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Cremation and the end of Mycenaean culture

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CREMATION AND THE END OF MYCENAEAN CULTURE*

Two waves of catastrophes affected Mycenaean states in Mainland Greece in the second half of the 13th century BC (LH III B_{1/2} and LH III B₂). The most severe of them was the second one which resulted in many destructions of all the main centres and of many settlements throughout the Peloponnese, Central Greece and Thessaly, opening a period of ca. 150-180 years during which time Mycenaean culture gradually disintegrated¹. The nature of that cataclysm has been widely disputed and among possible causes of the disaster the following ones have been pointed out: an invasion of people(s) from North-Western Greece (perhaps the Dorians) or from Southern Europe²; a catastrophic wave of earthquakes³; a rapid change of climate and subsequent long period of draught⁴; economic problems

Abbreviations used in the article:

ArchHom – Archeologia Homerica

BAR International Series – British Archaeological Reports International Series

CAH – Cambridge Ancient History, Cambridge

GDA – V.R.d'A. DESBOROUGH, *The Greek Dark Ages*, London 1972

LEWARTOWSKI, *Decline* – K. LEWARTOWSKI, *The Decline of Mycenaean Culture. An archaeological study of events in the Greek Mainland*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1989

LMTS – V.R.d'A. DESBOROUGH, *The last Mycenaean and their successors*, Oxford 1964

LORIMER, *Pulvis* – H.L. LORIMER, *Pulvis et umbra*, JHS 53, 1933, p. 161-80

MEE, *Aegean Trade* – CH. MEE, *Aegean Trade and Settlement in Anatolia in the Second Millennium BC*, AnatSt 28, 1978, p. 121-135

MELAS, *Cremation* – E. MELAS, *The origins of Aegean cremation*, Anthropologica 5, 1984, p. 21-37

MYLONAS, *Homeric* – G. MYLONAS, *Homeric and Mycenaean burial customs*, AJA 52, 1948, p. 56-81

SIMA – Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology

THEMELIS, *Parateriseis* – G. THEMELIS, *Parateriseis epi tou ethimou kavseos ton nekron eis ten El-lada*, AAA 6, 1973, p. 356-65

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1 E.g. Å. ÅLIN, *Das Ende der Mykenischen Fundstätten auf dem Griechischen Festland* [SIMA I], Lund 1962, *passim*; LMTS, *passim*; GDA, *passim*; J. BOUZEK, *Homerisches Griechenland*, Praha 1969, *passim*; A.M. SNODGRASS, *The Dark Age of Greece*, Edinburgh 1971, *passim*.

² LMTS esp. p. 221-257; BOUZEK *op. cit.* esp. p. 81-87; N.G.L. HAMMOND, *The end of Mycenaean civilisation and the Dark Age* in: CAH, vol. II 2³ 1975, p. 678-712.

³ K. KILIAN, *Zum Ende der mykenischen Epoche in der Argolis*, JbZMusMainz 27, 1980, p. 166-195.

⁴ R. CARPENTER, *Discontinuity in Greek civilization*, Cambridge 1966, *passim*.

caused by overpopulation, Sea Peoples' raids or political changes⁵; natural catastrophes and disturbances in the Eastern Mediterranean initiating long process of social and political changes and facilitating infiltration of foreign groups⁶. The puzzle of the end of Mycenaean culture is among the most complicated problems of Aegean archaeology. Literary sources are of little help because of their specific character: Linear B texts can be used only to support mainly the hypothesis of economical problems and partly the idea of invasion; the ancient sources speak only of the Dorian invasion connected with the return of the Heraclidae⁷. There does not exist any written document from the time of the troubles. Thus, the proponents of all of the above-named theories who depend mainly on the archaeological evidence compile lists of traces of destruction, foreign objects, or changes in burial practices, weaponry or clothing in support of their views.

The rite of cremation and its gradual spread belong to the phenomena which accompanied the process of disappearance of Mycenaean culture. The standard burial rite of Mycenaeans was inhumation. Only a few instances of cremation dating back to the period before the main catastrophe have been found:

- Tragana (LH III A₂) - cremated bones of two young „princesses” in a pit in tholos tomb 2⁸;
- Astypalea (Dodecanese, LH III A-B) - bones deposited on the floor of chamber tomb 1⁹;
- Brauron: Lapoutsi (LH III B₁) - a few adult bones in an alabastron in chamber tomb A¹⁰;
- Prosymna (LH III B₂) - cremated bones in a jug in the blocking wall of tomb XLI and bones scattered on the floor of tomb X¹¹.

There are two cremation burials of uncertain chronology:

- Thebes: Kolonaki (LH III B-C₁?) - cremated bones of an adult deposited on the floor of chamber tomb 16 (interpretation and chronology dubious)¹²;
- Kállithea (Patras area, LH III B-C) - 1 adult cremation in a heap on the floor of chamber tomb O which also contains richly furnished inhumations¹³.

