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LACONIA IN LH III C LATE AND SUBMYCENAEAN:
EVIDENCE FROM EPIDAUROS LIMERA, PELLANA,
THE AMYKLAION AND OTHER SITES

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper is the examination of the latest stage of the Mycenaean culture in Laconia, on the basis of pottery and other finds of LH III C Late and Submycenaean date, which show the transition of this region to the Early Iron Age. Actually, my paper is a sequel of my contribution to the second “Workshop on LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms” held in Vienna in 2004 (DEMAKOPOULOU 2007). My contribution then focussed on the LH III C Middle phase in Laconia.

Laconia was occupied throughout almost its entire area during the LH III C period, and its prosperous communities had connections with other parts of the Mycenaean world. A considerable amount of pottery dated to all three subdivisions of LH III C, Early, Middle and Late, with some Submycenaean, has been recovered from several Laconian sites¹ (Fig. 1). Of the main LH III C sites of Laconia, most of which yielded LH III C Early and Middle material, six continued in LH III C Late and Submycenaean, as shown by the important finds. Most significant are three of them: Epidauros Limera, a flourishing port on the southeast coast, a few kilometres north of Monemvasia; Pellana, north of Sparta, at the end of the Eurotas valley; and the Amyklaion in the central Spartan plain, on the west bank of the Eurotas, a well known Late Mycenaean sacred place at the site of the Archaic Apollo sanctuary. To the sites with LH III C Late pottery Krokeai and Phoiniki in south Laconia may also be assigned (DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 165–166). Moreover, pottery of LH III C Late and Submycenaean date was found during a recent excavation in a chamber tomb at the site Peristeri, known formerly as Tsasi, near the south coast of Laconia. The other sites were investigated in old excavations. Apart from the material from the Amyklaion, all the other LH III C and Submycenaean finds come from cemeteries.

THE SITES

Epidauros Limera

Most of the LH III C Late Laconian pottery comes from the extensive cemetery of chamber tombs at Epidauros Limera (Fig. 1), which was in use for a long time, from LH I to Submycenaean (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 117–120. – DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 162. – KOUNTOURI 1996/97, 491–493. – *RMDP*, 247). The pottery includes all typical shapes of the LH III C Late phase and it is of considerable interest because it shows external influence

¹ Much material of this date from Laconia is included in DEMAKOPOULOU 1968. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982. – *RMDP*, 251–252, 282–294, passim. – See also the survey of prehistoric Laconia by H. Waterhouse and R. Hope Simpson (WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1960. – WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1961).

and connections. Of special interest are three stirrup jars, FS 175, which seem to be imported from the Argolid or Attica, and Crete (*RMDP*, 293, nos. 240–241). One, which is fragmentary, is decorated with dot fringed apse on the shoulder (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 170, no. 40, pl. 74γ). Another (Fig. 2) has a conical-ovoid body with a high conical base. It is decorated with elaborate triangle and semicircles on the shoulder, where there is an airhole, a feature of Argive and Attic stirrup jars; it has a dark ground body with fine reserved lines (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 173, no. 45, pl. 75δ. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 240, fig. 100). The third stirrup jar (Fig. 3. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 172–173, no. 44, pl. 75β. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 119, pl. 62, no. 140. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 241, fig. 100) is most probably Cretan, with a close parallel from Karphi (SEIRADAKI 1960, 16–18, pl. 62). The main decoration on the shoulder is a cross-hatched triangle that overlaps the edge of the shoulder zone. There are traces of bars on the spout and a medium band and fine lines on the lower part of the biconical body.

Other shapes of LH III C Late from Epidauros Limera include the amphoriskos, FS 59. There are two characteristic examples, one with darkground neck, wavy line in the shoulder zone, narrow bands on the belly and bars on the protruding handles (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 181, no. 65, pl. 79α. – *RMDP*, 290, no. 227, fig. 99). There are parallels from Mycenae (*RMDP*, 175, no. 372, fig. 50) and Attica (*RMDP*, 603–604, nos. 504–507, fig. 225). The other amphoriskos is decorated with antithetic loops on the shoulder and a broad dark band on the belly (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 182, no. 70, pl. 80β. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 118, pl. 61, no. 139. – *RMDP*, 290, no. 228, fig. 99).

