



# MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES

at the greek unesco monuments

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF MYCENAE AND TIRYNS

## ► credits

### GENERAL COORDINATION

**Anastasia Lazaridou**, Dr Archaeologist, Emeritus Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes  
**Nikoletta Saraga**, Archaeologist, Deputy Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes

### GENERAL EDITING

**Andromachi Katselaki**, Dr Archaeologist, Head of the Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### IDEA CONCEPTION

**Andromachi Katselaki**

### PROJECT MANAGER

**Nikitas Georgiopoulos**, Archaeologist, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### PROJECT COORDINATION

**Athina Papadaki**, Archaeologist, MSc Cultural Management, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### GRAPHIC EDITING

**Spilios Pistas**, Graphic Designer, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

**Eleftheria Vlachou**, Archaeologist–Museologist  
**Athina Papadaki**

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

**Eirini-Margarita Kalomoiri**, Graphic Designer, Museologist  
**Vasilis Dimopoulos**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP  
**Spilios Pistas**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP  
**Eirini Charalampidi**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP

### SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH–AUTHORS OF TEXTS

**Ioannis Vaksevanis**, Archaeologist, Byzantine Post Byzantine Antiquities  
**Eleftheria Vlachou**  
**Ioannis Evrenopoulos**, Dr Archaeologist, Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities  
**Athina Papadaki**

### TEXT EDITING

**Ioannis Vaksevanis**  
**Athina Papadaki**

### SCIENTIFIC REVISION

**Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida**

### TRANSLATION

**Translix USCS IKE**

### PHOTOS

**Radiant Technologies: Andreas Santrouzos**  
**Spilios Pistas, Eirini Charalampidi**

### PRINTING

**Pressius Arvanitidis**

## ► acknowledgements

**Alkestis Papadimitriou**, Dr Archaeologist, Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida  
**Vasiliki Papamichalopoulou**, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida

We would like to thank the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation for allowing the free use of pictorial material from the website [www.travelogues.gr](http://www.travelogues.gr)

ISBN 978-960-386-607-7

### NOTICE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture has the copyright on the photographs of antiquities and on the antiquities that comprise the visual content of the photographs. The Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Funds of Greece (©ΥΠΠΟ-ΟΔΑΠ) receives all fees for the publication of photographs bearing the Ministry's copyright (Law 3028/2002). There are also used images with copyright ©UNESCO, ©Wikimediacommons, ©OUR PLACE The World Heritage Collection. Different image origin is mentioned in the image origin section. The Hellenic Ministry of Culture remains exclusively competent to grant permission to third parties to use the photographs and the antiquities that comprise their visual content.

Copyright © 2023 Ministry of Culture



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture

General Directorate of Antiquities  
and Cultural Heritage



Directorate of Archaeological Museums,  
Exhibitions and Educational Programmes  
Department of Educational Programmes and Communication



European Union  
European Social Fund

Operational Programme  
Human Resources Development,  
Education and Lifelong Learning

Co-financed by Greece and the European Union

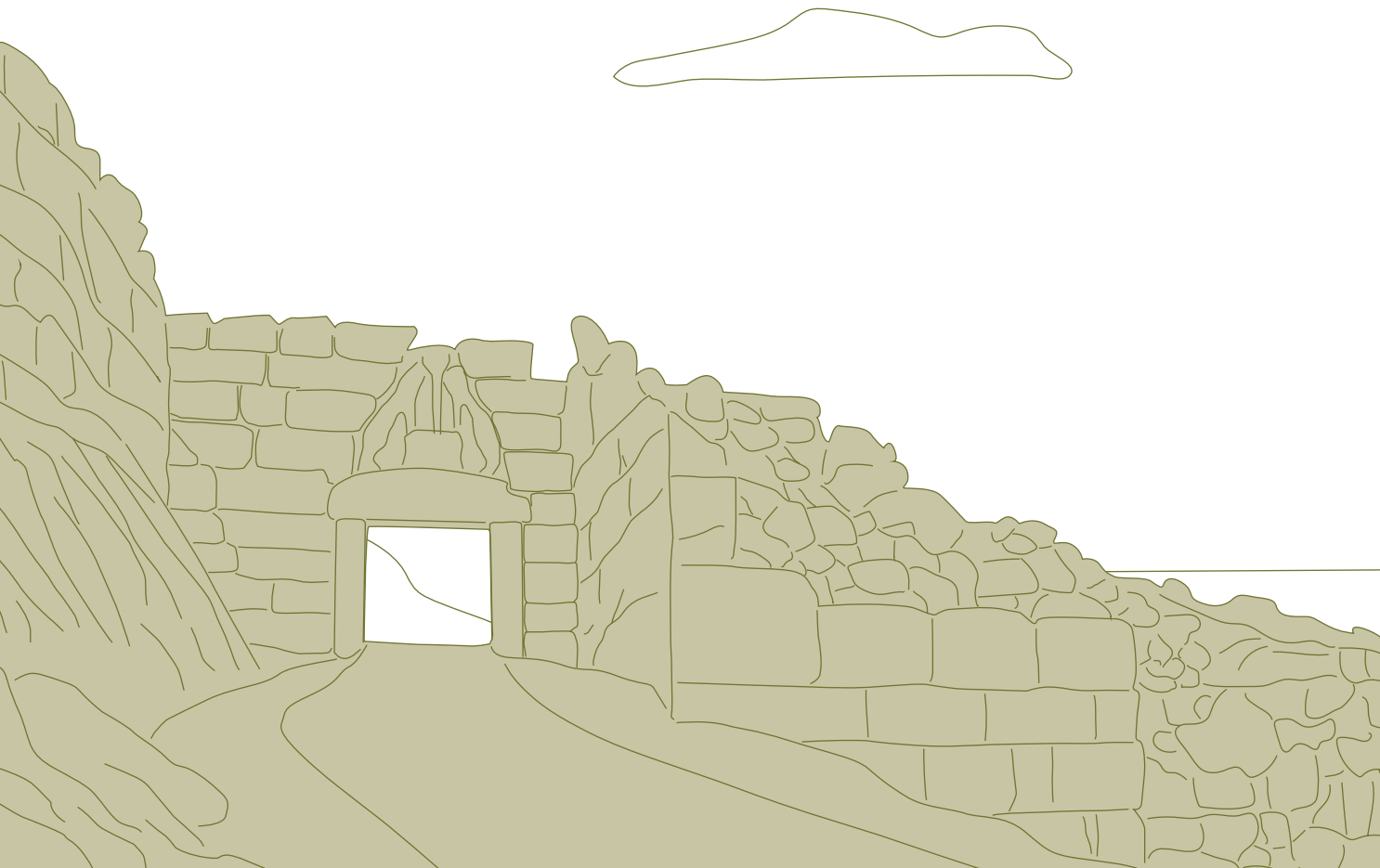


The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning”, NSRF 2014-2020.



# Αρχαιολογικοί χώροι Μυκηνών και Τίρυνθας

# Ten steps to...



1

These are two great ancient citadels associated with the Homeric epics and located in the east Peloponnese, near Nafplion.



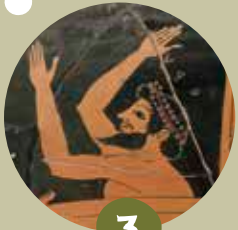
2

The granddaughter of Perseus gave birth to the greatest hero of Greek mythology, who almost became the king of the region...

Heracles, son of Alcmene, granddaughter of Perseus and daughter of the king of Mycenae.

Zeus had told the gods that he who would be born first of Perseus' line, would reign over Tiryns and Mycenae.

# ... Mycenae and Tiryns!



3

... but found himself serving the king of this region after divination by the Oracle of Delphi.

Out of jealousy, Hera hastened the birth of Eurystheus, also the grandson of Perseus, so that Heracles would not become king. Pythia gave Heracles an oracle to return to his mother's homeland and serve his cousin for 12 years. So Eurystheus assigned him 12 labors.



4

The most famous city of the two was founded by the hero who killed Medusa.

Mycenae was founded by Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae, daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos.



5

The monumental tombs outside these two citadels are architectural achievements of their time.



6

The Cyclopes took over the entire construction of the walls of this acropolis and that of another large neighboring city.

Already in antiquity, the impressive fortifications with the massive boulders were referred to as "cyclopean walls".



7

The first to excavate in the area was the amateur archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann who had previously excavated in Troy.

Until then, the Mycenaean civilization was virtually unknown.



8

Homer calls one of the two acropoleis "rich in gold".



9

According to legend, the king of one of the two acropoleis, Agamemnon, was the leader of the Achaeans in the Trojan War.



10

Two lions guard the entrance to one acropolis.

# The Mycenaean civilisation...

Rich in gold  
Mycenae<sup>1</sup>



## WHAT?

- Mycenae: the seat of the legendary King Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War, and the largest palatial center of the Mycenaean period.
- Tiryns: important fortified acropolis and urban centre of the Mycenaean period.

## WHERE?

- Regional Unit of Argolis, Region of the Peloponnese.

## WHEN?

- 16th–15th c. BC: beginnings of the Mycenaean civilisation.
- 14th–13th c. BC: heyday of the Mycenaean civilisation.

what do the numbers say:

**30,000 sqm**

AREA

of the acropolis of Mycenae



**20,000 sqm**

AREA

of the acropolis of Tiryns

**260**

IDEOGRAMS

included in the  
Linear B script



**100**

SHIPS

sent by Agamemnon  
in the Trojan War



# ... in the UNESCO List!

The monuments were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List based on the following criteria:



## critério i

The Mycenaean citadels are of excellent architectural and planning conception.

## critério ii

The Mycenaean buildings impacted the development of classical Greek architecture.

