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## MYCENAEAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE SARONIC GULF\*

### Introduction

The spectacular discoveries of the recent years in the Saronic Gulf, at the Mycenaean acropolis on Salamis and the sanctuary at Aghios Konstantinos on the Methana peninsula, have attracted attention of many scholars of Mycenaean culture to this region. In 1998 on the island of Poros the first conference specifically devoted to the archaeology of the Saronic Gulf was organised, although its results have not been published yet (*Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the History and Archaeology of the Saronic Gulf, Poros 26-28 June 1998*). Thanks to the growing number of surface surveys undertaken in Greece in recent years (the list of surveys for whole Greece in: RUTTER 2001: 97-105; SHELMERDINE 2001: 342-347, table 2), of which the survey conducted on the Methana Peninsula in the north-eastern Peloponnese (MEE, FORBES 1997) may serve as an example, this area is better recognised and the problems of settlement patterns better understood. However, many issues remain unsolved, such as questions concerning the origins and functioning of the political centres, trade and commodities exchange (unpublished proceedings of the conference in 1998: *Trade and Production in Pre-monetary Greece VIII: Crossing Borders, Athens 12-13 Dec. 1998*) or cult and religion (still unpublished proceedings of the symposium of the Swedish Institute in Athens: *Peloponnesian Sanctuaries and Cults. Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 11-13 June 1994* and of the Norwegian Institute in Athens: *Celebrations. Sanctuaries and Vestiges of Cult Practice. International Symposium at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 12-16 May 1999*).

Along the coast, as well as on the islands of the Saronic Gulf, relatively numerous sites of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and Late Bronze Age (LBA) have been identified. The aim of this paper is to present and systematise the new data which has recently been made available on the settlement pattern in the Saronic Gulf and the overseas contacts between this region and other parts of the Aegean world.

### Geography of the Saronic Gulf

The Saronic Gulf is situated between the north-eastern Peloponnese and the southern coast of the mainland. Around its shores are located provinces which were important for Mycenaean Greece: Attica, Corinthia and the eastern Argolid, as well as Troizen and Megarid. Among the islands of the Saronic Gulf, Aegina and Salamis were especially prominent in the Mycenaean period.

It can be observed that settlements were concentrated mainly along the coast and it is likely that this phenomenon was an effect of the geological configuration of this region. It can be seen in the north-eastern Peloponnese (eastern Argolid, Troizen), as well as in the south-eastern Corinthia, southern Megarid and Attica, where quite narrow lowland zones run along the coasts (especially in the north-eastern Peloponnese), which were especially conducive to the establishment of settlements. It is probably not a coincidence that in south-eastern and northern Corinthia, where extensive lowlands occur, numerous settlements existed during the whole Mycenaean period. A similar situation can be observed in the valleys of Eleusis, Megarid and in southern Attica, where many Bronze Age sites have been identified. It must have been significant that the low-lying coasts of the Saronic Gulf were separated from their hinterlands by natural obstacles in the form of highlands and mountain ridges. Intercourse between the eastern Argolid and Troizen and the Argive plain were certainly impeded by Acharneo, Mavrovouni and Aderes Mountains. Highlands separated the Corinthian plains from the Mycenaean centres situated in Argolid. The mountainous terrain undoubtedly impeded contact between northern Attica and lowlands of Boeotia or northern Greece. Such obstacles also explain why, for the entire Bronze Age, the southern part of this province was much more intimately connected to the Saronic Gulf region and the Peloponnese than to northern Greece. On the coastal plains of Attica as well, many settlements flourished throughout the Mycenaean period.

\* Chronology according to: SHELMERDINE 2001: table 1  
 MH III 1750/1720-1680  
 LH I 1680-1600/1580  
 LH IIA 1600/1580-1520/1480  
 LH IIB 1520/1480-1445/1415

LH IIIA1 1445/1415-1390/1370  
 LH IIIA2 1390/1370-1340/1330  
 LH IIIB 1340/1330-1190/1180  
 LH IIIC 1190/1180-1065/1060

Several communication and trade routes crossed in the Saronic Gulf, such as those connecting the north-eastern Peloponnese with northern Corinthia and the southern coast of Attica (by sea and land), those joining the shores of the gulf with Aegina, and the routes between Attica and the Cycladic islands (MOUNTJOY 1999: 485). Settlements situated in this region were influenced by the Minoan and Cycladic cultures whose impact can be traced for example in the ceramic imports.

This region of dynamic trade certainly played a significant role in the history of the period. The principal centre of this exchange, particularly in the Early Mycenaean period, was Aegina. It seems likely that the settlements located on the coasts of the Saronic Gulf participated in the distribution of pottery and other objects imported from distant parts of the Aegean world. They were also involved in the transfer and propagation of ideas reaching Mycenaean Greece through the Saronic Gulf.



Fig. 1. The Saronic Gulf. The Early Mycenaean period (P. Berezowski)

### The Early Mycenaean period (Fig. 1)<sup>1</sup>

The Early Mycenaean period coincided with the beginning of the co-called Shaft Grave era. It is now generally agreed that it marks the beginning of Mycenaean culture (HILLER 1989: 137) covering the transition of the Middle Helladic (MH) and Late Helladic (LH) periods (cf. DIETZ 1989). The Early Mycenaean period lasted about until the end of LH IIB (RUTTER 2001: 124). It is characterised by regional differences, mainly during the Shaft Grave era (RUTTER 2001: 137), concerning the development of political and economic centres (RUTTER 2001: 145-146), as well as distribution of Mycenaean pottery (cf. MOUNTJOY 1999) and other elements of the material culture (DICKINSON 1977). Only scant remains come from the settlements of this early stage of the Mycenaean culture, although data from cemeteries goes some way towards making up the deficit (RUTTER 2001: 138-139).

The situation in the Saronic Gulf during the Early Mycenaean period was similar to that of other parts of the Greek mainland. A relatively small number of settlements have been identified as belonging to the last stage of MH, and particularly to the Shaft Grave era. It must be emphasised however that our knowledge is restricted by the regrettably small number of excavations and surveys in this area, especially of sites of the MH period. Any reconstruction of the settlement pattern must therefore be based on this limited and unsatisfactory collection of excavated sites, and we should be alive to the dangers of working with so small a sample. Earlier research has led us to conclude that habitation in area of the Saronic Gulf was not very intense. However, a recently undertaken survey on the Methana peninsula in the north-eastern Peloponnese (MEE, FORBES 1997) revealed at least four sites inhabited during the MH and continuously in the LH, whereas only one (Aghios Konstantinos) was settled in the LH III. Consequently, it could be suggested that in MH/LH and LH I-II periods the coasts of the Saronic Gulf were more densely populated than previously believed (cf. DICKINSON 1977). Many sites inhabited during the MH still functioned in the Early and Late Mycenaean period. Some of them (like Kiapha Thiti) were abandoned at the end of the Early Mycenaean period. The evidence from Early Mycenaean pottery suggests that in LH I the political centres of the Peloponnese did not yet dominate the region of the Saronic Gulf and that the MH traditions persisted. More Aeginetan, Minoanizing and Mycenaean pottery appear

in the following period (LH II), which suggests that contacts and trade exchange were more intense than in the previous phase.

