Territory, Terracottas, and Tombs: The Evidence Against Argive Hegemony in the Central Argolid Plain in the 8th c. BC

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Territory, Terracottas, and Tombs:
The Evidence Against Argive Hegemony in the Central Argolid Plain in the 8th c. BC

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of Argos in the Argolid during the Iron Age (1050-700 BC) to determine the validity of the assumption that Argos had hegemony in the Argolid Plain in the 8th century BC. Several ancient authors claimed that Argos controlled a vast empire in the region by the late 8th century BC. Many modern scholars have taken these ancient accounts, along with archaeological evidence for the destruction of Asine and the establishment of the Argive Heraion in the 8th century BC, as proof of such an Argive Empire. Using evidence from burials, settlement patterns, inscriptions, sanctuaries and pottery, I will show that Argos did not in fact control other settlements in the Argive Plain in the 8th century BC. Instead, the 8th-century Argolid can be characterized a series of politically independent settlements with close cultural ties.
Maps: The Ancient Argolid

Map I: Argos and the Saronic Sea

Map II: The Argolid Plain
Iron Age Chronology

### Broad Chronology

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<th>Iron Age</th>
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<th>Proto-geometric</th>
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<td>1100-1050 BC</td>
<td>1050-900 BC</td>
<td>900-875 BC</td>
<td>(Ca.) 875-825 BC</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

The period between the Late Bronze Age (BA) palaces and the Archaic and Classical *poleis* used to be called the “Dark Age.” Finley comments on this terminology, stating, “In the sense . . . that we grope in the dark, and in that sense only, is it legitimate to employ the convention of calling the long period in Greek history from 1200 to 800 a ‘dark age’” (Finley 1970, 72). According to Finley, this period is only a Dark Age because we, modern scholars, are the ones left in the dark due to the fact that we have so little material from Iron Age (IA) Greece. This lack of material has made it very difficult to determine anything about the lives of the people and nature of the settlements that survived the destructions at the end of the Bronze Age. Yet, the Iron Age was clearly a very formative period in Ancient Greece—the settlements that had endured the destructions were greatly reduced, but throughout this period they recovered and ultimately became what we know as the Classical *poleis*, with a common religion and alphabet, monumental architecture, and the *oikos*, a house and economic structure common to the Greek world. It is obvious that Greece developed and changed quite a bit during this period and it would be helpful if we had more material to indicate how IA society worked. Unfortunately, however, we have even less than we had for the Late Bronze Age societies that came before, with possibly the greatest loss being that of writing, a skill which was only rediscovered in a different form around the time Homer’s epic poems are first attested in the late 8th century BC.

Sadly, Homer is no help in providing factual information on the Iron Age, even during the 8th century. Not only have scholars been debating when Homer’s epic poems were written, they have even been debating whether or not the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written down by one man, or if they were compiled by several bards/authors in the form we have today. What is more,
scholars have long debated about the historical value of the content of Homer’s poems. Is his portrayal of Greece one of Bronze Age or Iron Age society? Is his portrayal of social customs and political relationships valid for either period? Lastly, which period does his armor and weaponry come from? These are all valid questions to ask in determining whether an examination of Homer can in fact tell us anything about a period for which we have so little. It would be extremely helpful if we could rely on such a major source for information. As will be examined in the following chapter, however, a comparison of Homer’s poems to the archaeological record reveals that they do not provide information for either period, but are rather a mixture of political geography, social norms, and even weaponry from the BA and IA societies. This, of course, makes it impossible to determine what of his portrayals of economics and politics would be applicable and valid for studying the IA or even the BA. Thus, Homer must be left out of our considerations of the societies and settlements that survived into the Iron Age. Furthermore, settlement evidence for the early Iron Age is few and far between—even at Athens, a site known for its wealth of material during a period when material was scarce and settlements seem to have struggled, settlement evidence is sorely lacking. The bulk of archaeological evidence for the early Iron Age comes from burials and to a much lesser extent sanctuaries. Pottery and other finds associated with these contexts form the primary dataset for early IA Greece. As a result, scholars have tended to rely heavily on what evidence they can glean from the ancient authors, many of whom wrote long after the ‘dark ages’ ended, and what little the archaeological record provides.

These ancient authors include Hesiod, Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo, and Pausanias, among others. For our purposes here, several of them have provided information about the Argive Plain and Argos herself, telling of a vast Argive empire that controlled other settlements
in the Plain as early as the 8th century BC, and perhaps even earlier. This tradition starts with Homer, who speaks of Agamemnon ruling all of Argos. This statement, as I shall examine later in chapter three, is problematic given that the term “Argos” could refer merely to one site, or to the entire Plain. Additionally, we already know that Homer is unreliable for information on the Iron Age specifically, so his statement is too problematic to rely upon. He is not, however, the only one to claim such an Argive empire existed. Herodotus and Pausanias, whom I analyze further in chapter three, have also claimed that Argos was the head of an empire with control in the Argolid Plain during the Iron Age. They have done so even though both lived centuries later; Herodotus wrote his history in the 5th century BC and Pausanias traveled around Greece and wrote his guide in the 2nd century AD. The fact that these two ancient authors are so far removed from the events about which they were writing is only part of the problem. Herodotus seems to have relied on unreliable sources himself, while Pausanias relied upon the legend of the Lot of Temenus as part of his evidence for an Argive empire. This story is so wrapped up in myth that it too cannot be deemed dependable for any fact. Lastly, Pausanias also tells us that Argos destroyed Asine and Nauplia in the 8th century BC. The former destruction is attested in the archaeological record, while the second has not been so certainly confirmed.

However, a closer examination of the archaeological evidence reveals that these events and statements ought not to be taken at face value. Rather than relying heavily on the ancient authors to determine the validity for the claim of an 8th-century Argive empire, I examine the archaeological evidence accompanying it more closely. After giving an overview of Iron Age society, I focus more closely on the remains that we have for the major sites in the Argolid, namely Argos, Tiryns, Mycenae, Nauplia, Asine, Lerna, and the Argive Heraion (Berbati and Dendra are also examined when necessary). By examining the graves, pottery, sanctuaries,
material culture, settlement evidence, and ancient sources, I have determined that while Argos has delivered the most material for all phases of the Iron Age and was the largest settlement in the Central Argolid Plain throughout, it did not in fact have hegemony in the Argolid Plain during the 8th century BC. There is no doubt that Argos was influential in many aspects of Iron Age Argolid society— how could such a large settlement not have been a large part of culture and economics in Iron Age Argolic society? However, Argos’s prominence in the Argolid Plain during the Iron Age does not inevitably infer that they had direct control over nearby settlements. In fact, ancient source and epigraphic evidence reveals that other settlements were independent around the time of Argos’s supposed hegemony. Additionally, most often political control leads to an increase in the standardization of pottery and reduction in the number of shapes in the assemblage (Sinopoli 1991, 144). If Argos were in fact ruling the other settlements during the 8th century BC, such control should be evident in the form of homogenous Middle Geometric (MG) and Late Geometric (LG) Argolic pottery assemblages at all sites. We could therefore argue that either the production of all vessels was in Argos and they were then distributed to other sites in the Central Plain or that local workshops at the other sites were producing the same shapes and decoration as we see at Argos. As I will explain in chapter four, neither of these is the case: both the clay and motifs utilized at other settlements in the Plain reveal that they were making their own pottery and freely choosing how to decorate it.

In the subsequent chapters, I shall demonstrate by critiquing ancient sources and analyzing the relevant archaeological data that Argos did not have direct control over the neighboring settlements in the Central Plain during the 8th century BC. At most, one could argue that Argos was beginning to make attempts to legitimate its superiority through myth appropriation and a strong presence at the major regional sanctuary, the Argive Heraion, in this
period. However, Argos did not have formal control in the Central Plain until much later, namely in the 5th century BC when it conquered and destroyed Tiryns and Mycenae and claimed full ownership of the Argive Heraion.
Chapter Two

Iron Age Greece

During the early Iron Age, several things occurred that led scholars to formerly label it the “Dark Age.” Populations certainly decreased and material evidence was perhaps too ephemeral, or is now too difficult to find. In addition, writing was lost, and therefore for this period we do not even have lists in Linear B.\textsuperscript{1} Based on the lack of material and the catastrophic end that the Bronze Age (BA) palatial society met, we assume that this period was dark, nothing like the glories from those societies before or those following. We also tend to rely too heavily on what little we have, using Homer to try to piece together an Iron Age society and placing too much value on the Athenian material because of its abundance (a phenomenon labeled ‘Athenocentrism’). However, continued excavation and archaeological survey, along with an examination of the material we do have, shines light on this dark period and has shown that continuity exists where we did not think it did before. The material evidence also reveals that generalizations do not work for the Iron Age: regional differences were too prominent in this transitional period to make assumptions about uniformity with regard to anything, from population size to art form, from religious activity to architectural structures.

\textit{Ancient Sources}

The ancient historians seem to have been just as in the dark about the Iron Age as we have found ourselves. In his poem titled \textit{Theogony}, Hesiod told of five races of men: the golden race, the silver race, the bronze race, the race of heroes, and finally, in his own time, the race of iron. Hesiod’s description of his own time reveals his opinion about the end of the Iron Age: “I

\textsuperscript{1} The earliest textual evidence for religion are the Linear B records from the Third Palace Period, which do no more than list the offerings given to divine figures (Dickinson 2006, 223).
wish I were not counted among the fifth race of men, but rather had died before, or been born after it. This is the race of iron… Growing cares will be given them by the gods, and their lot will be a blend of good and bad” (174-179). It is generally agreed that Hesiod lived at the end of the Iron Age, around 700 BC. Yet, it was around this time that Greece was most visibly beginning to recover: foreign contacts were strong, writing restored, the population was growing again. Snodgrass thus assumes that Hesiod’s pessimism about his own time must have come from personal misfortunes (1971, 4). As a result, Hesiod’s account of the period is thought to be a generalization based on his own experiences. For him, the most difficult time for humans was at the end of the 8th century BC and did not extend for centuries before his own lifetime, like modern scholars have argued is the case for the Iron Age on the basis of archaeological evidence. As Whitley rightly says, “for [his own] period [Hesiod] is a reliable guide, but his sense of the recent and the remote past seems to be entirely mythical” (1991, 34).

In contrast, Herodotus, who lived and wrote during the 5th century BC, began his work by trying to link the Persian Wars of his own time to the events of the Trojan War. Among these opening paragraphs, he writes: “many of those [cities] that were great long ago have become inferior, and some that are great in my own time were inferior before” (1.5.4). Thus, among his discussions of the Trojan War Herodotus acknowledges that a reversal of fortunes occurred in association with that time. Indeed, by about 1100 BC the Bronze Age palaces had all been destroyed, thus extinguishing the power that the great palatial centers once held while leaving room for the cities that did not rely so heavily on the palatial centers to recover and grow in their

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2 Hesiod’s bitterness can be seen in several passages from his *Works and Days*. While speaking to his brother, Perses, Hesiod recounts the misfortunes of his father, who left his impoverished life in Kyme to build “his house near Helikon in the worthless village of Askra, a place… never good” (*Works and Days*, 635-640). He begins the same poem pointing out the envy one man has of another, particularly how “one neighbor envies another who hastens to his riches” (23-4). Hesiod was clearly very bitter about the impoverished life his family had led and as Snodgrass suggests, this may be why he is so negative about his own time.
stead. Therefore, while Mycenae and Tiryns needed time to recover and never became as strong as they had been under Bronze Age kings, settlements such as Argos and Athens continued on through the Iron Age and eventually became the new powers. Snodgrass writes that while Herodotus’ acknowledgement of this is useful to us, it is also nothing new among his contemporaries, all of whom were familiar with the epic poems and a “major upheaval in the state of things” thereafter (1971, 5). So, as Snodgrass points out, this still does not indicate that Herodotus had any knowledge of “a prolonged dark age” (1971, 5).

Thucydides, the last of the ancient sources to be discussed here, likewise lived in the 5th century BC (though he wrote his histories on the Peloponnesian Wars) and began his history with a discussion of matters in Greece before his time. In sections 1.11-1.12, Thucydides reveals his own opinion on the Trojan War. Following this, he mentions that the Dorian invasion occurred 80 years afterward\(^3\) and then writes that, “many years had to elapse before Hellas could attain to a durable tranquility undisturbed by removals, and could begin to send out colonies” (1.12.4). Overall, Thucydides only devotes a few sentences to the long stretch of time between his own lifetime and the Fall of Troy. He does mention that it took Greece a moment to recover, but generally he sees little worth mentioning besides the fact that Greece recovered steadily until it was doing well enough to found new colonies in Ionia, Italy, and Sicily, phenomena that occurred beginning in the 8th century BC. Snodgrass compares him and Hesiod, saying that the former sees no delineation for the beginning of the Dark Age, while Hesiod seems to think the Dark Age will never end (1971, 10).

\(^3\) Ancient historians were actually quite accurate in dating the Fall of Troy. Our archaeological evidence tells us that Troy VIIa was destroyed around 1190 BC. Herodotus estimated that Troy fell around 1250 BC, while Eratosthenes dated the destruction to 1183 BC (Snodgrass 1971, 12). Given these dates, Thucydides would have been stating that the Dorian invasion took place in the mid to late 12th century BC.
Overall, Snodgrass accurately summed up the knowledge and opinion of these ancient authors had of the Iron Age when he said: “These authorities are agreed, it seems, only in that none of them subscribes to the modern view of a recession, a period of weakness, a recovery, between the heroic and Classical ages” (Snodgrass 1971, 10). Thus, we are left with Homer and the archaeological record (mostly burials) to determine the affairs of the Iron Age. But how reliable is Homer for any factual information about the Iron Age, or even the Bronze Age for that matter?

Homer: How should we use him?

Homer is well discussed among scholars, both ancient and modern and there has been an ongoing debate to decide when the poet actually lived, if in fact he ever did. Herodotus believed he lived “no more than 400 year before [his] time” (2.53.2), placing Homer in the 9th century BC. Thucydides also places Homer long after the Trojan War, though he does not give an exact date as Herodotus does, merely saying he was “born long after the Trojan War” (1.3.3). Both Eratosthenes and Aristarchus, however, thought he lived shortly after the subject of his poems and thus place him in the 11th century BC (Snodgrass 1971, 5-6).4 The ancient authors also vary in their dedication to Homer. In his opening chapters, Herodotus devotes little more than a few sentences to the issue of the Trojan War and the abduction of Helen. In contrast, Thucydides

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4 Herodotus and Thucydides both lived in the 5th century BC and wrote histories of the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars respectively. Herodotus gave us his speculated date for Homer in a discussion of how the Greeks got their information on the gods, listing Homer and Hesiod as the earliest sources. Thucydides discussed Homer and his possible date while discussing the long history of disputes between the Greeks and the Persians, stretching back to the Trojan War. Aristarchus was a grammarian who lived in the 2nd century BC and wrote his own critical edition of the Homeric poems, trying to fix mistakes and ensure their validity. Unfortunately, the works of Aristarchus are lost, leaving us with fragments and references to his work by other ancient authors. Lastly, Eratosthenes lived in the 3rd century BC and, among other things, he is given the title “Father of Geography.” Though his works too are lost, we have fragments and references from other authors (Strabo among them) and know that he spent his time with the Homeric poems trying to prove the validity of Homer’s topography and geography.
speaks at length about the Trojan War, coming up with his own theories for its occurrence and relying on Homer as a factual source.

Interestingly, modern scholars have struggled just as much with the issue of Homer’s authority. A scholar from the early 19th century, William Mitford, treated Homer as a primary source for the time period, stating that his “testimony is unquestionable,” leaving no room for doubt that he believed everything that Homer offered about Ancient Greece (1823, 53). However, Friedrich August Wolf argued against this, insisting that Homer composed the Iliad by compiling many older folk tales (Prolegomena ad Homerum, 1795), and his argument was later used to claim that Homer was only good for attaining a general feel for his own time, which was long after the Trojan War (Morris 2000, 81). George Grote, who also lived in the 19th century, argued that the fact and the fiction in Homer could never be decisively separated, stating that Homer’s Trojan War was “essentially a legend and nothing more. If we are asked whether it be not a legend embodying portions of historical material… our answer must be, that as the possibility of it cannot be denied, so neither can the reality of it be affirmed” (1846, 321). The discussion should have ended there, but Schliemann, after finding Troy in 1870, began to rally behind the old idea of Homer as a reliable source, and everyone followed (Morris 2000, 85). However, when Michael Ventris cracked the code of Linear B in 1952, he discovered that Mycenaean economics differed vastly from those of the Homeric world and “by the mid-1960s Homer had been separated from the Bronze Age” (Morris 2000, 91-2).

However, since having acknowledged that Homer lived after the subject of his poems, there has still been much debate about when exactly the poems attributed to him came to be in their known form. George Grote wrote that Herodotus’s date, placing Homer between 850 and 800 BC, was probably too early, but ultimately decided that, “to place the Iliad and Odyssey at
some periods between 850 B.C. and 776 B.C. appears to me more probable than any other date, anterior or posterior” (1846, 181). Morris brings the date down, writing that “Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* probably date around 750-700 BC” (2007, 212). Snodgrass discusses the issue in general, explaining that scholarship was in agreement that the *Iliad* reached its final form as early as the mid-8th century BC, but that more recently scholars have been placing the poem later. As for the *Odyssey*, almost all authorities place the poem later than the mid-8th century and would even argue that it could be brought down into the 7th century BC (Snodgrass 1998, 12-13). Therefore, it would seem that as we uncover more information about Homer’s poems and the time in which they were composed, the later we assume the poems must have been written down in their known form.

The exact date aside, in more recent years it has been discovered that archaeology does not reflect Homeric society. Whitley states that while some details from the archaeological record do match up with Homer’s epics, at no time do things like the mixing of metallurgical practices and the arms described appear as Homer portrays them. Rather, “we have an amalgam,” some features being found in Late Bronze Age deposits, such as a boar’s-tusk helmet, while others come from the 8th century BC (Whitley 1991, 34-5). Some practices would have resonated with Homer’s audience of the 8th century, like cremation and individual burial, as is seen with Patroclus and Hector, and the emphasis on military contribution from the elite, but war chariots would not. Osborne argues that this “defamiliarisation ensures attention”—things are

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5 Whitley points out, as does Osborne, that the burials of the *Iliad*, those of Sarpedon, Patroclus, and Hector, have archaeological parallels, but none of them is specifically like any of the 8th century burials we have ever discovered. Most of the parallels to these epic funerals are found after Homer’s time, and thus probably copy Homer’s burials as a means to gain status and recognition. However, Whitley mentions that the Heroon at Lefkandi has many similarities to the burial of Patroclus, and given the early date of the Heroon, he does not toss the similarity off to imitation (Whitley 1991, 38).
just foreign enough to be captivating while still managing to be believable (Osborne 2004, 216-217).

Langdon agrees with Osborne’s notion of keeping things just familiar enough to resonate with the audience, arguing that Homer’s *ekphrasis* of the shield of Achilles describes in verse what Late Geometric artists placed on their vessels, especially in that the concentric design of the shield recalls decorated metal bowls from Phoenicia (2008, 13). Yet she is sure to refute a common theme of discussion linking Homer and Geometric figural scenes—most assume that the 8th-century scenes of battle and heroes found on Geometric pottery represent specific myths from the works of Homer (2008, 3-4). But, Langdon points out that “seeing Geometric art as the visual counterpart of epic poetry is no longer supportable… When Homer is compared with early images, it can be shown that the narrative scenes of Geometric art do not derive from preserved versions of Homeric epic” (Langdon 2008, 3). Although Homer’s *ekphrasis* recalls Geometric figural imagery, and vice versa, one cannot say that any specific scenes are clearly represented. Homer’s description of Achilles’ shield merely aligns with the artistic practices of his day, allowing him to draw his poetry into reality. Moreover, generic scenes of war and funerals in LG art show the popularity of all things heroic in the period, arguably reflecting the environment in which Homer’s stories were forged without a clear relationship to any specific art form.

6 It has always been questioned whether the earliest figural scenes of the Geometric period were influenced by or even reflect actual scenes from the Homeric epics. In his book, *Homer and the Artists*, Snodgrass goes through a list of Geometric artworks that have been labeled as Homeric scenes. He mentions funerary scenes, battle scenes, and the marriage scene on an Athenian pot that most think depicts the abduction of Helen, among others. His conclusion for the battle and funerary scenes is that, “to compare or link figures of such a vivid individuality [as one finds in Homer] with the apparently jejune stereotypes of Geometric art… seems something of a presumption” (1998, 23). For every figural scene he lists, he provides enough evidence for a connection to Homer to be presumptuous at best. Last on his list he brings up the scene of a capsized ship on an Attic Geometric oinochoe. Snodgrass admits that this scene is the most convincing one to possibly represent a Homeric scene: the capsizing of Odysseus’ ship that left him as sole survivor in book 12 of the *Odyssey*. But, even here he points out elements of this particular scene that could allow one to reject the connection (1998, 35-6). Overall, Snodgrass concludes that, “we have failed to detect, in the art of the eighth century, a single clear and incontrovertible reflection of the impact of Homer’s poems” (1998, 38-9).
Although it has been a long discussion and many times scholars have gone back and forth on the merits of Homer, it seems a conclusion has been reached. It may not help much, but the soundest conclusion on the usefulness of Homer is that he is a combination of two times and two societies: his own 8th-century BC society and what had been passed down concerning the Late Bronze Age. It is beneficial that we can match objects from the archaeological record to one period or the other, but it shall remain that Homer is an artistic “amalgam,” not a historical document, and accordingly not much help in gleaning a full picture of either period. Thus the traditional reliance by modern historians and archaeologists upon Homer as a guide for interpreting the political geography of the Iron Age Argos is very unfortunate (see also chapter three).

Iron Age Society, Politics, and Architecture

Knowing that Homer cannot be used to illuminate the world of the Iron Age, attempts to make something of the limited archaeological evidence from this “Dark Age” have led to interesting conclusions about the period. An early scholar to take such an approach was Anthony Snodgrass, who lists the five features of the Iron Age:

The modern doctrine would hold that the following characteristics were present in the post-Mycenaean period: first, a fall in population that is certainly detectable and may have been devastating; secondly, a decline in or loss of certain purely material skills; thirdly, a similar decline or loss in respect of some of the more elevated arts, of which the apparent loss of the art of writing is most striking to us… fourthly, a fall in living-standards and perhaps in the sum of wealth; fifthly, a general severance of contacts, commercial and otherwise, with most peoples beyond the Aegean area and even with some of those within it. To these features, some would add a growth of acute insecurity (Snodgrass 1971, 2).

While all of these points are true, in the years since each one seems to have been exaggerated by scholars, and such a dramatic focus on the losses and changes in the period dismisses the fact that there was, in truth, some continuity from the Mycenaean period. Unfortunately we have very little settlement evidence from the Iron Age and a large portion of our evidence comes from
graves. As a result, the decline in population and fall in living standards have been exaggerated, and some would argue that the issue concerning the loss of overseas contacts has also been exaggerated (see below).