## critério iii

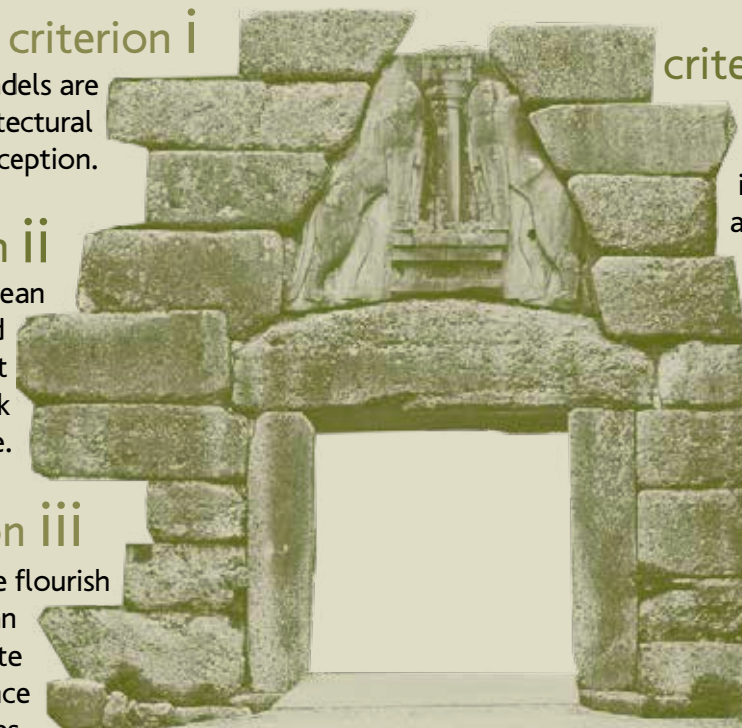
They reveal the flourish of the Mycenaean world and constitute unique evidence for the early stages of Greek civilization.

## critério iv

The achievements of the Mycenaean in the arts, architecture and technology laid the foundations of European civilization.

## critério vi

The spirit of the Mycenaean world is contained in Homer's work, which had a catalytic influence on European literature and art.

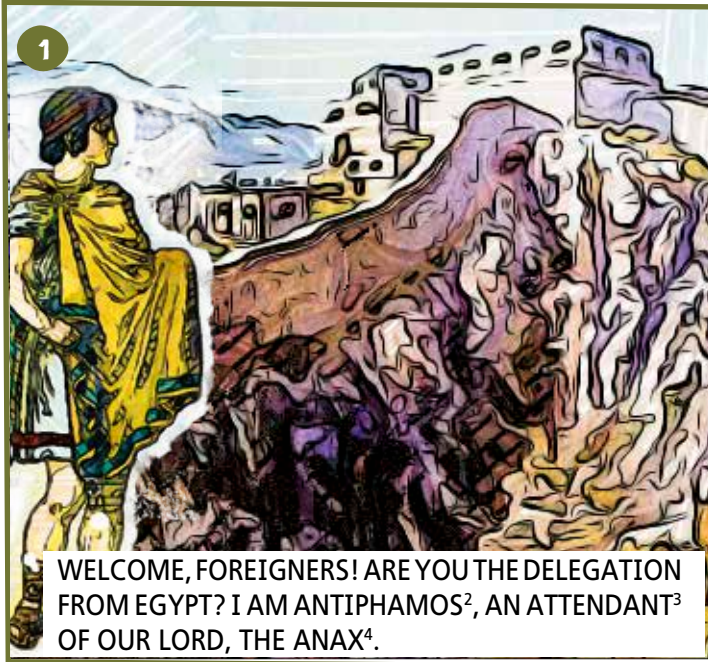


**10**   
**THOLOS TOMBS**  
at Mycenae and Tiryns

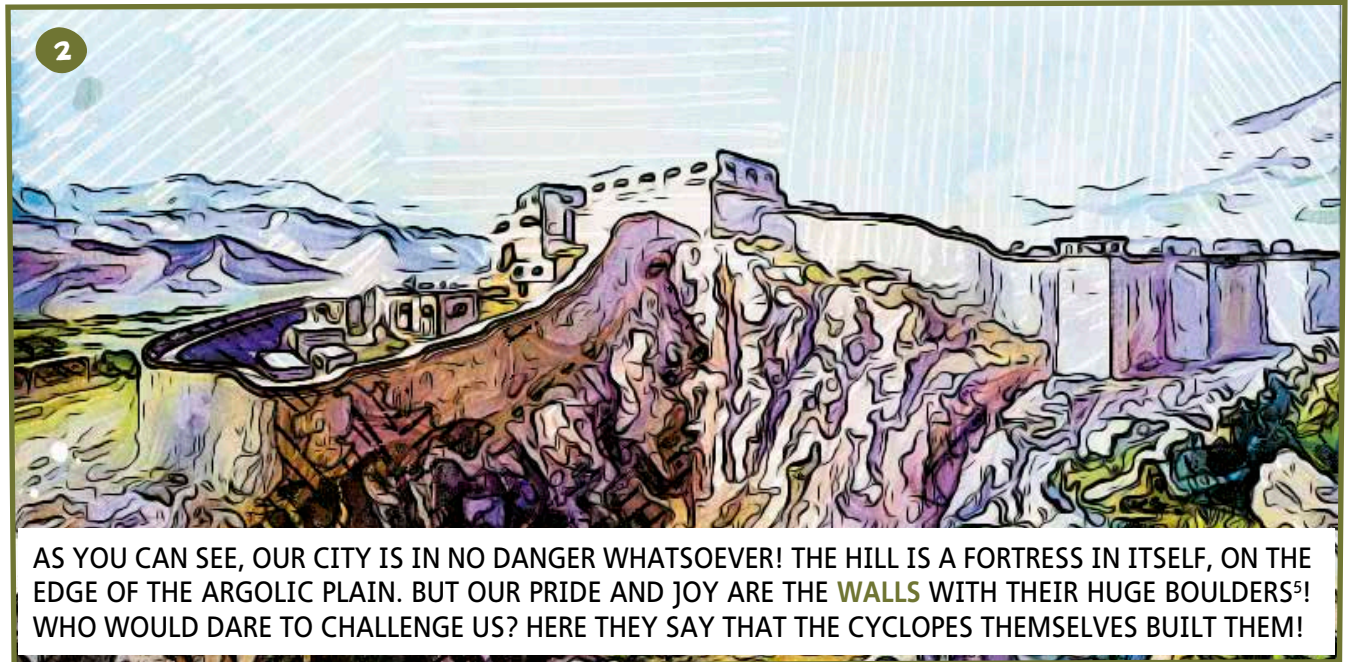
 **8 m**  
**THE THICKEST POINT**  
of the wall of Tiryns

1. Aerial view of the acropolis of Tiryns.

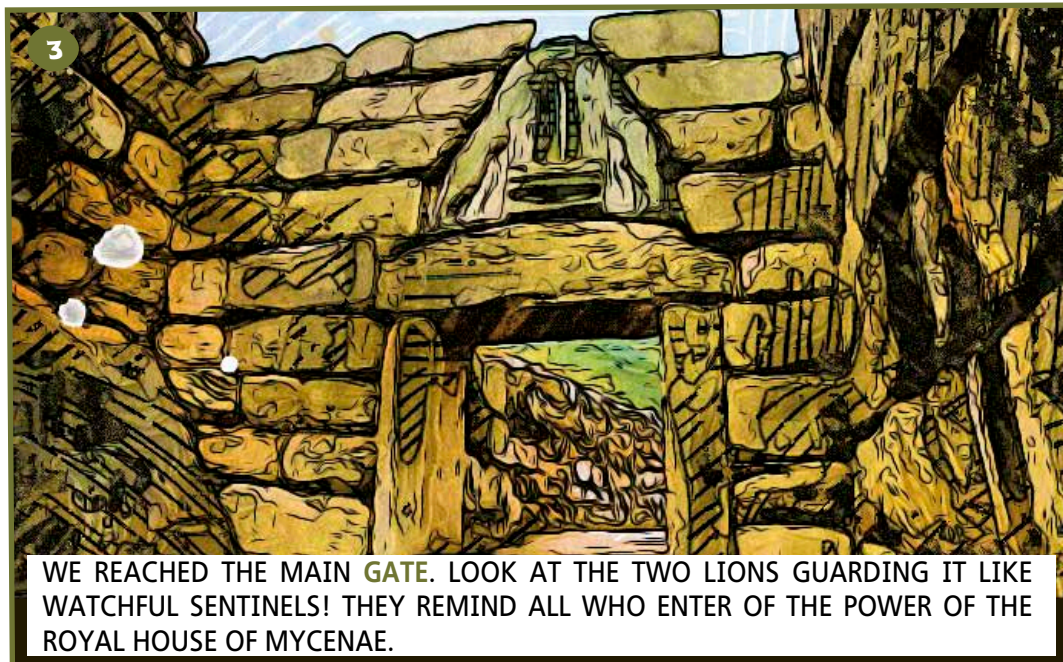
# Walking around Mycenae...



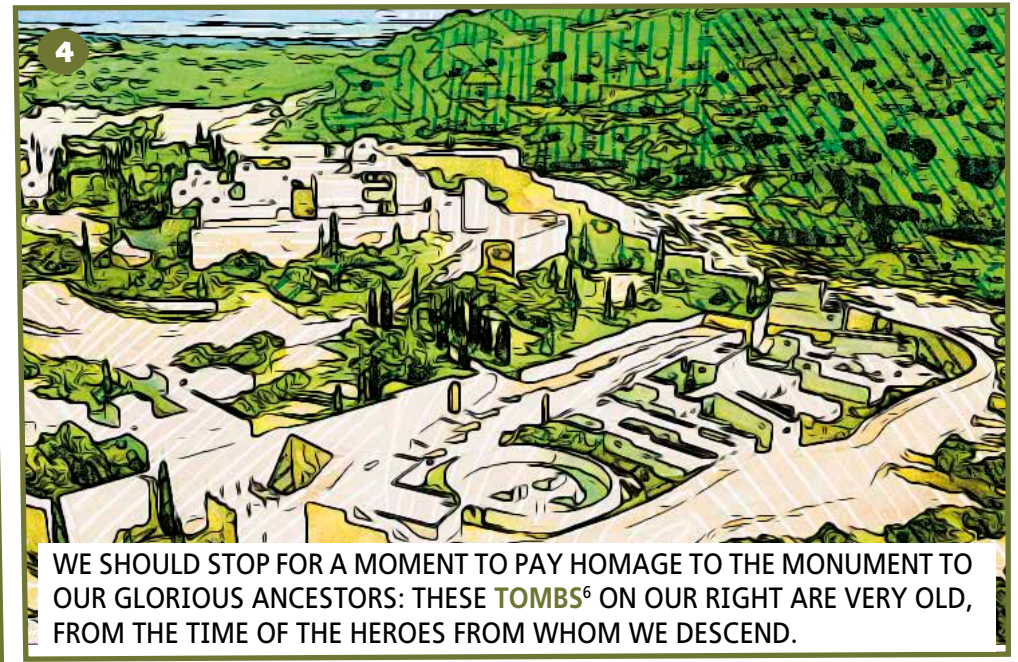
WELCOME, FOREIGNERS! ARE YOU THE DELEGATION FROM EGYPT? I AM ANTIPHAMOS<sup>2</sup>, AN ATTENDANT<sup>3</sup> OF OUR LORD, THE ANAX<sup>4</sup>.