There are also jugs, two of the large type, FS 106, with the handle set from neck to shoulder (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 183–184, no. 75, pl. 81β; 184, no. 77, pl. 81δ. – *RMDP*, 291, no. 233, fig. 99); they are decorated with bands (Fig. 4) and, one of them, with a necklace (Fig. 5). The latter can be compared with a LH III C Late jug with necklace from Asine (*RMDP*, 175, no. 379, fig. 50). The other jug with linear decoration has a parallel from Lefkandi (POPHAM – SCHOFIELD – SHERRATT 2006, 199, fig. 2.29:2). Two other jugs, one of them fragmentary, are of medium size, FS 110. They are both decorated with wavy line on the shoulder (Fig. 6 right). The complete jug has a barred handle (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 185, no. 80, pl. 82γ right; 183, no. 73, pl. 80δ. – *RMDP*, 291, nos. 234–235, fig. 100). There is also a small jug, FS 115, which seems to be monochrome (*RMDP*, 291, no. 236). Worthy of mention is a trefoil-mouthed jug, FS 137 (Fig. 7), decorated with cross-hatched and elaborate triangles on the shoulder; there is a nipple opposite the handle and below the spout flanked by oval “almonds” (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 185–186, no. 81, pl. 82β). The darkground decoration of the body dates this jug to LH III C Late (*RMDP*, 291, no. 238, fig. 100). Another typical vase of this period is a deep bowl, FS 285, with monochrome interior with reserved band below the rim and a reserved interior base; it has a narrow reserved zone on the exterior and an unpainted lower body (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 178, no. 56, pl. 78α left. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 244, fig. 100).

A few Submycenaean vases were recovered from the cemetery at Epidauros Limera. They include an amphoriskos with a large squat biconical body, FS 260 (Fig. 8), decorated with dot fringed triangles in the handle zone, which is defined by a large band below (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 119, pl. 62, no. 141. – KOUNTOURI 1996/97, 505–506, fig. 14. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 245, fig. 101). A small wide-necked jug, FS 115 (Fig. 6 left), which is darkground with two reserved zones of zigzag on shoulder and belly, is interesting. This jug has parallels from Messenia and Elis (*RMDP* 293, no. 246, fig. 101. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 185, no. 79, pl. 82γ left). The squat, rather dumpy body and the raised conical base of both vases are Submycenaean features.

Pellana

From the port of Epidauros Limera we move to Pellana, in the north Eurotas valley, 25 kilometres north of Sparta (Fig. 1). Pellana is an important Mycenaean site in Laconia, with a chamber tomb cemetery which was in use from LH II A to Submycenaean times (WATERHOUSE –

HOPE SIMPSON 1961, 125–127. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 113–117. – DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 165. – *RMDP*, 244). Excavations here, in the early twentieth century and more recently, have revealed rock-cut chamber tombs, some of which are large and tholos-shaped (KARACHALIOS 1929. – SPYROPOULOS 1989). The pottery from the old excavations includes material from the Early, Middle and Late phases of LH III C and shows not only connections with other Laconian sites, but also contacts with Mycenaean centres elsewhere and with Crete (*RMDP*, 282–293, *passim*. – DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 165). Quite a few vases can be assigned to the LH III C Late phase and to Submycenaean.

The LH III C Late pottery from Pellana includes a stirrup jar, FS 175, which could be Minoan (Figs. 9–10). It is decorated with elaborate triangles on the shoulder, a spiral on the disk and bars on the handles, the spout and the neck (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 115–116, pl. 57, no. 129. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 242, fig. 100). Its decoration of barred handles, spout and neck and the linear filled triangles are common on LM III C Late and Subminoan stirrup jars² (DESBOROUGH 1972, 40, fig. 3D. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 116. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 242, n. 169). There are two other closed vases of LH III C Late date from Pellana: an amphoriskos, FS 59 (Fig. 11), and a collar-necked jar, FS 64 (Fig. 12), which seem to be local and probably products of the same workshop; this is shown by the fabric and the similar decoration of a barred foliate band in a narrow zone on the belly of the amphoriskos and on the shoulder of the collar-necked jar (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 115, pl. 57, no. 128. – *RMDP*, 290–291, nos. 230–231, fig. 99). The amphoriskos is three-handled, with a tall concave neck and a high base. The collar-necked jar is miniature. There is another similar example from Pellana with linear decoration. Both have parallels in shape from Perati and Deiras (*RMDP*, 291; 605, nos. 521–522, fig. 226; 175, no. 376, fig. 50). A fragmentary cup from Pellana can be included with the LH III C Late vases from this site. It is monochrome, with a broad reserved decorative upper zone and reserved interior base (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 116, pl. 58, no. 132. – *RMDP*, 293, no. 243, fig. 100).

A few vases from Pellana can be assigned to the Submycenaean phase. There is a fragmentary small jug, FS 115, with an ovoid shape. It is monochrome, with a narrow reserved band below the rim (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 116, pl. 59, no. 134. – *RMDP*, 293–294, no. 247, fig. 101). It can be paralleled with a small Submycenaean jug from Lefkandi (*MDP*, 197, fig. 262). To the same group belong two other vases with open shapes: a one-handled, deep semiglobular cup, FS 217, monochrome, with a high conical base (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 116, pl. 58, no. 131. – *RMDP*, 294, no. 248, fig. 101). It has a close parallel from Lefkandi (*MDP*, 200, fig. 268, no. 1). The other open vase is a deep bowl with a high conical base, FS 286 (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 116, pl. 57, no. 130. – *RMDP*, 294, no. 249, fig. 101). It is monochrome, with reserved lower body, similar to monochrome deep bowls from the Kerameikos at Athens and from Lefkandi (*MDP*, 200, fig. 269, nos. 1–3).