The drop in population during the Iron Age has, perhaps, been most overstated. Snodgrass and Desborough both argued that the population had dropped by three quarters or more in the Iron Age due to ongoing destructions and emigration (Snodgrass 1971, 367; Desborough 1972, 18). In turn, Ian Morris also estimated that Greece’s population dropped by as much as 75% in the Early Iron Age (EIA), between 1200-1000 BC (2007, 218). Dickinson, however, points out that these scholars do not take into account the lack of archaeological visibility of EIA sites (Dickinson 2006, 93). Dickinson is careful to point out that these numbers are being drawn from very limited evidence, since most of the “dots” on the Greek Iron Age map do not represent settlements, but burials (Dickinson 2006, 84). He addresses the question of archaeological visibility, suggesting that surveys are not turning up Iron Age material because the materials could not stand the test of time. He further supplements this argument by suggesting that at smaller sites people may have been building houses out of more perishable materials that have left no trace. Ultimately, he concludes that, “Overall, it seems safest simply to accept the general impression that population was low, without any commitment to precise figures, because these entail highly questionable deductions from the numbers of sites and/or burials identified” (Dickinson 2006, 97-8). Walter Scheidel agrees that the burial and settlement evidence we have is not sufficient to judge the population levels of Iron Age Greece (2003, 129). Furthermore, he argues that Snodgrass’s estimates of a population increase of 3-4%, based off of the increase in burials in Attica between 780-720 BC, are simply exaggerated, even when considering that “historical populations recovering from prolonged depressions have certainly
exhibited substantial growth rates” (Scheidel 2003, 127-128). In his conclusion, Scheidel argues that the case of Iron Age Greece is nothing special and insists, “anomalous events, such as sudden population 'explosions', cannot be documented on the basis of the available evidence” (Scheidel 2003, 136).

In addition to population estimates, some conclusions about the overall quality of life in the Iron Age as compared with the previous and following periods have been made based on settlement size, population estimates, housing, and skeletal analyses: “EIA Greece… supported fewer people, living shorter lives, in more squalid conditions than it did in LBA or archaic/classical times. Regional variations were pronounced” (Morris 2007, 230). Morris concludes that life in EIA Greece was far less opulent than it had been in BA Greece or would be in Classical Greece, and no one seems to disagree with this conclusion. However, even if this generalization of life in Iron Age Greece is correct, we must remember his final point: ultimately regional and settlement variations were prominent. Whitley explains it well: “There was no such thing as Dark Age society, if by that we imply that the social structure and organisation of Greek Dark Age communities was essentially the same. Instead of a Dark Age society, there were a number of Dark Age societies, which developed along quite different lines” (1991, 342).

These regional variations can be seen in a number of ways. One, pointed out by Whitley himself, is that different Iron Age sites had different social organizations, namely stable and unstable. According to Whitley, stable sites are those that were occupied continuously through the Iron Age: “These sites were often large, they had usually been important Mycenaean centres, and were very often to become the urban foci of later city states” (Whitley 1991, 346). He places Athens, Argos, and Knossos into this category. Unstable settlements, on the other hand, are settlements that were occupied for a shorter period of time, “anything from fifty years to three
centuries,” and among these Whitley names Zagora and Nichoria (1991, 346-7). Whitley argues that these unstable societies fit what anthropologists deem the “Big Man” model, a system based on display and in which a settlement is focused around a large central building (1991, 349):

> Big men could offer some of the economic security that had previously been provided by the palaces. But big men also had to attract followers… Their position demanded that they make constant exertions to maintain any kind of following… But, since authority in these systems was so highly personal, on a big man's death, his authority and his prestige collapsed with him. In Lefkandi, Toumba the association of a big man's personality with his house was such that it could not be used by anyone else. So he was interred within its floor, and a tumulus was built over both him and his house (Whitley 1991, 349-350).

In these unstable societies, the “Big Man” gained power by providing a feeling of stability and hosting feasts to entertain the people and retain their loyalty. The property of this “Big Man” was so linked with his power, Whitley argued, that upon his death it was rendered useless, as is seen at Lefkandi. This, he argued, is why the societies were so unstable— every time the chief died, the society moved and changed, following “the rise and fall of big men” (1991, 349). Whitley also argues that these big men were the equivalent of Homer’s *basileis*, who also had to win and maintain followers with bribery and oratory (1991, 351). Whitley’s attempt to categorize societies nearly works, but Dickinson rightly points out some flaws that do not allow Iron Age societies and the “Big Man” model to match up exactly. Noting two of Whitley’s biggest examples, Lefkandi and Nichoria, Dickinson states that the sites do not exhibit the instability that his model requires. The Toumba cemetery was occupied for generations after the Heroon was covered, while at Nichoria the main building stood long enough to undergo renovations. Dickinson also argues for longer and more stable settlements at Mitrou and Kavousi, two of Whitley’s other examples (Dickinson 2006, 111).\(^7\) Clearly it is difficult to determine the exact social organization of Iron Age settlements.

\(^7\) Some of Dickinson’s information is based on new evidence that Whitley did not have at the time.
Instead of trying to apply a general theory to Greece at this time, Foxhall preferred to be more general, stating that “whatever happened at the end of the LH/LM III B period, it is clear that the top layer of the elite was swept away and the lower orders rearranged themselves over the next 100-150 years or so” (1995, 244). She also suggests, based on the study of pollen cores used to track changes in farming practices, that settlements that were not so closely tied to the palaces in the Bronze Age (such as Nichoria) continued into the Iron Age relatively intact, though the elite had more freedom (Foxhall 1995, 247). Mazarakis-Ainian asserts that in this period just after the destruction, the rearrangement consisted of local chieftains, who had been dependent on the central authority of the palace society, rising up and taking power (1997, 75). Following this reshuffle, there was stagnation and eventual recovery. Lastly, whether we call them basileis or big men, the chieftains that emerged after the fall of palace society were eventually forced to step down and share their power with other elites. At that time, oligarchy replaced single leadership, which occurred at the same time as synoikism (the prelude to polis formation) and coincided with the rise of temples and communal worship centers in the 8th century BC (Mazarakis-Ainian 1997, 382-384).

The physical structure of houses is always an important factor in understanding social and political organization. In Iron Age Greece, houses show even more clearly the regional differences we have already seen in other aspects of material culture. We do not, however, have an abundance of settlement evidence from the Iron Age and so there is very little upon which to base our understanding of household organization and function. On the whole, settlements were made up of “free-standing houses built in the standard way with basically mudbrick walls and thatched roofs” (Dickinson 2006, 106). Additionally, basic construction changed little from the
second to first millennia BC, though construction quality declined drastically after 1100 BC (Morris 2007, 229).

House plans in IA Greece were also very simple. Coucouzelli states that the megaron, a single-room structure, served both as a house and religious building during the period. However, in the 8th century BC the two functions split off into different structures and became separate entities (2007, 169). She examines two sectors at Zagora to show this transition. Sector D/H, where the original houses were not destroyed, but expanded, exhibits the transition in the 8th century BC from megaron houses to something like a courtyard house or oikos (2007, 169-175). Sector J, on the other hand, exhibits only the oikos house plan; it did not begin with megaron structures (Coucouzelli 2007, 175-177). Coucouzelli argues these changes in house architecture were spurred on by aristocrats and show that the desire for both separation of the sexes and the ability to receive male guests while keeping the rest of the house private, an idea that would dominate in the Archaic and Classical oikos, occurred at Zagora (2007, 179).

At Oropos, however, we see an entirely different house structure. Here, Mazarakis-Ainian describes, “complexes of curvilinear buildings surrounded by enclosure walls (periboloi), frequently repaired or replaced” (2007, 157). He argues that the apsidal/oval buildings in the complexes served for habitation and household or artisan activities, while the accompanying round buildings served auxiliary functions. He also notes that cult activity can be linked with both building types (2007, 157). Additionally, Mazarakis-Ainian points out that this type of complex is not just found at Oropos, but is found elsewhere in the “Euboean koine” (2007, 160). Finally, he argues that these complexes show a turning of the household inward and an eventual movement of communal activities outside to civic buildings and meeting places and thus show “the transitional stage between the mononuclear elongated house of the Dark Ages and the multi-
roomed courtyard house of the Archaic period” (2007, 168). Although these two settlements (Zagora and Oropos) both date to the 8th or 7th centuries BC, they are vastly different, one consisting of rectilinear megaron-type houses transitioning to the multi-room oikos, another consisting of curvilinear complexes each individually delimited by periboloi. Therefore, as with so many other aspects of Iron Age society, regionality is also shown through the domestic architecture of these two well-published examples of IA settlements. Yet, despite the vast differences between the structures, Coucouzelli and Mazarakis-Ainian reach the same conclusion: these houses are transitional, an indication of movement toward the courtyard houses that were part of the koine of Archaic and Classical Greece.

Overall, though conditions and populations did decline in the Iron Age, numbers have been exaggerated due to the lack of material and settlement evidence. Additionally, regional and societal differences in Iron Age Greece make it difficult to develop generalizations about conditions or social and political organization. Unsurprisingly then, we cannot rely on such generalizations to interpret the evidence from the Argolid either.

Iron Age Religion and Cult
A large point of continuity between BA and IA Greece is found in religious practices. Our knowledge of Mycenaean religion is very limited given that Linear B only provided lists of offerings made to the gods. However, we can glean several things from these records and the archaeological remains. First, the Mycenaeans had both priests and priestesses and the worship of a god was overseen by a figure of the same sex, something that carries into later periods of Greek religion (Dickinson 2006, 223). Second, the Olympian gods known from Homer and worshipped in Archaic and Classical Greece are mentioned in the Linear B tablets (Osborne 2004, 209). Lastly, the way in which religion was practiced (sacrifices, festivals, offerings to the
gods) essentially remained the same. With that said, however, some aspects of Greek religion seem to have changed between BA and Postpalatial/EIA Greece (Dickinson 2006, 223; Morgan 1996, 41). For example, the continued use of clay figurines links the Third Palace Period and Postpalatial Period on the mainland,

But by the end of the Postpalatial Period evidence for the dedication and even the manufacture of figurines has virtually disappeared from the Aegean outside Crete... It is very hard to accept theories of continuity from the Mycenaean tradition, let alone of widespread manufacture, in the virtual absence of figurines from the quite abundant deposits at sites where there is continuity of occupation like Kalapodi, Asine and Lefkandi (Dickinson 2006, 228-231).

Morgan also points out the drop in figurines from LHIIIC onward, but notes that when figurines do show up in the early Iron Age they are changed. In the Bronze Age, female figurines were most prevalent. In the transitional period, figurines were largely bovine, which Morgan argues could have been due to the importance of feasting during this period. Finally, from the late 10th century onward figurines were largely of horses and eventually they become exclusively votives, alongside tripods (Morgan 1996, 56).

In addition to the lack of/change in figurines from the BA to EIA, Dickinson also notes that there was a turnover of ritual sites from the Postpalatial period to EIA—even the shrine at Tiryns, which showed continuity into the Postpalatial Period, went out of use. Kalapodi shows continued use from the Third Palace Period onward, but other sites that become quite important in the future, Olympia and Isthmia, were established in the Postpalatial period, not continued from Bronze Age activity (Dickinson 2006, 231). All three of these sites also give us a glimpse of what EIA religion looked like: the earliest deposits consist of eating/drinking vessels and ash, suggesting that ritual dining was taking place. Dickinson summarizes Morgan to give an explanation for this new behavior, stating it was, “a deliberate decision by local magnates to establish new ritual sites and to meet at them regularly as an expression of cooperation between
the local communities” (2006, 231). As Morgan argues, the link between cult and political power did not break, but merely shifted, serving as a medium for display and the strengthening and celebration of alliances (Morgan 1996, 51-55). Dickinson finds merit in this hypothesis because it links the new cult sites to social development and foreshadows the importance of cult sites to community identity. He imagines that these ritual feasts would have looked somewhat like the ceremony, described by Homer in the *Iliad*, that Telemachus encounters when he goes to see Nestor at Pylos—Nestor’s family, as leaders, presided over the feasting, but all in the community took part (*Odyssey*, 3.33-70). Just so, such feasts would have been presided over by a chieftain, but all in the community would partake (Dickinson 2006, 231-233).

Another shift takes place in the late 10th century BC, in which emphasis is placed on the dedication of votive offerings, including tripods and figurines. It is at this time that display at sanctuaries starts to replace display in burial, though the transfer is not so cut-and-dry as some scholars would like to claim (Dickinson 2006, 236). During this period at Athens burials are still accompanied by major processions and large grave markers. This disparity brings us to yet another important point: IA religion, like so many other things, is not homogenous throughout Greece. Due to Homer’s epics, we know that it is not until circa 700 BC that Olympian religion is established and this can only be confirmed for Homer’s homeland in Ionia (Dickinson 2006, 234). Throughout the Iron Age “at best only outlines of patterns” (Dickinson 2006, 235) can be seen in Greek religion, though many of the consistent religious features of later periods in Greece “were developments in the EIA at the earliest, not inherited from the BA past” (Dickinson 2006, 237).

Finally, in his study of the transition from ruler’s dwellings to communal temples, Mazarakis-Ainian notes that in EIA Greece the ritual feasting mentioned by Morgan and
Dickinson took place in domestic cults and ruler’s dwellings. Feasting materials (dining vessels and animal bones) are commonly found alongside benches and hearths in ruler’s dwellings and at many EIA sites altars are located just outside these same dwellings (Mazarakis-Ainian 1997, 379). Thus, he concludes, EIA rulers had a priestly role and he, like Dickinson, also argues that Homeric feasts are representative of EIA religion (1997, 380-381). However, a shift took place in the 8th or 7th century BC in which the chiefs began to lose their power as one-man leadership was abolished and urban centers and urban temples began to rise (1997, 382-384). Nevertheless, Mazarakis-Ainian points out that ruler’s dwellings cannot be deemed “proto-temples” because during this transition temples and ruler’s dwellings existed at the same time (1997, 393). Thus, after the shift in material culture that Morgan mentioned, we have yet another shift in the 8th or 7th century BC that marks the transition from one-man rule and domestic cult in ruler’s dwellings to an oligarchic system with communal/urban religion.

Despite the lack of continuity in major religious sites from BA to EIA Greece, there is one very strong point of connection between the religious practices of the periods: ancestor or tomb cult. Antonaccio agrees that many BA shrines are not continued in IA Greece, but she does point out that tomb cult at and reuse of Mycenaean tombs was seen in the Iron Age. First, Antonaccio is careful to distinguish Iron Age tomb cult from Archaic and Classical hero cult: the former takes place at Mycenaean tombs, the latter does not (1994, 91). With that clarification, Antonaccio explains that the point of tomb cult was to stake claims on the territory and resources of ancestors through emphasis on lineage (1994, 92). She uses the tomb cult at Prosymna (in the Central Argolid Plain) as an example: “the Mycenaeans and Argives were both practicing tomb cult in the chamber and tholos tombs located close to their own citadels, and the tombs of Prosymna located between them would be a suitable venue for symbolic conflict” (Antonaccio
Argos and Mycenae, two cities that would develop a long history of conflict until Argos destroyed Mycenae in the 5th century BC, used tomb cult at Prosymna as a venue of display for that competition and as an attempt to stake claims on intervening territory through ancestral ties. Prosymna is one example among many that Antonaccio uses and through it we see that Iron Age communities used religious practice at Mycenaean tombs for political advantage.

Overall, it is evident that religion and political power were closely linked during the Iron Age in Greece. Religion was a means for community leaders to establish and celebrate bonds, but also a means to stake claims on territories and resources based on ancestral ties. But, as Dickinson points out, in this period there are, at best, only outlines of patterns, and religion in this period varied from settlement to settlement. It is not until the 8th or 7th century that we see a more communal religion and the full establishment of Olympian religion through Homer, and even his poems can only definitely confirm the recognition of Olympian religion in Ionia.

Iron Age Burial Practice

Iron Age burial practice is yet another issue that confirms the lack of homogeneity in this period. Burials and grave goods differed from region to region and even changed throughout the Iron Age as a whole. Additionally, as has been mentioned above, burials are where we get most of our information and material for the Iron Age. In Athens, for example, we have several Iron Age burials, in addition to wells full of materials, but we still have yet to find the location of the Iron Age settlement. This is precisely why it is so difficult to determine how Iron Age societies functioned: the evidence we have tells us far more about how they died than how they lived, and even then we recognize that there are limitations to the evidence.

There have been varying opinions on the amount of information we can glean from a society based on burial ritual. In the early 1970s, Binford (and Saxe) came up with the theory
that there is a strong link between social form and mortuary practice to the extent that mortuary practice allows us to determine the social type of a settlement (Binford 1972, 221). In addition, Joseph A. Tainter also claimed that energy expenditure was indicative of social status and that burial can therefore be used to rank the complexity of a society (Tainter 1978, 117, 126).

However, as Whitley points out, some parts of the burial practice, feasting for example, are not always archaeologically visible and we cannot assume that in every society the “recognition of social identities [in burials] is universal and automatic”. Not every society, region, settlement, or even family or group in IA Greece treated the dead the same way. Therefore, the hypotheses of Binford and Saxe can only be counted as “statistical probabilities” (Whitley 1991, 27).

Moreover, numerous IA burials have been studied, but we still lack an understanding of what took place before, during, and after the burial in the absence of written records and ritual material.\(^8\) Additionally, burial and other aspects of Iron Age society vary so much from site to site that though we may understand quite a bit about the practices of one site, such as Athens, we cannot directly apply that same knowledge to another.

In Athens, the prevailing rite in the Iron Age was cremation, and it had been since the mid-11\(^{th}\) century BC (Coldstream 2003, 7). When a funeral was carried out, the body of the deceased was burned on a pyre as the family feasted nearby and threw dining vessels into the flames. Finally, the body was placed in an urn along with some possessions (Coldstream 2003, 7). Cremation was not exclusive to Athens or Attica and is known to have taken place elsewhere, such as Lefkandi, while inhumation remained the prevailing rite at many other major sites, such as Argos and Corinth. The predominance of cremation burials in Athens during the IA marks a break from the BA past. In the Submycenaean period inhumations prevailed and there were very

\(^8\) Very little work has been done on the bones of IA burials to date, and those studies that have been done are now outdated and unreliable, thus making it even harder for modern scholars to determine the specifics of burial ritual and to correlate them to individuals or social groups.
few grave goods. In the same period, we also see the reuse of older tombs and the use of family
tombs to emphasize social connection (Dickinson 2006, 179-180). However, in the
Protogeometric period in Attica, cremation began to appear, ashes were buried in gender specific
urns, and men began to be buried with weapons (Langdon 2003, 7). By the beginning of the EIA
single burial had replaced multiple burial and cist and pit burials had replaced chamber tombs. In
this period grave goods were not too rich and exotic imports were rare, though we do see women
and children buried with metal and jewelry (Dickinson 2006, 185-187). In the Middle Geometric
(MG) period, the richest graves are now being found in the Attic countryside instead of in
Athens proper and younger women were receiving richer grave goods while the richness of male
burials was leveling off. Lastly, after about 760 BC in the LG period, we see more use of
monumental grave markers (Langdon 2003, 7-8), some of which are pierced at the bottom so that
libations can reach the burial (Coldstream 2003, 10).

At Lefkandi, the prevailing rite was also cremation. There the remains were not placed in
urns, but rather were placed together in an open grave along with unburnt pottery and personal
possessions. Nevertheless, the graves at Lefkandi are some of the richest from the Iron Age. Out
of 30 10th-century BC graves, no fewer than ten contain gold and some even contained Near
Eastern imports (Coldstream 2003, 18-19). In contrast, in Boeotia, rituals vary from site to site:
at Vranesi, cremations and inhumations occur side-by-side in cist graves, while the 10th-century
BC burials at Medeon are all cremations in elliptical rock-cut graves, though by the 9th century
BC cremations and inhumations are found side-by-side as well (Coldstream 2003, 15-16).
Burials in Corinth and Argos were quite different from those of Athens, yet similar to one
another. Inhumation was the prevailing rite at both, and it was typical for the deceased to be
buried with their knees drawn up or flexed. In Argos, however, cist graves and occasionally large
pithoi were used, while in Corinth we see cist graves and stone sarcophagi. Lastly, there is also an overall pattern in the wealth of grave goods at Corinth, Argos, and Athens starting in the Early Geometric (EG) period. Although Athens is the first site to see gold objects amongst its EG grave goods since the Protogeometric (PG) period, at all three grave goods get progressively richer from that time on (Coldstream 2003, 9 and 12-13).

From the examples discussed above, it is evident that burial practices varied from site to site. Regrettably, Athens has also, for now, been given far more attention and produced far more material to draw conclusions from than other sites. However, some overall conclusions about burials in the Iron Age can still be drawn from the material. For example, as will be explored in the next section, grave goods were rare and not so rich beginning in the Submycenaean and Protogeometric periods, but as the Iron Age progressed grave goods became richer and more abundant. In the 9th and 8th centuries BC, this increase in wealth allowed for greater visibility of burials, though with more evidence comes less uniformity of practice even while inhumation remains generally dominant and begins to reappear in Athens. Dickinson argues that this increase in material indicates an emphasis on display (although he does not agree that an increase in burials means an increase in population in this period), and in Argos to this is added the reuse of tombs to draw attention to the burying group (Dickinson 2006, 193-195). Lastly, grave goods in the Iron Age include weapons (in addition, of course, to pottery, the most profuse type of grave good in the Iron Age, as will be explored in depth later)—weapons accompanied the male cremation in the Heroon at Lefkandi, many burials in Athens have a sword “killed” around the cremation urn, and an entire panoply was found in a male burial in Argos. This shows that though burial practices may have varied regionally, overall high value was placed upon prowess in war and weapons were a way of showing status in the period (Osborne 2004, 209-210).
Iron Age Trade and External Contacts

As seen in Snodgrass’s description of the Iron Age above, it is generally believed that contact between the Aegean and the Near East and even contacts within the Aegean were severed when the Bronze Age palatial system fell. Dickinson asserts that trade was probably disrupted because, when the Mycenaean palaces fell, the Hittite empire was also collapsing, thus disrupting trade on both ends (2006, 202). Furthermore, there was a decline in exotic goods in IA Greece until about 900 BC, when graves once again began to regularly include gold and other imports. The cemetery at the Toumba mound at Lefkandi had some of the richest goods earliest, with Gr 49/1, possibly the first grave there, already containing gold circa 950 BC. By 850 BC, just before the cemetery went out of use, it was typical to have graves with a dozen or more gold ornaments (Morris 2000, 238). Graves get richer in Athens around 900 BC, and shortly thereafter Gr 42 contains gold and a bowl with a hunting scene on it known to be a Levantine import (Morris 2000, 239-241). By 850 BC, graves with gold and a large number of goods are no longer unusual at Athens (Morris 2000, 241). Additionally, a pair of earrings, found in a mid-9th century BC grave in Athens and decorated with trapeziums and pomegranates has been deemed the work of a resident Phoenician because it mixes Phoenician and Greek techniques. Evidently, by circa 800 BC contacts were strong enough to have foreign craftsmen working and selling their goods in Athens (Dickinson 2006, 118; Higgins 1969, 145; Coldstream 2003, 34). Lastly, Argos follows the same pattern (increasing wealth after 900 BC) as Athens and the Corinthia seems to as well, though Morris claims the evidence from the latter is so meager it is hard to tell (2000, 242).

It is apparent that by the early 9th century BC gold and imported goods were back in Greek graves and by 850 BC graves were generally much richer than they had been (Morris 2000, 256). Why were grave goods so poor up until this point? It has been suggested that
disrupted trade at the beginning of the IA resulted in a lack of exotic imports, including gold, available for deposition in graves and, as Snodgrass theorizes, even a lack of materials to produce bronze (1971, 237-49). Ironworking, thought to be a technology imported from Cyprus (Dickinson 2006, 114), replaced bronze and made iron the prevalent metal of the Iron Age. According to Snodgrass, the loss of contacts with the Near East after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces resulted in a shortage of tin and thus a lack of ability to produce bronze, forcing ironworking to become more prevalent (1971, 237-49). Dickinson, however, disagrees with this theory and argues that an analysis of IA bronzes shows that they are not just reused from the Bronze Age as Snodgrass proposes. Instead, Dickinson argues that ironworking technology had its own prestigious symbolic value because it was new and exotic, and that it was also favored because it was more practical, requiring only one metal instead of two (2006, 145-146). In addition, there were local iron sources available to the Greeks in the IA, and as a result the Greeks did not need to rely on trade for iron specifically, but this need not mean that contacts were severed. Therefore, it was likely a change of taste rather than change of contacts that resulted in the switch from bronze to iron in the Iron Age.