AS YOU CAN SEE, OUR CITY IS IN NO DANGER WHATSOEVER! THE HILL IS A FORTRESS IN ITSELF, ON THE EDGE OF THE ARGOLIC PLAIN. BUT OUR PRIDE AND JOY ARE THE WALLS WITH THEIR HUGE BOULDERS<sup>5</sup>! WHO WOULD DARE TO CHALLENGE US? HERE THEY SAY THAT THE CYCLOPES THEMSELVES BUILT THEM!

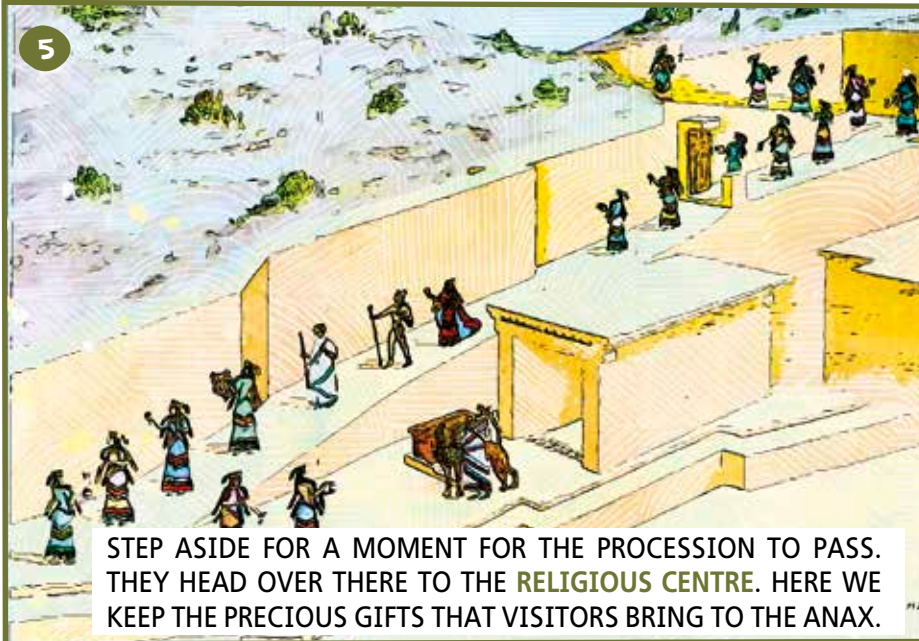


WE REACHED THE MAIN GATE. LOOK AT THE TWO LIONS GUARDING IT LIKE WATCHFUL SENTINELS! THEY REMIND ALL WHO ENTER OF THE POWER OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF MYCENAE.



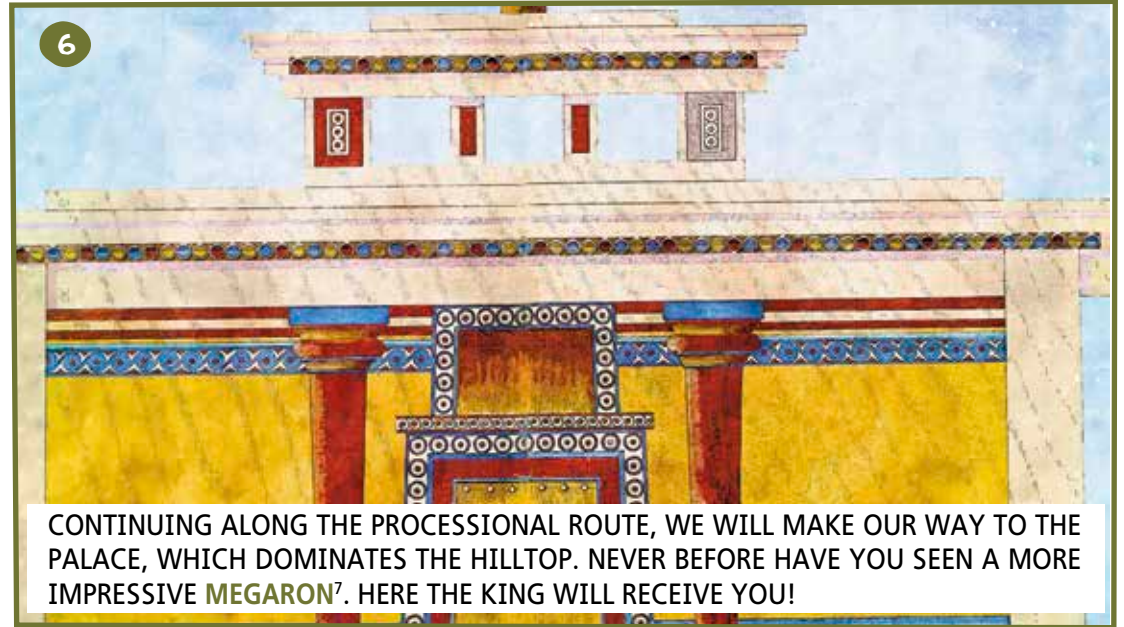
WE SHOULD STOP FOR A MOMENT TO PAY HOMAGE TO THE MONUMENT TO OUR GLORIOUS ANCESTORS: THESE TOMBS<sup>6</sup> ON OUR RIGHT ARE VERY OLD, FROM THE TIME OF THE HEROES FROM WHOM WE DESCEND.

# ... with Antiphamos



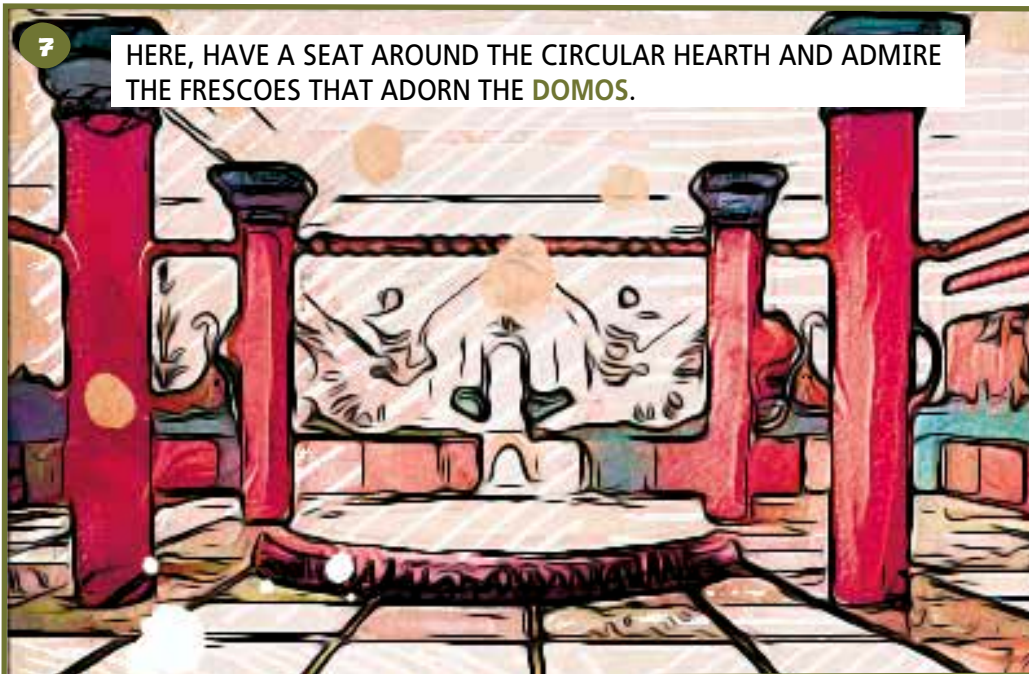
5

STEP ASIDE FOR A MOMENT FOR THE PROCESSION TO PASS. THEY HEAD OVER THERE TO THE **RELIGIOUS CENTRE**. HERE WE KEEP THE PRECIOUS GIFTS THAT VISITORS BRING TO THE ANAX.



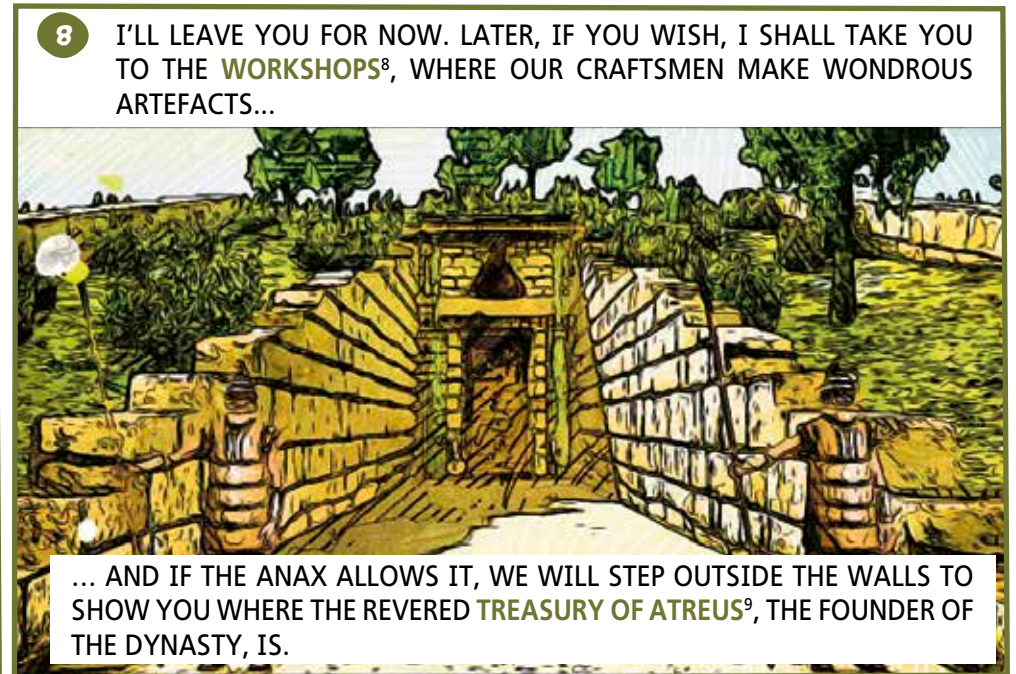
6

CONTINUING ALONG THE PROCESSIONAL ROUTE, WE WILL MAKE OUR WAY TO THE PALACE, WHICH DOMINATES THE HILLTOP. NEVER BEFORE HAVE YOU SEEN A MORE IMPRESSIVE **MEGARON**<sup>7</sup>. HERE THE KING WILL RECEIVE YOU!