The Mycenaean settlements identified in the discussed region were fortified or situated on naturally defensive hills or knolls near the coast. They were located for the most part in the coastal lowlands close to significant patches of arable land. It seems probable, that for many of these settlements, sea trade played an important role, although no harbour structures are known at those sites.

Among the Early Mycenaean sites, Kolonna on Aegina certainly played the most important role. This settlement maintained trading contacts with other settlements within the Saronic Gulf, as well as those situated at a great distance, which indicates the extraordinary significance of the island during MH and LH periods. Kolonna is one of the best-recognised sites in the Saronic Gulf region, particularly for the Early Mycenaean phase (the description of the island in: KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997: 108). The settlement was inhabited continuously from the Early Bronze Age probably until the end of the LH. Although remains dated to the Late Mycenaean phase have not been uncovered, habitation in this period is indicated by the occurrence of the Mycenaean pottery (HILLER 1975) and graves (CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 80; MOUNTJOY 1999: 490). The latest fortifications were dated to the Shaft Grave era (WOHLMAYR 1989: 151-153). After this period the settlement probably still prospered, since the large-scale export of pottery, reaching many sites in the Saronic Gulf, continued. Massive fortifications of Kolonna were continuously rebuilt and strengthened in the successive phases of the Early Helladic (EH) and MH, as far as MH III (deposits of the Town X) (WALTER, FELTEN 1981). These massive fortifications stand in contrast to other contemporary sites. The only MBA settlements with comparable defensive walls were discovered at Aghia Irini on Kea and at Troy VI (NIEMEIER 1995: 75). The elite burials, some of them even older than the shaft graves at Mycenae (KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997), prove the high social status of Kolonna's inhabitants (NIEMEIER 1995: 76-77).

It seems very probable that in the MBA and LBA Aegina was the main trading centre in the region of the Saronic Gulf. Since the MH a characteristic ceramic, distinguished from others by a volcanic Gold Mica intrusion, was produced on the island (MOUNTJOY 1999: 491; LINDBLOM 2001: 41). The pottery from Aegina is found on many MH and LH sites situated in the Saronic Gulf, as well as in very distant places – on the

<sup>1</sup> In a present paper I accepted a division of the Mycenaean period for the early (MH/LH-LH IIB) and late phase

(LH IIIA1-LH IIIC) after RUTTER 2001: 96 and SHEL-MERDINE 2001: 330-331

Cycladic islands (e.g. Thera, Naxos, Kea), in Messenia (Malthi), Laconia (e. g. Aghios Stephanos), Elis (e. g. Olympia), Arcadia (Asea), Boeotia (e. g. Thebes, Orchomenos, Eutresis), Phocis (Kirrha, Krisa), Thessaly (e. g. Iolkos, Pevkakia), on Crete (Knossos, Kommos) and in Italy (LINDBLOM 2001: table 9). Such a wide range of trading partners undoubtedly confirms the special position of the island as an export leader in the MH and LH periods. From the same period we find Cycladic pottery (WÜNSCHE 1977; KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997: 109-110), as well as Minoan and Minoanizing vessels at the settlement of Kolonna – the latter perhaps manufactured on the island (HILLER 1993: 197-199; KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997: 110-111). It has been suggested that the pottery in the Minoan-style was produced in a specialised pottery workshop, running by the Minoans, who lived on the island (HILLER 1993: 199). Inconsiderable amounts of Mycenaean pottery date from the LH I and LH IIA have been discovered on Aegina (MOUNTJOY 1999: 491-492), whereas in the same period imports of the Aeginetan ceramic increased at many sites within the Saronic Gulf and in other regions (LINDBLOM 2001: 42). Therefore, it could be suggested that the island did not remain under the strong influence of the Peloponnese or – perhaps a more likely explanation – that its inhabitants did not find it necessary to import Early Mycenaean pottery since a high quality domestic alternative was available. Aegina produced and exported a whole assortment of pottery shapes, including tableware, cooking jars, tripods and storage jars (LINDBLOM 2001: 42). Many vessels were marked before firing (“pre-firing marks”. LINDBLOM 2001), although the purpose of such markings remain uncertain. According to Zerner (1993: 49), the Aeginetan pottery became popular because of its high quality and the variety of its shapes, and not because of products transported inside the vessels. Aegina continued exporting the Gold Mica pottery to many sites on the Peloponnese and the Mainland Greece until the LH IIIC period. It has been observed, however, that starting from the LH IIIA2 tableware became less popular than before and only cooking and coarse vessels were traded (LINDBLOM 2001: 41-42). The location of the production site remains uncertain, although the town of Kolonna is the most likely candidate both for the role of producer and that of distributor (LINDBLOM 2001: 101-102). It is the largest site known on the island and its size and nature indicate the prosperity and significance of the settlement. According to Niemeier, Aegina was not only an important producer and exporter of high quality pottery, but also a wealthy and powerful island and might have played an important role as a mediator of Minoan, Cycladic and Aeginetan ideas to the Mainland Greece (NIEMEIER 1995: 77).

In addition to Kolonna several other MH and LH sites were identified on Aegina, but none of them has provided architectural remains. On Mt. Oros in the

southern part of the island (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 60), as well as at other sites on Aegina (cf. KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997: fig. 62) little MH material has been collected. Therefore, we can assume that Kolonna played the most important role on Aegina during the Early Mycenaean period.

On Salamis, the largest island in the Saronic Gulf situated near the southern coast of Attica and north of Aegina, there were very few findings datable to the MH/LH period. It seems likely that a settlement existed in the MH and LH at Koulouri (modern town of Salamis), since large amounts of pottery on the hill slopes (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 205) and from a cemetery of chamber tombs used from LH IIA were identified (LOLOS 1996: 1240). Dickinson has suggested that in the Early Mycenaean phase Salamis depended on one of the local principalities, situated in Athens, Megara or Eleusis (DICKINSON 1977: 96). It is difficult to give a coherent picture of Salamis and its situation during the Early Mycenaean period.