⁵ G. MYLONAS, *Mycenae's Last Century of Greatness*, Sydney 1968, p. 27 sq.; C.G. THOMAS, *The nature of Mycenaean Kinship*, SMEA 17, 1976, p. 93-116; J.T. HOOKER, *The end of Pylos and the Linear B evidence*, SMEA 23, 1982, p. 209-217.

⁶ LEWARTOWSKI, *Decline, passim*.

⁷ Cf. J.T. HOOKER, *Mycenaean Greece*, London 1976, Appendix 1 - list of literary sources.

⁸ S. MARINATOS, *Anaskaphai en Pylo*, Prakt 1955, p. 252 sq. - ca. 1400 BC; R. HOPE SIMPSON, O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, *A Gazetteer of Aegean Civilization in the Bronze Age*, vol. I [SIMA LII], Göteborg 1979 p. 132 sq. - LH III A₂.

⁹ CH. DOUMAS, ADelt 30, 1975, Chron., p. 372.

¹⁰ E. THEOCHARAKI, ADelt 21, 1966, Chron., p. 99.

¹¹ C.W. BLEGEN, *Prosymna: the Helladic settlement preceding the Argive Heraeum*, Cambridge Mass. 1937, p. 143, 200, 242, 250.

¹² A. KERAMOPOULOS, ADelt 3 1917, p. 163 sq.

¹³ TH. PAPADOPOULOS, *Anaskaphe Kallitheas Patron*, Prakt 1980 (1982), p. 108 sq. A violin-bow fibula was found among cremated bones. Violin-bow fibulae were in use in Achaea in the LH III B-C period (*IDEM*, *Mycenaean Achaea*, Göteborg 1978, p. 139), but generally they are much better attested for the LH III C period (SNODGRASS, *op. cit.*, p. 308-309), and this one is dated to LH III C

The list of cemeteries containing cremations in the LH III C period is shorter but the number of burials is larger:

- Perati - 18 + 3? in chamber tombs 1, 36, 38, 46, 75, 122, 145, 146, 154, 157 and the questionable cases of tombs 121, 133, S2, either in urns or in heaps in shallow pits¹⁴;
- Agrapidochori - a layer of ash with fragments of bones and vases¹⁵;
- Rhodes: Makra and Moschou Vounara - 9 cremations (7 in urns, 2 on floors) in chamber tombs (NT) 15, 17, 19, 32, 38, 71, 87¹⁶;
- Kos: Langada - 1 burial in a jug in chamber tomb 44¹⁷.

All Mycenaean cremation burials listed above have these very important features: all of them were deposited in traditional Mycenaean tombs (tholos and chamber tombs) side by side with inhumations; grave goods accompanying the bones do not show any trace of discrimination of cremated individuals in social status, age or sex. We can thus assume that cremated persons were Mycenaeans¹⁸ and members of the families who owned the tombs¹⁹. The evidence thus speaks against any hypothesis connecting cremation with an invasion, but the rite, because of its rarity in Mycenaean world, was possibly of foreign origin. The geographical distribution of Mycenaean cremations points to the Near East as the most probable source of the influence.

Syria and Palestine knew the rite of cremation maybe as early as the Stone Age²⁰. Then we can mention the Early Bronze Age burial from Gezer²¹ and, after a second long gap, a cremation burial isolated among inhumations in a pit in Jericho dating from the 15th century BC²². From that time a gradual spread of the rite is to be observed: inurned cremations from Tell Atchana from the 15th and 13th centuries BC occasionally associated with Mycenaean pottery²³; an adult cremation in a hydria in Tell Beit Mirsim dating from the 15th to the 13th century BC²⁴; inurned buri-

(K. KILIAN, *Violinbogenfibeln und Blattbügelfibeln des griechischen Festlandes aus mykenischer Zeit*, PZ 60, 1985, p. 163-4).

¹⁴ S. IAKOVIDIS, *Perati: To Nekrotapheion B*, Athenai 1970, p. 31-42.

¹⁵ ADelt 27, 1972, Chron., p. 268; THEMELIS, *Parateriseis*, p. 356.

¹⁶ A. MAIURI, *Jalissos. Scavi della Missione Archeologica Italiana a Rodi*, ASAte 6-7, 1923-24, p. 118, 129, 172, 176, 182, 238 sq.; G. JACOPI, *Nuovi scavi nella necropoli micenea di Jalisso*, ASAte 13-14, 1930-31, p. 254, 285, 329; CH. MEE, *Rhodes in the Bronze Age*, Warminster 1982, p. 23 – all cremations dated to LH III C; MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 29 – some of them could be of LH III A-B date.

¹⁷ L. MORRICONE, *Elleona e Langada: sepolcreti della tarda Età del Bronzo a Coa*, ASAte 27-8, 1965-66, p. 204; *LMTS*, p. 153.