7

HERE, HAVE A SEAT AROUND THE CIRCULAR HEARTH AND ADMIRE THE FRESCOES THAT ADORN THE **DOMOS**.

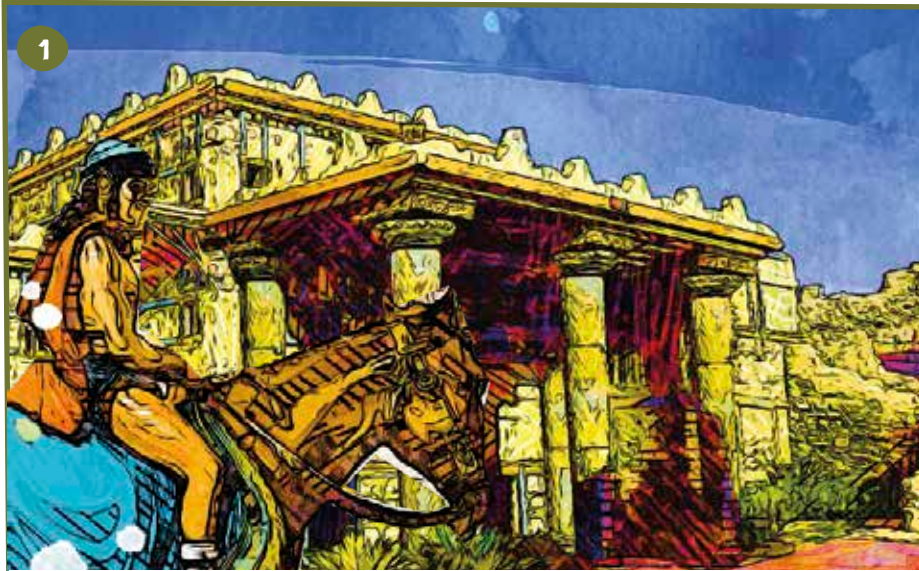


8

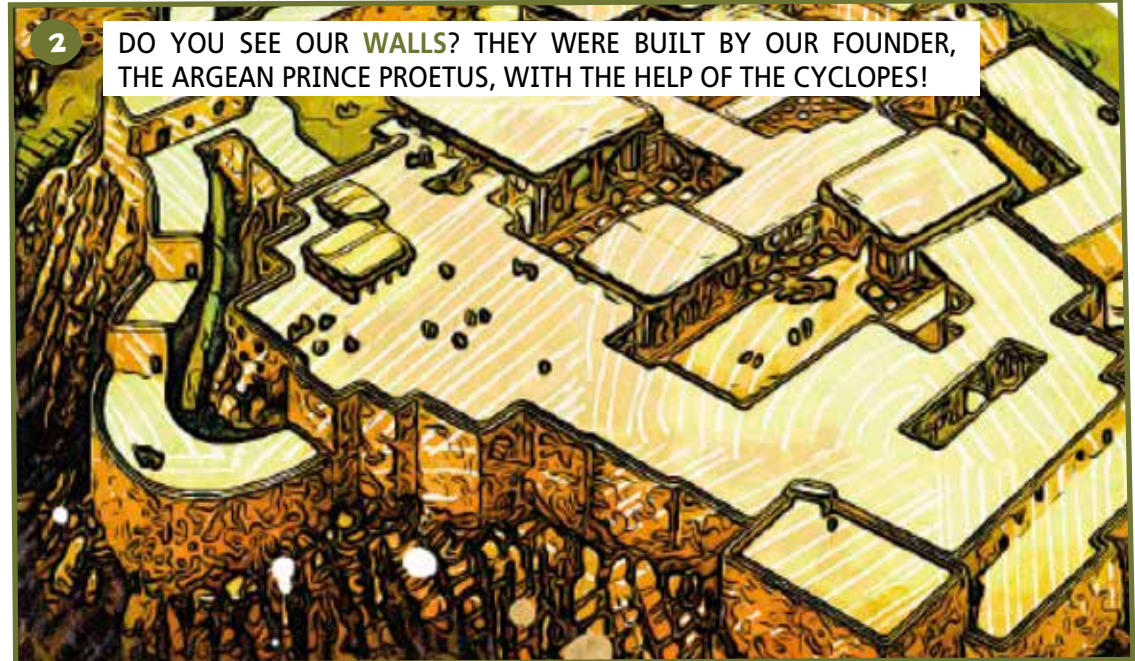
I'LL LEAVE YOU FOR NOW. LATER, IF YOU WISH, I SHALL TAKE YOU TO THE **WORKSHOPS**<sup>8</sup>, WHERE OUR CRAFTSMEN MAKE WONDROUS ARTEFACTS...

... AND IF THE ANAX ALLOWS IT, WE WILL STEP OUTSIDE THE WALLS TO SHOW YOU WHERE THE REVERED **TREASURY OF ATREUS**<sup>9</sup>, THE FOUNDER OF THE DYNASTY, IS.

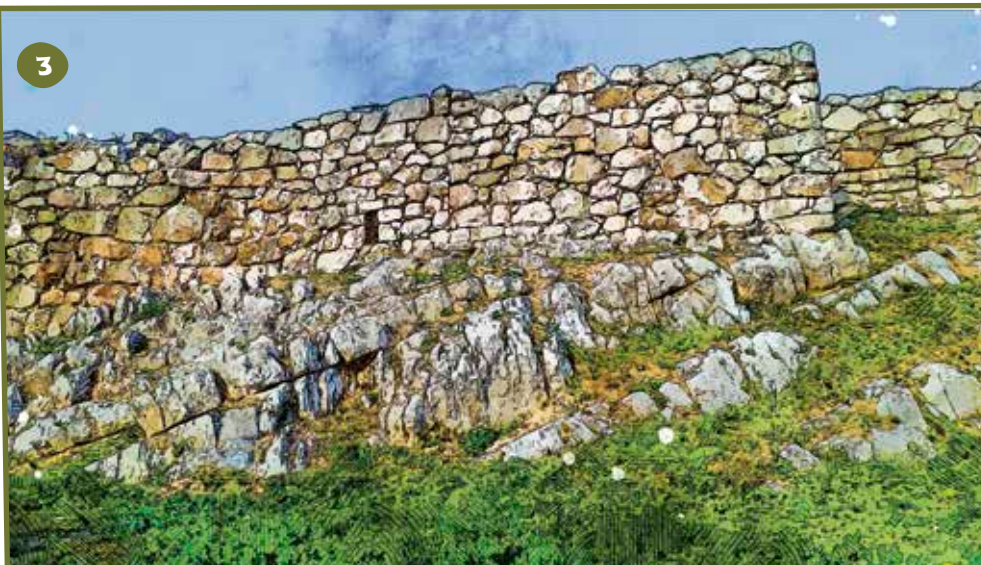
# Walking around Tiryns...



1  
AT LAST, ARCHER<sup>10</sup>, HAVE YOU COME TO TAKE OVER? YOU WILL REPORT TO ME. I AM THE CAPTAIN OF TIRYNS' GUARD, MEGAPENTHES<sup>11</sup>.