Although the shift to iron may not confirm the lack of Near Eastern contacts as easily as Snodgrass may have liked, after 900 BC the reappearance of imports and richer grave goods may indicate that those contacts were either renewed or strengthened. There is strong evidence of this contact through the adoption of Orientalizing themes in Greek art beginning as early as the mid-9th century BC, but particularly towards the end of the 8th century BC when the Geometric tradition begins to lose steam: “All forms of figured art [in the late 8th c. BC] now begin to lose their former rigidity, under oriental influence; and Geometric linear ornament is gradually

9 ‘Orientalizing’ is the term given to the period of art after the Geometric period in which Greek art, particularly pottery, was heavily influenced by motifs and techniques learned from areas in the Near East, such as Phoenicia and Assyria.
superseded by plant motifs of oriental origin” (Coldstream 2003, 341-2). We begin to see Orientalizing influence in pottery decoration and in the use and import of bronze bowls, ivories, scarabs, and other Oriental luxuries. Greek pottery is even influenced by Near Eastern bronze bowls, while Greek sculpture is also influenced by Near Eastern equivalents. Coldstream argues that influences became so strong because Near Eastern merchants (particularly Phoenicians) were actually coming to Greece in the Orientalizing period due to political unrest in the Assyrian empire (Coldstream 2003, 342).

Moreover, these contacts are evident even as far West as the Greek colonies in Italy and Sicily, both intense points of contact with the Near East. The first colonies were founded from 800-735 BC for the purpose of trade, unlike the second wave (734-706 BC), which were based on finding good agricultural land (Coldstream 2003, 203). Orientalizing vessels have been found among the graves (circa 750 BC) in the San Montano Valley in Italy (Coldstream 2003, 209). Additionally, the Euboeans are credited with rediscovering the West and are known to have traded pottery, iron-working, and oriental artifacts for metal ores with the native Italic peoples (Coldstream 2003, 224).

Overall, the evidence from graves indicates that trade was in fact disrupted in the early Iron Age Greece and then picked up in the mid-9th century BC. However, it is not certain that this contact was ever entirely severed, nor that it did in fact result in a metal shortage. Sarah Morris argues just as much, saying, “the Aegean was part of an east Mediterranean cultural koine. Aegean-Levantine contacts did not collapse after 1100; rather, pre-classical Greece was always in ‘oriental culture,’” and adding that these contacts only truly collapsed after the Persian Wars (Morris 2000, 102).
One piece of evidence for continued contact with the East is the distribution of Pendent Semi-circle Skyphoi beyond Euboea. This particular skyphos is descended from an Attic Protogeometric type and is a hallmark of Euboean pottery that was developed at Lefkandi and surrounding regions. They have a wide distribution and a long life throughout the Geometric period (Coldstream 2003, 16-17) and are found throughout the Euboean koine, the Cyclades, and even make it into the Eastern and Western Mediterranean (Lemos 2002, 44-47). They are also eventually exported into the Levant in the late 9th century BC, where Euboean and Cycladic merchants had posts on the North Syrian coast at Al Mina (Coldstream 2008, 345). These skyphoi are proof that contact and trade did not cease entirely in IA Greece. Trade was still conducted, throughout the Euboean koine10, between Euboea and the Cycladic islands, and to the Levant and the colonies in the West, either by Greek or Near Eastern merchants, allowing imports to flow into most centers in Mainland Greece, including the Argolid.

Iron Age Material Culture
As has been stated above, most of the materials from IA Greece come from burial contexts and, toward the end of the period, sanctuaries as well. Snodgrass’s description above was appropriate: on the whole, in the absence of support from the palaces, material culture did decline in IA Greece, but throughout the period it regained its former reputation, culminating in forms and decoration quite unique and that was at times successful in uniting different crafts.

Jewelry
Mycenaean jewelry was excellently crafted out of rich materials, but by comparison Iron Age jewelry was extremely simple. After the fall of the Mycenaean palaces, high-quality jewelry

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10 Koine is a Greek term that means “common.” To say that a region, such as Euboea, has a koine is to say that the region has a common culture. Koine was also used to describe the common Greek language shared by all in Greece during and after the Hellenistic period.
returns first in Attica and on Crete (Higgins 1969, 143). Gold jewelry has been discovered in the 12th-century BC cemetery at Perati in Attica, nearly all of which was imported from Cyprus, but “at the end of the twelfth century… the real break in continuity comes. With the new age we find, in the main, new kinds of jewellery… Most of it, as befits a poorer and austerer age, is of bronze” (Higgins 1969, 144). In the Submycenaean Kerameikos in Athens, the Mycenaean tradition is continued in some aspects, for example, in the continued use of finger rings, but most of the jewelry from these graves differs from the Mycenaean tradition and from about 1050-900 BC there is no gold jewelry in Attica. Thereafter, gold jewelry reappears, though it is usually very simple and based on Cypriot models. Some rich pieces have been unearthed, such as the afore-mentioned earrings from an Athenian tomb (Higgins 1969, 144-145). In tombs at Eleusis from circa 800 BC were also found rich materials, such as earrings of a technique similar to those from Athens, and a pair of fibulae decorated with figural representations that also show Phoenician influence (1969, 145-147). But, from the 8th century BC onward jewelry is poorly represented in Attica (Higgins 1969, 149).

At Knossos we see the same pattern: a break with the former jewelry tradition begins around 1200 BC, yet gold jewelry continues with possible Cypriot influence until it disappears at the end of the 12th century BC. Gold jewelry then reappears (again with Cypriot influences) in tombs, in the form of diadems, rings, dress pins, earrings, and hairpins, around 950 BC, a half century before it reappears in Attica. Around 800 BC, jewelry gets suddenly very sophisticated at Knossos, much of which comes specifically from the tomb at Tekke— for example, an early 8th-century BC diadem, with clear Oriental influence, shows two men fighting lions (Higgins 1969, 149-150).

Fibulae
Fibulae were decorative pins used to fasten the *peplos* or cloak. Several have been found in graves at women’s shoulders and while they varied across Greece (like so many other things from the Iron Age) in Central Greece they were constructed with plates large enough to decorate. This type has been deemed the “Attico-Boeotian” type due to the fact that they appear, and seem also to have been made, in those regions (DeVries 1972, 111-113). At first, the fibulae, which all date to the 8th and 7th centuries BC, had single-figure compositions quite similar to the metopal designs found on Geometric pottery. Likewise, as occurred with Late Geometric pottery, decoration on fibulae could be distinguished by craftsman and have thus been categorized as such. For example, the Schwanmeister is known for decorating his fibulae with long-necked birds, tremolo fill, and rosettes. The Löwemeister, on the other hand, is known for his patterns, usually putting a horse or deer on one side of the plate and a ship or lion on the other. What is more, his lions have jaws that curve outward, which is a characteristic of lions in Boeotian, Euboean, and Attic vase painting (DeVries 1972, 119-120). Eventually, humans are even introduced onto fibulae plates, where they usually appear leading horses or fighting one another (DeVries 1972, 121-123). While above we saw that jewelry as a whole took on a lot of foreign influence, namely Phoenician and Cypriot, the decoration on later fibulae also takes direction from a craft much closer to home: Greek vase painting.

**Tripod-Lebes**

The tripod is one item that was never lost from the Mycenaean period and continues into the Iron Age with just a few changes (Benton 1934, 77). One discovered at Olympia even has spirals on it derived from Mycenaean spirals. But in addition to showing some continuity from the Bronze Age, the decoration on tripods also shows some connection with Geometric pottery and figurines, though the style is adapted to suit the medium. For example, zigzags are a common
decoration for the panels on the legs of tripods, and zigzags are also found on Geometric pottery practically throughout the tradition (Benton 1934, 80-81). Additionally, the same figures appear on tripods as we see on pottery and among figurines. Birds occur early and late on tripods, but we also see bulls, horses, and men. Bulls appear only as bulls’ heads and both horses and men are more substantial than they are on vase painting to try to avoid breakage. Additionally, men are seen throwing spears, but also leading away a horse, just as we will see later in Geometric pottery (Benton 1934, 83-87). Interestingly, birds can sit directly on handles or on the backs of horses, and the connection between horses and birds is yet another theme the tripod has in common with Geometric pottery, especially Late Geometric pottery from the Argolid (Benton 1934, 101).

The tripod-lebes was a cooking pot, and its status as such would have been important in the Iron Age, where religious gatherings, political ties, and even burial ritual relied on feasting and social interaction (see above). In addition to emphasizing feasting, they were also dedications at sanctuaries starting in the 8th century BC and were even prizes for winning competitions. In representations on pottery, they are seen between two horses, associated with boxers, foot races, or horse races, and resting among other prizes given for a chariot race (Benton 1934, 103-108).

Pottery
The study of IA pottery has been very Athenocentric up until quite recently.\textsuperscript{11} The Athenians are credited by several scholars with inventing the Geometric style and all other styles of Geometric pottery seem to stand in the shadow of the great masterpieces found there. For example, Desborough claims that all other styles of Protogeometric pottery are based off of the Athenian style and no other type comes close to its achievements (1952, 126). However, further study has

\textsuperscript{11} Coldstream, too, who is heavily relied upon for the study of Geometric pottery due to his rigorous study and classification of the material, seems to be very biased toward Athenian Geometric pottery.
discovered that the style actually originated in Thessaly (where we see the earliest examples of the Protogeometric style) and spread down into mainland Greece. Additionally, in Thessaly it had strong links to the Mycenaean tradition, suggesting continuity in the art form (Lemos 2002, 4). Though this aspect of the scholarship needs to be more closely examined, Lemos does point out that the Athenian material is used most frequently because of its abundance and utility: for example it shows a continuous sequence from Submycenaean to Protogeometric (2002, 3).

The appearance of Protogeometric pottery was not sudden; it developed gradually through the Submycenaean period. Through this period some new shapes were developed and some dropped out (stirrup jars and amphoriskoi, for example). In the Protogeometric period, vessels became slimmer and better proportioned and the compass with multiple brush was invented, possibly by the Athenians (Coldstream 2008, 336) and quickly became a hallmark of the Protogeometric period (Lemos 2002, 14). With this new invention came the main decoration of the Protogeometric period as well: concentric circles and semicircles (Coldstream 2003, 4).

Attic pottery was widespread and influential in the Protogeometric period (Coldstream 2003, 17), but then Attic influence flagged a bit in the Early Geometric I (EG I) phase only to dominate again in Early Geometric II (EG II). In EG I, figural representations, namely horses, appear on two vessels from Athens, showing that the figural tradition had an earlier start than once supposed (Coldstream 2008, 13). The styles of the Corinthia and the Argolid are closely aligned with that of Attica in the Early Geometric period, though both styles are a bit more reserved than at Athens and they prefer the use of zigzags and wavy lines, while at Athens the meander pattern is predominate.

In the Middle Geometric I (MG I) phase, beginning in the later 9th century BC, Attic vase painting found a “perfect balance” between light and dark and the vessels took on a more
balanced shape and, finally, in Middle Geometric II (MG II) vase painters became more interested in figural representations, though they still did not dominate (Coldstream 2008, 16; 22). In MG, Athenian influence is spread more widely throughout Euboea and the Cycladic islands (Coldstream 2008, 165), but in MG II the Argive style starts to break away from Attic influence and develop its own patterns (Coldstream 2008, 164).

Lastly, Attic Late Geometric I (LG I), beginning in the mid-8th c. BC, is seen as the height of the Geometric style: figured scenes became increasingly prominent and the decoration expanded over the whole surface of the vase. The linear ornament was still neat and a happy medium was achieved between figures and linear ornament (Coldstream 2008, 29). In this period, scholars are able to distinguish the work of different artists and workshops both in and outside Athens, and different workshops were producing different shapes and utilizing different motifs based on needs and fashions. The Dipylon Master at Athens, known for his monumental grave markers, is considered by most to be the principal vase painter of the period for his astounding monumental funerary kraters and amphorae. Despite the modern scholar’s love of the Dipylon Master, however, LG Argive pottery breaks from Attic pottery in sequence and in style. The Argive LG I phase coincides with the Attic LG Ib phase and in this period horses, fish, and birds play a dominant role in Argive figural scenes, namely in the form of the horse tamer (Coldstream 2008, 120-121), while at Athens the Dipylon Master regularly paints funerary scenes and land and sea battles. However, in the LG II at Argos the figural scenes become more prominent and more varied, now including scenes of dancing, war, sports, and funerary ritual (Coldstream 2008, 121). In LG II, Attic Geometric begins to deteriorate. It splits off into the Classical Tradition and those outside the Classical Tradition and there is a collapse in the organization and quality of Geometric linear ornament until finally Orientalizing motifs take over (Coldstream 2008, 87-89).
Conclusion

The lack of Iron Age material in Greece is extremely frustrating. How can we know so little about a 300-year long period that seems so crucial to the development of Greece? A period in which the most enduring features of ancient Greece emerged with hundreds of *poleis* and the rich cultural production of Archaic and Classical Greek artists and thinkers? Thankfully, the more material is unearthed, the more we recognize that our assumptions about the Iron Age were misguided: continuity exists in places we did not previously see and the Greek world seems not to have fallen apart as catastrophically as we once thought. However, the more material is unearthed, the more complicated the picture gets as well. A further examination of archaeological materials, particularly pottery, settlements, sanctuaries, and graves, in the Argolid Plain during the Iron Age will reveal a clearer picture of the social and political connections in the region during this period. Ultimately, the finer details in the archaeological record will show, once again, that the accounts of Homer and other ancient sources are not to be trusted and relationships between settlements in the Argolid Plain were more complex than they at first seemed.
Chapter Three

The Argolid in the 9th and 8th Centuries BC

To determine the validity of the argument for Argive hegemony in the 8th century BC, I will examine the Argolid more closely in terms of its settlement patterns, material culture, the ancient sources, and its sanctuaries. This chapter aims to reassess all these aspects of the Argolid in the 9th and 8th centuries (except pottery, which will be treated in chapter four) to see if the archaeological evidence can help to support or deny the idea of an LG Argive empire. On the basis of a number of factors, modern scholars have traditionally believed that Argos controlled a great part of the Central Plain as early as the 8th century BC. First, Pausanias wrote of an Argive desire to defeat Sparta and gain control of the Central Plain beginning in the 8th century BC. In addition, he, Homer, and Herodotus mention a vast Argive empire dating to the 8th century BC in their works. Second, the construction of the great sanctuary now called the Argive Heraion, began in the 8th century BC, has been interpreted as a statement of Argive power in and over the Plain in that period. Lastly, the destructions of Asine and Nauplia in the late 8th century BC, mentioned by Pausanias and attested in the archaeological record, are taken as statements of Argos’ dominance of the entire Plain. In this chapter, I will assess these aspects of Argive history and archaeology to determine the validity of the assumption of an Argive empire as far back as the 8th century BC. I will conclude that not only are the chief sources not reliable for their information on any such empire, but also that the destruction of Asine and the construction of the Heraion do not outweigh other evidence against the existence of an 8th-century Argive empire.

Settlement Patterns
The Argolid region, just as the rest of IA Greece, was not homogenous. There is a great divide physically between the Central Plain and the eastern peninsula, the two halves of the Argolid being separated by a large mountain range (see Map II). The Central Plain, home to large settlements like Argos, Mycenae, and Tiryns, had access to the sea through its harbor at Nauplia (Foley 1988, 31), which sits right on the Argolic Gulf (See Map II). Asine also had two harbors of its own (Hall 1995, 582), allowing it access to trade with other parts of Greece, namely Athens, which had great influence on the pottery at the site.

Only six major sites in the entire Argolid survived the LHIIIB2 palatial destructions (ca. 1200 BC) into the Submycenaean period: Argos, Asine, Dendra, Mycenae, Nauplia, and Tiryns, all of which are sites in the Central Plain (Foley 1988, 23). Each produced its own set of finds from the Geometric period. Among these, there is no doubt that Argos is the most prominent settlement in the Central Plain during the Iron Age. More IA material has been unearthed from Argos than any other settlement, particularly in the form of pottery and graves. In addition, the finds from Argos from the Submycenaean (SM) and following periods include hearths, wells, building remains, several cemetery plots, and two summits, the Larissa and the Aspis (Foley 1988, 174-175). The post-Mycenaean settlement moved down from the Larissa and Aspis to the Plain and settled in four house clusters, which did not share a cemetery until about 700 BC, before which cemetery and burial areas mingled (Morgan and Whitelaw 1991, 86).

Asine is located on the Argolic Gulf on the eastern side of the Central Plain and consists of the acropolis, the surrounding town, and Barbouna Hill. Interestingly, there are no signs of destruction here in the LHIIC, but the remains decrease considerably (Foley 1988, 175). Asine is one of the few settlements to have produced SM remains, and house remains from the PG and
Geometric periods have been found, including an LG house with infant cist graves beneath the floor. Additionally, temple remains (possibly to Apollo Pythaeus) have been found at the top of Barbouna Hill. The site was deserted after it was destroyed by Argos in the 8th century BC and remained so until the Hellenistic period (Foley 1988, 175-176). Due to this destruction and desertion, the remains at Asine have provided us with a rare glimpse of Geometric domestic architecture: several houses are preserved on the acropolis and Barbouna Hill, where an apsidal building has also been discovered (Coldstream 2003, 122). Similarly, Dendra also shows signs of continued habitation, having produced SM remains, and Geometric pottery has also been found at the site (Foley 1988, 178).

At Mycenae, an important Late Bronze Age palace site, SM remains in the form of graves or pottery have not been found but some Geometric graves have been found in the lower town. The Agamemneion, a sanctuary site to the southwest of the settlement, also dates to the Geometric period (Foley 1988, 190). During the Iron Age, occupants built houses over the BA palace remains and reused tomb and cemetery areas (Morgan and Whitelaw 1991, 88). Lastly, Wace excavated a sanctuary that was over the top of the BA palace remains that could have been to Hera or Athena, and the pottery finds show that the cult began in the 8th century BC (1939)².

Nauplia has produced very little material due to overbuilding and the majority of the material has been found in graves from the nearby Pronoia cemetery dating from the EG II-LG I periods (Morgan and Whitelaw 1991, 90). Several houses dating to the Geometric period have also been found (Foley 1988, 191).

Lastly, the settlement at Tiryns, like Argos and Mycenae, also moved down from its acropolis into the Plain in the Post-Mycenaean period. The contents of a bothros on the citadel, however, indicate cult activity was occurring there in the mid-8th century BC. At the end of the

² See Foley 1988, 143-144 for a discussion of those finds.
same century, a monumental temple (possibly to Hera) was also constructed there (Morgan and
Whitelaw 1991, 87). An area west of the citadel produced the most Geometric material, while
SM and PG burials and PG houses have also been found in the lower town (Foley 1988, 198).

Of these sites, only Argos, Tiryns, and Asine show continuous occupation into the
Submycenaean period, while the remaining three have short gaps in their archaeological record
but were quickly reoccupied. Why would they have been reoccupied so quickly? Foley theorizes
that this was because of their location in the Central Plain, the most fertile part of the Argolid
and a location tucked away from the borders of the Argolid territory and consequently more
likely to be safe from invaders (Foley 1988, 24). Thus, starting in the Submycenaean period there
was a divide between the central and eastern parts of the Argolid, with the Central Plain having
been preferred for habitation.

Overall, the Protogeometric period saw only a slight increase in settlements and a slight
expansion of those already existing, and Argos has the most prominent finds from that period.
However, the Geometric period saw a major revival of the Argolid region in general —the
eastern peninsula was reoccupied and the Central Plain saw the addition of several sites (Foley
1988, 25-27). The 8th century in particular saw marked growth and migration to the eastern
peninsula, which Foley suggests might have been a result of population growth, political issues,
or a draught, which John Camp suggested occurred in Attica in the 8th century BC (Foley 1988,
28; Camp 1979, 397-411). If this was the case, increasing population put an even heavier burden
on a food supply already lacking because of the draught, and as a result people spread out to
lessen that burden on the diminishing food supply. Additionally, in the 8th century BC, LG
pottery is found at sites that had no previous evidence of EG or MG pottery (but in some cases
Mycenaean), which means that new sites are being occupied and previously abandoned sites are
being reoccupied during this phase of the Geometric period. Moreover, at this time Argos expands significantly, growing from a small village to an extensive settlement (Kelly 1976, 53). Regardless of the reason, it is evident that populations are growing and moving during the Late Geometric period, and it was having a marked effect on occupational patterns in the Central Argolid Plain.

It is obvious that the Central Plain was favored during the period of recovery after the LHIIIB2 destructions. It took some time for the region to recuperate, but when it finally did in the 8th century BC, the eastern peninsula was again re-occupied, as is shown through pottery and gravesites. Additionally, the archaeological evidence tells us that even during the rapid growth seen in the 8th century, Argos remained the forerunner in size and material, leading Coldstream to state that: “No site in the Argolid is more prolific than Argos itself, where fashions for the whole region were set in pottery, metalwork, and seals. From the flourishing industries in bronze and iron, and from the great terracing operation at the Argive Heraion, we get the impression of an exceptionally wealthy and powerful polis” (2003, 131). The site has also produced the most remains throughout the entire Geometric period for the Argolid region, from gravesites to votive deposits, a fact that betrays the strength of the city during a supposed “dark age.” However, while Argos’s sizeable archaeological remains indicate that it was the most prosperous settlement during the IA, other evidence does not support the notion of IA Argive hegemony in the Argolid Plain.

IA Argolic Burials

Although the Central Plain was not consistent in its reoccupation and settlement patterns during the Geometric period, it was quite consistent in its burial methods. Inhumations were the

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3 Unfortunately for modern archaeologists, however, later building activity in Argos itself has destroyed much of this older habitation evidence (Foley 1988, 27).
rule (unlike the cremations occurring in Attica), and graves occurred in three types: cist, pit, and pithos/pot graves (see Plates 1-2). Within that general framework, however, there was a lot of variation from site to site and one will find as much variation within a site as he will between sites (Foley 1988, 45-6). Nevertheless, some general patterns are still worth noting.

First, throughout the Plain in the LG period there was a great increase in the number of graves and an increase in the diversity of burial practices. This phenomenon is explained either by a population increase (a theory favored by many scholars) or by an increase in the number of people allowed to bury (Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2007, 675). Yet, as Morris states, populations did not rise as quickly in the 8th century BC, nor fall as quickly in the 7th century BC, as did the number of graves (Morris 1987, 158). In his discussion of these grave numbers, Morris focused specifically on the Attic material, but he did mention that the population growth of the 8th century BC was seen throughout the Mediterranean, even in Italy and the Near East, and thus the whole of Greece fits into a pattern of population increase (1987, 158). Nevertheless, population growth is not a sufficient explanation for the increase in grave numbers in the 8th century BC. Thus, we are left with Pappi and Triantaphyllou’s theory of an increase in those allowed to bury. This would explain the homogeneity of Geometric Argolic burial customs in general: because only certain populations were allowed to bury, namely the elite, they were following certain customs and traditions to display their status through burial. In the LG period, when the number of people allowed to bury (in an archaeologically visible manner) was increased, there was a decrease in the standardization of practices seen through the increase in grave offerings and iconographic scenes on pottery, as if people were using these means to express status and identity (Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2011, 675).
Despite this decreasing standardization of practices in the LG period, however, other aspects of Argolic graves still fell within a general framework. The usual characteristics of the 8th-century BC Argolid graves are as follows: the typical grave was a rectangular pit with gravel on the bottom and slabs on the side and covering the top (see Plate 1a). The body was interred on its back, clothed, with the legs bent and the head never pointing east. Grave goods were usually deposited near the head, but this was not a rule followed in every burial. Sometimes the graves were reopened and used for a second burial, for which the previous remains and goods were pushed aside or even taken out. In some cases, however, great care was taken not to disturb the remains and grave goods of the previous occupant (Foley 1988, 34).