¹⁸ Cf. J.C. WRIGHT, *Umpiring the Mycenaean Empire*, TUAS 9, 1984, p. 59 sq. on the term „Mycenaeans”.

¹⁹ *LMTS*, p. 157; MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 26.

²⁰ P.J. RIIS, *Hama*, vol. II, 3, Kopenhagen 1948, p. 37.

²¹ R.A.S. MACALISTER, *The Excavations of Gezer 1902-1905 and 1907-1909*, vol. I, London 1912, p. 285 sq., p. 392.

²² J. GARSTANG, *Jericho, city and necropolis*, AAALiv 19, 1932, p. 37.

²³ J. SCHAEFFER, *Stratigraphie comparée et chronologie de l'Asie Occidentale*, Oxford 1948, p. 98; L. WOOLLEY, *Alalach*, Oxford 1955, p. 202 sq.

²⁴ SCHAEFFER, *op. cit.*, p. 127 sq.

als in cist graves in Carchemish from the early Late Hittite period²⁵. The Early Iron Age in that area witnessed the further spread of the rite, of which the best examples are the cemetery of Hama, level F, containing inurned cremations exclusively²⁶ and two examples from Hazor²⁷. It seems that the rite came to Syro-Palestine from Anatolia in the 15th century BC.; about the same time it entered Mycenaean Greece²⁸. This coincidence speaks for a common origin of the rite in both areas rather than a Syro-Palestinian influence on the Aegean burial customs. However, the last possibility may not be excluded completely because of intensive Mycenaean contacts with the sites of the Syro-Palestinian coast²⁹. Directness of these relations has been questioned and Cyprus is thought to have been an intermediary in commercial relations between Mycenaeans and the Near East³⁰. If true, this view can be used to argue against the Syro-Palestinian influence because cremation was almost unknown on Cyprus³¹.

The motherland of cremation for the Bronze Age Mediterranean was most probably Anatolia. The rite was practised there as early as the third millennium BC - Karahöyük, Gedikli Höyük, Kanesz, Mersin, Dilkaya Höyük form a horizon of the oldest cremations. Interpretation of some of them is however disputed³². The second millennium instances of Hittite cremation burials are unquestionable. The oldest are interments found in the cemetery of Ilica (Old Hittite period) where they were placed in pots beside less numerous inhumations³³. Among the most important cemeteries is Osmankayasi, the cemetery of the Hittite capital. Burials found there were divided into three chronological groups, the second and third of which consisted of cremations and inhumations as well, and covered the period from the 16th to the 14th century. All the burials were deposited in natural rock niches, with the cremated bones moreover in broken pots³⁴. As was the case with Mycenaean cremations, grave offerings do not indicate any difference in the status of cremated and inhumated persons. The neighbouring cemetery of Baglarbasi containing cremation burials was found near the beginning of our century and neither its chronol-

²⁵ L. WOOLLEY, R.D. BARNETT, *Carchemish*, vol. III, London 1952, p. 152, 225, 250 sq.

²⁶ RIIS, *op. cit.*, p. 192-204; IDEM, *The Mycenaean expansion in the light of Danish excavations at Hama and Sukas* in: *Acts of the International Symposium "The Mycenaeans in the Eastern Mediterranean"*, Nicosia 27th March - 2nd April 1972, V. KARAGEORGHIS ed., Nicosia 1973, p. 198; SCHAEFFER, *op. cit.*, p. 155 tried to date the cemetery back to the 15th century.

²⁷ M. DOTHAN, *Tel Ashdod*, *IsrExplJ* 10, 1960, p. 259 sq.; IDEM, *Tel Ashdod*, *IsrExplJ* 11, 1961, p. 173.

²⁸ SCHAEFFER, *op. cit.*, p. 559 sq.

²⁹ M. ANDRONIKOS, *Totenkult* [ArchHom III], Göttingen 1968, p. 58 sq.

³⁰ G. BASS, *Cape Gelidonya and Bronze Age maritime trade in: Orient and Occident. Essays presented to C.H.Gordon*, H.A. HOFFNER ed., s.l. 1973, p. 29-39. For the contrasting opinion: J.D. MUHLY, *Homer and the Phoenicians. The Relations between Greece and the Near East in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages*, Berytus 19, 1970, p. 19-64.

³¹ MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 27.

³² Surveys of Anatolian cemeteries: K. BITTEL *Archäologische Untersuchung der Gräber von Osmankayasi*, in: BITTEL et al., *Die Hethitischen Grabfunde von Osmankayasi*, Berlin 1958, p. 29 sq.; K. EMRE, *Yanarlar*, Ankara 1978, p. 125-132.

³³ W. ORTMANN, *Das Gräberfeld bei Ilica*, Wiesbaden 1967.

³⁴ BITTEL, *op. cit.*, p. 2-29.

ogy nor description are certain³⁵.