2  
DO YOU SEE OUR WALLS? THEY WERE BUILT BY OUR FOUNDER, THE ARGEAN PRINCE PROETUS, WITH THE HELP OF THE CYCLOPES!

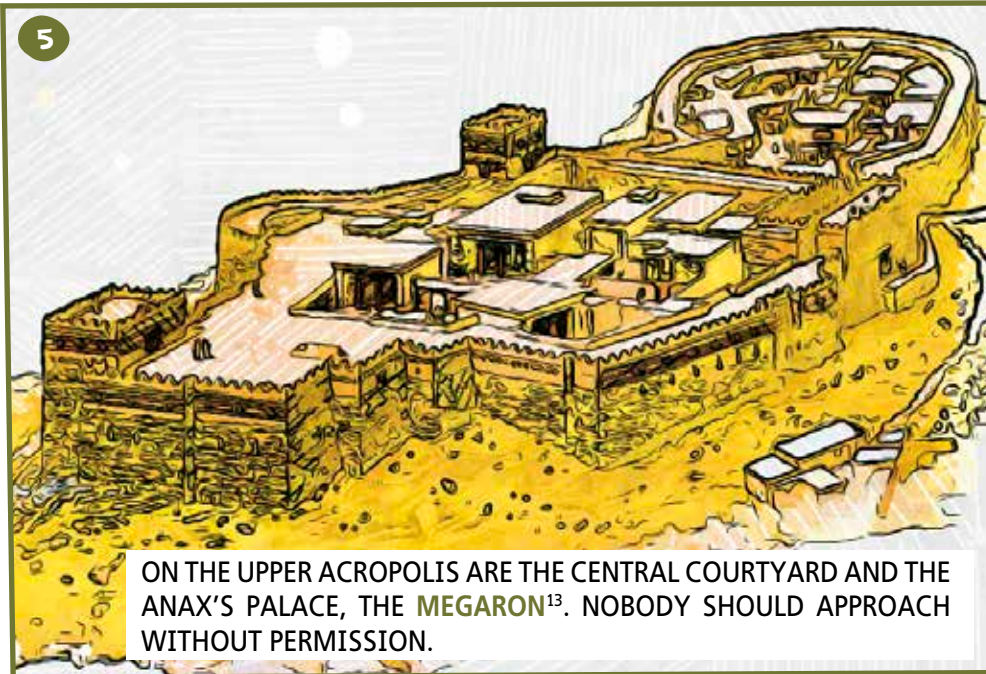


3  
INDEED, THE **BOULDERS** ARE SO BIG THAT EVEN A PAIR OF MULES CANNOT CARRY EVEN THE SMALLEST ONE<sup>12</sup>!



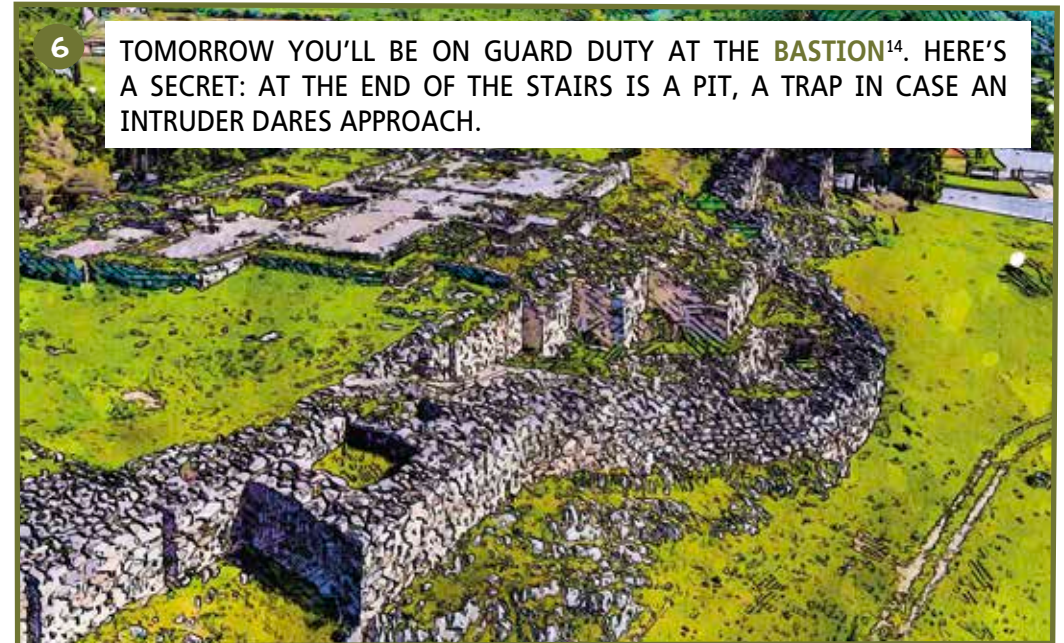
4  
HERE IS THE **GATE** YOU WILL GUARD TONIGHT. HAVE YOU BEEN TO MYCENAE? YES, INDEED, IT IS SIMILAR TO THE LION'S GATE.

# ... with Megapenthes



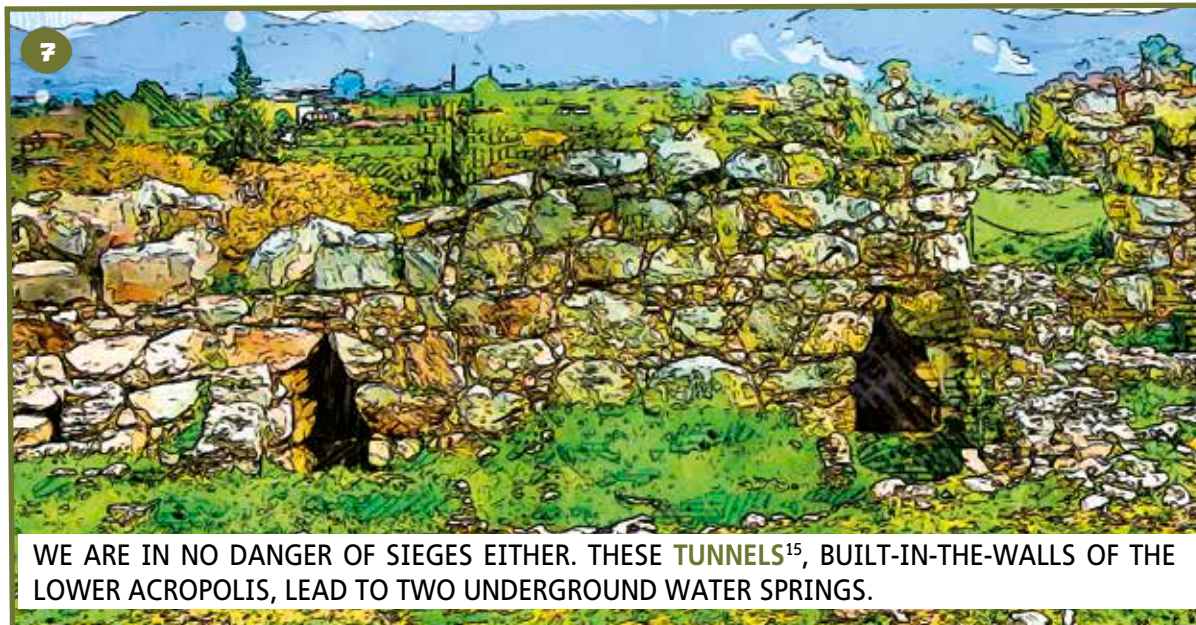
5

ON THE UPPER ACROPOLIS ARE THE CENTRAL COURTYARD AND THE ANAX'S PALACE, THE MEGARON<sup>13</sup>. NOBODY SHOULD APPROACH WITHOUT PERMISSION.



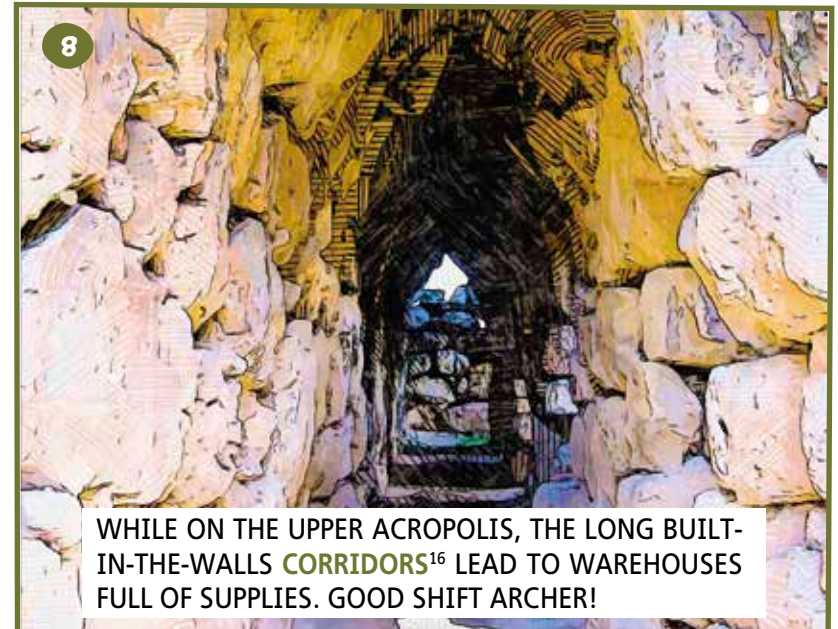
6

TOMORROW YOU'LL BE ON GUARD DUTY AT THE BASTION<sup>14</sup>. HERE'S A SECRET: AT THE END OF THE STAIRS IS A PIT, A TRAP IN CASE AN INTRUDER DARES APPROACH.



7

WE ARE IN NO DANGER OF SIEGES EITHER. THESE TUNNELS<sup>15</sup>, BUILT-IN-THE-WALLS OF THE LOWER ACROPOLIS, LEAD TO TWO UNDERGROUND WATER SPRINGS.



8

WHILE ON THE UPPER ACROPOLIS, THE LONG BUILT-IN-THE-WALLS CORRIDORS<sup>16</sup> LEAD TO WAREHOUSES FULL OF SUPPLIES. GOOD SHIFT ARCHER!

# The environment...

“*In the region now called Argolis [...] the rivers Inachus, Cephisus and Asterion [...] decided that the land belonged to Hera, and so Poseidon made their waters disappear. For this reason neither Inachus nor either of the other rivers I have mentioned provides any water except after rain.*”

Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, II, 15:4–5.

Mycenae was built between two high conical hills, Prophet Elias (805 m) and Sara (660 m), on a naturally fortified hill: to the north and south, the site is protected by ravines and access is only possible from the west. The strategic position of Mycenae controlling the Argolic plain and the road communications, was ideal for the seat of the Mycenaean kingdom.

The acropolis of Tiryns, built also in a key position near the sea, dominates over the large plain that stretches along the edges of the Argolic Gulf.



2. The Lion Gate. Drawing by Otto M. von Stackelberg, 19th c.

“*[...] I saw in the night the sharp mountaintop I saw the plain beyond flooded with the light of a ghostly moon I saw, turning my head, the black stones gathered [...]*”

*He who lifts the great stones sinks; I lifted these stones for as long as I could I loved these stones for as long as I could these stones, my fate.*”

Giorgos Seferis, “Gymnopaedia; B’ Mycenae”, 1935.

3. Aerial view of the acropolis of Mycenae.



## ... and the landscape

- In both acropoleis, the natural fortification reinforced by the famous “Cyclopean walls”, combined with underground springs, facilitated the settlement of people and the protection from foreign invasions. The formation of spacious artificial enclosures allowed the foundation of the imposing palaces, while the Argolic plain enabled the prosperity and development of small settlements in the area.
- Tiryns made the most of the natural opportunities offered by the surrounding fertile lowland. The abundant agricultural production and the maritime trade were sources of wealth that benefited the development of the city, which continued to be inhabited even after the gradual collapse of the Mycenaean world.

### Green details

The legendary founder of Mycenae, Perseus, is said to have given this name to the city because, as he was thirsty once, he found a *myces* (i.e. a fungus, a mushroom) and when he pulled it out, a spring with plenty of water was revealed, the *Perseus spring*, which exists to this day<sup>17</sup>.

# Mycenae and Tiryns through time



1350 BC

**MYCENAE**

The hill is walled for the first time and becomes an acropolis.



early 13th c. BC

**TIRYNS**

The area of the Lower and Middle Acropolis is fortified for the first time.



1100 BC

**TIRYNS**

Abandonment of the settlement at Tiryns, where few inhabitants remain.



14th c. BC

**TIRYNS**

The first palace complex is built on the south side of the hill (Upper Acropolis). At the same period the first fortification of the Upper Acropolis is built.



1200 BC

**MYCENAE**

New building phase in the NE part of the palace. The palace and many buildings of the acropolis are destroyed by fire. Some buildings, such as the Religious Centre, are reconstructed and remain in use until 1100 BC.



mid 13th c. BC

**MYCENAE**

Extension of the fortification and construction of the Lion Gate. The walled area includes the Grave Circle A, the Religious Centre and building complexes on the western and eastern sides of the acropolis.

**TIRYNS**

Extensive building project.



16th–15th c. BC

**MYCENAE**

Beginnings of Mycenaean culture. Construction of Grave Circle B (1650–1550) and Grave Circle A (1600–1500 n.X.).