In comparison to other regions located along the coast of the Saronic Gulf, Attica is comparatively well studied, although much remains to be done before we can produce a truly satisfactory reconstruction of the settlement pattern in the Early Mycenaean phase. The Attic evidence suggests that in the early phase of the Mycenaean period the MH ceramic tradition remained persisted, since Mycenaean LH I pottery does not appear in large quantities (MOUNTJOY 1999: 485). Settlements dated to this period maintained direct contacts with the Saronic Gulf and not with Peloponnese. Except for the Aeginetan pottery on Attic sites Minoan or Minoanizing and Cycladic ceramic was the rule (MOUNTJOY 1999: 491-492, 495). The fortified settlement at Kiapha Thiti, situated in southern Attica a short distance from the coast, seems to be the most important site in this period. It was inhabited continuously since the late Neolithic until the EH II period, and after a long hiatus again from MH II until LH IIIA1 (LAUTER 1989: 145; MARAN 1993: 201). The earliest fortifications were erected during the early phase of the MH. The settlement flourished in the later phase of the Shaft Grave era at which time the settlement was enlarged (the Lower Town was added) and supplied with massive fortifications. Lauter has suggested that important edifices, including the ruler's palace, may have been erected in the Upper Town (LAUTER 1989: 45). In the Middle Town a large absidal structure, reminiscent of megaron buildings, was constructed (LAUTER 1989: 146). In the end of the LH IIA a natural catastrophe (landslide) interrupted habitation at Kiapha Thiti (LAUTER 1989: 145; according to Maran the habitation might have continued as late as LH IIIA1. MARAN 1993: 201). There is little question that the residents of the settlement maintained systematic trading contacts with Aegina, since in MH and LH layers Gold Mica pottery constituted a large percentage of the

ceramics found at Kiapha Thiti (MARAN 1993: 206). Some pots were marked with “pre-firing marks” (LINDBLOM 2001: 110). Furthermore, the MH settlement obviously maintained contact with the Cycladic islands, although at the end of this period Cycladic pottery starts to disappear in the Kiapha Thiti layers. Neither Minoan and Mycenaean LH I vessels were used (MARAN 1992: pl. 21-22), which means that in this phase the MH tradition persisted and the village focused on exchange with Aegina. In the following phase (LH IIA) Mycenaean pottery became very popular and occurred in large quantities. Consequently it appears that relations as well as exchange between Attica and Peloponnese improved in this period. The Aeginetan ceramic continues to be a prominent feature of the site throughout the period of occupancy (MARAN 1993: 205).

Eleusis, situated on a hill in the centre of the southern Attic coastline, was another important centre in the Early Mycenaean period. During excavations EH material was identified (MYLONAS 1932: 107; COSMOPOULOS et al. 1995: 132), although it remains uncertain whether the settlement was inhabited during EH/MH and MH periods as well. From the late phase of the MH the remains of seven buildings on the south slope of the hill (MYLONAS 1932: 107-108; MYLONAS 1961: fig. 5) and cemetery used from MH/LH until LH IIIB were uncovered (so called West Cemetery, MYLONAS 1975). The south slope has revealed vestiges of LH I rectangular dwellings: House H (MYLONAS 1932: 108-109, fig. 4) and House I (MYLONAS 1961: fig. 5; for the detailed description see: HIESEL 1990: 180-181). On the southeastern slope the remains of a large building of megaron plan (Megaron B), erected in the transition phase of LH II/LH IIIA (the re-building is dated to LH IIIB) was preserved. According to Hiesel’s reconstruction of the first phase, the large structure with antea consisted of a single room B and an anteroom, both equipped with two posts to support roof. In the vestibule a stone platform (3 x 3.3m) was constructed. The platform and a peribolos surrounding Megaron B might suggest a ritual nature for this architectural complex (HIESEL 1990: 43, fig. 33, cf. DARCQUE 1981). The settlement of Eleusis probably played a significant role in this region. Ceramic analysis showed that the MH pots (Matt-painted) were almost entirely imported from Aegina (COSMOPOULOS et al. 1995: 134, 136). Moreover, in the MH deposits the pottery has been identified as Cycladic (COSMOPOULOS et al. 1995: 133-134, 136), whereas in LH I-II layers Mycenaean (COSMOPOULOS et al. 1995: 133-136), and Minoanizing pottery are also found (MOUNTJOY 1999: 492). Therefore it seems reasonable to say that in the MH Eleusis concentrated mainly on exchange with Aegina and the Cycladic islands but that after LH I pottery was imported from Peloponnese as well.

Another important site is Anavyssos-Aghios Nikolaos, located on the eastern side of the Attic coast. In

the MH an extensive settlement and a cist grave cemetery existed. According to Hope Simpson and Dickinson, both were abandoned during the late phase of MH (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 208-209). Many details concerning relations of the settlement with Attica, the Saronic Gulf or the Cycladic islands remain unclear. However, the village’s location on the seashore and astride the communication route leading along the Attic coast to the Cycladic islands, suggests that the settlement controlled the sea route as well as ships arriving or leaving the Saronic Gulf.

From the last phase of the Early Mycenaean period (LH IIA) there remain only vestiges of the seaside settlement at Aghios Kosmas on southern coast of Attica. One incompletely preserved building (House R) and the remains of a semicircular structure, perhaps serving as oven, were explored (MYLONAS 1959: 48-81, fig. 16). The pottery of the MH tradition, as well as the Mycenaean (MYLONAS 1959: 48-51) and the Aeginetan pots (LINDBLOM 2001: table 9) indicate the trade contacts with Aegina and Peloponnese. According to Mountjoy, the pottery manufactured in Athens (Acropolis Burnished Ware), possibly occurred in layers dated to the transition phase of LH IIB/LH IIIA1, however, this type of ceramic was not distinguished during excavations (MOUNTJOY 1999: 493).

The region of Megarid has not been explored very well due to the modern habitation. The city of Megara in all probability hides many remnants dated to the Mycenaean period. To date, two MH-LH sites have been identified: Palaiokastro and Megara-Aghios Georgios (Ancient Nisaia?) (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 73-74). According to Dickinson, it is possible that the city of Megara was a seat of a local dynasty (DICKINSON 1977: 96). It seems probable that the Megarid settlements exchanged items with Aegina (at Nisaia the Aeginetan pottery has been identified, cf. LINDBLOM 2001: table 9), as well as with Attica and Peloponnese.