On the level of archaeological evidence it is not possible to prove convincingly any influence of Hittite rites on the Mycenaean ones. The scarcity of Hittite imports in Greece and the nearly complete lack of Mycenaean exports on the territory of the Hittite Empire constitute arguments against such a view³⁶ although there are at least two finds from Hattusa suggesting a possibility of direct contacts between Hittites and Mycenaeans³⁷. But we have at our disposal two groups of literary sources, which can be taken under consideration. The first one consists of the famous Ahhijawa texts found in Boghazköy. They all refer to a certain country called Ahhijawa which first had ties and peaceful connections with the Hittites but then, towards the end of the Bronze Age was starting to cause problems for the Hittite rulers. For obvious reasons I will not quote the enormous discussion of the identification and geographical situation of Ahhijawa. It seems that from the time of the first posing of the problem the prevailing view has connected Ahhijawa with the Mycenaean world either on the Mainland or in Rhodes and despite serious reservations it had received new support quite recently³⁸. The second group of literary sources was found on Büyükkale and consists of fragments of tablets recording kings' funerary rituals. The course of the rituals, reconstructed from small fragments, shows that cremation of the king's body belonged to the most important parts of the long-lasting funeral ceremony³⁹. The link with the Greek world is established by the striking similarity of the first part of the ceremony (up to and including the phase of the collection and purification of the cremated bones) to the funeral ceremony of Patroklos in the *Iliad*. In both cases we are also dealing with funerals of kings and heroes⁴⁰, and there are many other analogies between Greek and Hittite mythologies strengthening the theory of Hittite influence⁴¹. The hypothesis however also has its weak points. The chronology and the process of formation of Greek mythology are uncertain, and there is lack of any convincing argument that could prove the Bronze Age origin of particular myths even when such an assumption is very probable⁴². The second objection concerns the link of Homeric rite with Myce-

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 32 sq.; EMRE, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

³⁶ S. IMMERWAHR, in: *Acts of the 6th International Colloquium on Aegean Prehistory, Athens 1987* (forthcoming) on possible links between both cultures.

³⁷ A sherd Bo 333 75 with a warrior in a boars' tusks helmet – K. BITTEL, *Tonschale mit Ritzzeichnung von Bogazköy*, RA 1976, p. 9-14; and a Mycenaean - type sword – O. HANSEN, *A Mycenaean Sword from Bogazköy – Hattusa found in 1991*, BSA 89, 1994, p. 213-215.

³⁸ E.O. FORRER, *Vorhomerische Griechen in den Keilschrifttexten von Bogazköi*, MDOG 63, 1924, p. 1-22; O.R. GURNEY, *The Hittites*, San Francisco 1964, p. 164 sq.; H.G. GÜTERBOCK, M.J. MELLINK, *The Hittites and the Aegean World*, AJA 87, 1983, p. 133-141; E. VERMEULE, *Response to Hans Güterbock*, AJA 87, 1983, p. 141 sq.; T.R. BRYCE, *The Nature of Mycenaean involvement in Western Anatolia*, Historia 38, 1989, p. 3-20. Against the identification: F. SOMMER, *Die Ahhijawa Urkunden*, München 1932, *passim*.

³⁹ H. OTTEN, *Hethitische Totenrituale*, Berlin 1958, *passim*; *IDEM*, *Bestattungsriten und Jenseitsvorstellungen nach dem hethitischen Texten*, in: BITTEL *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 81 sq.

⁴⁰ LORIMER, *Pulvis*, p. 172, 177; A.J.B. WACE, F. STUBBINGS, *A Companion to Homer*, Cambridge 1963, p. 481 sq. - cremation as the only rite in the epics.

⁴¹ M. POPKO, *Mitologia hetyckiej Anatolii*, Warszawa 1976, esp. p. 129, 143, 154.

⁴² E.g. M.P. NILSSON, *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology*, Cambridge 1932, *passim*; *IDEM*,

naean cremations. Despite G. Mylonas' opinion⁴³ the similarity of Patroklos' burial to known Mycenaean cremations is meagre⁴⁴. Instead, close resemblance to Middle Bronze Age tumuli from Vodhinë and Vajzë in Epirus has been observed. This analogy is not so surprising when the origin of Achilleus is taken into consideration⁴⁵.

Bearing in mind possible Hittite influence we have to look for better evidence. We can find it on the Western coast of Asia Minor. That the whole area was penetrated by Mycenaean is proven by numerous finds of Late Helladic pottery⁴⁶. Four sites are of special interest. Inurned cremation was the only rite of Troy VII and Mycenaean III A-B pottery found in the cemetery itself and in the town suggests direct contacts⁴⁷. A large cemetery of pit, cist and built graves was recently discovered nearby, near the shore of Besik (Besige) Bay. Some of the graves contained both inhumations and cremations accompanied by local and Mycenaean III B pottery. Minyan and Mycenaean pottery was found in the settlement nearby (Yassi Tepe)⁴⁸. The cemetery of Panaztepe consists of tholos type tombs, pithos burials and cist graves. Cremations were deposited in some of the tholoi together with inhumations. Pottery found with the burials was of local as well as Mycenaean III A-B production⁴⁹. The important cemetery of Müsgebi south of Miletos, in the area of the most intensive Mycenaean penetration and settlement, contained cremations deposited on the floors of chamber tombs besides inhumation burials. Mycenaean pottery found there dates from the LH III A₂-B period⁵⁰. The evidence of described cemeteries speaks for direct Mycenaean contacts with local population and its burial customs. The Hittite influence could reach the Mycenaean by means of this area.