Amyklaion

The Amyklaion, located near Sparta (Fig. 1), was an important cult place, probably used by several communities in the region (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 29–96. – DEMAKOPOULOU forthcoming. – WRIGHT 1994, 65). Ritual activity is attested by the large number of terracotta human and animal figures and figurines found at this site. The sanctuary was established in LH III B2 Late, a little before the demise of the palatial centres in the Mainland, and continued to prosper during the Postpalatial period until the end of LH III C and in the Submycenaean phase. A considerable number of Late Psi figurines was found, for the most part of

² Another stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera, dated to the LH III C Middle phase, seems to imitate a Minoan vase or may even be a Minoan import, see DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 164, fig. 9.

types B and C and with one or two of D, as defined by Elizabeth French (FRENCH 1971, 139–140, pls. 21–22:a–d). These figurines, which have affinities with the Late Psi figurines of the same types from the Syringes of Tiryns (WEBER-HIDEN 1990, 45–53, pls. 38–40), can be dated to LH III C Middle and Late. Many of them are decorated with elaborate or linear motifs like those used for decorating the pottery of these periods.³ Two of the Late Psi figurines with applied breasts from the Amyklaion, one with linear (Fig. 13), the other with elaborate decoration (Fig. 14), could be of LH III C Middle or Late date, as is suggested by the decorative motifs, such as the wavy lines and the tassel (FRENCH 1971, 140, pls. 21d, no. 19; 22b, no. 28. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 47–49, pls. 10, no. 24; 20, no. 55).

Most important are the large wheelmade animal figures from the Amyklaion which were probably intended to be bovids or bulls. They are all LH III C, many of them belonging to the Middle and Late phases (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 57–63, pls. 27–39. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 54–60, pls. 10–12). Like the handmade Psi figurines, most of them are decorated with motifs which were also used on pottery vessels. Some of the group of LH III C Middle pieces are finely decorated in the Close Style and with other elaborate motifs, typical of this same phase (TSOUNTAS 1892, 14, pl. 3:1–1a. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 58–59, pls. 27, 34, no. 79. – DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 165, fig. 17. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 54, nos. 156–157, pl. 10:1–2). Quite a few pieces might well belong to LH III C Late, as is suggested by their decoration. The fragments of two different animal figures, a head with a large muzzle and neck (Fig. 15) and a fragment of a part of breast, could be LH III C Late, because of their decoration with isolated semicircles with fringe and vertical wiggly lines (TSOUNTAS 1892, 14, pl. 3:3. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 58–60, pl. 31, no. 73. – DEMAKOPOULOU forthcoming. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 55–56, nos. 161, 172, pl. 10:5–6).

There are some more solid heads of animal figures representing bovids (Figs. 16–17), apart from one that seems to belong to a terracotta horse figure (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 59–60, pl. 33, no. 78. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 57, no. 177, pl. 12:3). Their darkground decoration, including semicircles and wiggly lines, dates them possibly to the LH III C Late phase or even to Submycenaean (TSOUNTAS 1892, 14, pl. 3:4. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 59–60, pls. 32, no. 76; 33, no. 77; 37, no. 86; 38, no. 88. – DEMAKOPOULOU forthcoming. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 55–57, nos. 159, 173–176, pls. 11:5–6; 12:1–2). Another fragment of a bovine figure is decorated with semicircles with fringe and central dot and could be dated to LH III C Middle or Late (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 60, pl. 35, no. 81. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 55, no. 164). A large part of the rear of the hollow body of a bull figure showing also the genitals, which are applied, is of considerable interest (Fig. 18). It is darkground with a reserved zone bearing zigzag on a double line (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 60, pl. 35, no. 82. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 56, no. 171). This is surely a LH III C Late or Submycenaean piece, as is shown by the decoration.

The group comprising the very few animal figures from the Amyklaion that have been partly restored from fragments includes one datable to the 11th century BC (Figs. 19–20). The shape of the short barrel-like body and the decoration of large isolated semicircles, chevrons with fringe and wiggly fine lines are reminiscent of motifs on Submycenaean vases, with which this animal figure may well belong (NICHOLLS 1970, 10, pl. 2d. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 58, 60, pl. 29, no. 70α–β. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 56, no. 169, pl. 11:2). A fragmentary bovine figure must likewise be assigned to the Submycenaean phase (Figs. 21–22. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 58, 60, pl. 28, no. 70. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 56, no. 170, pl. 11:3–4). The short conical body can be paralleled with the body of the above animal figure (Figs. 19–20). The short, full body of the two

³ The similarity of the decoration of the terracotta figures and figurines with that of the Mycenaean pottery vessels may indicate a similar date for both categories; see WEBER-HIDEN 1990, 47 for the use of the same decorative motifs on the Late Psi figurines and the LH III C pottery from the Syringes of Tiryns. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the same craftsmen painted vessels and figurines with the typical decorative motifs of their time.

animal figures from the Amyklaion is reminiscent of the wheelmade Protogeometric stag from the Kerameikos, which, as has been suggested, shows artistic affinities with Mycenaean animal figures (KÜBLER 1943, 20, 40, pl. 26. – NICHOLLS 1970, 13, pl. 2c. – DESBOROUGH 1972, 145–146, pl. 26a. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 72, no. 221, pl. 15:9). It is noteworthy that, as on the Kerameikos stag, the decoration of the Amyklaion fragmentary animal figure is in zones (Figs. 21–22). The motifs in the decorative zones on our figure are wavy lines, semicircles with central dot and net; the last motif is included also in the decoration of the Kerameikos stag.⁴ The net motif, surely a Mycenaean decorative motif, although known from later periods, appears likewise on the Late Protogeometric Lefkandi centaur (DESBOROUGH 1972, 199–200, pl. 46. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 92, no. 286a–b, pl. 21:4).