Overall, these cist graves were the preferred burial type throughout the Geometric period (particularly in Argos), but pithoi were also favored by some, and in these cases the body was put in feet first so that the head was at the mouth of the vessel, which was then closed by a stone slab or another vessel. Even less commonly still, sometimes individuals were simply laid in earthen pits, occasionally covered with a slab (Foley 1988, 35). All three burial types were used for both men and women, although Whitley attempted to argue that cist graves were reserved exclusively for male burials (1991, 189-191). Pappi and Triantaphyllou disagree, however, pointing out the fact that women are found buried alongside men in the richest cist graves in Argos—the warrior graves. One grave in particular, the Sklavounos grave no. 1, contained one man and two women, both of whom were between 40-50 years old (2007 675, 677). Therefore, even the richest burials are not exclusively male, although it is suggested by Pappi and Triantaphyllou, as well as Langdon, that only women of a certain age had access to the “symbolic system of men” in Geometric Argos (Langdon 2001, 591-592; Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2007, 677). Additionally, men and women were typically buried with the same type of pottery, and
metal goods were common in graves in the form of pins, fibulae, and weapons (Foley 1988, 35-6).

The burial of children was more complex. In the 8th century BC, children were generally buried in pots (usually not pithoi, although adults were buried in either pithoi or pots throughout the Geometric period), while in the earlier part of the Geometric period they were occasionally buried in cists as well, though these graves were later reserved only for adults (Foley 1988, 35). This, of course, is the trend seen throughout the Argolid Plain, but how strictly it was adhered to varied from settlement to settlement, as did other burial customs, a fact that will become apparent below.

Finally, the number of graves at each site reveals a bit about the fluctuations in visible burial methods throughout the Iron Age. Below is a table of the number of burials from the major sites in the Central Plain from the Protogeometric period through the 7th century BC, taken from a table in Foley (1988, 268).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>PG</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th>MG</th>
<th>LG</th>
<th>“G”</th>
<th>7th Century</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argos</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34-38</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>87+</td>
<td>34+</td>
<td>308-312+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiryns</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2?</td>
<td>79+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mycenae</td>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30-40+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauplia</td>
<td>1?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>5-20</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>27-42+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asine</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>69-81+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dendra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lerna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosymna</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this table, it is obvious that dating Geometric graves is no easy task. Several of the sites have gaps in the burial record or only have a few burials in a limited time span, while others have questionable figures and a large number of burials simply labeled “G” due to a lack of ability to place them firmly in any one phase of the Geometric period. However, some trends can be seen
in what information is available, namely, as was mentioned above by Pappi and Triantaphyllou and Morris, that the figures in nearly every settlement increased in the LG period. These numbers increased most dramatically at Argos, Tiryns, and possibly Nauplia. For Lerna and Dendra, the only graves mentioned are LG and “G.” Additionally, only Lerna’s numbers decreased from MG to LG, although this site, just as the others, has many graves that are only labeled as “G.” Another piece of evidence worth mentioning is the startling number of Argive graves compared to all the other sites. The total number of graves from Argos is more than triple those found at the sites with the next highest numbers, those being Tiryns and Asine. The grave evidence is a large part of the reason (among others of course) why Argos is deemed the leading, most prosperous settlement in the IA Argolid Plain. The graves and their goods will be studied in more detail in the following chapter, along with Argive Geometric pottery, to determine relationships and common practices among settlements.

IA Argolic Burials By Settlement

In the PG, EG, and MG periods at Argos, cist graves were the norm, while pit graves were very rare. Additionally, in the PG period, reuse of graves was unusual, but in the LG period the reuse of graves increased substantially, with the practice reaching its peak (Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2011, 674). According to Foley, the pithoi/pot burials at Argos are poorer than the cist graves in all periods, although both types of graves represent a range of richness and thus cannot be classed by wealth. Instead, the distinctive burial types must reflect cultural, ethnic, or religious choices made by equally distinct groups. Foley argues for a distinction between cist and pot graves, with each type dominating separate cemeteries, and a mixed population of two groups in Argos (Foley 1988, 38-9). Foley hypothesizes that these burial practices mark cultural or ethnic distinctions, namely between Dorians and Dryopians. Dorians are a group
known from historical sources to have ruled in Argos, and Foley suggested they used wealthy cist graves, while the subordinate ethnic group, the Dryopes, buried in pots (Foley 1988, 39-40). However, this explanation is problematic—it does not explain how one group, said to utilize pot burials, could have burials that are far richer than some of the cist burials of another group, and it also does not explain why in the LG period, when wealth seemed to increase, the number of pot burials also seemed to increase (Foley 1988, 38). Such burial patterns are not easily explained by ethnic or class differences.

In contrast, Pappi and Triantaphyllou argue that the differences between those buried in pots and those buried in cists in Argos are not substantial. According to them, there is no difference in the health statuses of individuals buried in cists or pots, but they do note a third type of burial (simple pit types), that do contain individuals with more health problems, thus indicating that those buried in pits are of lower wealth or status (2007, 676). The two former types of burial require care and attention, while the pit burials can be done quickly and require little expense.

Pappi and Triantaphyllou argue that Argive pot/pithos burials are not exclusionary at all, but are quite diverse in decoration, mode of burial, and therefore cost and are found alongside other types of burials in the same plots (2007, 676). Further, they point out that pithos/pot burials were labeled as poorer burials because a group of pithos burials excavated in the Argos Hospital plot were found to have no grave goods. However, these burials lack the stratigraphic evidence to date them securely, and thus dating these burials to the Middle Helladic (ca. 2000 BC) or early Archaic period (ca. 680 BC) is also not impossible (Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2007, 676). Thus, the assumption that Argive Geometric pithos/pot burials are far poorer than Argive Geometric cist burials is based on a group of pithos burials that may not even belong to the Geometric period.
Therefore, the supposed division of classes or even ethnic groups based on these two types of burials, as presented by Foley, is no longer a valid argument. Pithoi were in fact extremely expensive to use as coffins given their size—constructing such vessels would have been time consuming. Consequently, assuming that different classes or ethnic groups (such as a ruling class of Dori ans versus a lower class of Dryopes) used them separately based on hierarchy is not sufficient. Rather, it is likely that the different grave types were used according to family or clan traditions.

The cist, pithos/pot, and pit burials were the norm at Argos for adults, but the burial of children followed different procedures. In the EG and MG periods there are very low instances of child burials. Thus, it seems that during these periods children were one of the groups excluded from burial. In the LG period, however, child burials, including neonates (children below one year of age) are found more often than adult burials, a phenomenon that Pappi and Triantaphyllou stress shows an emphasis on family ties, already expressed in the increase in the reuse of graves in the LG period as well (2007, 677). During the LG period, children younger than six were typically buried in elaborately decorated kraters, while children between six and 12 years old were buried in pithoi and cists, suggesting that age was a crucial factor of burial in the Geometric Argolid (Pappi and Triantaphyllou 2007, 677).

Moving southwest from Argos to Lerna, approximately 22 graves have been found, only one of which can securely be dated to the 8th century BC. Cist graves on the Pontinos Hill, which Courbin dates to the 7th century BC on account of the lack of grave goods (1974, 123), have bodies that are almost or fully extended, which is odd in a region where bent legs are the norm. The absence of grave goods and the extended position of the bodies may reflect a local cist tradition (Foley 1988, 44). The same is seen in two 7th-century BC graves at Argos, T83 and T84, and if these graves are given a 7th century BC date, they actually match a practice found at
Argos at least minimally (Foley 1988, 54). Overall from Lerna, one EG grave, three MG graves, and one LG grave have been identified, while 17 more may be Geometric. These graves are a mixture of cist and pot/pithos graves, but no pit graves have been found. Additionally, all the graves from Lerna come from the Geometric period, suggesting the site was abandoned from the LHIIIC period through the PG period and only then reoccupied (Foley 1988, 44).

At Tiryns, the same general trends are followed as in Argos. There are, however, some differences. First, in the EG period neither cist nor pithos/pot burials seem to have been preferred. However, in the 8th century BC, pithos/pot burials outnumber the cist burials, making this the preferred burial type (Foley 1988, 40-41). Foley once again explains this difference as representing Dorian/Dryopian ethnicity, suggesting that the population at Tiryns must have not been so strongly Dorian as that at Argos (1988, 42). However, very few burials have been uncovered at Tiryns, suggesting that there is more to find and rendering such conclusions on tenuous grounds. We cannot assume that our data shows conclusive evidence of ethnic separation and exclusion when we suspect some of our evidence is missing or yet to be discovered. A second difference between Argos and Tiryns is that at Tiryns in the 8th century BC, burials were moved away from settlement areas and kept separate. The same kind of separation of settlement and cemetery occurred at Mycenae during this time, although at Mycenae very few graves have been found and general trends besides this one are difficult to point out without making assumptions (Foley 1988, 42-43; 46). At Nauplia too the evidence in the 8th century BC was very limited, but what has been found indicates that its practices were more like those of Tiryns than those of Argos, because here too they favored pits and pithos/pot burials to cist burials (Foley 1988, 43).

A total of about 21 Geometric graves have been discovered at Asine, and by comparison 60 graves have been dated to the PG period. Therefore, the 9th and 8th centuries at Asine were
fairly quiet. This fits into a general pattern with the other settlements in the Argolid, where grave numbers decreased in the 9th century BC as well (Foley 1988, 45). Asine breaks from patterns in the rest of the Argolid, namely that of burying children in pots, and inters children in cist graves. Additionally, intramural burials have been found at the site, which is unusual for the 8th-century BC Argolid (Foley 1988, 45).

In the 7th century BC, burial practices in the Argolid changed quite a bit. All the transitional Late Geometric to Subgeometric burials at Argos are krater or amphora burials. Furthermore, Archaic burials are almost exclusively cylindrical pithos graves, which is quite a change from the cist graves that dominated before, and most graves from 700-630 BC had no offerings (Foley 1988, 47-8). Additionally, there was a significant drop in the number of graves, especially in Argos, leading Foley to believe that the population decreased drastically due to drought/disease or political issues and, as a result, migration (Foley 1988, 49-50). Nauplia is the only site besides Argos that has enough burials dated to this period to draw any conclusions. Only seven graves were found there, all with only a few offerings, and the cylindrical pithos grave is prominent (Foley 1988, 51). Otherwise, both Mycenae and Tiryns only produced two graves each, leading Foley to believe that Mycenae was not even a settlement in this period and that at Tiryns more graves have yet to be found (1988, 51).

When one compares the burial evidence from the sites in the Argolid region to those in Corinth, it is obvious that overall the practices there were quite homogenous, despite the fact that Argos favored cists as opposed to pits and pithos/pot burials, in contrast to Tiryns and Nauplia, and had a larger number of wealthy burials (Foley 1988, 162). At Corinth, the scattered villages buried their dead in the immediate vicinity and only one plot seems to have been planned, an area labeled the North Cemetery. Here they appear to have family plots based on the grouping and
placement of multiple burials and in addition to earth-cut pits (MG II in date) and cists with monolithic slabs (LG in date), they also buried children in sarcophagi and infants in kraters (Blegen, Palmer, and Young 1964; Pfaff 2007). Overall, the burial practices in Corinth are fairly different from those in any of the Argolid settlements, and a comparison shows that despite the variations, burial in the Argolid region was reasonably consistent. However, consistency in customs and the larger number of graves in Argos itself do nothing to confirm that Argos was ruling other settlements at the time.

In fact, because Nauplia and Tiryns seemed to favor pot/pithos burials while Argos favored cist burials, one might argue that this showed a level of independence in societal and cultural practices. While it is unlikely that Argos would have controlled something as deeply traditional as burial practices even in the event that she conquered the other settlements in the Central Plain, the burial practices at other settlements do not reveal the presence of a ruling Argive elite. Given that Argos does prefer cist burials throughout all periods of the Iron Age, if she were ruling the other major sites in the Central Plain we would expect to see one of two things. We would possibly see, 1) no rich cist burials at the other settlements because there are no elites (the only people allowed access to elite status are Argive and they live in Argos), or 2) the only rich burials are cist burials, and they are very few because the Argive elite that are ruling in these other settlements are the only ones allowed to bury in such a fashion. Our evidence at present indicates that neither of these scenarios occurred. Overall, at most we see that burial practices fit into a general pattern of inhumation in various ways, but vary greatly between settlements. This suggests consistent contact between settlements throughout the Argolid Plain but not strong enough contact to start standardizing their burial practices.

Material Culture, Contacts, and Trade
The settlements in the Argolid seem to have been largely self-sufficient in the Geometric period, developing their own pottery and metallurgy styles, and there is very little evidence of influence from other regions (Kelly 1976, 43). This is shown particularly through the 8th and 7th centuries BC when Argive pottery remained very conservative and was not receptive to new styles. On the whole, Argive pottery transitioned in the 7th century into a Subgeometric style derived directly from the local Geometric style rather than wholly adopting the Orientalizing style and motifs that developed in other regions, such as Corinth and Attica (Kelly 1976, 57). There were some exceptions in the form of a workshop or multiple workshops that produced pottery in the Orientalizing style in the Argolid (Orientalizing “experiments” are seen on krater C 201, mentioned by Coldstream [2003, 122]), but this did not last. These workshops dwindled and then came to an end in the middle of the 7th century BC. Thereafter, the pottery industry in the Argolid subsided and, as occurred in other parts of Greece, Argos began importing Corinthian pottery (Foley 1988, 76).

Argive Geometric pottery was also not widely exported. Although Argive LG pottery has been found at several other sites (Courbin lists LG Argive vases and vase fragments at Tegea, Aegina, Corinth, Perachora, Delphi, Athens, Melos, Ithaca, Megara Hyblaea, and Troezen [1966, 450, 549-555]), they are found in such small quantities that they might be the result of individual travel, not evidence of extended contact or trade (Foley 1988, 68; Coldstream 2003, 132). Although it was not widely exported, Argive pottery was quite consistent throughout the Central Plain as a whole, making it difficult to tell if we are dealing with pottery from multiple workshops or with pottery from one or two prominent workshops that was then extensively distributed throughout the region. Lastly, despite this lack of export, the 8th-century BC Argive pottery appears to have heavily influenced Laconian and Tegean pottery (Coldstream 2008, 352; 364).
Outside the realm of pottery, other aspects of Argive material culture suggest contacts and influence further afield than one might anticipate. Coldstream classifies bronzes found at Olympia and Delphi as personal votives left by Argive visitors (2003, 132), while tripods found at the Argive Heraion and Olympia are attributed to Argive export or to an Argive workshop at the sanctuary (2003, 135). Cycladic Geometric seals were imported and imitated in the Argolid (Coldstream 2008, 364). In addition, firedogs or iron spits from the “Panoply Grave” (also known as gr. 45) in Argos (see Plate 3c) suggest contacts with Cyprus and Crete, where similar firedogs in the shape of a warship have been found.4 According to Coldstream, “the whole group is homogeneous enough for us to suppose some sharing of ideas between Argos, Crete, and Cyprus—not least because the pairs from Kavousi, Paphos, and Salamis appear to belong to the same generation as the Argos firedogs” (2003,125). From the same grave, the bell-shaped corslet finds its ancestors in a Mycenaean panoply from Dendra, “but the intervening stages can be seen in a series of corslets from the Urnfield Culture of Central Europe, which offers precedents for the bell shape, and the semicircular marking of the breasts” (Coldstream 2003, 128). Thus, through its metallurgy there is evidence of contacts and the exchange of ideas between Argos and places far afield.5

**Metalwork**

Metal goods are found in Geometric Argive graves and sanctuaries up until the 7th century (Foley 1988, 80). Iron pins are the most common locally-made metal good found in graves, the most common type among them being Kilian-Dirlmeier’s types IA to ID, found in her work titled *Nadeln* (Foley 1988, 97; Kilian-Dirlmeier, 1984). A grave will normally have

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4 Warship-shaped firedogs have been found at Kavousi on East Crete and Paphos, Salamis and Patriki on Cyprus (Coldstream 2003, 125).

5 Argos was known for its metallurgy. The site even had a silver workshop as early as the end of the Submycenaean period, which shows how important metalworking was in the region very early on (Foley 1988, 25).
two, and they are thought to have been used to pin clothing or a burial shroud onto the deceased. These pins are found consistently across sites and they increase in length over time, those found in LG graves being longer than those found in EG graves (Foley 1988, 81; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1984, 97ff). Unusually long pins have been found dedicated at the Heraion, and it is speculated that these pins, far too long for normal human use, were dedicated for use by the goddess herself.6

Bronze and iron fibulae, on the other hand, are rare in graves and more abundant in sanctuaries. What is more, scholars used to assume that the Boeotians had a monopoly on the production of fibulae given the abundance of them found in that region. However, more recently it has been suggested that the Argives themselves, being famous metalworkers, may have had their own workshop7 to produce the fibulae found at sanctuaries like the Heraion (Foley 1988, 84).8 Bronze rings, on the other hand, are important among grave goods and are usually worn by the deceased.9 These rings come in two main types, one flat and the other with a central ridge and they have been found in 8th-century graves in Argos, Tiryns, Lerna, Nauplia, and Mycenae. Rings with tremolo decoration have also been found at Lerna, Tiryns, Asine, and the Argive Heraion (Foley 1988, 85). A rarer type of ring consisting of iron coated with bronze has been found in a LG grave at Mycenae and a MG II grave at Argos, but this type of ring was extremely rare and overall bronze rings were favored (Foley 1988, 86).

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6 Additionally, when such pins disappear from graves in the 7th century BC, they continue to be dedicated at sanctuaries like the Heraion (Foley 1988, 82-3).
7 Evidence for Argive origin of fibulae can be found in Kilian 1979, 33-38 and Philipp 1981, 277ff.
8 Foley questions why pins would be found in graves and not fibulae and concludes that they may have been more valuable pieces (as was discussed in the previous chapter, their decoration became very elaborate late in the Geometric period). As a result, people kept them in the family rather than depositing them in a grave with the deceased (Foley 1988, 85).
9 They too increase in number in the LG period but thereafter are found primarily at sanctuaries. Additionally, all the ring-types known in the Argolid have been found at the Heraion (Foley 1988, 85-86).
Bronze armor is another category of Argolid metalworking, and one that figures heavily in Argive graves and at their sanctuaries. One grave in Argos, known as T. 45 or the “Panoply Grave,” was found with a nearly complete set of armor, including a helmet and breastplate (Foley 1988, 86; Coldstream 2003, 126-128; see Plate 3). Another helmet just like the one found in T. 45 was also found in Argos, as well as a third helmet of a different type. Additionally, the breastplate from T. 45 and one other possible breastplate, in conjunction with the helmets, have led scholars to suggest that Argos was the leading settlement in the development of armor and the hoplite tactics that followed thereafter (Foley 1988, 86-88; Coldstream 2003, 128).

Other metal objects were manufactured and deposited in graves as well, although not on the same scale as the above. These objects include gold in the form of earrings, beads, and rings (however, gold objects are only found in EG graves), along with weapons like daggers and spear heads (these were typically made of iron) (Foley 1988, 95; also seen in list of graves, 200-222). Iron obeloi and firedogs have also been found in Argolid graves (such as T. 45) and were once considered to be a form of currency and thus a sign of immense wealth (Courbin 1959, 223ff), although their value as a currency has more recently been questioned (Foley 1988, 95). Lastly, bronze and iron figurines (free-standing, attached to bases, or attached to tripod cauldrons) and tripod cauldrons are also prominent among metalwork in and from the Argolid. As was mentioned above, the metal figurines found at Delphi and Olympia seem to be a result of individual travel, while the tripod cauldrons at Olympia were either exported from Argos or made at Olympia by a traveling Argive workshop at the sanctuary. It is specifically a class of cast tripods with decoration in panels that are attributed to Argolic workshops and which is commonly found at the Argive Heraion and has also been found at Delphi and Olympia (Foley 1988, 86).

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10 The helmet in T. 45 was of the type known as a Kegelhelm, a helmet of conical shape and with cheek pieces. Given the date of the burial, it is estimated that this helmet dates to 730-710 BC. The other helmet type is open-faced and is estimated to be LG I in date (Foley 1988, 86).
Coldstream notes that the style of decoration in these panels recalls Argolic decoration, pointing to a particular scene of a horse with a manger and a panel above its back, a motif typically seen in Argive pottery (2003, 336). In addition to the cast tripod cauldrons with legs decorated in panels, Maass’s Class II tripods (which have horses and zigzags on the legs like that of Argive pottery decoration) and Schweitzer’s third and second class (found at Olympia) have been attributed to Argos as well (Maass 1978, 63-94, 109). 

Lastly, Most of the figurines from the Argolid come from the Heraion, and the most common figurine among these is that of the horse, the style of which closely resembles that found in Argolic Geometric pottery decoration (Foley 1988, 90).

Overall, the number of metal dedications at sanctuaries (bronze was more typically dedicated at the Argive Heraion than was iron) and in graves (where both iron and bronze are present) increases in the LG period, showing an increase in wealth and resources at that time (Foley 1988, 96). However, as with other grave goods in the 7th century BC, graves lack metal goods almost entirely, while metal dedications at sanctuaries, although they do not cease entirely, see reduced numbers. Overall, metal manufacturing declines in general throughout that century, only to return at the end of the period (Foley 1988, 97). Foley mentions that the decline in metal goods at sanctuaries is not just seen in the Argolid, but throughout the whole of Greece. What is more, metallic goods and pottery both decline among 7th-century BC Argolic graves (Foley 1988, 97). Why would the two biggest industries in the Argolid, pottery and metal manufacturing, suddenly decline in the 7th century BC just as the Greek world is picking up its

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11 Due to the size of Schweitzer’s tripod cauldrons of the second and third class, it is assumed that they were made on site. A piece of a mold was found at Olympia and also supports this theory (Foley 1988, 89).

12 Horses similar to those found at the Heraion have been found at Olympia, suggesting the possibility that a workshop of Argolic origin may have been based at Olympia to produce the figurines dedicated there. However, these figurines could possibly be of Corinthian origin, and thus a solid determination of their Argolid origin is impossible (Foley 1988, 91-2).
pace and Argos, the greatest center for both crafts, is increasing in size and power in the Plain? Additionally, among these metal goods why would weapons disappear at a time when hoplite warfare seems to be evolving and soon to appear? Foley suggests that metal dedications at sanctuaries decline because they were too expensive and perhaps the Central Plain saw a brief period of economic decline in the 7th century BC (Foley 1988, 97). Imaginably, the decline in grave goods could have occurred for the same reason, or because of a lack of visibility of graves during this period. Moreover, it is possible that the changing notion of inclusion in burials in the LG period perpetrated further changes in 7th-century BC burial practices, resulting in the deposition of grave goods going out of style. Regardless of the reason, this sudden drop in pottery and metallic goods is startling when compared with the supposed growth and changes occurring in Greece and in the Central Argolid Plain (particularly in Argos) at the time.

Seals

Within the Greek world, the Bronze Age art of gem engraving may have been revived as early as the mid-9th century BC, but was certainly in full swing by the mid-8th century BC. The craft drew its inspiration from the Near East (Phoenicia, specifically), and then adapted to the style of the Greeks (Foley 1988, 114). Most of the earliest Geometric stone seals are found in the Argolid at the Argive Heraion (Foley 1988, 115), and Argos is considered one of the early centers of production for the seals (Boardman 1970, 109). The earliest seals are large, roughly square plaques made of a soft white stone. Another type, square seals with fields divided into four panels, typically carried geometric patterns and occasional simple representations of men and women. Similar such seals are found in the Near East, particularly North Syria (Boardman 1970, 109-110). The region also produced two other types of seals: hemispherical, which bear typical Geometric motifs such as horses and men alongside linear motifs (Norton 1902/1905,
345ff), and disc-shaped, which often have Orientalizing motifs (Norton 1902/1905). In the 7th century BC, ivory became the dominant material for seals. The later examples were made somewhere in the Peloponnese, though they are only found in Argos and Mycenae in the Argolid itself. The decoration on them closely resembles Protocorinthian decoration, and therefore they may have been of Corinthian origin (Foley 1988, 119). Just as with pottery and metal finds, the number of seals declines in the 7th century BC and the Argolid eventually turned to Corinthian products in the mid-7th century BC (Foley 1988, 121).