A small number of sites dated to the Early Mycenaean period were identified in Corinthia. Some of them, even those located in a great distance from the Saronic Gulf, maintained trading contacts with this region. It seems possible that this province was related with the Saronic Gulf (and especially with Aegina) and not with Argolid and Peloponnese, since very little Mycenaean pottery of LH I date has been imported from there (MOUNTJOY 1999: 59, 199). At Korakou, situated on the Corinthian Gulf coast, no architectural remains dated to the Early Mycenaean phase were preserved. The ceramic evidence from the East Alley sounding (between the Houses M and L. BLEGEN 1921: table 1, fig. 134) revealed that habitation continued from EH until LH IIIC period (DAVIS 1979: 236). Among LH I ceramics, examples of MH tradition, Mycenaean, Minoan and Minoanizing, as well as Aeginetan were distinguished

(DAVIS 1979). The Mycenaean and Aeginetan pottery occurred as well in the LH IIA and LH IIB levels (DICKINSON 1972; LINDBLOM 2001: 107). However, it seems that Mycenaean pottery (originating from the Peloponnese) was relatively rare in the Early Mycenaean period and Corinthia was therefore not strongly under the influence of the Argolid centres. In contrast to the sites of Korakou and Gonia, where Aeginetan pottery appeared as early as the MH period (LINDBLOM 2001: 107-108), at other sites located inland (Tsoungiza, Zygouries) it appeared not earlier than the LH I period (LINDBLOM 2001: 41, 108).

A different situation can be observed at Isthmia, situated on the coast of the Saronic Gulf. This small settlement is located on the plateau, in close proximity to the communication routes connecting Corinth with Attica and the Saronic Gulf. The ceramic evidence demonstrates that the site was inhabited in the EH period and again in the LH II-LH IIIA2/IIIB (MORGAN 1999: 431). No architectural remains dated to the Early Mycenaean phase were preserved. In contrast to Korakou or settlements situated on the coast, Aeginetan pottery was not used at Isthmia. Of the ceramics found there, only three cooking jars were tentatively identified as coming from Aegina, and this on the basis of their forms and rather than any Gold Mica inclusion (MORGAN 1999: 233). Furthermore, no vessels from the Argolid, Crete or the Cycladic islands have been recovered. The Isthmian pottery reveals certain similarities to the Argive ceramic material, although it was made of local clay (MORGAN 1999: 258). It seems probable that the settlement at Isthmia was closely related to the province of Corinthia, and not to the Peloponnese or the Saronic Gulf region.

The western coast of the Saronic Gulf has produced considerable evidence of Early Mycenaean occupation and cult practice, e.g. at Ancient Epidauros, situated inland by the communication route running along the Saronic Gulf (MORGAN 1999: 303). An EH-LH IIIB settlement has been discovered on the slopes of a hill at Kynortion, at the location of the later Apollo Meleatas sanctuary (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 52). A location further down the hill has been identified as a cult centre. It appears as though cult had been practised there since at least the LH I period. The shrine served not only the nearby settlement but also other villages including some situated at a considerable distance from Epidauros. The existence of cult practice is indicated by a terrace wall covered with ashes, burnt animal bones, burnt potsherds from drinking vessels and terracotta figurines. A building uncovered nearby served in all probability as a cult structure too, since it contained many drinking cups similar to those found near the altar. The objects discovered on the site were of the Minoan style, including small bronze double axes, a steatite rhyton, seals, bronze swords and daggers (LAMBRINOUDAKIS 1981). At Nea Epidauros-Vassa there was another settlement,

situated on the hill near the coast, founded in the MH and inhabited through the LH I/II-LH IIIB periods (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 53). It seems reasonable to suggest that it played an important role in the region, since it was located directly on the coast and was situated on the communication and trading route which linked the Argolid plain with the Saronic Gulf (cf. DICKINSON 1999: fig. 5.34). In the southern part of the western Saronic coast, at Magoula-Galatas in Troizen province, another significant settlement was identified. It functioned continuously from the MH to the LH period (KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 2001: 218). According to Konsolaki, Magoula-Galatas may have been an important Mycenaean centre, controlling the north-eastern Peloponnese (KONSOLAKI 1998a; KONSOLAKI 1998b).

### The Late Mycenaean period (Fig. 2)

The Late Mycenaean period lasted from the transition phase of LH IIB and LH IIIA1 until LH IIIC3 (for a recent discussion on chronology of the late phase of the Bronze Age see: SHELMEARDINE 2001: 331-333). It is generally accepted that during the Early Mycenaean period the local principalities (characteristic of the transition phase of MH/LH) had been transformed into states ruled by kings who resided in palaces. This change took place probably in LH IIIA-IIIB period (SHELMEARDINE 2001: 349). In the Early Mycenaean phase local differences could be observed throughout Greece. Many regions of Greece for example maintained unique ceramic traditions during this period. However, the Late Mycenaean period was one of increasing standardisation, evidenced by the growing homogeneity of pottery remains as well as certain similarities in both palatial and domestic architecture at many sites. The dynamic expansion of Mycenaean habitation can be seen in the increasing number of new settlements and enlargement of existing ones, that took place in LH IIIA-IIIB in many parts of Mycenaean Greece. Also in the Argolid and the Nemea valley (SHELMEARDINE 2001: 343-346) and other parts of the Saronic Gulf the same pattern can be traced. In the late phase of the Mycenaean period new political, economic and cult centres appeared (e. g. Kanakia on Salamis, Aghios Konstantinos in the Methana peninsula) and some of those which had been founded in earlier periods seem to have become more affluent and powerful (most notably Eleusis and Korakou). During this era the number of cemeteries (especially those of the chamber tomb type) increased in this region (CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 61). After the peak of prosperity in the LH IIIA-B period, many settlements in Greece were abandoned in the LH IIIB/C phase (LEWARTOWSKI 1989: 101-102; SHELMEARDINE 2001: 373-376) and the same process can be observed in the region of the Saronic Gulf. Destruction layers are especially pronounced in the