The similarity of Anatolian burial customs and the Mycenaean ones is clearly visible: coexistence of both rites in the same cemetery and even in the same tomb, disposal of cremated bones on the tombs' floors or into urns. It thus seems sufficiently proven by archaeological evidence that Mycenaean cremation had its origin in Anatolia. The greater part of Mycenaean cremation burials was found in the areas facing the East and having many relations with the Eastern Mediterranean as proven by other sources⁵¹. There is also evidence for relations of Tragara and

The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion, Lund 1950, *passim*;
B.C. DIETRICH, *The Origins of Greek Religion*, Berlin 1974, *passim*.

⁴³ MYLONAS, *Homeric*, p. 56-81.

⁴⁴ M. ANDRONIKOS, *He "Dirike eisdole" kai ta arhaiologika euremata*, *Hellenika* 17, 1962, p. 40-57.

⁴⁵ N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Epirus*, Oxford 1967, p. 202 sq., 228 sq., 387 sq.

⁴⁶ MEE, *Aegean Trade*, p. 121-135.

⁴⁷ C. BLEGEN, *Troy and the Trojans*, London 1963, p. 142 sq.

⁴⁸ M. KORFMANN, reports from Besik Tepe in *AnatSt* 33, 1983, p. 236 sq.; *AnatSt* 34, 1984, p. 208; *AnatSt* 35, 1985, p. 182 sq; *AnatSt* 36, 1986, p. 181 sq.; Y.E. ERSOY, *Findings from Menemen Panaztepe in the Manisa Museum*, *BSA* 82, 1988, p. 55-82.

⁴⁹ A. ERKANAL, *Panaztepe*, *AnatSt* 36, 1986, p. 207; J. MELLINK, *Archaeology in Anatolia*, *AJA* 92, 1988, p. 114-115; E. HAYAT in: *Acts of the 6th International Colloquium on Aegean Prehistory* (forthcoming).

⁵⁰ MEE, *Aegean Trade*, p. 137-142.

⁵¹ MYLONAS, *Homeric*, p. 80; P. LORIMER, *Homer and the Monuments*, London 1950, p. 107;

Agrapidochori with the settlements in the Dodecanese⁵². The same conclusion relates to the Bronze Age Cretan cremations and is strengthened by the discovery of cremations in Karpathos, the stepping-stone from the East to Crete, in a LM III context⁵³.

E. Melas in his article on the origins of Aegean cremations used one more argument in favour of the eastern hypothesis: iron objects accompanying early cremations⁵⁴. But closer examination of this problem shows that iron objects were only found with cremations in very few cases: in LH III B - none, in LH III C - 1 in Perati (tomb 38) and 1 in Ialysos (tomb 17, unfortunately the context of the find is not clear)⁵⁵. It means that from the total of 28 (or 30 depending on the dating of Thebes and Kallithea) + 3? LH III C cremations, only 2 were accompanied by iron objects. When we look at the location of iron objects in relation to cremations, we find that only 2 of the total of 12 are found in association with cremations⁵⁶. Even if the statistics for Crete are a little better for this argument, it is still impossible to connect the two phenomena. In the light of present knowledge we have to place the „iron argument” among the various archaeological evidence for Aegean contacts with the East, but to deprive it of its special position in relation to the problem of cremation.

It would be very interesting to find out why some of the members of Mycenaean society, but in fact very few of them, were cremated. It is probable that such exceptional burials could take place under special circumstances. As far as we can judge, there were no religious objections to this practice⁵⁷. There is no trace of any disease left on the cremated bones⁵⁸. Probably the cremated persons had spent some time in the East where they became familiar with the rite and brought it home⁵⁹ or maybe they died far from their homelands and were cremated to make the transport of their remains possible. The last supposition finds some support in ancient literary sources⁶⁰. It also means that cremation was practised among privileged social groups - merchants or warriors, but there is no evidence of kings' cremations.

Conclusions drawn from the analysis of the problem of cremation can enrich

E. VERMEULE, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, London 1969, p. 301; SNODGRASS, *op. cit.*, p. 157 sq.; IAKOVIDIS, *op. cit.*, p. 43-57; THEMELIS, *Parateriseis*, p. 362 sq.; MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 33.