Overall, the craft production in the Argolid in the 9th and 8th centuries BC shows how sophisticated this thriving region was during the later phases of the Iron Age. The Argolid was producing its own ornate style of pottery and leading the way in the production of metal goods (particularly armor) and seals, revealing how advanced craft production was in the region at the time. What is more, the common motifs throughout all the media discussed above make it clear how prominent horse iconography was throughout Argolic artwork in the form of motifs in pottery beginning as early as the MGII phase (as will be seen later on), on tripod cauldrons, in the form of figurines, and on Argolic seals. It is suggested that horse iconography, and especially the typical Argolic scene of a horse tamer framed by two horses, was a scene utilized as an aristocratic symbol of wealth. Pappi and Tryantaphyllou link the prominence of such scenes in the LG repertoire to the ever-growing need to express identity and social status among Argive burials (2007, 675). The distribution of Argive goods was not substantial, nor was the region importing a great number of goods from other regions. However, as was discussed above, it is known that they had contact with far-reaching parts of the Mediterranean and even central Europe during the Iron Age (as evidenced by the firedogs, armor, and seals). Therefore, one
might conclude that while Argos could have imported foreign goods (Attic pottery, for example), the region preferred to rely on local pottery and craft production. This craft production was relatively homogenous in the late phases of the Iron Age, although the focus of such items as armor and the large amount of pottery in Argos in particular leads to the impression that Argos was somehow more important in the development of these Argolic crafts than were other settlements in the Central Plain (this will be examined further in the following chapter).

Ancient Sources

Our literary sources tell us that Argos destroyed Tiryns and Mycenae in the 460s BC and resettled their populations in Argos. Argive control was extended when, after a long conflict with Sparta over the territory, Argos destroyed Orneai in 416 BC (Thucydides 6.7.1-2) and incorporated it, making the people Argive citizens (Pausanias 2.26.5). In addition to this clear evidence, attested in the archaeological record, scholars have pointed to passages in other works to try to determine a much earlier date for Argive hegemony in the Plain, pushing the start of their control back into the 8th century BC. But, these sources, as we shall see, are problematic.

The notion of hegemony is first seen in Homer. In the Catalogue of Ships in book two of the Iliad, Homer lists Argos among the forces that came to Menelaus’s aid against Troy. With Diomedes as their leader, the poem lists the settlements of Argos, Tiryns, Hermione, Asine, Troezen, Eionae, and Epidaurus all united under the term “Argives” (2.650-659). Additionally, earlier on in the same book Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, is referred to as “lord of many isles and all of Argos” (2.108). There are many issues with the information provided in these passages, namely that Homer has been deemed an amalgam of BA and late IA customs and materials (see chapter 2). As a result, it is unknown whether Homer was describing a unified

13 Mycenae: Diod. Sic. 11.65.1-5; Strabo. 8.6.19; Paus. 7.25.5-6. Tiryns: Hdt. 7.137; Ephoros FGrHist 70.56; Strab. 8.6.11; Paus. 2.17.5, 2.25.8, 8.46.3.
Argive Plain under Agamemnon during the Bronze Age or if this is a reflection of the political geography of the Argolid Plain when the poems were recorded around the 8th century BC. Tomlinson adds that “the memory of this prehistoric [BA] organization might have been confused with, or, rather, supplanted the far less spectacular” state of affairs of the Argolid during the IA (1972, 77). The Argives were certainly known for appropriating myth to fit their political agenda, and the idea of the city claiming Agamemnon’s supposed empire into the Iron Age would not be impossible. Lastly, given that Argive could refer to the Plain or merely the city, it is difficult to tell whether Agamemnon was ruler over the entire Plain, or merely the city of Argos, though Kelly believes it must have referred to the Plain (Kelly 1976, 39).

The next source to suggest an Argive empire was Herodotus. In book one of his histories, Herodotus gives an account of a battle between Argos and Sparta over the territory of Thyrea circa 546 BC in which he claims that the Argives controlled a vast expanse of the mainland as well as the as the islands off the coast (1.82). Nothing of how these territories were gained or when is explained by Herodotus. What is more, Argos did not have complete control over Mycenae and Tiryns, two cities quite close to Argos itself, until their destructions much later. Kelly believes that in this passage Herodotus was reflecting “nothing more than a Homeric reminiscence” and that ultimately Argos did not control so much territory at the time of the battle at Thyrea (1976, 40).

These sources are the earliest that point to the existence of an IA Argive Empire and were recorded in the 8th/7th and 5th centuries BC. The issues with Homer’s reliability were discussed in the previous chapter and directly above. This leaves Herodotus as the earliest possible reliable source for historical fact, and he was writing about 400 years after the IA had come to a close, a fact that, on its own, makes his account highly suspect and far removed from actual events. The
remaining sources relied upon for evidence of an Argive empire are even further removed.
Pausanias traveled the Greek world and wrote about places and their histories along the way in the 2nd century AD. In his discussion of the history of sites throughout the Peloponnese, Pausanias refers often to the Lot of Temenus and his rule in Argos. His account of the Lot itself (4.3.4-5) is short. In book two, Pausanias describes how Temenus, Kresphontes, and the sons of Aristodemus invaded the Peloponnese under the rule of Tisamenos and recaptured it (2.18.6-7). Later, Pausanias narrates that when Temenus, his brother Kresphontes, and the sons of his deceased brother Aristodemus (all Herakleidai), were drawing lots to split up the Peloponnese among themselves, Temenus cheated so that Kresphontes would have first pick (he chose Messenia). As a result of the lot, Temenus became king of Argos (see also Pausanias 3.1.5). In addition to this, Pausanias explains that Deiphontes, who was appointed general adviser and battle-commander by Temenus (2.19.1) captured Epidaurus with an Argive army and then seceded after the death of Temenus due to a quarrel with Temenus’s children, suggesting that Argos’s rule extended as far as Epidaurus, but only briefly (2.26.2). Finally, Pausanias’s last bit of information about Temenus’s rule in Argos mentions his founding of a city named after him, Temenion, six or seven miles from Nauplia (2.38.1-2). Overall, these small bits of information do not give a solid picture of the amount of territory ruled by Temenus. These sections do tell us that Argos once held Epidaurus, but this city was lost when Deiphontes split off from the rest of Argos, taking it from Temenus’s children. Temenus also controlled Temenion six or seven miles from Nauplia on the way from Lerna (Pausanias, 2.38.1-2), but this city was not very far from Argos itself and does not paint a picture of a vast empire. What is more, Pausanias’s entire account of the story of Temenus and his brothers is wrapped up in myth: they are the sons of
Herakles after all, and the account mentions sons of gods and goddesses throughout. This leads one to wonder if King Temenus even existed, or if he was invented to validate the origin of the Argives and their control later on, myths added to the list of those appropriated by the Argives just as Tomlinson suggested above. Pausanias’s account of Temenus’s rule is too incomplete and intertwined with myth to be trusted, and it never gives a full picture of the extent of territory ruled by Temenus and, by extension, Argos.

The final (possible) piece of evidence from the ancient sources for Argive control and expansion again comes from Pausanias, this time explaining that during the IA, Sparta, under the reign of Echestratos, fought with Argos over the land of Cyournia (3.2.2-3). However, Thucydides gives an account of the two cities fighting over the same territory in 420 BC (5.41.2), and Kelly argues that this later account is much more reasonable, seeing as neither Argos nor Sparta was worrying about Cyournia in the 8th century BC. That territory would only be useful to Sparta when it had gained control of the Eurotas Valley and to Argos when it controlled the rest of the Argolid Plain, events that had not occurred yet (Kelly 1976, 49-50). Additionally, Hall points out that it is unlikely that Sparta had the time or resources to be involved in campaigns with Argos in the 8th century BC because it was too preoccupied with the Messenian Wars at that time (1995, 585). War between Argos and Sparta is seen as a defining characteristic of the Peloponnese “throughout the Classical age, and is fundamental to Argive history” (Tomlinson 1972, 76). However, Pausanias points to this dispute over Cyournia in the IA, and it was supposedly not the first collision between the two settlements. They are also said to have fought at Thyreatis in 719/8 BC after Argos supposedly intervened with Sparta, and Helos and at Hysiai in 669 BC (Pausanias 3.7.5 and 2.24.7). There is also a second battle at Thyreatis between the same cities recorded in Herodotus (1.82) and Tomlinson suggests that the
IA battle could be a projection back of the battle recorded by Herodotus (1972, 76). Tomlinson adds that:

The traditions were recorded after Sparta and Argos had finally emerged as major, developed and expanded city states, controlling more or less distant territory and including in their population the inhabitants of other towns and communities which had become politically subject to them. Doubtless there was a tendency to regard this as the normal and natural situation and the existence, and loss of an early Argive empire might then seem the logical explanation of the conflict between the two communities (1972, 76-77).

The entire idea of the conflict between Sparta and Argos may have been a projection further back in time of the conflict that had been occurring between the two in the Classical period, well known to Herodotus and Pausanias. As Hall and Kelly pointed out above, the likelihood that the two settlements were worried about each other in the 8th century BC, or that they even had bordering territories, is very low, and therefore so is the likelihood that the two settlements fought these battles in the 8th century at all.

In contrast to the above sources, there are others that give no support for an Argive empire. On the contrary, they suggest that such an empire did not exist so early. Recorded Delphic oracular responses from the 7th century BC distinguish Argos from the settlements of Tiryns and Arcadia. This distinction, Hall argues, indicates that Tiryns and Argos were, at the time, separate entities (1995, 587). Additionally, in his account of the Spartan king Kleomenes’s attack of Argos in 494 BC, Herodotus mentions that Kleomenes waited with his army in the chora of Tiryns and that the Argives sent an army out to meet him (6.67-83). However, Tiryns and Nauplia, close by, did not send an army to help Argos, nor did they resist Kleomenes’s presence. This lack of action shows that Tiryns and Nauplia felt no military obligation toward Argos even at this late date (Hall 1995, 589). Thus, Hall concludes that, “there is little
justification in assuming that the territory of Argos extended across the whole Argive Plain until
the destructions of Mycenae, Tiryns, and Midea in the 460s B.C.” (1995, 589).

In addition to the oracular responses and the account in Herodotus, inscriptions found at
Tiryns confirm even further Tiryns’s independence from Argos before her destruction in the
460s BC. At Tiryns in 1962, “a series of inscribed blocks of stone were found among those
covering the underground passages leading to the cistern” (Foley 1988, 126). These inscriptions,
published fully by Verdelis, Jameson, and Papachristodolou (1975, 150-205), were compared to
two from Argos (one from the Heraion, the other from the Larissa in Argos, both dating to the 7th
century BC) and “in every detail, in fact, the Tiryns inscription is identical with the script of
Argos” (Foley 1988, 126). This discovery led to the conclusion that Tiryns must be put in the
same group as Argos and Mycenae instead of in the Kleonai-Phleious group\(^\text{14}\) as before (Hall
1995, 587), showing a strong connection among these settlements in the Central Plain during the
7th century BC. But does this mean that Argos had any control over these same settlements? The
answer must be no. The inscriptions, although they may match the Argive script, also have words
in them that refer to a “sovereign people” and a “popular assembly” at Tiryns, two terms that
indicate that Tiryns was independent at the time the inscriptions were made, circa 600 BC (Hall
1995, 587). Therefore, all at once it was discovered that Tiryns is closely linked with Mycenae
and Argos, but that it is also distinct and independent from those two, even as late as 600 BC.

Overall, it is obvious that the ancient accounts of Argive hegemony and expansion are
unreliable. The majority of these accounts were recorded far later than the supposed period in
which Argive control began—Pausanias recorded his travels in the 2nd century AD, while this IA

\(^\text{14}\) L. H. Jeffrey had originally placed Tiryns with Kleonai and Phlius in the Corinthian group, one of three distinct
groups of script that he proposed for the Argolid (the eastern Argolid comprised another group, as did the Heraion,
Mycenae, and Tiryns collectively) in his work *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, published in 1961 (Foley 1988,
124).
empire is supposed to have begun in the 8th c BC. Moreover, the two most referenced accounts, those of Homer and Pausanias, have their own set of problems. The issues with Homer were discussed in chapter two and above. Additionally, Pausanias provides an account of the lot of Temenus that never explicitly states the extent of Argive control under Temenus and the account of the king and his descendants is so indistinguishable from mythology that the likelihood of such events having taken place is suspicious. Finally, the sources that contradict the idea of an IA Argive empire seem far more reliable than do those that might support it, among them recorded Oracular responses and the inscriptions from Tiryns. Therefore, it would be unwise to assume anything of Argive IA hegemony based on these highly contested sources. Consequently, we must turn to archaeological remains to fill in the gaps and answer the question of the possible date at which Argive hegemony really began.

8th-Century BC Destrucions: Asine and Nauplia

Pausanias asserted that Argos, under king Eratos, destroyed Asine in the late 8th century BC because the settlement helped Sparta to invade Argos during the aforementioned disputes between Argos and Sparta (2.36.4-5). In the midst of this dispute, whatever the reason, Nauplia and Tiryns were left untouched and remained uninvolved in the process of the dispute and ultimate destruction, though Kelly concludes that this means Argos controlled the Plain indirectly and unchallenged (1976, 66). This argument, however, assumes a lot about Argos and the event of Asine’s destruction. As has been mentioned already, Argos did have the wealthiest graves and the largest settlement and, presumably, the largest population in the Argolid during the Geometric period. Additionally, the weapons found there, particularly those of T. 45, have

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15 Kelly disagrees with this conclusion and suggests that it was cultural differences that led to the destruction of the city. These differences were namely that the Asinetans worshipped Apollo (not Hera) as their main deity, they had close contact with Athens (as will be seen in an examination of their pottery), and they were primarily Dryopes, not Dorians (Kelly 1976, 64-5)
led scholars to assume that Argos was leading the way in military action as well. However, while another possible reason for the destruction of Asine has yet to be determined, we can argue that Pausanias’s account is unlikely. First, as mentioned above, is the fact that the 8th century BC is too early for any battles to have occurred between Sparta and Argos. Second, Pausanias recorded that the destruction of Nauplia under King Damokratidas, which occurred just after the Messenian War (dated to the late 8th century BC), took place for exactly the same reason—Nauplia allied with Sparta against Argos (Pausanias, 4.24.4 and 4.35.2). Even less is known about what led to this conflict, but the fact that Pausanias gives the same reason is suspicious (Hall 1995, 583). Additionally, this too was an isolated incident that did not involve other settlements in the Plain (Kelly 1976, 89), and there is little evidence in the archaeological record unlike the destruction of Asine. Although both happened during the same century and supposedly due to conflict with Sparta, the destructions occurred under different kings, the destruction of Asine occurring while the Spartans were still fighting the First Messenian War (Pausanias, 4.14.3) and the destruction of Nauplia occurring after the Messenian War was finished (Pausanias 4.24.4).

What are we to make of these destructions, occurring in the same area around the same period and with Argos as a common factor? It is unlikely that, given the lack of involvement from other settlements, these were a result of an Argive program of expansion.16 When looking at a map of the Plain, it is easy to see that to gain control of these two settlements would have necessitated Argive control of Tiryns as well—Tiryns sits right in between Argos and her enemies (see Maps I and II). However, Tiryns is not mentioned as having been involved in Pausanias’s accounts of the destructions of Asine or Nauplia, and the epigraphic evidence mentioned above provides solid evidence that even in the 7th century BC Tiryns was an

16 That is, unless these territories were already controlled by Argos, but this is unlikely given that they are conquered by Argos in the 5th century BC and the independence of Tiryns is supported by oracular responses recorded at Delphi and in inscriptions found at Tiryns.
independent entity. Therefore, given the unlikelihood of Pausanias’s explanations for the
destruction of both Asine and Nauplia and the fact that no other settlements are mentioned in his
accounts, the disputes were undoubtedly isolated events between those cities and Argos. These
destructions therefore provide no concrete evidence of Argive hegemony in the Iron Age, but
only of disputes and their devastating end for one or two Argive settlements in the late 8th
century BC.

Sanctuaries

Two of the major sanctuaries and places of worship in the central Plain, the Argive
Heraion and the nearby Mycenaean tombs at Prosymna, have provided us with much dedicatory
material from 8th and 7th centuries BC, and an examination of those materials sheds some light on
the political connections within the Plain at that time. Generally, the latter half of 8th century BC
was a major stepping-stone in Argolid religion— it saw the erection of temples and sanctuaries
throughout the region. Foley points out that this phenomenon was not restricted to the Argolid,
but was occurring all around Greece at the time, and therefore “It is impossible to draw any
definite conclusions about the political situation in the eighth and seventh centuries in the
Argolid from the evidence of sanctuaries and cult” (Foley 1988, 153). De Polignac, however,
argues that Greek settlements, and later poleis, used religion to create a representation of reality
and pattern of behavior, redefining social and spatial relations through the construction of
sanctuaries and temples by which they could form new relationships and practice inclusion,

The Argive Heraion

“[One of our problems] is the remarkable Argive propensity for rapid mythological reinvention” (Hall 1995,
580).
The Heraion is located midway between Argos and Mycenae, on a low hill overlooking a large portion of the Central Plain. Several other sanctuaries to Hera are known in the region and others may have existed, but none was as prominent as the Heraion.\footnote{Hera was an important Argolid deity even in Homer, where her favorite cities are said to be Argos, followed by Mycenae. Sanctuaries to her may have also existed on the citadels of Tiryns and Mycenae, though the deity worshipped could also have been Athena in both cases (for more information see Hall 1995, 598-600; Foley 1988, 143-146).} The date of construction for the Argive Heraion has been much debated due to misleading and minimal evidence. Foley points out that votives appear at the Heraion at the end of the 9\textsuperscript{th} century BC, suggesting that the cult began around that time (1988, 153). Hall mentions that pottery found at the sanctuary could be as early as Protogeometric, and a confirmed MG II sherd has been found there, while the earliest pins and fibulae are PG in date. Thus, it is not impossible that cult activity began there in the PG period (Hall 1995, 591-2). The Old Terrace Wall, part of the very first phase of monumental building at the sanctuary, mimics the Cyclopean masonry found at the BA palaces of Mycenae and Tiryns. However, there are no temple remains predating the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC, which leads us to conclude that the wall could not have been built earlier than the 8\textsuperscript{th} century BC (Kelly 1976, 54). Furthermore, Carl Blegen, who excavated the site, did not find any Protocorinthian sherds in the building layers of the terrace and retaining wall, and therefore concluded that these must have been finished by 725 BC (Blegen 1939, 432).

However, not all scholars have agreed upon this date, and the date of the old temple, of which only a small part of the stylobate remains, is debated as well. Wright proposes that the temple should be dated to the third quarter of the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC, placing it in the same century as the temple of Apollo (early 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC) at Corinth due to similarities between the two, but pushing the date forward into the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC due to the technological advancement of the use of bosses on the stylobate blocks to help with placement (1982, 189-191). Kelly, on the other
hand, believes that the temple ought to be dated to the second half of the 8th century BC based on
the Geometric sherds found by Blegen below the terrace wall (1967, 428-9). Additionally, the
discovery of a terracotta model at the site led some scholars to believe that before a monumental
temple was built on the Old Terrace, a “simple, hut-like shrine” was built on it first (Antonaccio
1992, 96). Finally, Mallwitz suggests that merely an altar, not a structure, preceded the Old
Temple on the terrace (1981, 634).

The exact date of the temple aside, the fact that the general date of the earliest temple and
the terrace remains at the Heraion (late 8th or early 7th century BC) nearly coincides with the
destructions of Asine and Nauplia (late 8th century BC) and the supposed struggles between
Argos and Sparta in the 8th century BC, has led some scholars to believe that the sanctuary is a
statement of control and power by Argos over the entire Central Plain. Antonaccio asserts that,
“The Old Temple and terrace at the Heraion do not belong to early competition... Rather, they
mark its end, which saw the destruction of Asine and the expansion of the settlement of Argos
itself and the consolidation of the Argive Plain under the hegemony of Argos” (1992, 105).

Antonaccio believes that the building of the Heraion was a statement of power aimed at the
Spartans and that it solidified Argive domination in the Plain (1992, 103-4). However, the idea
that Sparta and Argos were at war with one another in the 8th century BC was already examined
earlier in this chapter and effectively deemed improbable by Hall and Kelly. Additionally, the
destructions of Nauplia and Asine, as discussed above, are not necessarily evidence of Argive
hegemony or expansion. But if the sanctuary was not a statement of power and control, what was
it? Both Hall and De Polignac argue that the sanctuary was a communal sanctuary used by the
communities of the Argive Plain until the 460s BC when Argos destroyed Mycenae and Tiryns
and took sole control of the area (Hall 1995, 613; De Polignac 1994, 4).
This persuasive interpretation can be supported by several lines of evidence. First, Ingrid Strøm, who examined the dedications (particularly the metalwork) at the Argive Heraion, has argued for differences in dedicatory practices between the Heraion and sanctuaries of Hera at Argos. Strøm notes that the monumentality of the Heraion is not matched in the building program of Argos itself until the 5th century BC (1992, 198-199). Additionally, she found that some of the bronzes located at the Heraion were North Syrian or Phrygian in origin, while the only imported material represented at Argos is Cypriot (Strøm 1992, 57-9), indicating that there was a difference in imports among the votives at the Heraion and in the city of Argos itself (Hall 1995, 606). Another line of evidence comes from the most commonly dedicated pin at the Heraion, which is Kilian-Dirlmeier’s type 1D. It is found in Geometric graves at Argos, but the same pins are not dedicated at sanctuaries within Argos itself (Hall 1995, 607). Yet, at Mycenae the Kilian-Dirlmeier’s type 1D pins are found in both graves and sanctuaries (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1984, 97; 100-101). Thus, as Hall notes, there is evidence for differing patterns of dedication at the Heraion and within Argos itself. So, if Argos was using the Heraion as a point of control and assertion of power, we would expect to see similar patterns of dedications, but in fact the opposite is true. The fact that Mycenae is finding connections with the sanctuary where Argos is not is even more peculiar and perhaps even suggests they are a dominant presence at the Heraion.

A second piece of evidence that does not testify to a strict connection between only Argos and the Heraion comes from myth. In the myth of Io, a priestess of Hera in Argos, the character of Io’s father changes in the course of history from Peirasos to Iasos. Hall attributes this initial change to Hellanikos and argues that the switch probably occurred because Peirasos was closely associated with Tiryns (Hall 1995, 610). According Plutarch, Peirasos dedicated a
statue of Hera in the sanctuary at Tiryns, which was then moved to the Heraion after the
destruction of Tiryns by Argos (Plutarch fr. 10 Bernadakis). Thus the myths of Io and Peirasos
both link the cult of Hera at the Heraion to Tiryns, not Argos. Even further, according to Plutarch
the establishment of the cult is accredited to Tiryns, not Argos (Hall 1995, 610).

Finally, a bronze plaque was discovered at the Heraion bearing a Sacral Law (IG IV.506;
SEG XI.302; C. Waldstein 1905). It dates to ca. 575-550 and mentions a damiourgos, a
magistrate who was in charge of administering the law. Such magistrates were common
throughout Greece and are mentioned in several texts and inscriptions. Nine such damiourgoi are
known to have operated at Argos due to similar inscriptions found on the Larissa mentioning the
magistrates (IG IV.614; SEG XI.336; Hall 1995, 610). However, at the Heraion a provision was
made for when there was no damiourgos present, showing that at the administrative level there
was little or no connection between Argos and the Heraion at the time of the inscription (Hall
1995, 610). The fact that the settlement and the sanctuary had separate magistrates and that an
Argive magistrate did not fill in should the damiourgos at the Heraion be absent shows that the
two were not closely connected politically and therefore that Argos did not have direct control.