In addition to the LH III C Late and Submycenaean terracotta animal figures, the pottery from the Amyklaion includes some kylix stems of the same date (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 71–72, pl. 52, no. 120:20–23,25). One of the stems is tall, with linear decoration and can be attributed to a LH III C Late conical kylix, FS 275. The others come from kylikes with ribbed stems, FS 276. Kylikes of this type are known from a number of sites, notably from Messenia, Thessaly, Ithaka and Olympia. The kylikes with a ribbed stem from the Amyklaion may be Submycenaean or Bronze Age survivals.⁵

The finds from the Amyklaion demonstrate clearly that the Mycenaean sanctuary on the hill of Ayia Kyriaki was in use until the final phase of the Mycenaean period.

Peristeri

At the site Tsasi (Fig. 1), now known as Peristeri, near the south coast of Laconia, north of Ayios Stephanos, recent excavations uncovered a chamber tomb, not far from the chamber tomb with LH III A2–B ceramic material excavated by Karachalios early in the 20th century (WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1960, 92–94. – *RMDP*, 246). The new tomb was found intact and probably belongs to a cemetery in this area (THEMOS 2007, 460–461). The finds show that it was used for a long time, from LH II A to LH III C Late and Submycenaean, like the chamber tombs at Epidauros Limera and Pellana.⁶

The chamber tomb contained many burials in successive levels. These were found *in situ* or they had been pushed aside to make space for new ones. From a moved burial comes an intact jug (Fig. 23). It is medium-sized with an ovoid body and a large shoulder zone decorated with groups of vertical lines alternating with columns of bars. Interesting features are the bars on the interior of the rim and the double bands of the neck. The jug could be dated either to LH III C Middle or Late. Two straight-sided alabastera were found in other moved burials; one, which is tall with two handles, is monochrome. They could be both dated to LH III C Late.

On the upper level of the chamber tomb an intact burial was found, evidently the last burial in the tomb. The body of the dead was placed in supine position. The skeleton had been preserved in fairly good condition. The burial was furnished with two vessels placed one beside the

⁴ Although the Kerameikos stag was recovered from a late 10th century BC grave, the shape and decoration of its body can be related to the Late Mycenaean wheelmade animal figures rather than the Protogeometric ones. If it is not a heirloom from the late 11th century BC, then some features, such as the animal shapes and decorative elements, seem to have continued in the succeeding century, cf. NICHOLLS 1970, 13, 15. – SNODGRASS 1971, 401, fig. 119. It has been suggested that the Kerameikos stag is nearly contemporary with the Late Protogeometric centaur from Lefkandi; see DESBOROUGH – NICHOLLS – POPHAM 1970, 21–30, esp. 24.

⁵ See the recent publication of the material from Olympia (EDER 2006, 151–154, 216–219, nos. 12–22, pls. 53, 77) with a full discussion and bibliography about this category of kylikes, which are characteristic of LH III C Late to Protogeometric times.

⁶ I warmly thank the excavators, my colleagues H. Zavvou and A. Themis, who most generously allowed me to refer to their important discovery and provided me with illustrations of the unpublished finds dated to the period under discussion.

other: a small jug, about 0.09 m high (Fig. 24) and a large neck-handled amphora (Fig. 25). The jug has a squat globular body with a heavy conical base and a wide neck. Its mouth is not extant, but the shape of the vase suggests that it could be a trefoil-mouthed jug, FS 137. It is monochrome, with a narrow reserved decorative zone below the shoulder, containing a horizontal wavy line. Both shape and decoration of the jug suggest that it must belong to the Submycenaean phase. For the shape and decoration there are parallels both from Lefkandi (*RMDP*, 722–724, nos. 101, 107–108, fig. 278) and the Kerameikos (RUPPENSTEIN 2007, 20, Gr. 131/3, fig. 9, pl. 27). The large amphora, about 0.30 m high, seems to be uncoated, although its decoration may have been lost or covered by heavy incrustation. It has an ovoid shape with sloping shoulders, tall neck with a hollow lip, two vertical oval handles from neck to shoulder and a raised concave base, FS 70. This type of amphora, usually decorated, is included among the Submycenaean shapes (*MDP*, 197, fig. 261). There are similar examples from the Kerameikos (*RMDP*, 627, nos. 622–624, fig. 240. – RUPPENSTEIN 2007, 120, Gr. hs 76, pl. 43) and from Lefkandi (*RMDP*, 722, no. 100, fig. 278). In any case, the date of the neck-handled amphora from Peristeri is supported by the Submycenaean jug found in the same burial.