⁵² TH. PAPADOPOULOS, *The Dodecanese and the Western Peloponnese in the Late Bronze Age: some thoughts on the problem of their relations in: Archaeology in the Dodecanese*, S. DIETZ, I PAPACHRISTODOULOU eds., Copenhagen 1988, p. 73 sq.

⁵³ M. MELAS, *The Islands of Karpathos, Saros and Kassos in the Neolithic and Bronze Age* [SIMA LXVIII], Göteborg 1985, p. 169 sq.

⁵⁴ MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 32 sq.

⁵⁵ MAIURI, *op. cit.*, p. 117 sq, 127.

⁵⁶ J. WALDBAUM, *From Bronze to Iron* [SIMA LIV], Göteborg 1978, p. 18 sq, 31 sq. The proportion of iron found apart from cremation is even higher in the light of Muhly's review in JHS 100, 1980, p. 263 sq.

⁵⁷ GDA, p. 268.

⁵⁸ C. MAVRIYANAKI, *Incinerazioni del Tardo Minoico III nella Creta occidentale. Un riesame dell'uso della cremazione orel mondo miceneo del XIII e XII secolo*, ASAtene 29-30, 1967-68, p. 175 n. 9.

⁵⁹ MELAS, *Cremation*, p. 33.

⁶⁰ LORIMER, *Pulvis*, p. 171 sq.

our image of the situation in the Mycenaean Aegean after the great catastrophe. It is well known that many local and long-distance population movements took place at that time. The local ones were of centripetal character, with people from smaller settlements gathering in big centres. The great migrations on the contrary were centrifugal - from the Peloponnese to north-western Greece and from Greece to the East⁶¹. The LH III C cremations as evidence of constant interconnections with countries of the Eastern Mediterranean show that migrations did not destroy the existing communication network. They could even strengthen the ties between eastern colonies and the centres⁶². It possibly means that the migrations were not massive waves of people, but rather they were divided into smaller streams slowly moving from one stage to another. It coincides with the lack of LH III C_{1a} pottery in Mycenaean settlements in Cyprus⁶³. The population of Perati remains still somewhat mysterious. Its close relations with the East and sudden appearance on Attika's Eastern coast suggest that it came from the Eastern Aegean, pushed out of there by the disturbances of that time. So far it is the only known migration heading from the East in a western direction in the transitional period LH III B/C.

A further stage of the spread of cremation in Greece took place during the final phase of Mycenaean culture and the subsequent transitional period. A strange tumulus covering inurned cremations was found at Chania near Mycenae but unfortunately its precise chronology is unknown⁶⁴. There were discovered 2 Middle and 1 Late/Sub-Mycenaean A cremations, and 13 dated to Late Sub-Mycenaean Proto-geometric period in the cemetery of Kerameikos⁶⁵; in Salamis there were 2 cremation burials probably of Sub-Mycenaean date besides ca. 100 inhumations⁶⁶. In both cemeteries cremations were deposited in urns located in earthen pits. Cremation was more popular in Lefkandi since from the earliest phase of the cemetery it was the prevailing rite. The graves were very badly preserved and there are some problems with their chronology. It is however clear that the cemetery cannot be earlier than the Sub-Mycenaean period. Cremated bones were found mainly in pyres and only partly in urns⁶⁷. In the Proto-geometric period cremations began to prevail over inhumations in the Kerameikos cemetery. The process reached its culmination in the Early Geometric period⁶⁸.

⁶¹ LEWARTOWSKI, *Decline*, chaptes II. IV (with references).

⁶² Cf. MEE, *The LH III B period in the Dodecanese*, in: DIETZ, PAPACHRISTODOULOU eds., *op.cit.*, p. 57; M. BENZI, *Mycenaean Rhodes: A Summary*, *ibidem*, p. 67 sq.

⁶³ H.W. CATLING, *Cyprus and the West 1600-1050 BC*, Sheffield 1980, p. 24; V. KARAGEORGHIS, *Summary*, in: V. KARAGEORGHIS, M. DEMAS, *Pyla-Kokkinokremos: a late 13th century fortified settlement in Cyprus*, Nicosia 1984, p. 69.

⁶⁴ H. CATLING, *ARepLond* 1984-85, p. 21; G. TOUCHAIS, *Chronique des fouilles*, BCH 109, 1985, p. 776.

⁶⁵ C.G. STYRENIUS, *Submycenaean Studies*, Stockholm 1967, p. 33 sq., 65 sq., 76 sq.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 30, 32.

⁶⁷ P. THEMELIS, *Proto-geometric necropolis near Lefkandi*, AAA 2, 1969, p. 99 sq.; THEMELIS, *Parateriseis*, p. 359 sq.; *IDEM*, *Burial customs*, in: M.R. POPHAM et al., *Lefkandi*, vol. I, Oxford 1980, p. 211-214.

⁶⁸ R.M. COOK, *Archaeological argument: some principles*, *Antiquity* 34, 1960, p. 178; SNODGRASS, *op. cit.*, p. 143 sq.