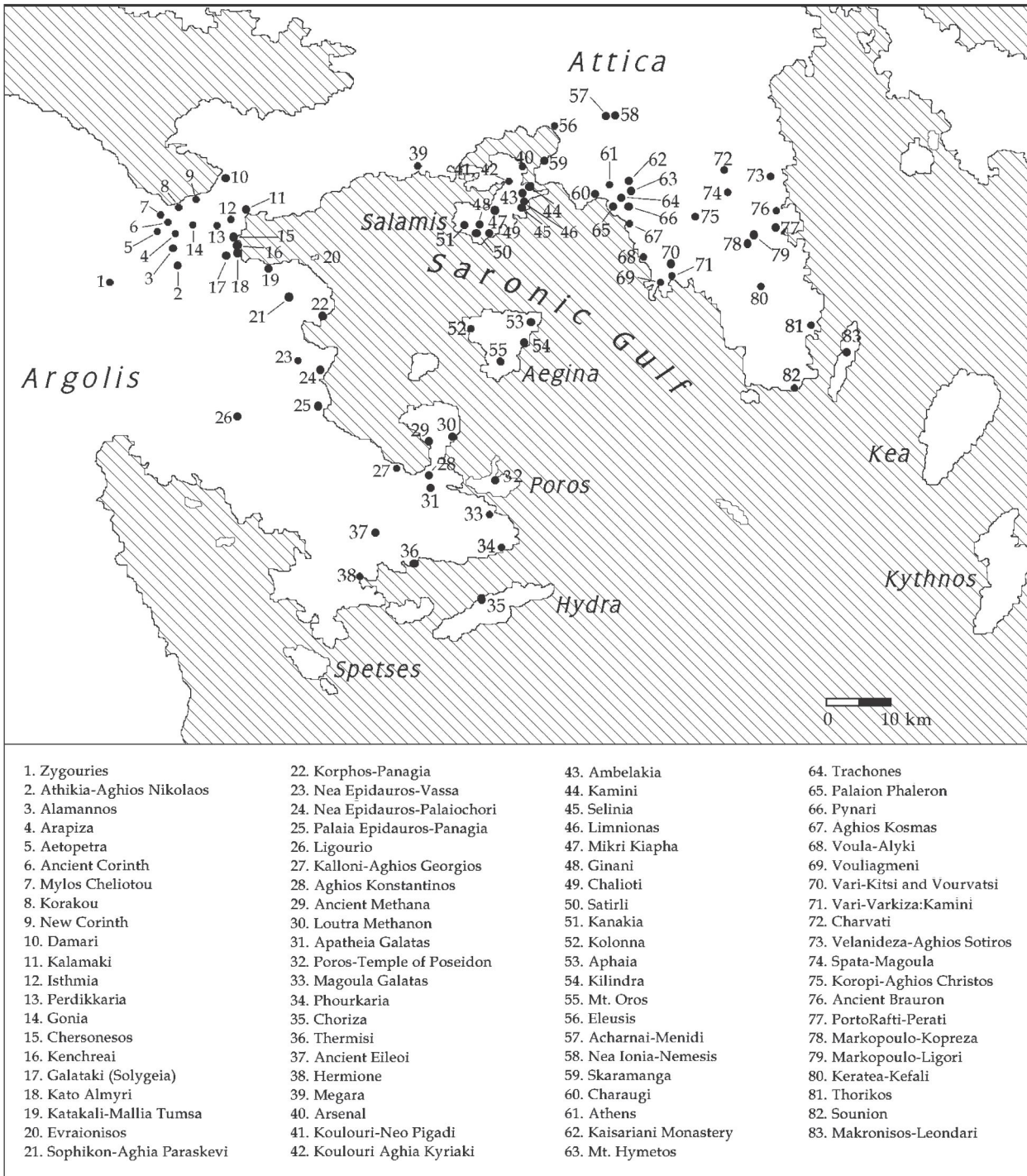


Fig. 2. The Saronic Gulf. The Late Mycenaean period (P. Berezowski)

palatial centres of the Argolid, although non-palatial settlements were also destroyed and finally abandoned. In the Saronic Gulf several settlements continued to exist even after the turmoil of the middle phase of LH IIIB period. It is possible that settlements like Korakou, Eleusis and Aghios Kosmas owed their power and prosperity to favourable locations close to the communication

routes that passed through the Saronic Gulf, as well as to profits made directly from exchange and trade. Some of them could function as local political centres, even after the depopulation, which occurred in many areas in Late Mycenaean Greece. The LH IIIB/C and LH IIIC periods in Greece were marked by a series of dramatic events that changed the political and social organisation of the

Mycenaean states. The whole region suffered from depopulation and many settlements were abandoned. It seems very probable that local population movements and migrations took place in the Aegean. Groups of people who had left their homelands settled for example in Attica and Salamis and this event can be traced in the number of settlements which still existed in LH IIIC period. Another group of migrants went eastwards (e. g. to Cyprus) and passed through Attica in the LH IIIC/ Sub-Mycenaean period (LEWARTOWSKI 1989: 100-107, 164-183). Very scanty remains of settlements dating to the last phases of the Mycenaean period existed there just before the final collapse of that culture (for the end of the Mycenaean culture see: ÅLIN 1962; BETTANCOURT 1976; LEWARTOWSKI 1989; THOMAS 1987; WARD, JOUKOWSKY 1992; SHELMEARDINE 2001: 374-377).

In LH III the island of Aegina was still a significant producer and distributor of high quality pottery, although its products were now exported mainly within the Saronic Gulf. In contrast to the MH and Early Mycenaean periods, the pottery exported by the island during this era was limited to cooking ware, jars and tripods (LINDBLOM 2001: 41), which suggests that the Mycenaean tableware being manufactured in local workshops became more popular than the Aeginetan ceramic (LINDBLOM 2001: 42). The number of LH III sites on the island is considerably smaller than the number of MH sites (KILLIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997: fig. 62). However, it should be stated that our knowledge is restricted to limited data from surveys and fieldwork. The settlement in Kolonna probably functioned continuously in the LH IIIA-C periods, since Mycenaean pottery has been identified (HILLER 1975), as have simple-type graves used until LH IIIB (CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 80) and chamber tombs used until LH IIIC (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 60). The LH III material was collected at Aphaia in the north-eastern part of the island. LH III pottery and terracotta figurines of LH IIIA2-IIIC date were discovered in layers below the sanctuary date from the Archaic period (FURTWÄNGLER 1906: fig. 127.5). It has been suggested that an open-air sanctuary existed here at least from the LH IIIA2 period, which served all settlements of the island. No architectural remains survive, although the concentration of ceramic as well as clay idols indicates that the area had a cult function (MORGAN 1999: 302). In the southern part of Aegina near the summit or Mt. Oros the presence of a LH IIIA-IIIB settlement is indicated by the numerous potsherds discovered there. The localisation of the site suggests that it was a refuge (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 60). In the Kilindra village on the eastern coast, a few burials date from LH IIIA-IIIB period were uncovered (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 60). Late Mycenaean pottery did not occur on Aegina in significant quantities. Open forms, usually present in habitation contexts, were conspicuously absent (MOUNT-

JOY 1999: 493-499). The fact that LH IIIA2 Attic pottery did not occur on the island (MOUNTJOY 1999: 485) would suggest that Aegina did not import ceramics from that area. However, the island maintained trading contacts with Attica, since Aeginetan pottery, which was manufactured in the phases immediately preceding and following this one, has been found at Attic sites (LINDBLOM 2001: 103, 109).