All in all, in dedicatory practices, in myths related to the Heraion, and in inscriptions
evidence of administrative practices, there is little evidence of a direct connection between Argos
and the Heraion, even as late as 575-550 BC, that would indicate Argive control over the
sanctuary. What is more, Hall even asserts that “the earliest literary evidence that indisputably
connects the Heraion with Argos… [is] Pindar's 10th Nemean Ode of 464 B.C.” (Hall 1995,
612). Instead, De Polignac argues that sanctuaries like the Heraion (seated on the border of
territories/settlements) were meeting places that allowed for display and competition between
settlements. The Heraion, therefore, was a sanctuary meant to oversee the connections in the
Argolid Plain and it was not under the control of any one settlement during the Geometric period, but a shared space for all nearby settlements (De Polignac 1994, 12-13). Additionally, this may be why we see an increase in dedications in the 8th century BC—the elites of the communities sharing the sanctuary are displaying their wealth and competing with their neighbors through those dedications. Interestingly, they are doing so not only through standard dedications, such as tripod cauldrons and pins or fibulae, but also through the dedication of arms and armor, indicators of heroic status (De Polignac 1994, 13). Ultimately, De Polignac argues that while the building of the Heraion and contemporary destruction of Asine may have been expressions of Argive supremacy, it did not exclude other settlements from the sanctuary, nor did it signify Argive political hegemony in the Central Plain (1995, 53).

Given the evidence against Argive control over the Heraion provided by Hall, it seems that the conclusions of Hall and De Polignac are more than reasonable. When the building program of the Argive Heraion is taken alongside ideas of conflict between Argos and Sparta and with the evidence provided by Pausanias for the destruction of Asine and Nauplia, it seems at first glance that the sanctuary is in fact an Argive statement of power. However, having examined all the evidence, the Heraion is more likely to have been a center of cooperation, a space for gatherings and competition through display, not purely an expression of dominance by Argos.

Prosymna
In the late 8th century BC, 15 out of 50 Mycenaean chamber tombs at Prosymna were the focus of ritual activity in the form of ceramic dedications (Foley 1988, 151) and bronze bowls (Antonaccio 1992, 98). In addition to the dedications, there is evidence of reuse, as Geometric and later burials have also been found in these tombs. While Foley notes that most of the pottery
is hastily and sloppily made (1988, 66), the similarity between the dedications at the tombs and those at the Heraion led some scholars to believe that Hera may have been worshipped there as well (Antonaccio 1992, 99). We may therefore see the reuse and dedication of goods at these tombs as a means to reappropriate the past, in that those making the dedications “establish[ed] a link between the previous and the existing masters of the land and, through the sanction that the past thereby seemed to provide, legitimated the present state of things” (De Polignac 1995, 140) The true identity of those buried in the tombs was unknown to those reusing them, but that did not matter. Instead, those worshipping there in the 8th century BC conferred upon them an identity necessary to their own goals by means of myth (De Polignac 1995, 140).

Mycenae and Argos seem to have been competing with one another for claims to the land around the Heraion (at Prosymna especially) through the establishment of these tomb cults. Antonaccio suggests that the Argive program of building the Heraion and the establishment tomb cult at Prosymna were moves on the part of Argos to reclaim territory (1992, 102). She also suggests that Argos and Mycenae may have

[come] to conflict over the boundaries of their territories in a dispute over burying rights in the old tombs at Prosymna on the edge of the plain. Argos responded by building the secondary shrine near the tombs. At the Chaos ravine in Mycenae, the shrine usually thought to belong to Agamemnon may have been the Mycenaean response of staking their territory; it is comparable to the “secondary shrine” (1992, 103-104).

De Polignac interprets the concurrent establishment of the two cults similarly, suggesting that the establishment of a cult at Prosymna by Argos was an attempt to lay claims to the Heraion and its heroes, while the Mycenaean responded by establishing the Agamemneion to assert their own mythical traditions and collective identity (1995, 142). If these theories are correct, then Argos and Mycenae were engaging one another in a not-so-silent contest to lay claim to ancestral mythology and the land between their cities and the Heraion. This struggle reveals that while Argos may have
been attempting to claim the territory around the Heraion through cult activity, her stake on the land was not formal or not yet established. Moreover, Mycenae was allegedly fighting back against an Argive claim to the Heraion and surrounding territory through the establishment of its own ancestral cult. If Argos were in full control of the Central Plain at the time these cults were established, Mycenae might not have made such a move at declaring its identity and independence. The cult activity at Prosymna reveals that Argos may have been struggling to assert its supremacy at the time, as De Polignac suggested, but the evidence does not support Argive hegemony in the 8th century BC. Rather, it shows that Argos was, at the time, making attempts at the power they would formally claim in the 5th century BC.

The Central Plain of the Argolid was a cohesive, closely connected region observing similar burial practices and preferring its own local art forms over those of neighboring regions even into the 8th century BC. Pottery, graves, ritual remains, and even domestic evidence have been found at the major sites that provide evidence for patterns and practices in the Plain throughout the Geometric period. Using ancient sources, the wealth of remains produced by IA Argos, the destruction of Asine attested in the archaeological record, and the construction of the Argive Heraion, the idea of an Argive empire beginning in the 8th century BC is easy to latch on to. However, a closer examination of the evidence reveals that the literary accounts are not reliable and that the Argive Heraion was in fact a communal sanctuary and not the personal property of Argos alone. Instead, Argive domination in the Central Plain is not unequivocal until the destructions of Tiryns and Mycenae in the 460s BC. Left to be studied in relation to the idea of this Argive empire are the pottery and the grave goods of the major settlements throughout the Central Plain, both of which are examined in the next chapter. Both the pottery and grave goods
provide further indications of increasing cultural contacts between settlements during the Iron Age, as I will show, but no signs of a politically-dominant Argos in the 8th century BC.
Chapter Four

Pottery and Burials: Examining Settlement Connections within the Geometric Argolid Plain

“Material culture, like all culture, was actively manipulated by thinking people in pursuit of their own ends” (Morris 2000, 22).

Given the limited amount of material that we have for the Geometric Argolid, it is hard to determine exactly what the political climate of the Central Plain was in the Late Geometric period (from the 8th century into the early 7th century BC). As was examined in the previous chapter, the ancient sources are too far removed from the situation in the IA Central Argolid Plain to be anything more than jumbled stories and unfounded claims of Argive supremacy in the 8th century BC. Thus, relying on these sources is ill-advised. In addition, the archaeological record contradicts the claims of those sources. While it is confirmed that Asine was destroyed by Argos in the 8th century BC as Pausanias stated (the destruction of Nauplia has not been confirmed in the archaeological record) his given reasons, that the settlement aided the Spartans in attacks on Argos, are unfounded. Additionally, epigraphic data and archaeological evidence from sanctuaries do not support the idea of Argive hegemony as early as the 8th century BC.

But what about pottery? As Brenda J. Bowser states in her article, titled From Pottery to Politics: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Political Factionalism, Ethnicity, and Domestic Pottery Style in the Ecuadorian Amazon, “In practice, archaeologists routinely rely upon analysis of domestic pottery to identify political boundaries and to gauge sociopolitical change” (2000, 219).¹ In this chapter, I attempt to study the motifs, shapes, and clay of the pottery produced at

¹ Bowser looked to the paints and motifs used by Amazonian women of the Quichua and Achuar factions in Conambo and determined that “women's political affiliation and the factional division in Conambo are indicated strongly in the painted designs on chicha bowls” (2000, 231). Chicha bowls are used to serve a fermented beverage
several major IA Argolid sites within the Central Plain to determine the relationships (economic, political, or otherwise) that might be visible. Additionally, I study the grave goods from these sites, pottery included, to determine any regional trends that might be present. Through this examination of the pottery and grave goods, I have found that pottery and burial practices are similar enough to talk about an Argive *koine* in terms of the pottery shapes and motifs, as well as the chosen burial methods (inhumation in cists, pots, or pits and with grave goods usually including pottery, iron and bronze pins, and bronze rings), which are generally consistent from site to site. In the details, however, the motifs, shapes, and preferred burial practices vary from site to site. Argos, for example, has shapes during one period that have not been found at other major sites (such as Tiryns and Mycenae). Additionally, Tiryns utilizes motifs that are not typical to Geometric pottery produced at workshops in the other settlements in the Plain. Moreover, while cists were the preferred burial type in Argos throughout all periods, even in the LG period when pithos/pot burials increased in popularity, at Tiryns pithos/pot burials matched or even outnumbered cist graves. Yet overall, non-ceramic grave goods are very consistent across sites, with major sites such as Tiryns and Mycenae having very few grave goods outside of the normal assemblage found at Argos. Overall the pottery, burial practices, and grave goods show that while all the settlements were participating in a cultural *koine*, they were also utilizing unique shapes and motifs and revealing a preference for practices that were not dominant in Argos. I argue that while this all shows a shared culture and therefore strong connections throughout the Argolid Plain in the Geometric period, this does not support the idea of Argive hegemony.

*Argolic Pottery*

called chichi, and the offering of the liquid and the type of bowl used indicate the social and political status of the offerer and drinker.
Argolic pottery utilizes a fair number of shapes with varying functions throughout the Geometric period. In my study, I am specifically looking at decorated tablewares deposited in graves as goods or ash urns. Some of these vessels are known to have had a life before their deposition as a grave good or their use as an ash urn based on small details such as repairs made (see Langdon’s discussion in her article titled Beyond the Grave, 2001). For our purposes, however, I will examine them only in their burial and workshop contexts through an examination of details such as clay color, shape, motifs, and techniques.

Prominent among Argolic pottery from graves are amphorae (neck-handled, belly-handled, and shoulder-handled, the placement of the handles thought to be an indicator of the gender of the person interred inside), kraters, and pithoi. All three were utilized as ash urns, but amphorae were also deposited as grave goods. Amphorae outside of burial contexts were used for holding wine or for storage, while pithoi were also used for storage and kraters were the “punch bowls” of the Greek world, used primarily for mixing wine with water. The pyxis and kantharos were also used as ash urns and, like the amphora, they were also deposited as grave goods. The pyxis was typically used by women for the storage of items such as cosmetics or jewelry and the kantharos was used as a cup. Both of these vessels were made in much larger versions in order to be used as ash urns. The remainder of the vessels commonly found in graves at the prominent Iron Age Argolid sites were deposited as grave goods, and they include the oinochoe and lekythos-oinochoe, both used as wine or water pitchers, the skyphos and cup, both for drinking, the plate, obviously for food consumption, the aryballos, a smaller vessel typically used for holding perfumed oils, the hydria, used as a water jug, and the jug and mug, both for serving and consuming liquids. Other shapes were far less frequent and they include the bird vase (which is a pouring vessel), the amphoriskos, a miniature version of the amphora used for
holding oils, the olpe and the bottle, both used for holding and serving liquids. Judging by this list, most vessels being deposited in graves and used as ash urns were finely-made table wares connected to dining and drinking. It is known that ritual feasting often took place at the gravesite at the time the burial occurred given the presence of animal bones and ashes in some graves from the period. Additionally, feasting was an important element of Iron Age religion and was a mark of status (the firedogs in the Panoply Grave in Argos indicate that that particular soldier was capable of providing feasts for his fellow elite). Moreover, the deposited vessels not associated with feasting are connected to other elements of status and display, like perfumed oils or jewelry.

As will be discussed below, before the LG II phase Argive pottery was not distinguishable by workshop. During this latest phase, vessels from specific workshops are found at several sites (except for the Atticizing work of Asine), suggesting local trade in the Central Plane. From EG I to LG I, however, pottery was only distinguishable by individual motifs and the color of the fired clay. Due to the fact that, at most sites, a unique clay color has been found and occasionally a unique motif, I suggest below that for the most part settlements were producing their own pottery and then using it locally. During the LG II phase, when workshops can be identified, pottery was circulating between multiple settlements, so it is clear that not all the pottery that was found at a site must also have been made there. However, even in this period, very few vessels from these workshops have been found outside of their proposed production center, which suggests that even at the highest point of production and consumption, these vessels were not circulating very widely within the Plain. This supports the theory that in earlier periods with more limited production, most of the pottery found at a site was locally-made.

Lastly, at the beginning of the Geometric period, as we shall see below, Argolic Geometric pottery was in its developing stages and therefore was not consistent in shapes and
motifs from site to site. As the period progressed, however, the style matured and sites began to share ideas, resulting in shapes and motifs, along with motif combinations, common to most sites throughout the Central Plain. This development of a common assemblage is referred to as an Argolic pottery *koine*, and its emergence gives information about the connections in the Plain later in the Geometric period.

*EG I Argolid Pottery (900-875)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belly-Handled Amphora</td>
<td>Tiryns (2), Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amphora</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td>Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Tiryns (1), Mycenae (3), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Tiryns (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: EG I Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangles</td>
<td>Mycenae (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple zigzag</td>
<td>Mycenae (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Axe</td>
<td>Mycenae (kantharos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battlement in multiple outline</td>
<td>Mycenae (skyphos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inset triangles</td>
<td>Mycenae (lekythos-oinochoe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diluted scribble</td>
<td>Argos (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad dogtooth</td>
<td>Argos (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed diagonals</td>
<td>Argos (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow panel of horizontal lines</td>
<td>Tiryns (amphora), Argos (pyxis C 2479)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: EG I Decoration

The three sites listed in the above tables (Mycenae, Tiryns, and Argos) were among the six sites that have signs of continuity from the LHIIIIB2 palatial destructions into the Submycenaean period (see chapter three). All three sites play major roles in the Central Plain in the Geometric period.

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2 All the tables in this section are based on information provided in “Chapter Four: Argive Geometric” of J.N. Coldstream’s *Greek Geometric Pottery: A Survey of Ten Local Styles and Their Chronology* and his references to plates in Paul Courbin’s *La Céramique Géométrique De L’Argolide* (to be abbreviated as CGA). Note that Coldstream provided information based on a selection of pottery and this does not include unpublished finds. Additionally, the numbers of types of vessels from each site are in parentheses beside the site name.

3 All EG I Mycenaean pottery found in Coldstream, pl 22.

4 Any vessel labeled “C” can be found in CGA according to its number.
Period, although, as Foley states, of the three, Argos was the most dominant purely on the basis of the size of the site and amount of material found there (1988, 56). Unfortunately the only vase from Argos that Coldstream provided information for is the neck-handled amphora found in Phlessas Gr. 4/1, stating that the rest of the vases are unpublished (2008, 113). However, examining the information Coldstream does provide, it is interesting that while Argos produced a neck-handled amphora, Tiryns and Mycenae produced belly-handled amphorae (Table 4.1; Plate 4). Thus, in the realm of amphorae the three sites are not all connected, but rather Argos stands on its own as having produced a different type. Mycenae and Tiryns do share several shapes in the assemblage set forth by Coldstream (amphorae, oinochoai, pyxides, and skyphoi), but Mycenae produced shapes not seen at the other settlements (a lekythos-oinochoe and a kantharos) (see Plate 4). In addition, the decoration seems just as scattered. The repertoire of motifs is very limited and they are not found consistently across these three sites. The most common motifs, the battlement (Plate 4a) and zigzag (Plate 4c), which are to remain prominent beyond this phase of the Geometric period, are likely found at more sites than Coldstream specifically points out (Table 4.2), while triangles (Plate 4c and 4e) are inherited from the Protogeometric period (Coldstream 2008, 115). However, outside of these major motifs no clear patterns of connection emerge between the sites, especially in decoration.

Overall, during the brief EG I period, while the Geometric style was developing in the region, the limited number of motifs and range of shapes and their largely random distribution across these three major sites indicates that different sites were choosing different shapes and shape-motif combinations at will. Thus, in the realm of pottery, the Argolid Plain was not yet part of an artistic koine. Morgan and Whitelaw observed this same trend of dissimilarity while
the style was developing and even found that before the Late Geometric period, the sites only increased in dissimilarity (1991, 99).

*EG II Argolic Pottery (875-825 BC)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled Amphora</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Argos (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Argos (3), Nauplia (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Argos (3), Mycenae (2?), Dendra (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestalled Krater</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Argos (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Mycenae (2), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>Argos (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: EG II Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Zigzag (Most Common)</td>
<td>Mycenae (Oinochoe), Argos (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched Meander (Most Common)</td>
<td>Mycenae (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battlement in Multiple Outline</td>
<td>Argos (Amphora C 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-hatched lozenge chain</td>
<td>Argos (Oinochoe C 52), Dendra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagonal Cross</td>
<td>Argos (Kantharos C 62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambda Ornament</td>
<td>Mycenae (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogtooth</td>
<td>Argos (krater C 204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-Columns</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis C 2410)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Hatched Triangles</td>
<td>Mycenae (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single zigzag</td>
<td>Pyxides from Argos (C 895) and Mycenae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double zigzag</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis C 2410)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row of dots</td>
<td>Mycenae (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: EG II Decoration

In the EG II period, the number of sites at which geometric-painted pottery is found expands to include Dendra and Nauplia alongside Mycenae, Argos, and Tiryns (See Map I). Beginning in this period, examples of the same shape begin to be found across multiple sites. The pyxis and the oinochoe, for example, were found at multiple sites, indicating that a *koine* was emerging

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5 All EG II pottery from Mycenae found in Coldstream, pl 23.
along with the decoration. While the neck-handled amphora (Plate 5b) is now found at Argos and Mycenae (Table 4.3), several shapes are still found only at Argos: the plate, krater, and now the lekythos-oinochoe, a shape found at Mycenae in EG I (Table 4.1 and 4.3). The fact that these shapes are not found at both in either period, but occur in one and then the other, suggests that the diffusion of shapes is slow in this phase. Additionally, it should be noted that they appeared in Mycenae first, not Argos. Moreover, there are no clear spatial patterns in decoration in this period across sites, although the repertoire does expand in general alongside the expanding list of shapes. The most common motifs, as in EG I, are found at multiple sites. Innovative new motifs (such as M-columns, Lambda ornament [see Plate 5c], and the dogtooth) occur randomly distributed among various sites, a pattern we would expect as the region develops its own Geometric style.

From tables 4.1 through 4.4, it is obvious that from EG I to EG II the Geometric style was slowly developing across the Argolid plain as it gradually appeared at more settlements and new motifs and shapes were added to the repertoire. However, even though find spots have increased and shapes are found across more sites, there is still no real sense of a coherent and unified Geometric Argolid style. Later on an Argolid style, or koine, will be obvious in the common use of most shapes and motifs at every site. For these earlier phases, it is clear that there is still not a lot of artistic communication between sites (there is just enough that they are beginning to make some of the same shapes, but this communication becomes far more prominent in later periods).

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6 These most common motifs include the multiple zigzag and the hatched meander (see Plate 5a-b), which makes its debut in this period (it was lacking in the EG I repertoire).

7 Interestingly, innovative new motifs are also found most often on pyxides. This shape may have been the experimental shape for Argive painters, and this could have been due to the fact that they were not connected to ritual feasting and drinking like the rest of the shapes, but rather to items more commercial, like cosmetics.

8 It should be noted that Coldstream provides only one example for several of the motifs he lists in the EG II phase.
and that while some commonalities have emerged, the data set is still too small to determine anything about settlement connections.

*MG I Argolic Pottery (825-800 BC)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapes</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amphora</td>
<td>Argos (2), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Berbati (2), Argos (2), Tiryns (2), Nauplia (2); two types, both found at Nauplia and Berbati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td>Argos (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aryballos</td>
<td>Berbati (5), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Argos (4), Berbati (?), Tiryns (1),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Berbati (1), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Argos (C 835-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Nauplion (1), Argos (3), Berbati (2?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Nauplion (1), Berbati (17 examples), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>Berbati (2?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>Lerna (burial), Argos (C 3967)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: MG I Shapes

MG I Decoration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hatched Meander (Most Common)</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Zigzag (Most Common)</td>
<td>Berbati (krater pl 24b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-hatched lozenge chains</td>
<td>Argos (cup), Tiryns (Oinochoe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed diagonals</td>
<td>Tiryns (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal lines</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight-pointed stars with verticals</td>
<td>Nauplion (skyphos), Argos (skyphoi), Argos (pyxis, amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-hatched triangles</td>
<td>Berbati, Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous fine banding</td>
<td>Berbati (amphora, pyxis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: MG I Decoration

In the MG I phase the range of shapes remains about the same, here only adding the aryballos (Plate 6e). Additionally, a new site has been added, that of Berbati, and it seems to have been very active.\(^9\) Again three shapes in this phase are only found at one site—the kantharos and the

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\(^9\) The collection for Berbati in the MG II phase is pretty substantial (Plate 6b is a krater from Berbati). Additionally, Coldstream lists Lerna among the pottery, but the only piece he mentions is a burial pithos (2008, 118).
lekythos-oinochoe, both only at Argos, and the plate at Berbati. The rest of the shapes, in particular the oinochoe, the skyphos, and the cup, however, are found at several settlements throughout the plain, major (Argos, Tiryns) and minor (Nauplia, Berbati). This is significant in that it shows that Argive Geometric pottery is both expanding and becoming more standard in the plain.

The list of decoration seems to be getting more concentrated in its range of motifs, which is now shorter than the EG II list, but also more focused on staple motifs that are common among all sites. The hatched meander (Plate 6a) and multiple zigzag (Plate 6a-d) are the most common motifs. Yet, around the common motifs the ancillary, or secondary, motifs were still different from site to site. Interestingly, on the majority of vessels that place the main motif in a window-panel, there are no subsidiary zones of decoration. Instead, the rest of the vessel is broken up by alternating reserved lines that are more numerous in this phase than in EG I (Coldstream 2008, 120; Plate 6b-d). Additionally, the decoration, unlike the shapes, still seems a bit more irregular from settlement to settlement, with ancillary motifs like opposed diagonals and horizontal lines still only found at a limited number of sites.

The increasing standardization of the style is also visible when comparing the distribution of shapes across phases, and the style finds more regularity in the continued use of the most common motifs (hatched meander, multiple zigzag, and lozenge chains). It is obvious, when comparing tables 4.5 and 4.6 to tables 4.1 through 4.4 that shapes and motifs are, on the whole, being found more consistently at several sites throughout the plain, indicating that the Geometric style is maturing and becoming more uniform at this phase. Nevertheless, the style still has not reached the level of cohesion it will in later periods.