There is an easily noticeable difference between LH III Mycenaean cremations and later Greek ones: the type of burial changed from incidental instances of cremation placed in traditional Mycenaean chamber tombs together with inhumations, to individual interments (in urns or not) located in earthen pits. This change coincides with the parallel simplification of the tombs containing inhumation burials - mainly cist and pit graves⁶⁹. It seems therefore that the long Mycenaean tradition vanished then and a new cultural formation emerged, replacing the former one and partly incorporating some of its elements⁷⁰. The most impressive examples of the survival of Mycenaean customs of the higher classes are warrior burials from Lefkandi - inhumations with iron swords. It seems probable that the leaders of Lefkandi were living still in accordance with very old traditions⁷¹. If this example really shows the continuity of customs, it stays in perfect agreement with the observation presented earlier that cremation was not practised among the members of the Mycenaean ruling class.

Cremation became the dominating burial custom near the end of the Late Bronze Age in Central Europe and Italy, and it also gained popularity in Syro-Palestine. For the Eastern cremations it has been suggested that it was an influence from the Aegean as a result of the Sea Peoples raids⁷². As far as the Aegean cremations are concerned the situation does not seem so clear. There is a chronological gap between the Attic cremation burials from the LH III C - and Sub-Mycenaean periods. The theory of Eastern influence does not receive any good support in the archaeological evidence because there are only inurned cremations from Assarlik which can be dated to the Sub-Mycenaean period. They were found in tombs covered by tumuli having also some features of chamber tombs⁷³. One can take into consideration also Cypriote connections of the Sub-Mycenaean population of Lefkandi⁷⁴. We can assume of course that Greece was accustomed to the rite of cremation in the previous period and prepared to the broader spread of the practice. The spread of the rite could be one of the results of the final stage of the disappearance of Mycenaean culture accompanied by deep political and social changes, increase of the population of Athens, and changes of beliefs and religion⁷⁵.

⁶⁹ For the discussion of the origin of this type see in Sub-Mycenaean: *LMTS*, p. 33 sq., 112 sq. - intrusive from North; STYRENIUS, *op. cit.*, p. 161 sq.; S. IMMERWAHR, *The Neolithic and Bronze Ages* [The Athenian Agora XIII], Princeton 1971, p. 103, 209. - possible local development. Cf. O.T.K.P. DICKINSON, *Cist graves and chamber tombs*, BSA 78, 1983, p. 55-67.

⁷⁰ K. LEWARTOWSKI, *Mycenae - Greece continuity or discontinuity?*, *ÉtTrav* 15, 1989, p. 238-242.

⁷¹ THEMELIS, *Parateriseis*, p. 359 sq.

⁷² RIIS, *op. cit.*, p. 198-206.

⁷³ W.R. PATON, *Excavations in Caria*, JHS 8 1987, p. 66 sq.

⁷⁴ M. POPHAM, H. SACKETT, *Historical conclusions*, in: POPHAM *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 355 sq.

⁷⁵ F. POULSEN, *Die Dipylongräber und die Dipylonvasen*, Leipzig 1905, p. 5-10 (religious motives); SNODGRASS, *op. cit.*, p. 146 sq. (social); D.C. KURTZ, J. BOARDMANN, *Greek Burial Customs*, London 1971, p. 37 (personal preference); *GDA*, p. 275 (political and social). See also R. GARLAND, *The Greek Way of Death*, London 1985, p. 34, 36, 78, 92, 114. Compare with similar discussion of Proto-Villanovan cremation: M.A. FUGAZZOLA, *Delpino, The Proto-Villanovan: A Survey*, in: D. and F.R. RIDGWAY, *Italy before the Romans. The Iron Age, Orientalizing and Etruscan Periods*, London, New York, San Francisco 1979, p. 32-40 with further references.

The spread of cremation in the Sub-Mycenaean and Protogeometric periods could also be stimulated by influence from Europe. The rite was very well known there, especially in Central Europe, in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC⁷⁶. It came to Malta in the middle of the 2nd millennium⁷⁷, and in *Magna Grecia* it was sporadically practised from the 15th century⁷⁸. From the Illyrian region come the already mentioned tumuli from Vajzë and Vodhinë, the Late Bronze Age cremations from Bajkaj in North-Western Albania⁷⁹, Bela Crkva and Dobraca in Yugoslavia⁸⁰, and the inurned cremations from Gradesnica and Orsoja in Bulgaria⁸¹. Close Mycenaean contacts with Illyria and Italy are attested by abundant archaeological evidence⁸². Numerous traces of infiltration of small foreign groups from Illyrian-Danubian area into Greece are also recorded. The evidence shows that they started about the time of the great catastrophes and lasted until the beginning of the Protogeometric period⁸³. The end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age witnessed the appearance of a kind of European *koiné*, which embraced Greece to some extent in such domains as metal artefacts, ornamental patterns and cremation⁸⁴. The similarities cited earlier of the Homeric and Epirotic burials point to North-Western influence. The tumulus from Chania and a late inhumation burial in a cist grave inside of the Citadel House at Mycenae could be direct evidence of different practices of foreign, European origin⁸⁵. The cemetery of Tsiganadika on Thasos with its final Bronze Age cremation burial in tomb T.15 and relations with Bulgarian as well as Mycenaean area can be considered as possible trace of the

⁷⁶ H. MÜLLER-KARPE, *Handbuch der Vorgeschichte*, vol. III, München 1974, p. 173, 194, 206, 209, 215, 217, 241 sq., 245, 250, 253.