**TIRYNS**

Tiryns is destroyed, probably by an earthquake. The site is partially rebuilt and new houses are built in the Lower Acropolis. Outside the acropolis, the settlement grew in size.



5th c. BC

**TIRYNS**

The Tirynthians lose their political autonomy and are exiled by the Argeans.



468 BC

**MYCENAE**

Argos conquers Mycenae and demolishes parts of the fortified acropolis.



323–31 BC

**MYCENAE**

The Argeans establish a “komi” on the hill of Mycenae, repair the prehistoric walls and the archaic temple, and build a small theatre over the road of the Tholos tomb of Clytemnestra.



**Byzantine period**

**TIRYNS**

A church with cemetery and probably a small settlement was founded west of the Upper Acropolis.



**Venetian rule**

**TIRYNS**

Tiryns is referred to in Venetian sources as Napoli Vecchio (old Nafplio).



1379

**TIRYNS**

The Turks conquer Argos.



18th–19th c.

**MYCENAE**

Travellers and archaeologists visit the site and often loot it.



1876

**MYCENAE**

Heinrich Schliemann begins his great excavation, which reveals the five graves of Grave Circle A.



1884/5

**TIRYNS**

Heinrich Schliemann carries out extensive excavations.



1999

**MYCENAE**

**TIRYNS**

Inclusion of the monuments in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

# Historical figures through the ages

The seat of the king and of the political power, a place of administration and the residence of many officials, as well as of the priesthood...

... as it turns out, in addition to the function of shrines and places of worship within the fortified hills, Mycenae and Tiryns also hosted foreign delegations, merchants, craftsmen and crowds of people on a daily basis.



4. Gold diadem with embossed decoration. Grave Circle A, grave III. 16th c. BC. National Archaeological Museum.



## NOBLE FAMILIES



**Perseus**  
was the first king  
of Mycenae.

The greatest hero  
**Heracles**  
and King  
**Eurystheus**  
were his grandsons.



Heracles was in the service of Eurystheus, king of Tiryns, for twelve years, after receiving divination from the Oracle of Delphi, to perform the twelve labors and to purify himself for the frenzied murder of his children.

**The Atreides**  
were the tragic family  
that succeeded  
the Perseides.

King Agamemnon,  
commander-in-chief  
of the Greeks in the Trojan War,  
was tragically killed  
by his wife Clytemnestra  
upon returning to Mycenae  
after the campaign.



His children,  
**Electra and Orestes**  
avenged him by killing their mother.



## KEEN EXPLORERS



**Edward Dodwell**  
(1767–1832)

In 1805, the Irish archaeologist and painter visited and painted the ruined castle of Agamemnon and especially the Lion Gate, while he criticized the looting of antiquities by travellers.



**King Otto**

asked Gennaeus Kolokotronis to accompany him to Mycenae. But neither the general nor the inhabitants knew where the ruins were. He then asked the villagers if they had seen any foreign travellers in the area, and so he located the site near the village of Harvati.



**The German Heinrich Schliemann**

was the first great excavator of Mycenae and Tiryns. Although controversial, Schliemann's excavations mark the beginning of the unearthing of the Mycenaean period.



Many locals worked on the excavation.

Schliemann paid 5 cents for each valuable object brought to him by the workers (the daily wage of the guardian of antiquities was 1 drachma). The excavation in Mycenae cost him 30,000 drachmas and the Archaeological Society 4,000 drachmas.

## SKILLED ARCHAEOLOGISTS



**The archaeologist Christos Tsountas**  
(1857–1934)

The founder of archaeological science in Greece contributed to the systematic unearthing and study of Greek prehistory, Neolithic, Cycladic and Mycenaean civilizations. On behalf of the Archaeological Society of Athens, he conducted excavations since 1886 at Mycenae, Tiryns and Laconia.



**Important Greek archaeologists, such as Ioannis Papadimitriou, Georgios Mylonas and Spyros Iakovidis** members of the Archaeological Society at Athens., continued and expanded the research during the 20th c.

# A monument is born

In the centuries that followed, the Mycenaean civilization passed into the realm of myth. The imposing palaces and majestic tombs disappear into the earth and vegetation, and only the ancient walls stand out in the distance. In Venetian documents, the small settlement in the area of Tiryns is referred to as “Old Nafplio” (Napoli Vecchio).

## THE LIONS PROTECT THE RUINS

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many travellers visited the area.

Among them the infamous Lord Elgin, who in 1802 tried to take the lions' relief from the Lion Gate with him, but he couldn't carry it and gave up on the idea.

The Lion Gate was discovered by chance by a Venetian architect looking for large stones to fortify Palamidi in Nafplion.



Εικ. 5. The British cartoonist of the “Illustrated London News” draws the Lion Gate in Mycenae, 19th c.

Εικ. 6. Figurine of ivory lion, 13th c. BC. Mycenae Museum.

I SAW AGAMEMNON'S FACE!



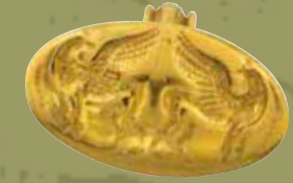
Fig 7. The relics Heinrich Schliemann discovered at Mycenae are presented in an exhibition in Athens.

In the Grave Circle A 19 skeletons and 40 kg of golden burial offerings were found, justifying Homer's description of Mycenae as "rich in gold"<sup>19</sup>.

The impressive findings led Shliemann to the certainty that he found "the skeletons of Agamemnon, Cassandra, Eurymedon and members of the family of Pelops".



The famous "Mask of Agamemnon" actually belongs to a ruler of the 16th c. BC, and not to the legendary leader of the Achaeans who is supposed to have lived in the 12th c. BC.



November 28, 1876

*This treasure alone is enough to fill a great museum [...] Since I work out of sheer love for science, I naturally have no claim on these treasures, which I give over with great enthusiasm in their entirety to Greece.*

*Best Regards  
Heinrich Schliemann*

Heinrich Schliemann, Telegram to King George I, November 28, 1876<sup>18</sup>.

The providence of the Greek state is reflected in the establishment of the Archaeological Service in 1833 and the cooperation with the Archaeological Society of Athens to conduct systematic research in the acropolis and the area of Mycenae<sup>20</sup>.

Schliemann excavated at Tiryns in 1884–1885, together with Wilhelm Dörpfeld and supervised by Dimitrios Filios<sup>21</sup>. Systematic research in the acropolis of Tiryns has been carried out by the German Archaeological Institute at Athens from 1967 until today in cooperation with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida.

# A unique monument...

The Mycenaean civilization was the first major Greek civilization developed in mainland Greece during the late Bronze Age (1600–1100 BC)

## Strong hands, sharp minds

The great works of the period demonstrate the high level of Mycenaean expertise in engineering and hydraulics.

The “cyclopean” walls were constructed of rough boulders, while the gaps were filled with small stones to ensure consistency and stability. The fortifications were reinforced by towers, pointed tunnels that served as storerooms and descending passageways leading to underground drinking water springs.



8. The access to the underground tank in the acropolis of Mycenae.



9. The famous tunnels of Tiryns.



An excellent example of a tholos tomb is the known as “The Treasury of Atreus”, which is also the largest of them all<sup>22</sup>.

## The “key” is at the top

The tholos tombs of the Mycenaean rulers are a feat of construction.

The long *dromos* (road) leads to the burial chamber. The entrance is monumental, with a *relieving triangle* over the lintel, which was made by an enormous slab. The vaulted chamber is built with ashlar blocks using the corbelling system that gives it the form of a beehive. The upper part was closed with a large round stone, the so called “key.” The whole structure was covered with a pile of earth, forming an artificial hill, the *mound*.

# ... with timeless radiance ★1

“... on the side of the opposite hill,  
I beheld the ruins of Mycenae.  
I particularly admired one of the city’s gates,  
composed of gigantic masses of stone.  
Two colossal lions without heads,  
carved on each side of this Gate,  
are its only ornament. They are standing,  
face to face, like the lions which supported  
the arms of coats of our ancient chevaliers.  
I never saw, even in Egypt itself, a more  
imposing specimen of architecture [...] It was a shepherd boy, stark naked,  
that showed me in this solitude the tomb of  
Agamemnon and the ruins of Mycenae.”

François-René de Chateaubriand,  
*Travel in Greece*, 1806  
(transl. in Greek Andr. Karantonis 2010).

“Marker” of the ancestors



10. Base of a gravestone with spirals.  
Grave Circle B, 16th c. BC.



11. Grave stele depicting hunting scene  
and chariot. Grave Circle A, 16th c. BC.



12. Grave stele of Dexileos, Kerameikos.  
394 BC. Drawing in the newspaper  
“Estia”, 1876.

Gravestones, *stela*, used as tomb markers, as a *sema*,  
are a burial practice first attested in the Grave Circles A and B  
which is also adopted by subsequent generations.

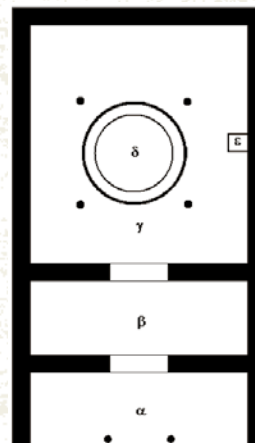
Megaron:  
the centre of the palace

Mycenaean architecture is considered the  
precursor of the architecture of the later Greek  
temples of antiquity.

There are characteristic similarities and analogies between  
the Mycenaean *megaron* and a *temple in antis*<sup>23</sup>.



13. Giorgos Zogkolopoulos, “Cyclopeion”, 1965–1966.



# A unique monument...

## The culture of lions

The megalithic *Lion Gate* is considered the oldest example of monumental sculpture in Europe.

The threshold, lintel and pilasters are monolithic, that is they are made by a singular huge slab, while higher up the *relieving triangle*<sup>24</sup> is decorated with two imposing lions facing each other.



14. Lion Gate, Mycenae.



15. Fresco from the megaron in Tiryns, 13th c. BC. National Archaeological Museum.

## Colourful frescoes

... adorned the Mycenaean palace centres and impressed the visitors. Today, although they are preserved in fragments, they provide us with valuable information about the customs and the everyday life of that time.

“ The lions had been lost for years. Not a single one was to be found in all of Greece or rather, a lonely, hunted one, was hidden somewhere in the Peloponnese no longer threatening anyone until Heracles killed it too. But the memory of the lions never ceased to frighten their image on emblems and shields their likeness was terrifying on the monuments of battle their reliefs were terrifying on the stone lintel of the gate. Our heavy past always frightens the narrative of what has happened frightens as the writing carves it on the lintel of the gate we pass through every day.”