Apart from the two vases, the finds belonging to this burial included some bronzes (Fig. 26). A plain ring was found at the right hand of the dead person. It can be paralleled by the plain bronze rings from Submycenaean tombs at Kerameikos (RUPPENSTEIN 2007, 206–207, fig. 11, pl. 30). Three fragmentary pins were also recovered; they were found near the shoulders of the skeleton, one slightly fallen near the breast. They evidently were used to fasten the shroud or the funeral dress. Both pins and ring are much corroded. The ribbed decoration of the pin-heads assigns them to Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier's type A, which was common in Late Postpalatial and Early Iron Age times (KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1984, 66–69, pl. 6. – DESBOROUGH 1972, 297 [Type B]. – DICKINSON 2006, 159–160, fig. 5.22:1–2).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The finds from both the old and more recent excavations have demonstrated that at least six sites in Laconia continued to be occupied during LH III C Late and Submycenaean times.⁷ Three of these sites, Epidauros Limera, Pellana and the Amyklaion, which are among the most important of the Laconian Mycenaean sites, seem to be fairly prosperous throughout the entire LH III C period.

The extensive cemeteries at Pellana in the north and Epidauros Limera in the south, both used without interruption from the beginning of the Mycenaean era, have produced pottery ranging from LH III C Early to Submycenaean. It is noteworthy that the LH III C Middle and Late ceramic material is plentiful, especially at Epidauros Limera, and that it displays similarities with the pottery from other parts of the Mainland,⁸ the Cyclades and Crete. There are also some imported vases. Furthermore, the chamber tombs of both cemeteries which started in Early Mycenaean times continued into Submycenaean.⁹ The vases recovered from these tombs

⁷ Future excavations in Laconia may well bring to light more sites with LH III C and Submycenaean pottery.

⁸ It is of interest that the LH III C Middle and Late pottery from Laconia resembles in various ways the pottery of the Lefkandi Phases 2a–b and 3, see POPHAM – SCHOFIELD – SHERRATT 2006, 150–180.

⁹ The evidence from Laconia supports the view that Submycenaean seems to be a pottery style originating from the LH III C Late style with which it has many similarities. It could well be a phase between LH III C Late and Protogeometric rather than a sub-phase of LH III C Late. In any case, it is the latest pottery phase of the Mycenaean period during which some LH III C Late shapes continue in a looser form. Most of them are dark-ground with reserved zones and/or they are decorated with simple bands, wavy or wiggly lines, zigzags, cross-hatching and semicircles. For the view that Submycenaean is a distinctive phase between LH III C Late and Protogeometric, see a.o. MOUNTJOY 1988 and, more recently, STYRENIUS 2001. – RUPPENSTEIN 2003. – RUPPENSTEIN 2007, 269–271. – Also RUPPENSTEIN this volume.

and from the recently excavated chamber tomb at Peristeri appear to be of the same Submycenaean types known from other parts of the Peloponnese and Central Greece, notably from the Athenian Kerameikos and Lefkandi.

The Amyklaion sanctuary was established in the final phase of LH III B and it was in use throughout the entire LH III C and Submycenaean period. This is demonstrated by the considerable number of large hollow animal figures, partly wheelmade, of the type known from other Mycenaean sanctuaries, such as those at Tiryns (KILIAN 1992, 21 n. 136, 25, pl. 3), Epidauros (LAMBRINUDAKIS 1981, 59, 63, fig. 8) and Methana in the Argolid (KONSOLAKI 2002, 34, fig. 13), Kalapodi in Phthiotis (FELSCH 1981, 87, figs. 20, 22) and Phylakopi on Melos (FRENCH 1985, 236–252). It is of particular interest that the numerous bovine figures found in the sanctuary at Phylakopi may stylistically date to LH III A–B (FRENCH 1985, 238–239, 279–280). Apparently, this type of wheelmade animal figures, although known mostly from LH III C sites, also appeared earlier as the wheelmade female figures. Many of the LH III C Middle and Late animal figures from the Amyklaion are decorated with motifs resembling those used for the decoration of pottery vessels. It is noteworthy that the deposition of terracotta animal figures in the sanctuary continued during the Submycenaean phase with a number of figures decorated with motifs typical of this style. This provides strong evidence for the existence of ritual activity at the site to the very end of the Bronze Age. There are many indications that the sanctuary continued in use through the succeeding Early Iron Age, into Protogeometric times, perhaps after a short break. The offerings, however, are now chiefly bronzes, with some drinking vessels of clay.¹⁰

The other three LH III C sites in Laconia likewise continued in use until the end of the Bronze Age. Pottery from Epidauros Limera, Pellana and Peristeri demonstrates that Laconia was indeed not isolated during the 11th century BC, but still had contacts with the external world. The external relations and interregional interactions, which were evident during LH III C Middle in Laconia, continued in LH III C Late, for the most part with the Argolid, Attica, Euboea and Crete. Epidauros Limera with its strategic coastal location was an important site for outside contacts, as it was during the entire Mycenaean period. The influence from Crete and other parts of the Aegean could have reached Laconia through this port, whence it would have been transferred to the inland sites, including Pellana at the north end of the region. From there it will have been transmitted to Palaioikastro in Arcadia, with its most important LH III C cemetery, where influence from Achaia and Elis is also apparent (*RMDP*, 296–299. – DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 166–168). Thus, a general conclusion is that the different regions of the Mainland and the Aegean did not lose contact with each other and their connections continued well into the latest stage of the Mycenaean civilization.