⁷⁷ J.D. EVANS, *The Prehistoric Antiquities of Maltese Islands*, London 1971, p. 149-166, 224 sq.

⁷⁸ L. BARFIELD, *Northern Italy before Rome*, London 1971, p. 94 sq.; L. BERNABÒ-BREA, *Eolia, Sicilia, e Malta nell'Età del Bronzo*, Kokalos 22-23, 1976-77, p. 36 sq.; FUGAZZOLA, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁷⁹ M. KORKUTI, *Die Siedlungen der späten Bronze- und der frühen Eisenzeit in Südwest-Albanien*, in: B. HÄNSEL ed., *Südosteuropa zwischen 1600 und 1000 v. Chr.*, Berlin 1982, p. 248.

⁸⁰ M. and D. GARASANIN, *Neue Hügelgräberforschung in Westserbien*, AJug 2, 1956, p. 11 sq.

⁸¹ G.J. GEORGIEV, *Die Erforschung der Bronzezeit in Nordwestbulgarien*, in: B. HÄNSEL ed., *Südosteuropa zwischen 1600 und 1000 v. Chr.*, Berlin 1982, p. 197 sq.

⁸² K. KILIAN, *Nordgrenze des ägäischen Kulturbereiches in mykenischer und nachmykenischer Zeit*, JberInstVgFrankf 1976, p. 112-129; A.K. WARDLE, *Cultural Groups of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in North-West Greece*, Godisnjak Sarajevo 15, 1977, p. 153-160; R. ROSS HOLLOWAY, *Italy and the Aegean 3000-700 BC*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1981, p. 54-96; F. PRENDI, *Nordgrenze des ägäischen Kulturbereiches in mykenischer und nachmykenischer Zeit*, in: HÄNSEL ed., *op. cit.*, p. 212-224; *Nuragic Sardinia and the Mycenaean World*, M.S. BALMUTH ed. [BAR International Series 338], Oxford 1987, *passim*; T.R. SMITH, *Mycenaean Trade and Interaction in the West Central Mediterranean 1600-1000 BC* [BAR Int. Series 371], Oxford 1987, *passim*.

⁸³ LEWARTOWSKI, *Decline*, chapter IV (with references).

⁸⁴ J. BOUZEK, *Local Schools of the Aegean Bronzework of European Inspiration, 1300-1100 BC*, in: *Studies Presented in Memory of P. Dikaios*, Nicosia 1979, p. 49-52; *IDEM*, *The Aegean, Anatolia and Europe: cultural interrelations in the second millenium BC* [SIMA XXIX], Göteborg 1985, p. 207, 240 sq.; H. MATTHÄUS, *KYKNOI DE ESAN TO ARMA, Spätmykenische und urnenfelderzeitliche Vogelplastik*, in: *Studien zur Bronzezeit. Festschrift für W.A. v. Brunn*, M. LORENZ ed., Mainz 1981, p. 277-297.

⁸⁵ N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas*, Park Ridge 1976, p. 148.

Northern influence on the Aegean⁸⁶. There is no evidence for any larger invasion in Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age Greece and we have spoken about infiltration and influence only. No serious argument can connect the spread of cremation with the Dorians. The old hypothesis of the Dorian invasion was seriously questioned and various other solutions were proposed instead⁸⁷.

The appearance of cremation in Mycenaean Greece and the further spread of the rite are symptomatic of the period of the fall of Helladic culture. The appearance was due to influence coming from the East. Increase in the number of cremations in the LH III C period was conditioned by continuous relations with the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus the rite cannot be used as an argument in favour of the hypothesis of invasion from Epirus or Illyria. Cremation can be considered as one of the elements of Oriental culture implanted into the Greek culture. From the other side, at the very end of the Bronze Age burial customs were influenced by European practices. Some old Mycenaean traditions also survived. The burial rites of that time mirror the general conditions of the development of Greek culture: three main cultural factors - Oriental, European and Mycenaean - were transformed in creative ways into new, vital and powerful values.

⁸⁶ ADelt 30, 1975, Chron., p. 279 sq.

⁸⁷ Cf. D. MUSTI ed., *Le origini dei Greci. Dori e mondo Egeo*, Bari 1985 with further references.