Titos Patrikios, “The Lion Gate”, 2002.

MUSEUM OF CYCLADIC ART  
Periodic Exhibition, 2019

PICASSO  
AND  
ANTIQUITY



LINE  
AND  
CLAY

The great artist of the 20th c. Pablo Picasso  
Is heavily inspired by the Minoan and Mycenaean  
culture and the Greek world.

# ... with timeless radiance ★ 2

“lord Agamemnon, captain,  
with a hundred ships”  
Homer, *Iliad*, Book B, 576.



16. Clay tablet with Linear B script. 13th c. BC. . MM 2066<sup>25</sup>.

Linear B script contains 89 syllabograms, representing syllables with phonetic value, and about 260 ideograms (or logograms).

## Saving... fires!

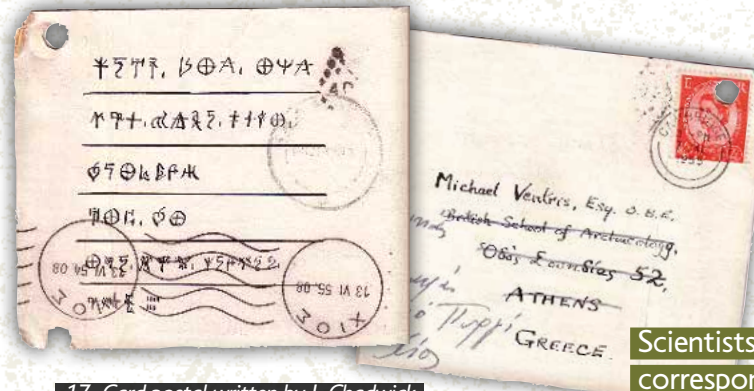
The unfired clay tablets were for temporary recording... like ancient notebooks. As a rule, they did not survive over the centuries.

Only a small number has survived: those that by chance were “baked” in a fire and thus preserved. 90 Linear B tablets were found at Mycenae and 18 at Tiryns.

## Mycenaeans also wrote!

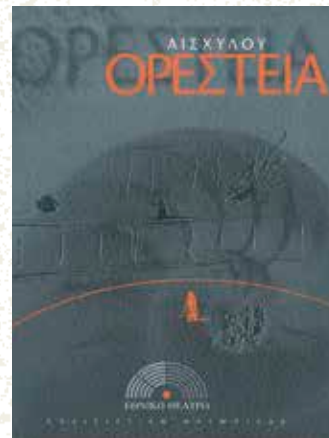
Their writing was called Linear B Script by the archaeologists.

Dozens of tablets have been found in Mycenaean palaces. But what did the Mycenaeans write? Poems? Stories about the heroic deeds of their ancestors? No! Their tablets were lists of administrative acts: warehouses with goods, palace staff organisation, estates and raw material distribution, etc.



17. Card postal written by J. Chadwick in Linear B Script, June 7 1955.

Scientists at first thought that Linear B corresponded to the Minoan language, like Linear A Script. But the British architect Michael Ventris and the linguist John Chadwick thought that it represented the Greek language and so, in 1952 they succeeded in deciphering it.



## From the Iliad to today!

Ancient, modern and contemporary art often draws inspiration from the myths of the Mycenaean period. The Atreides, the “cursed” royal family of Mycenae, with adventures and intense passions, have inspired poets, dramatists and artists from Homer to the present day...

# Monumental dialogues



GREECE

## Aigai

The capital of ancient Macedonia, where the magnificent palace complex and the tombs of the Macedonian kings have been brought to light, including the funerary monument attributed to King Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great.



GREECE

## Acropolis of Gla (or Glas)

In Kastro in Boeotia is preserves the largest fortified Mycenaean acropolis in Greece. It was built around 1300 BC to control a gigantic technical project: the drainage of lake Kopais. Before the drainage, the site resembled an island.

TURKEY



## archaeological Site of Troy

The remains of the ancient city, which is closely linked to the Homeric epics, the Trojan War and the Mycenae, was discovered also by Heinrich Schliemann.

TURKEY



## Hattusa

The capital of the Hittite Empire remained the largest political and military centre until their fall (12th c. BC). Excavations revealed a royal archive with 10,000 tablets in cuneiform Akkadian script, which was deciphered in 1915. Another Lion Gate is located here.

# A message today...

## “Bridges” to the past

The Mycenaeans’ ingenuity, innovations and technical knowledge can be seen mainly through the great works of monumental architecture, such as the acropoleis with the cyclopean fortifications, the tholos tombs, but also, the bridges!

The oldest bridges in Europe and perhaps in the world are 3,400-year-old Mycenaean structures built with enormous boulders. Up to now 17 bridges have been identified in Argolida, some of which are very close to Mycenae and Tiryns and apparently facilitated access to these great cities.

One of the oldest and most characteristic examples of the arched mycenaean bridge is the Arcadiko Bridge, also known as the Kazarma Bridge, with a length of 22 m, width 5.6 m and height 4 m, which is still in use until today.



18. Bridge of Kazarma in Argolida (1300 BC).

# ... for a better tomorrow!

Goals 2030 >



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

> Creating flexible infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

1. “Aigisthos... reigned over Mycenae, rich in gold,” (Homer, *Odyssey*, Book 3, 304). Translation in Modern Greek N. Kazantzakis-I.Th. Kakridis.
2. The name of the guide is inspired by the name of a coppersmith recorded on Linear B tablets of the 13th c. BC.
3. The identity of Antiphamos as an attendant is also inspired by the Linear B tablets, as in them there are mentioned among the officials the *enétēs* (*eqeta*), i.e. “followers” or “attendants”.
4. The *anax* (*wa-na-ka*), was at the top of the Mycenaean hierarchy, i.e. the ruler of each mycenaean state. The *anax* resided in the palace (*anaktoron*), in the centre of the fortified acropolis.
5. The perimeter of the wall in Mycenae in its present form is 900 m, fortifying an area of 30,000 sqm. The maximum surviving height is 8.25 m, and the average width is 5.5-6 m, but in some places, it reaches 8 m. Large boulders were placed in two rows, one internal and one external, one on top of the other without any connecting material. The inner space between the two rows of boulders was filled with smaller stones and soil.
6. The Grave Circle A is a great enclosure that was the royal cemetery of the Mycenaean rulers during 16th c. BC. It enclosed six large shaft graves, marked by grave stones (*stele*), as markers (*semata*). Rich and valuable burial offerings were found here. The Mycenaean rulers considered these great burials as a monument of their glorious ancestors and used them to legitimize their own power, as can be attested by the construction of the walls of the acropolis around the Grave Circles, as well as by the later references to the Royal House of the Atrides in the Homeric epics.
7. The *anaktoron* was a large palatial building complex, as it was the residence of the supreme ruler, the *anax*, but also the centre of administration of each Mycenaean state. It included several apartments and annexes, but the core of the complex was the *megaron*. The Mycenaean *megaron* consists of three halls: a propylon (portico) with columns at the entrance, the *prodomos* (anteroom) and the *domos*, i.e. the main hall with a central circular fireplace and frescoes on the walls.
8. In Mycenae a workshop complex was excavated, which includes buildings related to the monopolistic system of administration of the Mycenaean. The so called “Artists’ Quarter”, the “House of the Columns”, and “Buildings C” and “D” were used by the artisans working for the palace and to store raw materials, items and products, etc.
9. See also p. 20 and note 22.
10. The existence of archers in the Mycenaean army is confirmed in the Linear B Script tablets, which among other things, mention archers (*τοξόται* = *to-ko-so-te*).
11. The name is inspired by the son of Proetus, the first king of Tiryns, who, according to mythology, had commissioned the Cyclopes to build the city walls.
12. Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Corinth, II*, 25:8.

13. See note 7. In the main hall (*domos*) of Tiryns, there was a large hearth, 3 m in diameter, surrounded by four columns, while on the eastern wall of the hall stood the king’s throne.

14. The so called “Western Bastion” is the only part of the walls with a curved contour. It has a defensive character and the curved course of the inner staircase left no room for protection to the invaders.

15. The tunnels were specially designed passageways with a corbelling building system (See note 9), ensuring a safe and continuous water supply, from underground springs outside the acropolis.

16. The corridors are located and built into the eastern and southern parts of the wall of the upper acropolis: they consist of a long corridor adjoined by a series of aboveground rooms, with a corbelled ceiling.

17. Another version of the myth about the name of Mycenae states that the “myces” (the mushroom-like hilt) of Perseus’ sword fell there.

18. “I have discovered fabulous treasures and ancient objects of solid gold in these tombs. These treasures alone are enough to fill a large museum which will become the most famous in the world and will attract myriads of foreigners to Greece from every land. Since I work out of sheer love of science, I naturally make no claim on these treasures and enthusiastically give them over, in their entirety, to Greece. May, your majesty, with God’s help, these treasures be the foundation of immeasurable national wealth. Telegram from Heinrich Schliemann to King George I, November 28, 1876. See K. Πασχαλίδης, «“(…) ’έρρωσο. Ερρικός Σχλιέμανν”. Η ανακάλυψη του Μυκηνναϊκού πολιτισμού και η δημιουργία του ‘Μυκηνναϊκού Μουσείου’ μέσα από τις αναφορές των πρωταγωνιστών της», in K. Κοπανιάς–Γ. Παπαδάτος (ed), *Κυδάλιμος: Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Γεώργιο Στυλ. Κορρέ*, τομ. 4, Athens 2020, 101.

19. Schliemann’s excavations lasted 5 months in 1876. There had been previous excavations by him at the site without permission as early as 1874. The self-taught archaeologist Panagiotis Stamatakis, supervisor on behalf of the Archaeological Society of Schliemann’s excavation, the following year uncovered the sixth grave of Grave Circle A and continued the excavation until 1883. The shaft graves, marked with stone grave stele, contained family burials, with particularly rich gifts, which leave no doubt that these are royal burials.

20. In 1920–1950, the British School at Athens was also granted the right to excavate with the renowned archaeologist Alan J.B. Wace and then William D. Taylour and Elizabeth French, who, among other things, brought to light the impressive findings of the “Religious Centre” and the “Chamber with the fresco”.

21. Dörpfeld carried out small-scale excavations in Tiryns until the First World War with Georg Karo and Kurt Mueller, archaeologists from the German Archaeological Institute at Athens.