The Late Mycenaean period on Salamis began with an increasing number of settlements. In this phase the island seems to have had trading contacts with Attica and with other distant parts of the Aegean world (Dodecanese, Cyprus). A pottery workshop may have functioned on the island in LH IIIA2 although its location remains unknown. It produced, among other things, the decorated craters, which were exported to Attica (MOUNTJOY 1999: 494). At Kanakia in the south-western part of Salamis, a large Mycenaean acropolis has been recently uncovered. It is dated to LH IIIA-IIIC period (LOLOS 2001b: 14-15; LOLOS 2002: 14-15). The unfortified settlement covered two neighbouring hills near the coast. As yet the remains of a dozen or so buildings and parts of a paved road have been identified (LOLOS 2001b: 15), while on the eastern acropolis two large architectural-complexes were explored. The Building IA consisted of few rooms – working areas and magazines – where tools, pottery and production waste (such as mineral dye) has been preserved. The Building IB was used during LH IIIB-IIIC1 period. It had the unique form of a massive gate with a tower and a triangular entrance (LOLOS 2002: 14-15, fig. 24, 25). Several findings confirm that the settlement maintained contacts with Aegina (a clay tripod), possibly the Dodecanese islands (a strainer jar) and Cyprus (a large fragment of an ox-hide type copper ingot) (LOLOS 2002: 15). The discovery of the Kanakia acropolis is very significant and surprising somehow, mainly because of its very close proximity to palace in Athens, which functioned probably from LH IIIA1 to LH IIIC2-3 period (MOUNTJOY 1995). According to Dickinson, the Attic political centres of the Early Mycenaean period dominated the island of Salamis (DICKINSON 1977: 96). However it seems quite probable that in the later phase the island became independent. Other settlements have also been discovered which suggest that the island was flourishing in the Late Mycenaean phase. In Koulouri-Neo Pigadi a building of a megaron plan was uncovered. According to Pallas, it could form part of a palatial complex (PALLAS 1987: 229). In the same town at the site of Aghia Kyriaki a large chamber tomb cemetery, used during LH IIA-LH IIIC1 period, was explored (LOLOS 1996: 1240). A Mycenaean settlement probably existed also at Kamini near Ambelakia town (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 204-205), while at Limnionas (TZAVELLA-EVJEN 1992), Ambelakia and Kamini (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 204-205) chamber tombs have been discovered. A Late

Mycenaean cemetery consisting of chamber tombs was partially explored at Chalioti in the southern part of the island (PHOURIKIS 1916: 8; ROBINSON 1950: 1-9). In the course of surveys and fieldwork undertaken in southern Salamis other settlements were identified: at Selinia (PALLAS 1987: 205-206, 229), Mikri Kiapha (PALLAS 1987: 189-190), Kastelli-Satirli (LOLOS 1996: 1243) and Ginani (LOLOS 2001a). The large number of sites date from the Late Mycenaean period could be a consequence of migrations that occurred in the later phases of the Mycenaean period. According to Sourvinou-Inwood (1973), group of people who left the Peloponnese first moved to Eleusis, then to Salamis and finally to Athens and points further east. Salamis saw considerable destruction during the late stage of the Mycenaean period (e. g. the settlement in Kanakia was destroyed in LH IIIC1) and many inhabitants of the island possibly left it to move eastwards (to Cyprus for example). In spite of those events, Salamis maintained its prominent position in the Sub-Mycenaean period – a large cist grave cemetery, dates from LH IIIC-Sub-Mycenaean, was uncovered at Arsenal (STYRENIUS 1962) and two LH IIIC-Geometric refuge citadels at Ginani (LOLOS 2001a). According to Lolos (1989: 34), several sites of the southern Salamis, located on the coast or at some distance from the sea, prove that in the Bronze Age pirates were very active in the Saronic Gulf.

Southern Attica has produced several cemeteries, but settlements do not appear to have been numerous in the Late Mycenaean phase. Eleusis and Aghios Kosmas were inhabited continuously from the Early Mycenaean period and they prospered at least until the beginning of LH IIIC phase. The settlement at Eleusis was a significant centre in the LH IIIA-IIIB period (cf. DICKINSON 1999: 157). Its size increased and a considerable amount of construction took place on the acropolis, its south-eastern and eastern slopes, and the area north of the hill (MYLONAS 1961: 32). In the LH IIIA/B stratum a part of a building (Building A) was preserved. According to Mylonas' interpretation, the eastern walls belonged to another structure (Building B) (MYLONAS 1936: 419-421, fig. 6), whereas Hiesel believed they formed the foundations for the upper storey of the Building A (HIESEL 1990: 180). Megaron B on the south-eastern slope was rebuilt in the LH IIIB period. At least three other rooms were added to room B (B1, B2, B3), bringing the size of the whole architectural complex to about 110 sq. m. (HIESEL 1990: 41-46). Terracotta figurines were discovered north of rooms B1 and B3 (cf. DARCQUE 1981: 600), and LH IIIB pottery was found in every room in the structure (HIESEL 1990: 43). It seems probable that some of the walls of the building were decorated, since a fragment of a wall painting was uncovered (MYLONAS 1961: 43). Neither defensive walls nor palatial buildings were unearthed. Such buildings may however have been destroyed when a later sanctuary of

Demeter was erected (MYLONAS 1961: 33). The West Cemetery, consisting of earthen chamber tombs, remained in use until the LH IIIB period (MYLONAS 1975).

The settlement at Aghios Kosmas in the southern part of Attica was probably fortified in the Late Mycenaean period. A fragment of a defensive wall was uncovered in the southern and eastern part of the site (MYLONAS 1959: 58). None of the buildings belonging to this phase were preserved completely. House S, which measured 12 x 7 m, may have been divided by partition walls and had a roof supported with columns. The stone base for a post was also found in a small portico (MYLONAS 1959: 53, fig. 14). The building contained many potsherds dating to LH IIIB2/C1 (MOUNTJOY 1999: 496), as well as stone weights, animal bones, shells and the clay bathtub (1.3 x 0.67 m) preserved *in situ* in the south-eastern corner (MYLONAS 1959: 53-55). House T, only partially preserved, belonged to the early stage of LH IIIC and consisted of a portico with two columns and a large room with posts. Pottery and two steatite weights were found inside the building (MYLONAS 1959: 55-56, fig. 15). Parts of another two houses (V and W) and a section of a street paved with pebbles and potsherds were found directly on the shore. Mylonas dated this complex according to its architectural features to LH IIIC (MYLONAS 1959: 57-58, fig. 17). The settlement was probably abandoned in the early stage of LH IIIC (MOUNTJOY 1999: 489).

The majority of the Late Mycenaean sites in the Attic part of the Saronic Gulf are cemeteries. The increasing number of burials indicates that the region was densely inhabited (MOUNTJOY 1999: 488), although – as stated above – remains of settlements are scarce. In the central part of the Attic coast chamber tombs, which are characteristic for this phase of the Mycenaean period (CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 77), as well as other types of burials were identified. At the Piraeus LH IIIA-IIIB burials were explored at Charaugi and Skaramanga (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 202). Chamber tomb cemeteries were found on Mt. Hymetos, at Palaion Phaleron, Voula-Alyki, Vouliagmeni and Vari-Varkiza, and at Kamini (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 205-207). At the site of Vari-Kitsi, situated inland a short distance from Vari-Varkiza, sections of a defensive wall of uncertain chronology were identified. The pottery collected at the site indicates that in the MH and LH IIIA1-C periods a settlement existed there. An extensive cemetery in Vourvatsi belonging to this village was used in LH IIIA2-IIIC2 (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 208; MOUNTJOY 1999: 489).