¹⁰ The gap between the Mycenaean and Protogeometric sanctuaries at Amyklai may well have been narrow and not so long as has been believed in the past. It is possible, however, that the cult continued at the site without interruption until the appearance of the Protogeometric pottery which indeed is very different from the Mycenaean pottery and has a characteristic metallic glaze. It is unfortunate for the chronological sequence of the sanctuaries that the Mycenaean figures and figurines did not come from stratified deposits; for these matters, see a.o. DESBOROUGH 1972, 280. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 90–96. – DEMAKOPOULOU forthcoming. – WRIGHT 1994, 65. – EDER 1998, 99–100, 136–137. – EDER 2006, 209. – MORGAN 1999, 371, 382–384, 390. – DICKINSON 2006, 232. – KYRIELEIS 2006, 64.

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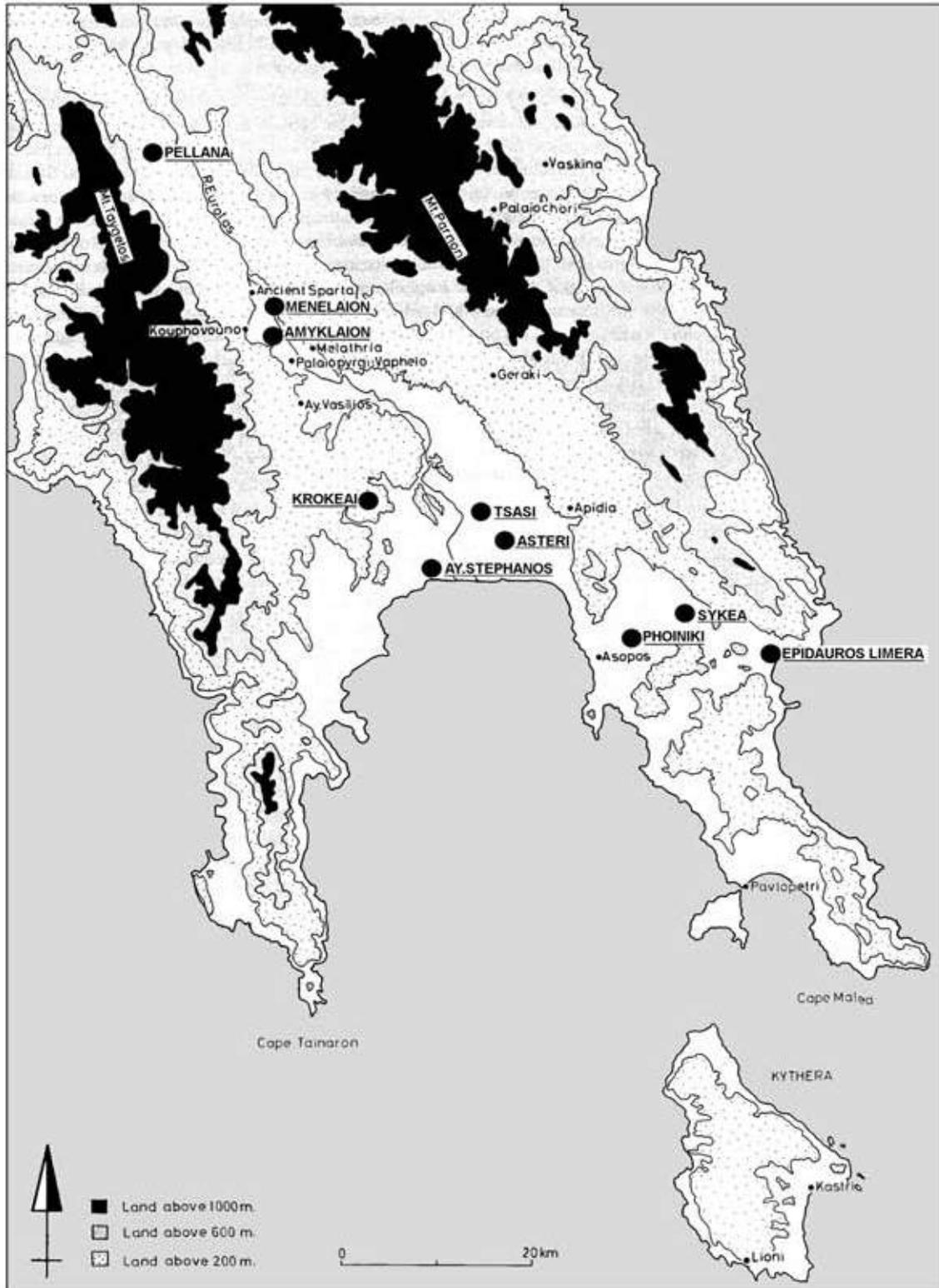