Interestingly, Coldstream does not mention any material from Mycenae for this phase, nor does he provide an explanation for the lack of material from the site.
### MGII Argolic Pottery (800-750)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapes</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amphora</td>
<td>Argos (5), Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amporiskos</td>
<td>Argos (5), Tiryns (9?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belly-handled amphora</td>
<td>Nauplia (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini belly-handled amphora</td>
<td>Argos (C 190-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Mycenae (2), Tiryns (1), Argos (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td>Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aryballos</td>
<td>Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydria</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Vase</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxides</td>
<td>Mycenae (3), Argos (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Argos (4), Mycenae (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Tiryns (2), Mycenae (1), Argos (1),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Mycenae (1), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Argos (4), Mycenae (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: MG II Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical chevrons/sigmas</td>
<td>Argos (skyphos, pyxis and cup), Mycenae (cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gear pattern</td>
<td>Tiryns (aryballos), Argos (C 287, 878)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double axe with vertical bars</td>
<td>Argos (amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double axe in isolation</td>
<td>Argos (C 289, 836)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotted lozenge chains</td>
<td>Argos (C 31, amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotted tangential circles</td>
<td>Argos (C 33), Kantharos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paneled stars</td>
<td>Argos (C 423), Tiryns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose, single zigzag</td>
<td>Tiryns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dots</td>
<td>Argos (C 2476), Oinochoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple zigzags</td>
<td>“Popular,” no specific place mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-hatched lozenge chains</td>
<td>“Popular,” no specific place mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched Meander</td>
<td>Argos (krater), in every large design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meander hook</td>
<td>Argos (pl 25a, C 29, 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched Battlement</td>
<td>Argos (C 289, 423, 835, Phlessas; oinochoe, kantharos, amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched gear pattern</td>
<td>Kantharos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched zigzag</td>
<td>Argos (pl 25a, amphora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatrefoil metopes</td>
<td>Argos (pl 25b, C 289, 878)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octofoils</td>
<td>Argos (C 423, krater)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing marshbirds (also with fish on C 840)</td>
<td>Tiryns (lekythos-oinochoe), Argos (pyxis C 840)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrupeds</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses/stags</td>
<td>Argos (kantharos C 33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: MG II Decoration
The number of shapes and motifs expands immensely in the MG II phase. The amphoriskos, miniature belly-handled amphora, hydria, and a bird vase all make their debut in this period, while the belly-handled amphora returns after having shown up in the EG I (Table 4.1). Nauplia is only once mentioned among the find spots, but the majority of the shapes are found at two or more of the major settlements in the plain (Tiryns, Argos, and Mycenae). The list of motifs for the MG II phase has doubled since the MG I phase, while retaining old motifs like cross-hatched lozenge chains (Plate 7a) and multiple zigzags (Plate 7a, c-e) that are popular throughout the Geometric style and adding new variants and ancillary motifs. In addition, we see the birth of figured motifs in this phase, the first coming from Tiryns in the form of a bird file (Plate 7e) and then at Argos with the first figural motifs of quadrupeds. As the Geometric style of the Argolid becomes more established, it seems that workshops are beginning to experiment more and add to the repertoire of staples that they had become accustomed to use.

Of the newer shapes (of which there are four), the hydria, the bird vase, and the mini belly-handled amphora are found exclusively at Argos. In fact, the newest shapes have been found consistently at Argos (see tables 4.3 through 4.6). This could tell us one of two things: either these rare finds are coming exclusively from Argos because it was the largest settlement of the period and has produced the most remains, or Argos is the source of innovation for new shapes and they were spreading to the other major settlements from there as time progressed. The second option, of course, requires that one assume more about relationships within the Plain and make Argos the center of ceramic innovation and production. This latter possibility, however, will be examined further in the coming sections.

As I stated above, Morgan and Whitelaw argue that before the LG period, Argolic Geometric pottery only increased in dissimilarity on a site-by-site basis, and they argue that
shapes and motifs across sites did not begin to exhibit marked similarities until the LG phase (1991, 99). I, however, believe that these similarities are exhibited beginning in the MG II phase. Nearly all the shapes of this phase (Table 4.7) are found at multiple sites, and several (the amphorae, amphoriskos, krater, skyphos, cup, and kantharos) are found at nearly every major site, Argos, Tiryns, and Mycenae. Although the same cannot be said of the motifs outside of the popular ones (multiple zigzags, lozenge chains, and meanders; Table 4.8), the growing list of motifs reveals the increasing emphasis on painted pottery and these motifs will come to be just as regular as the shapes have become in the MG II phase. By comparison to the lack of patterns and connections in the EG I and EG II data sets (Tables 4.1-4.4), the MG II data set reveals far more connections and an expanding assemblage that is beginning to resemble the koine that is very clear in the LG period (the emergence of figural motifs in the MG II in particular makes this evident).

**LG I Argolic Pottery (750-730 BC)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapes</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amphora</td>
<td>Tiryns (1), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos</td>
<td>Tiryns (unique, 2?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphoriskos</td>
<td>Nauplia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Dendra (2?), Argos (3), Nauplia (1), Lerna (1), Tiryns (1), Mycenae (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-oinochoe</td>
<td>Tiryns (rare, 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jug</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mug</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Argos (2), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Argos (4), Dendra (2), Asine (1), Mycenae (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Argos (2), Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Argos (10), Dendra (3?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Tiryns (2), Argos (10), Nauplia (1), Lerna (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotyle</td>
<td>Asine (1), Argos (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: LG I Shapes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagonal crosses between vertical bars</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangential compass-drawn circles</td>
<td>Argos (giant pyxis) [have floating circles at Asine]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serpentine wavy line with stars in field</td>
<td>Argos (giant pyxis, oinochoe, C 244, 4660), Asine (oinochoe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotted-leaf lozenges</td>
<td>Mycenae (oinochoe pl 27e), without central dot: Argos (C 566), Mycenae (pl 27a), Nauplia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dots and zigzags</td>
<td>Still common: Argos (Oinochoe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevrons, sigmas, vertical wavy lines</td>
<td>Mycenae (pl 27b); always multiple brush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step meander</td>
<td>hallmark of Argive LG ; Argos (giant pyxis pl 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meander, meander hooks, multiple zigzags</td>
<td>All common: Argos (giant pyxis pl 26, kantharos, sherds), Mycenae (27c-e, skyphos, krater, oinochoe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatrefoil metopes</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis), Dendra, Tiryns, Nauplia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched swastika metopes</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis), Mycenae (oinochoe pl 27e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular design metopes</td>
<td>Dendra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun-like metopes</td>
<td>Argos (pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotted Line</td>
<td>Argos (Kantharos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURAL MOTIFS:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse tamer &amp; row of dancers</td>
<td>Most popular figural motifs; Argos (krater, sherds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestlers</td>
<td>Argos (giant pyxis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>Argos (Marshbirds, pelican, and flamingos in groups of 3 on giant pyxis), Mycenae (pl 27 c-d, skyphos and krater), larger bird at Mycenae (oinochoe 27e), also found on LG II krater from Tiryns and Argos krater C 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Commonly seen with horses; Argos (giant pyxis and fragment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: LG I Decoration

The LG I phase sees a continuation of the trends and patterns observed in MG II: namely, an increase in the number of shapes and motifs and particularly a focus on figural motifs, which get more complex as the phase progresses. With such a broad range of primary and ancillary motifs and the more common inclusion of figural motifs, it makes sense that decoration would become more varied across sites as motifs and motif combinations become more complex and cover
more of the pot’s surface. Leaf lozenges (Plate 8a,d) and concentric circles (Plate 8a) have two variants each, with each variant seen at differing sites. Additionally, birds vary by site: an oinochoe from Mycenae (Plate 8d) displays a solitary, larger bird type in this phase that is not seen at another site until the LG II phase, when it is known at Tiryns and Argos as well. At this phase, the Argolic Geometric style is developed enough to find consistencies in major motifs and figural motifs across sites, but not yet regular enough to distinguish individual workshops. It is for these reasons that Morgan and Whitelaw have argued for the emergence of a *koine* in this phase specifically, though I argue that the rapid expansion of the list of shapes and motifs and the greater consistencies of shapes found from site to site in the MG II, phenomena markedly different from the previous periods, shows that this *koine* was slowly beginning to emerge a bit earlier.

The shape distribution in the LG I phase provides interesting information about possible connections in the plain. In the MG II, unique shapes were found exclusively at Argos, but in the LG I they are found at Tiryns as well, where the lekythos (unique in this phase) and the lekythos-oinochoe (rare in this phase) are only found. Unique shapes are still found at Argos as well, the jug and the mug (Plate 9a-b), but Argos is no longer the only settlement at which unique shapes have been found. In the MG II phase at Tiryns are also found the first figural motifs in the Argolid (Plate 7e). By examining tables 4.7-4.10, it is obvious that Argos does not stand alone in making unique shapes and motifs that then appear at other sites in the final phase of the Geometric style, a fact which suggests the presence of independent workshops (specifically at Tiryns).
**LG II Argolic Pottery (730-690 BC)**

Coldstream has separated some of the pottery from this period into different workshops based on the similarities between details (such as the way a horse’s tail is rendered) in the figural motifs and the use of similar ancillary motifs. Not all of the pottery from the LG II phase, however, was made in these workshops and can only be classified by site. Therefore, I have separated this section of the discussion into general shapes and motifs as I did in the former periods, but I also included tables with the workshop material (see also Plates 9c and 10-13), as it is important to this discussion. I begin here with the overall material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled amphora</td>
<td>Argos (5), Tiryns (2?), Asine (1), Nauplia (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphoriskos</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belly-handled amphora</td>
<td>Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder-handled amphora</td>
<td>Nauplia (1), Asine (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>Ovoid type- Asine (8), Tiryns (1); small, plump type- Asine (2); hemispherical-Argos (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td>Wheelmade- Heraion (1), Argos (1), Tiryns (1); handmade- Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mug</td>
<td>Tiryns (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olpe</td>
<td>Asine (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Flat- Asine (1), Mycenae (1), Nauplia (1); Lug-handled- Tiryns (1), Argos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Argos (3), Corinth (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td>Argos (3), Mycenae (1), Tiryns (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Tiryns (1), Mycenae (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Argos (2), Mycenae (2), Tiryns (4), Asine (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaques</td>
<td>Heraion (5), Aegina (6)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: LG II Shapes

*One plaque from Aegina painted by same hand as plaque from the Argive Heraion, skyphos from Prosymna, and fragment from Troezen (Coldstream 2008, 143).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decoration:</th>
<th>Where Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse taming, dancing women</td>
<td>Most popular scenes, found throughout LG II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other figured scenes</td>
<td>Rare; female mourners- Argos; chariot processions- Argos, Heraion; armed warriors; archers in battle-Heraion; Siamese Twins-Heraion; Male Dancers-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.13: LG II Decoration

*Note that the majority of these special scenes come from the Argive Heraion, an arena of competition and a sanctuary with dedications from many different areas of the Argolid in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Quadrupeds (besides horses)</td>
<td>Heraion; Competing Boxers- Heraion*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneeling Deer- Argos (Master of Argos C 201, seen on C 210); deer combined with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helmeted sphinxes and riders- Tiryns;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Deer-Heraion, Argos (C 4177); goat- Argos (C 3805)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Birds</td>
<td>Asine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird files</td>
<td>One-legged soldier-Mycenae; wirebird-Corinth; also seen on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>many others!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlined cross</td>
<td>Favored by Fence Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid-squares</td>
<td>Favored by Verdelis Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartered and cross-hatched lozenges</td>
<td>Favored by Painter of Athens 877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meander hooks</td>
<td>Favored by Master of Argos C 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dots, chevrons, sigmas</td>
<td>Dance Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Found below horses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangers</td>
<td>Found below horses, especially T-shaped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zigzag or bird groups</td>
<td>Seen in close panel above horses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step meander</td>
<td>Most popular motif outside figural field;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatched zigzags and meander hooks</td>
<td>Ancillary motifs on large vessels, main decoration on those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>too small for step-meander (as on Tirynthian Kantharos and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argive Krater)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaf lozenges, dots, single zigzag, gear pattern</td>
<td>Regularly fill third zones (as on Mycenaean syphos and cup);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leaf-lozenges vary by workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical columns (with zigzags or chevrons)</td>
<td>Argos (Kantharos), Nauplia (tripod amphora), Mycenae (pyxis),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiryns (Kantharos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical zigzags</td>
<td>Argos (krater)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even in this late phase, new shapes are making their debut in the Argolic Geometric assemblage: the shoulder-handled amphora, the olpe, and the plaque. Asine produced much more material in this phase than in the previous and was the only find spot for the new olpe (Coldstream 2008, 131-2). The Heraion was also built in this period and regional pottery was among the earliest dedications. Additionally, Argive Geometric pottery is found for the first time outside of the

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11 For the LG II phase, Coldstream listed the shapes and decoration as for the previous phases, but he also broke the pieces up into their specified workshops, to be discussed below.
Argolid, on the island of Aegina. It seems that a plaque found on Aegina was made by the same hand as plaques and fragments found in several places in the Argolid, the Heraion included. Therefore, we have evidence that pottery was making its way out of the Central Plain.

At this point in the Geometric period, multiple sites in the Argolid are producing the same shapes with similar scenes and motif combinations. The Argolid Geometric style, which was only in its experimental phases in the EG I through MG I phases, has now fully matured into a style common to all sites and used as a language of display and competition (Morgan and Whitelaw 1991, 101). Even though the assemblage and number of motifs increases, the similarities between sites in spite of distance (the further two sites were from one another, the more they differed in previous periods) increase in the LG phase (Morgan and Whitelaw 1991, 99-101; Fig. 4). The same is obvious in tables 4.12 and 4.13. Interestingly, the Argive Heraion and occasionally Asine are the find spots of the rarer types of figural scenes. The Heraion, as will be discussed below, drew in worshippers from all over the plain, and it therefore makes sense that the materials found there show a greater variety of scenes produced by local workshops. As for Asine, the site appears to have been influenced by material from sites outside the Argolid, thus explaining its innovative local motifs. Lastly, the ancillary motifs that were common in previous periods, although widely distributed, now become standard companions to the figural scenes that dominated LG II pottery.

Table 4.14: LG II Workshops by Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site and workshop:</th>
<th>Argos</th>
<th>Tiryns</th>
<th>Mycenae</th>
<th>Asine</th>
<th>Nauplia</th>
<th>Argive Heraion</th>
<th>Corinth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atticizing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter of the Sparring Horses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence Workshop</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miniature Style (and the Verdelis Painter)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape and workshop:</td>
<td>Atticizing</td>
<td>Painter of the Sparring Horses</td>
<td>Fence Workshop</td>
<td>Miniature Style (and the Verdelis Painter)</td>
<td>Schliemann Workshop</td>
<td>Painter of Athens 877</td>
<td>Master of Argos C 201 and Antecedents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck-handled Amphora</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Oinochoe</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oinochoe</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouted Krater</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestalled Krater</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat Pyxis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripod Amphora</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyphos</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekythos-Oinochoe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemispherical Oinochoe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lug-Handled Pyxis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder-handled Amphora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of the workshops assigned by Coldstream (2008, pp 132-141) provides information about production and distribution in the Central Plain in this latest phase. Interestingly, these workshops and the tables both provide examples of Argive vessels/work
outside the Argolid: an Argive plaque was found on Aegina (mentioned above) and the work of
the Dance Painter was found in Corinth (Plate 13). Several workshops\textsuperscript{12} show contact between
Tiryns, Argos, Asine, Nauplia, and Mycenae, with finds from these individual workshops having
been discovered at two or more of those five sites and even some at the Argive Heraion or
further abroad. The presence of workshop-specific pieces at more than one settlement shows that
in the LG II phase workshops and their settlements were not isolated, but that exchange was
occurring between sites in the period and resulting in the movement of pottery between sites in
the Central Plain.

Kraters and kantharoi (Plates 10a-b, 11b, 12a-b, and 13) are the most commonly
produced shapes at all the LG II workshops, while the figural motif of a horse tamer between two
horses is only common to the Miniature Style, the Schliemann Workshop (Plate 11b), the Painter
of Athens 877 (Plate 12a), and the Master of Argos C201 (Coldstream 2008, 132-141).
Interestingly, however, the Master of Argos C 201 simplifies the scene by having a horse tamer
and a solitary horse (Plate 12b) (Coldstream 2008, 139). The remaining workshops, with the
exception of the Asine workshop, deal with other common Argive motifs: a single horse, birds
and bird files, and dancing women (Coldstream 2008, 133-141).

\textit{Regional Pottery Production}

Anne Foley’s work, as presented in \textit{The Argolid 800-600 B.C.: An Archaeological
Survey}, is also central to my study, particularly her research on workshops (1988, 56-66). Foley
focuses on 8\textsuperscript{th}-century or LG Argive pottery and examines it site by site. She considers Argos to
be the dominant site during this century purely due to its size and the fact that it yields the most
pottery. Clay is an important factor to consider in determining production centers, and the clay at

\textsuperscript{12} As is seen in table 4.13, this is true of all of the workshops except that of Asine and that of the Dance Painter.
Argos is generally a light buff color (Foley 1988, 56), a point that is very important when comparing Argive pottery to that of other settlements in the Central Plain. Variations in clay across the Central Plain, among other differences, can tell us which clay beds are used by which workshop, and this can in turn provide us with clues as to whether or not a site is producing its own pottery. The workshops discussed above were not, on the whole, attributed by Coldstream to any one settlement (except the Verdelis painter and the Asine workshop) because their work was found at multiple sites. Other factors, however, help to determine which sites were making their own pottery.

Asine seems to be the most obvious candidate for a settlement possessing its own pottery workshops when the 8th century BC material is examined. The Asine workshop is unique and features motifs and shapes foreign to the Argolid that appear to originate in Athens. Among these motifs are the use of concentric circle groups (Plate 9c), double outlined tongues, birds flanking a center quatrefoil, and ladder-columns (Plate 9c). The spouted krater is also a distinctly Atticizing shape (Coldstream 2008, 132-133). These unique features show how different the workshop at Asine was from the rest of the Argolid. This was partially due to the fact that Asine lay on the coast facing the Saronic Gulf (see Map I), and therefore Athens, which likely resulted in higher instances of trade with the site. It also adds a new dimension to the fact that Asine was destroyed by Argos. Did Argos not like the fact that Asine was trading so much with Athens? Did the two sites come to conflict because of cultural differences, which in this instance were partially displayed through local pottery production? These are possibilities, but unfortunately the likelihood of answering these questions is all too small. Moreover, the clay used for the vessels found at Asine is more of a pinkish/reddish color and not at all comparable to the pale clay at Argos, which is how we can tell Asine’s unique pottery was likely a local product. Additionally,
several shapes are found at Asine that are rare elsewhere, such as the rectilinear amphora, hydria, and, as mentioned above, the spouted krater. Conversely, Asine has not produced a single example of the vertical-handled kantharos, a shape common at other Argolid sites in the 8th century BC (Foley 1988, 59). As for decoration, Asine uses a clay wash, which is uncommon elsewhere, and it also utilizes motifs that are rare at other sites (such as circular motifs borrowed from Attica and even decoration reminiscent of Cycladic pieces). Lastly, in a period when figural scenes dominate the ceramic world, Asine does not use figural scenes nearly as often as the rest of the Plain (although Asinean horses do follow the Argolic fashion) (Foley 1988, 60). Overall, a very strong argument can be made that Asine produced its own pottery.

At Tiryns, too, there are some clues that suggest a local workshop, though the evidence here is largely circumstantial. The clay used for vessels found at Tiryns is very similar to that of Argos, suggesting the two settlements were exploiting the same clay bed (this is not surprising given their proximity), and is not helpful for determining local production. Additionally, in many ways the decoration found at Tiryns is typical of Argive ware. However, Tiryns also has some shapes that are rare elsewhere in the plain, such as the tankard (Foley 1988, 61). Moreover, the pottery found at Tiryns has unique motifs, such as scenes of men on horseback or in chariots, both of which are very rare elsewhere in the Argolid in the 8th century BC (Foley 1988, 62). Lastly, the work of the Verdelis Painter, who was part of the miniature style, has only been found at Tiryns (Coldstream 2003). This fact once again suggests that Tiryns has its own workshop, from which such a painter could produce his wares. Overall, it would seem then that Tiryns did

13 For the most part, Tiryns and Argos use the same motifs and shapes. Aside from the common motifs, in MG I they also both use cross-hatched lozenge chains and eight-pointed stars (table 4.6). In MG II they both utilize the gear pattern, paneled stars, multiple zigzags, and cross-hatched lozenges (table 4.8). In LG I, several motifs become common to several sites, Tiryns and Argos among them. Among these common motifs are dots, zigzags, meanders, meander hook, multiple zigzags, and so on (see table 4.10). Finally, in the LG II phase, several of the workshops have material at both Argos and Tiryns, while figural motifs like dancing files of women and horse taming are common throughout the Plain. This information coincides with Morgan and Whitelaw’s suggestion that Tiryns moved stylistically toward Argos beginning in the MG I phase (1991, 106).
not keep entirely within the bounds of typical Argive shapes and motifs, and it seems one particular painter, in the LG II at least, was making his pottery specifically at Tiryns. Despite the similarities to Argos and the rest of the plain, all of this would suggest that Tiryns was producing its own pottery (Foley 1988, 63).

The 8th-century pottery from Mycenae also may be locally produced. Mycenae shares some shapes with only select settlements: the cylindrical-necked oinochoe is only found also at Tiryns and Argos, the small flat-based pyxis only also at Tiryns, and the pointed pyxis is only at Tiryns and Berbati (Foley 1988, 63). The distribution of these shapes shows the connections between Argos, Tiryns, and Mycenae that were also visible in the tables above. The clay of vessels found at Mycenae proper is a darker brown than that of Tiryns and Argos, but the decoration and shapes are like those of the Argive assemblage (Foley 1988, 64). The pottery from the Agamemneion (a sanctuary near the citadel of Mycenae), however, is not so similar to the nearby settlements (Foley 1988, 64). Instead, this pottery is very distinct. This suggests that the pottery at the Agamemneion was possibly produced on the site of the sanctuary itself (a common occurrence for sanctuaries). Additionally, a unique type of bird was found among Mycenae’s figural decoration, one with a three-ribbed tail, which seems to be unique to the settlement. Overall, despite the fact that the pottery from Mycenae proper is harder to distinguish from that of Argos and Tiryns, Foley concludes that pottery from the Agamemneion indicates local production (1988, 63-4).

Excavations at Nauplia have not produced enough 8th-century pottery to determine whether it had its own local workshop at that time. Several fragments and pieces found there resemble pottery from other settlements: a Fence workshop amphora (which ties Nauplia to Argos, Tiryns, and Asine), a kantharos resembling an Argive fragment, and an amphora with
double horizontal handles which is also seen at Tiryns and Asine (Foley 1988, 64-5). Foley admits that there is too little material to tell, but guesses that due to the mainstream nature of the material at Nauplia that it did not have its own workshop or local production (1988, 65). Foley reaches the same conclusion about 8th-century pottery production at Lerna as well. Here the shapes, decoration and clay color of the pottery were so similar to Argos that it was probably made in Argos and imported (Foley 1988, 65).

Interestingly, Dendra has some peculiarities in its 8th-century pottery that suggest it may have had its own workshop. Pottery found at the site has decoration typical for the Plain, including two cups with decoration similar to that of Tiryns and Asine, but also included two cups with motifs seen nowhere else in the Argolid. Foley concludes that the closest parallel to Dendra in clay and decoration is distant Asine14 and despite the limited amount of material she concludes that here too there was local production of pottery (Foley 1988, 66).

The Argive Heraion is the last of the major sites. The pottery found at the sanctuary is indicative of the range of production within the Plain, representing products made at different sites (exhibited by the multitude of clay types and range of decorative motifs, even as the koine emerges), providing evidence for multiple production sites. As table 4.13 shows, several of the rarer figural scenes in the LG II phase come from the Heraion. Other rarities are found at the sanctuary among the eighth-century material as well: a votive cake and pomegranate and figural motifs depicting men in battle and in chariots15 (J.C. Hoppin in Waldstein, AH II Pl. LVIII, 13; Courbin 1996, Pl. 90). In addition, the clay of the vessels varies, including buff, orange, greenish, yellowish, and reddish (Hoppin in Waldstein, AH II, 105), indicating that pottery from many different sites is being dedicated at the sanctuary (Foley 1988, 65). Overall, the Heraion

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14 The ladder column motif has been found in the Dendra assemblage, a motif common to both Athens and Asine.
15 Outside of the Heraion, scenes of battle are very rare in Argolic Geometric pottery.
seems to have produced material from multiple settlements in the 8th century BC (Foley 1988, 65-66). This is to be expected, of course. The sanctuary was very important in the Central Plain in the 8th century BC, during which it was built and began to function, and it makes sense that such a religious spot would draw people from all over the plain.