The settlement pattern in Corinthia – including the eastern part of the province that is situated on the coast of the Saronic Gulf – developed considerably during LH IIIA-IIIB period. It seems however that the large settlements and political centres were located not on the coast itself, but rather in the area of the Corinthian Gulf

or inland (MORGAN 1999: 361, fig. 15). The surveys undertaken in that region showed that several villages existed along the coastline in this phase: at Kalamaki, Perdikkaria (the 30-meter long fragment of a cyclopean wall), Kenchreai, Alamannos and Chersonesos. Chamber tomb cemeteries have been found in Galataki-Solygeia and Kato Almyri (until LH IIIC) (MORGAN 1999: 469-479). Most of these settlements did not survive into the following phase, although some continued to exist into the LH IIIC period. In the Late Mycenaean period Aeginetan pottery still reached some of the Corinthian villages (Aeginetan cooking pots for example were found in Tsoungiza), although such finds are less common than they are in previous phases (LINDBLOM 2001: 41). The political centre of Corinthia has not been identified so far although Corinth is one of the most probable candidates. None of the excavated sites (Corinth, Korakou, Gonia, Tsoungiza, Zygouries) has revealed evidence of palatial architecture. A relatively large number of architectural remains were uncovered in Korakou in north-eastern Corinthia. The settlement was inhabited continuously in the Late Mycenaean period, since pottery date from LH IIIA-IIIC was found at the site (MOUNTJOY 1999: 200-201). In LH IIIB-IIIC layers, fortifications (BLEGEN 1921: 98), numerous buildings with almost completely preserved plans, as well as alleys and streets separating houses, have been unearthed. Houses were erected very close to each other and most consisted of two or three rooms (e. g. House H, M, O), although a few had more composite forms (e. g. House L, P). According to the excavator, all edifices were renovated, rebuilt and enlarged frequently. Hearths (made of clay or built directly into the floor), stone platforms (used as working counters, benches or beds) and stone bases supporting wooden columns, were common features of these houses (BLEGEN 1921). House P, dates from LH IIIB2/C-LH IIIC2 (four phases have been recognised. MOUNTJOY 1999: 197-198) was noticeably larger than other buildings and probably belonged to an important resident of the settlement. The structure consisted of a vestibule, a large central room and two rear rooms. The central space (8 x 8 m) may have been only partially roofed. Several unique architectonic features uncovered inside are worth noting: a square hearth made of stones, clay and potsherds, a square platform constructed of stone and earth with a side stonewall, interpreted to be an altar or offering table, and a low wall possibly used as base for a wooden or stone bench. Carbonated olive-stones were preserved along the edge of the platform as well as between the platform and a stone column base. According to Hiesel, the installations unearthed in the central room were used for the processing of agricultural commodities (HIESEL 1990: 90). The rear rooms were of a more private character. The eastern room was equipped with a square hearth and two paved areas (one of which could have served as a bed), and contained numerous potsherds. The room was

interpreted as a kitchen or pantry. The western rear room contained a hearth and a paved area and on that account was identified by Blegen as a bedroom or guest-room (BLEGEN 1921: 83-89). The pottery collected in House P (LH IIIB2/C1) is reminiscent of examples found in the Argolid (e. g. in the Iria settlement), and in Phocis, which suggests that Korakou had commercial contacts with these parts of Mycenaean Greece. Some of the vessels belonging to LH IIIC2 phase were Argive imports (MOUNTJOY 1999: 200-201).

The settlement at Gonia was situated on the hill south of Korakou. It was inhabited continuously from the Neolithic to the LH IIIB period. For the Late Mycenaean phase sections of a defensive wall have been preserved, as well as remnants of houses similar to those at Korakou (BLEGEN 1921: 116; RUTTER 1981). Since the site has been explored only partially it is still too early to draw any definite conclusions about the role the settlement played in the region. (MORGAN 1999: 354, 474).

Relatively few potsherds and architectural remains have been found in the area of Ancient Corinth. It seems that the site was already inhabited in the Neolithic and continued to be occupied in the EH and MH periods (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 61-62). The Mycenaean pottery (LH IIIB-IIIC2) was uncovered in a pit deposit in area of the ancient town. Some of vessels indicate that the settlement maintained contacts with Phocis, situated on the opposite side of the Corinthian Gulf (MOUNTJOY 1999: 201). A chamber tomb cemetery was established on the slopes above the ancient town (WIESEMAN 1978: 72) and on the northern slopes of Akrokorinth in the area of the later Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore a small hamlet existed, although only a single building has been preserved. The pottery evidence indicates that the house was used in the LH IIIB-IIIC period and was destroyed by fire. Nearby a cist grave, probably dating to LH IIIC, and a part of terrace wall, supposedly associated with the building, were explored. Akrokorinth was probably inhabited as early as the beginning of the Sub-Mycenaean period (RUTTER 1979). In the modern town of Corinth (New Corinth) a chamber tomb cemetery, dates from LH II-IIIB, was discovered (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 61), which indicates that a Mycenaean settlement existed here also (MORGAN 1999: 355; for the placement of cemeteries in close proximity to settlements see: CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 61-62). In spite of the lack of any architectural remains at New Corinth this settlement may have been a local political centre. Its strategic location near the Corinthian Gulf and the communication routes connecting Corinth with Argolid make New Corinth a likely candidate for the position of leading settlement. (DICKINSON 1999: fig. 5.34).

The village at Isthmia flourished in LH II-III A periods with the final phase of habitation ending in LH

IIC2-3 (MORGAN 1999: 431). No architectural remains have been preserved at the site, except for a fragment of cyclopean-style wall. Although its function remains uncertain plausible suggestions include fortification wall, boundary wall or road. Pottery was found in the excavated part of the wall belonging to LH II/IIIA1 (MORGAN 1999: 362-365, 437-447, fig. 2-14). Although the ceramic collected at Isthmia was in the Argive style it was made of local clay. Analogies can be found at other Corinthian sites: at Korakou, Tsoungiza and Kato Almyri. Among a very small number imports identified at Isthmia are a pair of Argive objects: a "Psi" figurine dates from LH IIIA2/B1, a deep bowl from LH IIC together with what may be a miniature handmade vessel from LH IIIB (MORGAN 1999: 232-233). It seems then that, just as in the Early Mycenaean period, the village had ties to Corinthia but not to the Peloponnese, Attica or the Saronic Gulf region.