Fig. 1 Map of Laconia (after RMDP, 245 fig. 81) showing sites with LH III C pottery



Fig. 2 Stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 3 Stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 4 Jug from Epidauros Limera

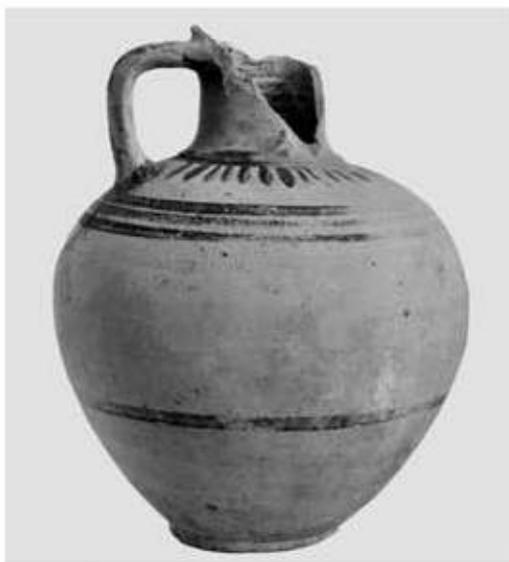


Fig. 5 Jug from Epidauros Limera

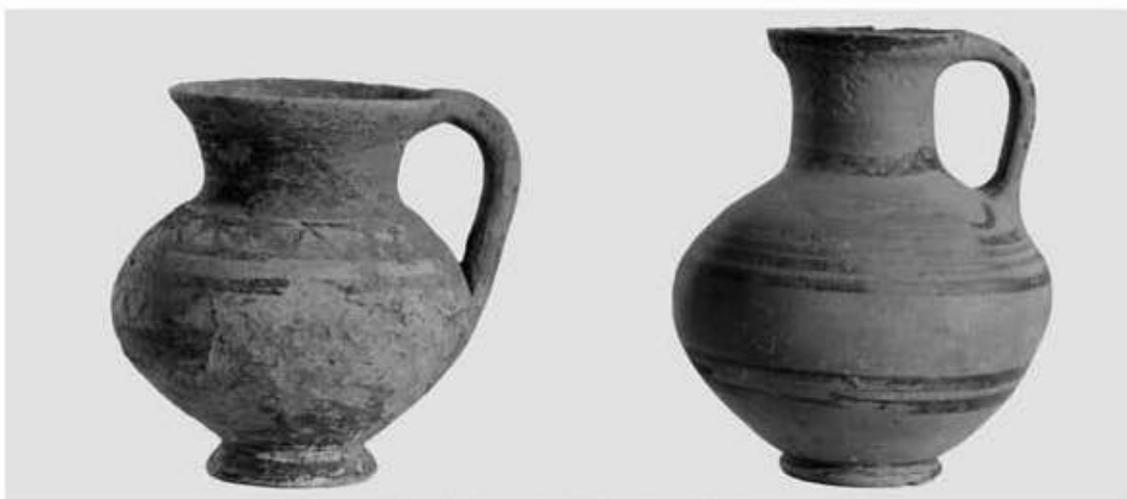


Fig 6 Jugs from Epidauros Limera

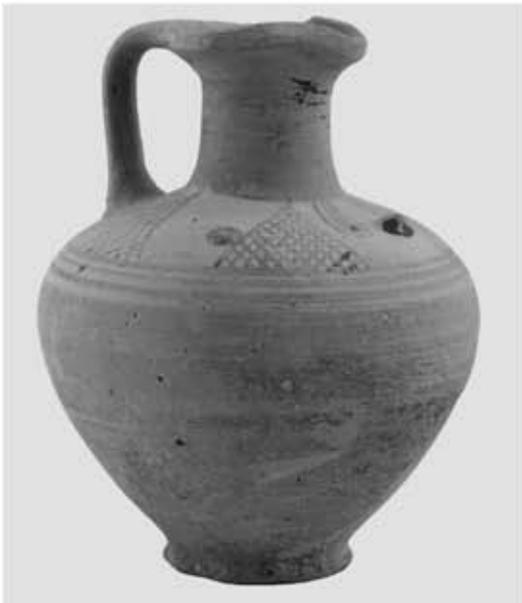


Fig. 7 Trefoil-mouthed jug from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 8 Amphoriskos from Epidauros Limera