22. The well-known “Treasury of Atreus”, the most impressive of the nine tholos tombs that have been found in Mycenae, is located in the SW of

the acropolis. It is certain that it was used for the burial of some important member of the Mycenaean royal family, but it has not been identified with the tomb of Agamemnon or Atreus, the mythical progenitor of the Mycenaean royal house. Already from the time of the traveller Pausanias (2nd c. AD) the monument was referred to as the “treasury” of Atreus and for this reason the tomb is known to this day either as “treasure of Atreus” or “tomb of Agamemnon”. Access to the tomb was through an imposing road (36 x 6 m). The circular chamber of the tomb has a diameter of 14.60 m and a height of 13.40 m, while it is covered with a beehive dome of 33 consecutive rows of ashlar, perfectly assembled so that each row protrudes slightly inwards in relation to the lower one layer (*corbelling* system).

23. In both cases, there is a rectangular plan with a tripartite division: the entrance porch with the columns in the temples recalls the propylon of the Mycenaean palaces, the *pronaos* refers to the *prodomos* of the *megaron* and the main room, the *septum*, recalls the Mycenaean main hall, the *domos*.

24. The so-called relieving triangle, above the lintel, transfers the centre of gravity of the overlying stones to the sides. The triangular slab of the Lion Gate is decorated in relief with the composition of two lions face to face, standing on incurved altars, with a column between them.

25. On this particular Linear B Script tablet, Sitopotnia, the goddess who protects the produce, is mentioned, as well as specialized craftsmen in handling blue glasspaste to make jewellery (1250–1180 BC).

# bibliography

Βασιλικού Ντ., *Ο μυκηναϊκός πολιτισμός*, Αθήνα 1995 (1η έκδ.), 2019 (2η έκδ.) (και σε ηλεκτρ. έκδ.).

Δημακοπούλου Κ. (επιμ.), *Τροία, Μυκίνες, Τίρυνς, Ορχομενός: Εκατό χρόνια από το θάνατο του Ερρίκου Σλήμαν* (κατ. έκθ.), Αθήνα 1990.

Ιακωβίδης Σπ., *Αί μυκηναϊκά άκροπόλεις: Πανεπιστημιακά παραδόσεις*, Αθήνα 1973.

Ιακωβίδης Σπ.Ε., *Μυκίνες–Επίδαυρος–Αργος–Τίρυνς–Ναύπλιον: Πλήρης οδηγός για τα μουσεία και τους αρχαιολογικούς χώρους της Αργολίδας*, Αθήνα 1995.

Ιακωβίδης Σπ.Ε., «Μυκίνες», στο Α.Γ. Βλαχόπουλος (επιμ.), *Αρχαιολογία: Πελοπόννησος*, Αθήνα 2012, 148–157.

Λαγογιάννη-Γεωργακαράκου Μ.–Κουτσογιάννης Θ. (επιμ.), «Δι' αυτά πολεμήσαμεν»: *Αρχαιοίτες και Ελληνική Επανάσταση* (κατ. έκθ.), Αθήνα 2019.

Λαμπρινουδάκης Β.Κ., *Αργολίδα. Αρχαιολογικοί χώροι και μουσεία της Αργολίδας: Μυκίνες, Ηραίο, Αργος, Τίρυνς, Ναύπλιο, Επίδαυρος*, Αθήνα 1990 (1η έκδ.).

Μυλωνάς Γ.Ε., *Πολύχρυσοι Μυκῆναι*, Αθήνα 1983.

Παλαιολόγου Ε., «“Μυκίνη ευρυάγυια”: Η περιοχή πέριξ των Μυκηνών», στο Βλαχόπουλος Α.Γ. (επιμ.), *Αρχαιολογία: Πελοπόννησος*, Αθήνα 2012, 158–161.

Παπαδημητρίου Α., *Τίρυνς: Ιστορικός και αρχαιολογικός οδηγός*, Αθήνα 2001.

Παπαδημητρίου Α., «Μυκίνες», στο Ε. Κόρκα κ.ά. (επιμ.), *Ελλάδα: Μνημεία και χώροι παγκόσμιας κληρονομιάς*, Αθήνα 2009, 138–159.

Παπαδημητρίου Α., *Μυκίνες* [Κοινωνοφελές Ίδρυμα Ιωάννη Σ. Λάτση, Ο Κύκλος των Μουσείων 17], Αθήνα 2015 (και σε ηλεκτρ. έκδ.).

Παπαδημητρίου Α.–Σπαθάρη Ε., *Μυκίνες: Ταξιδεύοντας στον κόσμο του Αγαμέμνονα*, Αθήνα 2020.

Σπαθάρη Ε., *Μυκίνες: Ιστορικός και αρχαιολογικός οδηγός*, Αθήνα 2001.

Σπαθάρη Ε., *Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο Μυκηνών*, Αθήνα 2003 (1η έκδ.).

Τσούντας Χρ., *Μυκῆναι καί μυκηναϊός πολιτισμός*, Αθήνα 1893.

Chadwick J., *Ο μυκηναϊκός κόσμος* (μτφρ. Κ.Ν. Πετρόπουλος), Αθήνα 1999.

Dickinson O.T.P.K., *Η προέλευση του μυκηναϊκού πολιτισμού* (μτφρ. Α. Παπαδόπουλος), Αθήνα 1992 (1η έκδ.).

Dickinson O., *Αιγαίο: Εποχή του Χαλκού* (μτφρ. Θ. Ξένος), Αθήνα 2003.

French E., *Mycenae: Agamemnon's Capital: The Site and its Setting*, Stroud - Charleston 2002.

Iakovidis Sp.E.–Lavery J.–French E.B.–Ioannides Ch.–Shelton K.–Jansen A., *Archaeological Atlas of Mycenae*, Αθήνα 2003 (και σε ηλεκτ. έκδ.).

Kelder J.M., *The Kingdom of Mycenae: A Great Kingdom in the Late Bronze Age Aegean*, Βηθεσδά (Μέριλαντ) 2010.

Maran J.–Παπαδημητρίου Α., «Τίρυνθα», στο Βλαχόπουλος Α.Γ. (επιμ.),

*Αρχαιολογία: Πελοπόννησος*, Αθήνα 2012, 162–167.

Maran J.–Papadimitriou A., “Mycenae and the Argolid”, στο I.S. Lemos–A. Kotsonas (επιμ.), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*, τόμ. 2, Χόμποκεν 2020, 693–718.

Maran J.–Παπαδημητρίου Α., «Τέλος και αρχή: Η εκπληκτική ανάκαμψη της Τίρυνθας μετά την καταστροφή των ανακτόρων το 1200 π.Χ.», *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες* 136 (2021), 30–43 (και σε ηλεκτ. έκδ.).

Nilsson M.P., *Όμηρος και Μυκίνες* (μτφρ. Ι.Κ. Μαζαράκης Αιινιάν), Αθήνα 1989.

Ruipérez M.S.–Melena J.L., *Οι Μυκηναίοι Έλληνες* (μτφρ. Μ. Παναγιωτίδου), Αθήνα 1996.

Shelmerdine C.W. (επιμ.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, Κέιμπριτζ–Νέα Υόρκη 2008.

Treuil R.–Darcque P.–J.–Poursat Cl.–Touchais G., *Οι πολιτισμοί του Αιγαίου* (μτφρ. Ο. Πολυχρονοπούλου–Α. Φιλίππα–Touchais), Αθήνα 1996 (1η έκδ.).

## Internet sources:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/941/>

<https://archaeologicalmuseums.gr>

Archaeological site of Mycenae:

[http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj\\_id=2573](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj_id=2573)

Mycenae by drone: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx\\_66wuam1o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx_66wuam1o)

3D representation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QG9v6A0A9HQ>

<https://mycenaegr.wordpress.com>

Archaeological site of Tyrins:

[http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj\\_id=2382](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj_id=2382) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czqwTCpDK0k>

The Archaeological Society at Athens, Mycenae excavations

<https://www.archetai.gr/index.php?p=exchavations&lang=/> Μυκίνες – ΑΡΓΟΛΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΕΙΑΚΗ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ <https://argolikivivliothiki.gr/category/μυκίνες/>

# origin of pictures

Cover: HMC/DAMEEP

1. HMC/DAMEEP

2. Papadimitriou A., 2015, p. 38–39. (also available in English)

3. HMC/DAMEEP

4. HMC/National Archaeological Museum

5. *1842–1885. Ελλάδα, ιστορική, εικονογραφημένη. Μια πλήρης συλλογή ιστορικών, τοπογραφικών και καλλιτεχνικών ντοκουμέντων.*

*Με 280 γκραβούρες εποχής*, Αθήνα, 1984.

Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation. <https://el.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=57565>

6. HMC/Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida/Mycenae Museum

*1842–1885. Ελλάδα, ιστορική, εικονογραφημένη. Μια πλήρης συλλογή ιστορικών, τοπογραφικών και καλλιτεχνικών ντοκουμέντων.*

*Με 280 γκραβούρες εποχής*, Αθήνα, 1984.

Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation. <https://el.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=57636> <https://el.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=57636>

7. HMC/DAMEEP

8. HMC/DAMEEP

9. HMC/Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida/Mycenae Museum

10. HMC/National Archaeological Museum

11. [https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Στήλη\\_του\\_Δεξιλεω#/media/Αρχείο:Stele\\_Dexileos.JPG](https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Στήλη_του_Δεξιλεω#/media/Αρχείο:Stele_Dexileos.JPG)

12. <https://www.searchculture.gr/aggregator/edm/ZogopoulosF/000041-64080>

Georgios Zongolopoulos Foundation.

<https://www.zongolopoulos.gr/erga-giorgos-zongolopoulos/031>

13. HMC/DAMEEP

14. HMC/National Archaeological Museum

15. HMC/Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolida/Mycenae Museum

16. <https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/55-06-07-chadwick-ventris.pdf>

17. [https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Γέφυρα\\_του\\_Αρκαδικού#/media/Αρχείο:Kazarma\\_bridge.jpg](https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Γέφυρα_του_Αρκαδικού#/media/Αρχείο:Kazarma_bridge.jpg)

MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES  
at the greek unesco monuments



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture

General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage



Directorate of Archaeological Museums,  
Exhibitions and Educational Programmes  
Department of Educational Programmes and Communication



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση

Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση

Με το συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



ανάπτυξη - εργασία - αλληλεγγύη



ISBN 978-960-386-607-7