighting took place close to the Acropolis cannot be discerned from the archaeological evidence. In the case that these widespread catastrophes were a part of the campaign of the Sea Peoples Athens may have simply been outside of the path of destruction. In any case, there is no reason to discredit the tradition that Athens was spared at this time, whomever the invaders were.

The next major attack on Athens is in the time of Kodrus, whose date would fall at least a century after the initial attack at the Isthmus. The earliest version of the story of Kodrus comes from the 4th century oration *Against Leocrates* by Lycurgus of Athens.<sup>77</sup> Pausanias tells us that the Athenians met the attackers in the valley of the Ilissos and that the king was there killed. During the time of the Dorian Invasion of Peloponnesus, the Dorians under Aletes, son of Hippotes consulted the Delphic Oracle, who prophesied that their invasion would succeed as long as the king was not harmed.<sup>78</sup> The news of this prophecy, that only the death of an Athenian king would ensure the safety of Athens, quickly found its way to the ears of Kodrus. An oracle foretold that the city would be spared if the king was slain, and Kodrus, in his eagerness to save his people, sought death in battle by purposely exposing himself. Kodrus disguised himself as a peasant and made it to the vicinity of the Dorian encampment across the river, where he provoked a group of Dorian soldiers.<sup>79</sup> He was put to death in the quarrel, and the Dorians, realizing Kodrus was slain, decided to

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<sup>77</sup> Lycurgus, Burt, J. O. trans. *Against Leocrates*,  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0152%3Aspeech%3D1%3Asection%3D85>

<sup>78</sup> Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 1.85.

<sup>79</sup> Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 1.86.

retreat in fear of their prophesied defeat. The Athenians were so impressed with the voluntary death of their monarch that they decided to have no more kings, since no one could be found worthy or able to live up to the high standard of patriotism and self-sacrifice set by Kodrus.<sup>80</sup> So the title of king was abolished, and that of *archon* replaced it. Aristotle, however, in the *Constitution of the Athenians* presents an alternative view that Kodrus was succeeded as king by his sons Medon, and then Acastus.

The myth explains the presence of a joint sanctuary to Kodrus, his ancestor Neleus, and Basile, which was located somewhere to the southeast of the Acropolis. The existence of the sanctuary indicates that the tradition of the king's death in battle at this point may well have been based on actual facts. The attempted invasion in the time of Kodrus has left no tangible remains on the Acropolis itself. There is some evidence of occupation south of the Acropolis before and during the Mycenaean period but nothing of substance yet.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, some decisive change seems to have taken place at this time. The bulk of pottery from the underground passage is late Mycenaean, and includes the Granary style, the latest phase of Mycenaean pottery, and then stops abruptly. There is practically no sub-Mycenaean pottery from the underground fountain. It is at this time that the pottery from the Kerameikos graves begins.<sup>82</sup> The Mycenaean cemetery of the fourteenth century BCE was near the Acropolis, on the slopes of the Areopagus, as previously noted. At that time the Acropolis was the fortified home of the kings and the center of the city.

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<sup>80</sup> Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 1.88.

<sup>81</sup> Immerwahr, S.A., *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 158.

<sup>82</sup> Broneer, O. "What Happened at Athens," p. 113.

## **Chapter 6:**

### **Athens at the End of the Bronze Age**

After the so-called Dorian invasion, the Athenians seem to move farther from the Acropolis, as may be judged by the presence of the new cemetery. No houses of that period have been found and the chief settlement of the city remains unknown, most likely due to later building projects, but the transfer of the cemetery from the Areopagus to the Kerameikos indicates a dispersal of the population per Desborough.<sup>83</sup> If Athens was not sacked, though, and continued to be populated then what could constitute the gradual disappearance of the Mycenaean culture?

The answer, as Desborough suggests, lies in the organization of Mycenaean palace culture. Mycenaean civilization was based on interdependence of these small kingdoms, in which trade played a major role, especially with raw materials and metals.<sup>84</sup> A single surviving Mycenaean palace could not continue on its own.

As the population moved farther from the center, what was once the home of the kings became the exclusive domain of the gods. The Acropolis remained a fortified stronghold where the Athenians could take refuge in a time of extreme danger, but the buildings that arose were thenceforth destined to be the house the gods of the city and particularly its guardian deity Athena who, as Homer tells us, took up her abode in the

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<sup>83</sup> Desborough, L. *The Last Mycenaeans and their Successors, An Archaeological Survey, c. 1200-c. 1000 B. C.* p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Desborough, L. *The Last Mycenaeans and their Successors, An Archaeological Survey, c. 1200-c. 1000 B. C.* pp. 241 -244.



it encouraged that isolation to continue from fear of other invaders. Athens' main focus was no longer economic but rather defense. The Mycenaean culture that by this time existed at Athens was unable to survive on its own. Athens, like most other cities, declined for about 150 years through the Dark Age to emerge as one of the dominant city-states of ancient Greece.

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