Figs. 9–10 Stirrup jar from Pellana



Fig. 11 Three-handled amphoriskos from Pellana



Fig. 12 Collar-necked jar from Pellana



Fig. 13 Terracotta figurine of Late Psi type, group B, from the Amyklaion



Fig. 14 Terracotta figurine of Late Psi type, group C, from the Amyklaion



Fig. 15 Head with neck of a terracotta bovine figure from the Amyklaion



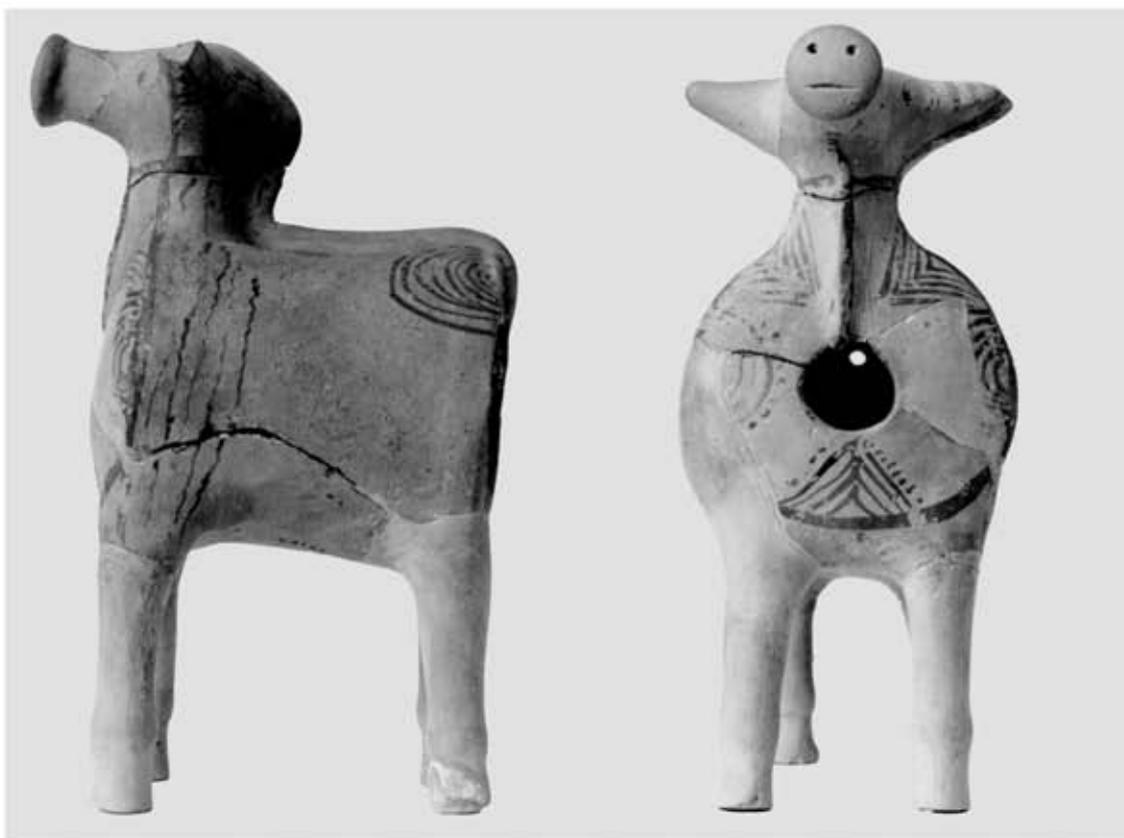
Fig. 16 Head with neck of a terracotta bovine figure from the Amyklaion



Fig. 17 Head with neck of a terracotta bovine figure from the Amyklaion



Fig. 18 Part of a terracotta bull figure from the Amyklaion



Figs. 19–20 Terracotta bovine figure from the Amyklaion



Figs. 21–22 Body of a bovine figure from the Amyklaion



Fig. 23 Jug from Peristeri



Fig. 24 Jug from Peristeri



Fig. 25 Large neck-handled amphora from Peristeri

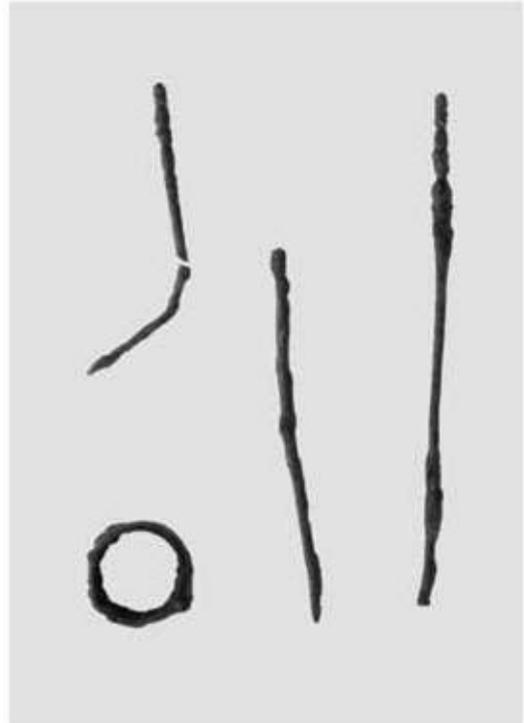


Fig. 26 Bronze ring and pins from Peristeri