Very scanty remains come from the central part of the eastern coast of Argolid. LH pottery has been collected at only a few sites: Korphos-Panagia, Sophikon-Aghia Paraskevi, Katakali-Mallia and Tumsa (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 65-66). The southern part of the region has been more thoroughly studied. Near ancient Epidauros a cult area which seems to have been used at least as late as LH IIIB was discovered beneath the remains of the later sanctuary of Apollo Meleatas. Mycenaean settlements were identified on the hill above that sanctuary and at Nea Epidauros-Vassa. Cemeteries have been located south of the latter settlement in Nea Epidauros-Palaiochori (dates from LH III) and in the area of the ancient town at Palaia Epidauros-Panagia (chamber tombs date from LH IIIB-C) (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 52-53).

Interesting evidence for settlement pattern and Late Mycenaean cult practices comes from the Methana peninsula. Survey research indicated that all of the sites which existed in the MH continued to be inhabited throughout the Early Mycenaean phase and were expanded considerably in the LH III phase (two of which grew to over 1 ha). All of the sites were situated on or near the coast and two of them have been described as typical Mycenaean acropolises (MEE, FORBES 1997). Settlements were identified on the acropolis at Methana, in the area of the later sanctuary of Poseidon at Kalauria and at Aghios Georgios near Kalauria (WELTER 1941: 10-11; HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 54-56). Several LH IIIA-B buildings and cult places have been recently explored at Aghios Konstantinos in the eastern part of the peninsula. The cult installations of the Room A consisted of a stone bench, a stone-plate platform (probably an offering table or altar), a low wall and a small hearth. Over 150 terracotta figurines, *kylikes*, *rhyta* and burnt animal bones were uncovered in the room (KONSOLAKI 1991: 72; KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 1995: 427-433). It has been suggested that animals were sacrificed

in this room, while ritual meals were prepared in the neighbouring room (B). In this area a hearth, cooking pots and tripods were found – some of them originating on Aegina (LINDBLUM 2001: 104). Other cult installations have been identified in Area F and in Room G (KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 2001: 213-219), while a workshop was discovered in Room D and a magazine in Room O.

Late Mycenaean remains have been also revealed in Troizen. Chamber tombs date from LH IIB-III A2 were explored at Apatheia-Galatas (KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 2001: 217-218). A MH-LH settlement at Magoula-Galatas and a group of tholos tombs on the western slope of the Magoula hill have recently been discovered (KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 2001: 218-219).

### Conclusions

The analysis of the archaeological remains from the region of the Saronic Gulf indicates that both on the mainland and on the islands the majority of settlements were founded on the coastline. It seems likely that locations with access to the sea were conducive to commercial exchange, and this fact resulted in the concentration of settlements along the coastlines. Most of the settlements, which existed in the MH and Shaft Grave periods, saw continued habitation into the Late Mycenaean period. This suggests that their coastal locations continued to be advantageous down to the LH IIIB period. By contrast Mycenaean settlements situated inland were attenuated or were abandoned altogether during this period.

The difference between the settlement patterns of the Early and Late Mycenaean periods is quite striking. There were clearly fewer settlements in the earlier phase and their number increased in the LH III period. The increased number and size of settlements in the Saronic Gulf, together with the growing number of cemeteries from the Late Mycenaean period, mirror the trends, which we observe in other parts of Mycenaean Greece. These trends can be seen most clearly in the final phase of the Mycenaean period, when most of smaller villages and hamlets were abandoned in favour of larger and better fortified centres. The data from the Saronic Gulf region therefore squares well with models of Mycenaean settlement developed for other areas of Greece.

The supposition that in the Shaft Grave period this region remained under the influence of the MH tradition is chiefly supported by evidence of pottery production and distribution. It should be noted that the new ceramics which were characteristic of Mycenaean culture seldom reached settlements situated in the Saronic Gulf before the first stage of LH period. The introduction of Mycenaean ceramics proceeded slowly and fitfully. Likewise, the influence of the Early Mycenaean Argolid increased gradually and unevenly. It appears that several

settlements in north-eastern Corinthia (Korakou, Tsoungiza, Zygouries) and in southern Attica (Athens, Eleusis) became important political and cultural centres at the beginning of the Late Mycenaean period.

Aegina clearly played a very important role in the Saronic Gulf region. From the MH until the end of LH period it manufactured and exported high quality table and cooking ware. Additional work needs to be done before we can properly assess the significance of the island and of its primary settlement, Kolonna. It seems very probable that Aegina was involved in the development of Mycenaean culture in the Peloponnese. As a commercial town which was already prosperous in the EH and MH periods, it could have formed a bridge between the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures. New trends and ideas, expressed for example in the form of valuable grave goods, may have reached mainland Greece through Aegina. It is significant that this type of grave seems to have appeared first on this island. Aegina probably became rich through the raw materials trade and because of its strategic position at the centre of the Saronic Gulf, which facilitated its development and allowed it to retain its standing through the end of the Late Mycenaean period. According to Walter (1941: 11), the pirates who looted the coasts of the Peloponnese used the settlements of Aegina as bases. Unfortunately it is impossible to confirm this theory archaeologically.

It is worth noting that no palatial site has been uncovered in the area of the Saronic Gulf. The southern coast of Attica seems to have remained under the control of the palace at Athens, which existed from LH IIIA1 until LHIIIC2-3. The power of the Corinthian states (in which however no palatial centre has yet been identified) and those of the Argolid extended to other regions (to

north-eastern Argolid, the southern Corinthian coast, and perhaps Troizen). Apparently, local political centres, which developed rapidly in the Late Mycenaean period (Eleusis, Korakou, Magoula-Galatas, Korinth, Kanakia on Salamis), controlled the areas immediately surrounding the settlements themselves. The recent discovery of the Late Mycenaean acropolis on Salamis will certainly have an important impact on the process of reconstructing political and economical forces at work throughout the entire region. Since this large and undoubtedly significant settlement was situated in close proximity to the palatial centre in Athens, it seems that Mycenaean Greece in the last stage of the LH period was more politically divided than has previously been supposed. Upcoming research at Kanakia may help to demonstrate that the island played an important role in the Saronic Gulf and became its main commercial centre. It has been already noted that it maintained commercial contacts with Cyprus and Dodecanese.

It seems obvious that the coast of the Saronic Gulf was a strategic area because of its access to the sea and because of the many commercial routes which crossed there. These factors encouraged the growth of political centres which could exercise control over the sea lanes. In the final phase of the Mycenaean period groups of migrants going east (e. g. to Cyprus) reached Attica and Salamina, and this movement may have been responsible for the continuous inhabitation of some of these settlements. Domination of the coast clearly meant domination of the commercial routes connecting different centres of the Saronic Gulf with the Cycladic islands, more remote parts of the Aegean (e. g. Cyprus, Dodecanese) and the eastern Mediterranean generally.

## Abbreviations

AR	Archaeological Reports
SIMA p-b	Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, pocket book

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