**Pottery: Discussion**

Evidence of the later 8th-century material found at important sites in the Central Plain suggests widespread local pottery production. In the EG I phase, the Geometric style was extremely limited in decorative motifs and followed no patterns of distribution. But, as the Geometric period progressed the style found its typical shapes and decorative motifs, which were then manipulated and embellished on a site-by-site basis beginning in the MG II phase and continuing into the 8th c. BC. Morgan and Whitelaw attribute this increased stylistic similarity in the later phases of the Geometric period to the increased use of pottery as a political tool. Essentially, they believe it was increasingly used as a means of communication and competition between sites (1991, 101). As society grew more complex, communal sanctuaries were being established, and more members of society were being allowed to bury, it became increasingly important to distinguish oneself from others through such things as motifs on pottery (or the richness of grave goods you are able to bury with your kin). Though Argos was producing the largest amount of pottery throughout the Geometric period, clearly it did not manufacture all of the plain’s pottery. Other settlements had their own workshops and made contributions to the development of the style. These individual workshops at major sites like Tiryns, Asine, and possibly Mycenae, remained connected to one another through the common use of shapes and certain motifs. As Morgan and Whitelaw suggest, these connections came to provide a means of defining societal roles and relationships between sites in the Central Plain. Local workshops and
their customers emulated and altered the work from other sites to create a relationship with that site as well as a personal identity within the developing *koine*.

With that said, what do these connections and the unique attributes from the major sites in the central plain in the 8th-century BC ceramic material tell us about Argive rule in the Argolid plain during that century? Based on ethnographic analogies to pottery production at sites in Mexico and Iran, the finds of the Argolid plain suggest nothing of Argive control (Sinopoli 1991, 143-160).

According to Feinman, Kowaleski, and Blanton, the control of economic institutions, such as pottery production, occurs under circumstances of high political consolidation (1984). Consequently, as Sinopoli points out, as the scale of production increases and competition decreases under direct control, the vessels increase in standardization and there is a decrease in the variety of vessels produced (1991, 144). In Oaxaca, Mexico, for example, when the leading site, San José Mogote, was destroyed in 500 BC, a new site rose to power, that of Monte Albán. Early on, the other sites remained autonomous, but Monte Albán’s influence expanded until in the Monte Albán (MA) IIIa period (200-450 AD) the site had control of the valley (Sinopoli 1991, 145-7). As the control of Monte Albán grew within the Oaxaca Valley, pottery came to be standardized and mass-produced, with low energy investment and widespread distribution networks. However, after Monte Albán control collapsed in the MA IIIb period (450-650 AD), political control of ceramics vanished, ceramic boundaries and political boundaries did not coincide, and standardization decreased while energy output increased (Sinopoli 1991, 148-9). Therefore, this example shows a high correspondence between the control of Monte Albán and the uniformity of pottery in the region (Sinopoli 1991, 150). Thus, if Argos did control the entire...
Central Plain in the 8th c. BC we might expect a decrease in the quality of ceramics, the range of shapes produced, and greater similarities between pottery found at different sites.

This same pattern is seen in the Susiana Plain in Southwestern Iran. Here, the sites of Susa, Abu Fanduweh, and Chogha Mish emerged in the Middle Uruk period (3500-3300 BC). At this time, public architecture and administrative artifacts (such as stamp and cylinder seals, counters (bullae), and bevel-rim bowls) increased, suggesting a high degree of administrative integration (Sinopoli 1991, 152). During this same period, pottery production was restricted to these large centers and regional integration was high, also resulting in increased vessel standardization and thus a decrease in the variety of the vessels made. Thus, the same results were produced in the Susiana Plain millennia earlier with pottery production controlled by and limited to political centers during a period of high centralization (Sinopoli 1991, 153).

Sinopoli concludes, given the examples examined above, that “the production and distribution of material culture, even such utilitarian goods as ceramics, are often dramatically affected by political changes” (1991, 159). On the basis of these examples, Sinopoli determines that during periods of political consolidation, the production of pottery undergoes changes that affect where and what type of pottery is produced. This occurred in two separate societies at very different times. Thus, it seems, that this trend is a common pattern rather than a remarkable coincidence. So how does the Argolid Plain in the 8th century compare?

In the previous chapter we saw that the evidence usually highlighted to support the theory of Argive control in the 8th century BC—ancient sources, the religious activities at the Argive Heraion and Prosymna, and the destructions of Asine and Nauplia— is problematic and cannot be used to construct an airtight argument for centralized control. Likewise, neither does the ceramic assemblage. In the tables above, the number of shapes and motifs clearly expanded in
the 8th century BC rather than becoming more standardized as Sinopoli’s example might suggest in a climate of Argive political dominance. In fact, in the MG II phase of Argive Geometric pottery (ca. 800-750 BC), there are more shapes and types of linear and figural motifs than ever before and they continue to increase throughout the period. Additionally, while this expansion and innovation is occurring, Argos is not the only site leading the way. Tiryns, Asine, and to an extent Mycenae are also experimenting with different shapes and motifs. While such innovation was occurring, at the same time some of the motifs became standard in the central plain as a whole (like the horse tamer, dancing women, hatched meander, leaf lozenges) and shapes generally became more ovoid and balanced. Even during the 8th century BC (see table 4.12), it is obvious that many sites and workshops are developing recognizable local styles that build off of the Argolic ceramic koine. Certain shapes are still only found at certain sites throughout and some workshops (like Tiryns and Asine) are producing unique scenes and motifs not found at Argos at all, despite the large amount of material at Argos and the small amount at other sites by comparison.

Overall, there is no doubt that Argos was a leading center in the Geometric period and it likely led the development of what would become known as the Argive Geometric style. However, none of the evidence points to Argive control of ceramic production in the Plain as was so blatantly portrayed in the Oaxaca and Susiana cases above. Instead, the ceramic evidence makes it clear that a few other settlements in the central Argolid plain had independent and innovative workshops. There is therefore no evidence of political domination by Argos over the Argive Plain in the 8th c. BC or earlier in the pottery record.

Grave Goods of the 8th and 7th Centuries BC
Just like the distribution of types of pottery and their decoration, an examination of grave goods and funerary practices can provide insight into the politics and social behavior at settlements throughout the Argolid Plain. For example, if all sites follow a similar pattern in the types of goods, including pottery, that they place in graves and the types of pottery used as funerary urns, then we could infer something about the homogeneity of burial customs in the plain.

The following tables organize information provided by Foley. I have arranged the information into tables by site, and within each site by grave good and the period in which it was found. These tables do not include burials with no listed finds or which were explicitly stated to have no burial goods.

Table 4.16: Grave Goods at Argos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argive Grave Good</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th>“MG”/MG I*</th>
<th>MG II</th>
<th>MG/LG **</th>
<th>“LG”/LG I***</th>
<th>LG II</th>
<th>8th c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vases</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze/finger rings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze-iron pins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibula</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze knife/dagger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faience pearls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurines</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Spirals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Spear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron dagger/weapon</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron obeloi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Leaf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terracotta plaque</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Nails</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 Foley 1988, pp 200-222.
17 In total the number of Argive graves with grave goods in them is 44.
The number of graves with grave goods in Tiryns is 24. The number of graves with grave goods in Mycenae is six.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alabastron</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronze phialai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze cup/vessel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Swords</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“bronze and iron objects”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuirass</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Where the period is not specified for the goods of multiple burials, the goods are placed in all the time periods listed for the grave. EG graves only have pins when grouped together in burial reuses.*

* Some graves just listed as “MG” (the same applies Asine below).
** Graves that were not distinguished as either MG or LG, but listed under both periods.
*** Some graves just listed as “LG” (the same applies to all the sites below).

Table 4.17: Grave Goods at Tiryns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tirynthian Grave Goods</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th>MG I</th>
<th>MG II</th>
<th>LG/LG I</th>
<th>LG II</th>
<th>8th c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze figurines</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze/finger rings</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze-iron pins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boar’s Teeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Spear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron dagger/weapon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“bronze and iron objects”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18: Grave Goods at Mycenae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mycenaean Grave Goods</th>
<th>EG</th>
<th>MG I</th>
<th>MG II</th>
<th>LG/LG I</th>
<th>LG II</th>
<th>8th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vases</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

18 The number of graves with grave goods in Tiryns is 24.
19 The number of graves with grave goods in Mycenae is six.
In addition to the above graves, Lerna had one burial listed. It was an LG I/II pithos burial that contained pottery, bronze wire loops, small rings, and a fibula.

Table 4.21: Burial vessels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Burial Vessel</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>Argos, Nauplia, Lerna, Tiryns, Mycenae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

20 The number of graves with grave goods in Nauplia is five.
21 The number of graves with grave goods in Asine is two.
### Table 4.22: Dedicatory Vessels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Vessel</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krater</td>
<td>Argos, Mycenae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Argos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphora</td>
<td>Argos, Tiryns, Nauplia, Mycenae, Amphora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripod Amphora</td>
<td>Argos, Nauplia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantharos</td>
<td>Tiryns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attic Pyxis</td>
<td>Tiryns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grave Goods: Discussion**

One thing that is immediately obvious in the above tables (4.16-4.20) is that there was a high degree of deposition of wealth in graves in the Argolid, particularly in the later phases of the Geometric period, and a significant portion of the population seems to have received such grave goods given their high number, especially at Argos. Metal dedications, like rings and pins, are fairly common at every site, and the deposition of pottery is even more common. This indicates that the settlements of the Plain may have been fairly prosperous during the early Iron Age. Overall, Argos has the highest number of graves in any period. Additionally, Argos leads the way in weaponry deposited in graves, providing us not only with the most daggers, spears,
and swords (typically of iron, though a bronze dagger is documented), but also a full cuirass and several helmets (all of which were discussed in more detail in the previous chapter). With the evidence displayed like this, it is no wonder that most assume Argos was leading the way in the innovations of arms and warfare, given that no other major site in the plain produced actual pieces of armor.

Additionally Argos has the largest variety of grave goods, with a list far longer than any other settlement examined by Foley, if the different phases of the Geometric period are taken all together. These grave goods range from the perfectly typical and ordinary, like pottery and pins, to the exotic and rich, like gold spirals, faience pearls (a Near Eastern import, most likely), and gold leaf. However, other sites have goods that Argos does not. Tiryns produced a bronze figurine in an MG II grave and a bead in an LG/LG I grave. One LG/LG I grave at Nauplia produced shells, while the LG I/II burial at Lerna produced bronze wire loops. But most of the items deposited in graves at other sites, and not found at Argos, are fairly poor (with the exception of the bronze material). Shells and beads are all fairly ordinary goods, items that a poorer family might place in a grave due to a lack of means to provide a more substantial offering. The bead in the Tirynthian LG II grave was found in a multiple use cist grave with several other offerings, among them metal dedications. The shells at Nauplia were found among what seems to be the remains of a funeral pyre, which is odd for an LG Argolic burial seeing that the Geometric Argolid favored inhumation (Foley 1988, 219). Lastly, the bronze loops at Lerna suggest a richer burial but not one as rich as those from Argos that can contain gold objects. These less glamorous grave goods are interesting additions to graves that stand outside the Argive norm.
Overall, as far as burial goods are concerned, Argos takes the lead in the number and richness of its materials, though this is to be expected given that it has also produced the most burials (65 in total) during the 8th century BC. Published graves at other sites were much fewer. For example, Lerna only has one listed with goods in it (Foley 1988, 220). It seems, however, that just as with pottery, there were typical grave goods common to every site—pottery, metal rings, pins, and weapons to an extent—but there was also a small amount of variation.

Variation among the types of vessels used for burial was more substantial. Pithoi, kraters, and amphorae are commonly used for funerary urns at multiple sites, with the amphora and pithos being the most popular (they are found at every site in this study). The remaining funerary urn shapes are found at either Argos or Tiryns, but not both, which indicates that there were populations at the two settlements with distinctive burial preferences. At Argos a pyxis is used as a burial vessel (Plate 8a), while at Tiryns human remains were interred in a kantharos and, unusually, an imported Attic pyxis.

In conclusion, the pottery and graves of the 8th-century Argolid seem to tell the same story: there was a *koine* in the Argolid for the decoration and shapes of pottery, as well as shared idea about what was appropriate for deposition in graves and when. However, variations can be found at each site in the form of unique shapes and motifs or the addition of unusual items to a burial. Outside of Argos the variations in burial goods are not astounding, but the broadly uniform patterns indicate that there was strong communication among the Central Plain sites (particularly our major ones, Argos, Tiryns, and Mycenae), and perhaps a generally common culture. It is clear that Argos, as the largest and perhaps most prosperous site in the Plain, was producing the dominant ceramic style, but it was not directly controlling the pottery production
or funerary rituals at other settlements. At most, we can guess that Argos led the way in social and economic developments.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

After the LHIIIIB2 palatial destructions that struck the great Mycenaean palaces of the Bronze Age, Greece fell into a period scholars used to call the “Dark Age” due to several factors. Among these factors were the loss of writing, a fall in the population, a decline in material skills, and finally a decline in contacts, though they were not necessarily severed entirely. Very few settlement remains from this period have survived the test of time to be discovered by archaeologists today, and monumental architecture did not reappear until sanctuaries like the Argive Heraion were established in the 8th century BC. Therefore, archaeologists have had to rely on the remaining burial evidence, including grave goods, which dominates the record in this period (although these, too, are far fewer for phases of the Iron Age than we would like). The ancient sources are not much help in determining conditions in the Iron Age either—the earliest possible source is Homer, and his poems are unreliable as factual sources for any period at all, while later sources are too far removed from the Iron Age to be reliable either.

Some settlements fared better throughout the Iron Age than did others, and they later emerged as Classical poleis. Among these are Athens, Corinth, and Argos—settlements that survived the palatial destructions at the end of the Bronze and Age and have produced more material than most for the Iron Age. Due to the fact that Argos has produced so much material from the Iron Age (among this material are pottery and metal items, including armor), one of the most hotly debated aspects of this period is the status of Argos vis a vis the rest of the Argolid Plain. By the Classical period, Argos was politically dominant, controlling the other settlements in the central plain, and it has been tempting to propose that this began much earlier perhaps
as early as the Bronze Age. In chapters three and four I have re-examined all of the evidence that has traditionally been utilized by scholars to address the question of whether or not Argive hegemony in the Central Argolid Plain began in the 8th century BC. Ancient sources, namely Homer and Pausanias, either implicitly or explicitly refer to the political dominance of Argos from an early date. Such ancient sources, however, are not reliable in their account of Argive hegemony. Homer’s claim that Agamemnon ruled all the Argives and his grouping together of Argos, Tiryns, Asine, and several other settlements under the term Argive are not sufficient on their own, seeing as Homer is unreliable as a source for the Iron Age. The other major source utilized, Pausanias, gives us information on the lot of Temenus and the destructions of Nauplia and Asine. His story of Temenus and his brothers, however, is indiscernible from myth, and as a result any reliance on this story for evidence of an Argive empire is unreasonable. Additionally, while Pausanias’ account of the destruction of Asine in the 8th century BC has been confirmed by the archaeological evidence, his reason for the conflict between Asine and Argos, namely that Asine aided Sparta in attacking Argos, makes no sense for the political and social conditions in the 8th century BC.

Lastly, the Argive Heraion is looked to as a statement of control and power in the Central Argive Plain, but there is no solid evidence of direct control over the sanctuary by Argos itself until the 5th century BC. Before then, in fact, a stronger argument can be made that Argos and the Heraion were distinct from one another, seeing as there are significant differences in dedicatory practices between the sanctuary and those at Argos, as well as differing mythological accounts. It is far more likely that the sanctuary was communal prior to the destruction of Tiryns and Mycenae and the control of the Plain by Argos in the 460s BC. What is more, dedications at the nearby tombs at Prosymna may indicate that Argos was competing against Mycenae to declare
ancestral supremacy and claim rights to the land, further suggesting that Argos did not at the
time have full control of the territory. Therefore, as De Polignac concludes, sanctuaries such as
the Heraion were more likely being used during the 8th century BC as a means of cultivating
connections and as an arena for display and competition between neighboring settlements than
as a statement of hegemony (1994, 12-13).

Having dismissed the chief ancient sources as unreliable and determined that the Argive
Heraion was a shared sanctuary, not solely a statement of Argive power, I also examined burial
practices and the distribution of pottery shapes and motifs to determine the strength and types of
connections these archaeological data could reveal in the Central Plain. Argolic burial practices
and pottery alike fit into an Argolic koine, a point that is evident when comparing the sites in the
Central Argolid Plain with other regions of Iron Age Greece. First, all the sites in the Central
Plain practice inhumation in three types of graves (cist, pithos/pot, and pit), while other regions
had begun to practice cremation at that time (Attica, for example). Additionally, Argos
developed its own pottery style throughout the Iron Age, utilizing certain motifs characteristic
of the region (for example, multiple zigzags and hatched meanders early on, followed by scenes
of horse taming and dancing women in the LG period).

On its own, this Argolic koine in the 8th century BC does not reveal more than the fact
that at this late phase of the Iron Age the material culture in the Plain was becoming more
closely uniform. In order to assume Argive hegemony from the burial and pottery evidence, we
would need to see signs of direct control. On the basis of ethnographic analogues, if Argos or
any settlement was politically dominant in the Plain in the 8th century BC, we should this
reflected in ceramic production. As Sinopoli points out, in such situations, pottery becomes
standardized in its decoration and there is a reduction in the variety of vessels produced (1991,
We might therefore expect that either all pottery would be made at Argos and distributed to other sites in the Plain, or that local workshops produced pottery with shapes and motifs identical to those found at Argos as a means of displaying political allegiance. There is, however, a lot of evidence indicating that the opposite is occurring in the 8th c. BC. First, it is not the case that in the 8th century BC pottery production becomes more standardized and less varied. On the contrary, it is at this point that the number of shapes and motifs expands rapidly and figural motifs appear in an ever-expanding assemblage. Additionally, I found no evidence that all pottery production was relocated to Argos at this time, seeing as variations in clay color, techniques (such as the presence of a clay wash), and motifs used indicate local production at Tiryns and Asine at least, if not Dendra and Mycenae as well. Lastly, the evidence does not support the final point that Argos may have been controlling pottery production from afar as it was produced in local centers. I found that at particular sites, Tiryns often among them, shapes and motifs are being used that have not also been found in Argos. Were Argos in full control of pottery production, it would be unlikely that this production of unique shapes and motifs would occur at centers outside of Argos but not in Argos herself. Thus, ceramic production does not follow the pattern that has been argued for in cases of high political consolidation, and by an examination of the pottery alone it is unlikely that Argos was ruling in the 8th century BC.

In addition to pottery, the burial practices at these different settlements do not support the idea of Argive hegemony in the 8th century BC. An examination of the burial practices and goods deposited shows that, overall, practices were fairly homogenous. However, differences in burial details were also apparent when examined on a site-by-site basis. Prominent among these differences is the fact that at Argos, cist burials are preferred and therefore prominent in all periods, whereas at Tiryns and Nauplia, pot/pithos burials were favored. These differences
indicate that at the separate settlements, clans or families had different burial traditions. If Argos were ruling at either in the 8th century BC, we would not necessarily expect that these settlements were burying exactly like Argos. On the contrary, such a traditional practice would likely not change in the event of political control by another settlement unless those in control were forcing such a deeply personal change on those they have conquered. Given the unlikelyhood of such an event in the 8th-century Central Argolid Plain, we would more likely see indications of Argive presence and control. This could mean one of two things: first, if no rich Argive-style cist burials would be found at sites like Tiryns and Nauplia it might mean that only the Argive elite are allowed to bury in such an Argive manner, and they are all doing so at home in Argos; or second, if Argive elite were present at other sites as a ruling elite, we would then expect to see a very limited number of very rich cist burials, because, once again, only the Argive elite are allowed to claim the status associated with such burial practices. Neither of these is the case at any site outside Argos. Cist burials still exist regularly at other sites, and nothing indicates that they are very few and far richer than the other burial types utilized. Although the preference for one burial or another is seen, practices are still too mixed and such indications of Argive control and presence in the other settlements is not accounted for.

Overall, the ancient sources and their claim of Argive hegemony in the 8th century BC cannot be trusted, while the archaeological evidence indicates that Argos was in no way controlling other settlements in the Plain so early. This does not mean, however, that its role in the IA Argive Plain was not important. Argos was clearly one of the most prominent settlements in IA Greece, and certainly the most prominent in the Central Plain specifically. This idea is supported by the amount of material that has been uncovered in Argos by comparison to other settlements in the Central Plain, even Mycenae and Tiryns, settlements that had been some of the
most impressive in Greece during the BA. Argos has also produced the most pottery and metal artifacts, and it is known that Argos was famous for its metallurgy in particular. Many have argued, in fact, that Argos was also responsible for the technological advancements that led to the formation of hoplite warfare, an argument perhaps supported by the number of helmets and other weaponry and armor that have been found in graves in Argos proper. Lastly, while the Argive Heraion was not a statement of control in the 8th century BC, it would become so in the 5th century BC, and the Argives, being the masters of myth appropriation that they were, utilized political strategy to make their control over the sanctuary seem more rooted in ancient myth and therefore more legitimate. The Argive quest to legitimate their claims to territory in the Classical period through myth-making may even have meant that by the time of Pausanias, there was a belief in antiquity of Argive control all the way back to the Bronze Age.

Overall, any argument for Argive hegemony beginning in the 8th century BC takes the ancient sources too seriously and ignores the substantial evidence against this claim that can be found in the IA Argolid archaeological remains. Yet there is no doubt that Argos’s Iron Age prominence in the Central Plain set up the settlement, and eventually the polis, as a force to be reckoned with. Argos may not have had political control of the Central Argive Plain in the 8th century BC, but its achievements in the Iron Age made it possible, in part, for what would become the Classical polis to achieve hegemony in the 460s BC.


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Wolf, F. A., Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and James E. G. Zetzel. Prolegomena to

Plate 1: Geometric Burials

(a) T164 EG

b) 8th century Burial Amphora, Argos (Foley 1988, Fig. 2, 270)

II 651 = T152 LGI

c) LG Burial Pithos, Tiryns (Foley 1988, Fig. 3, 270)
Plate 2: Geometric Burial Pots

a) Burial Pithoi from Argos, MG I and LG I periods (Foley 1988 Pl. 1).

b) (Left) LG II Burial Pithos, Argos (Foley 1988 Pl. 1).
Plate 3: Panoply Grave

a) Iron Spit (L. 111), b) Bronze Panoply (HS. 46 and 47.4), c) Iron Firedogs (L. 129) (Coldstream 2003, 127).
Plate 4: EG I Pottery

a) Kantharos from Mycenae (Nauplion, Myc. 54-267; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 22)

b) Belly-Handled Amphora from Mycenae (ibid. 54-265; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 22)

c) Pointed Pyxis from Mycenae (ibid. 54-269; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 22)

d) Pyxis from Mycenae (ibid. 54-270; Coldstream Pl. 22)

e) Lekythos-Oinochoe from Mycenae (ibid. 54-266; Coldstream Pl. 22)

f) Globular Pyxis from Mycenae (ibid. 54-263; Coldstream Pl. 22)
Plate 5: EG II Pottery

a) Oinochoe from Mycenae (Nauplion, Myc. 54-211; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 23)
b) Neck – Handled Amphora from Mycenae (Nauplion, Myc. 59-35; Coldstream 2008, Pl. 23)
c) Globular Pyxis from Mycenae (Nauplion, Myc. 59-70; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 23)
Plate 6: MG I Pottery

a) Globular Pyxis from Argos
  (C 2434; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 24)

b) Krater From Berbati
  (Nauplion 4161; Coldstream 2008, Pl. 24)

c) Aryballos from Argos (C 925; Courbin CGA Pl. 16).

d) Oinochoe from Berbati
  (Nauplion 3832; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 24)

e) Tall Oinochoe from Berbati
  (Nauplion 3833; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 24)
Plate 7: MG II Pottery

a) Neck-Handled Amphora from Argos (C 2473; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 24)

b) Neck-Handled Amphora from Argos (C 30; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 25)

c) Pyxis from Argos (C 43; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 25)
d) Aryballos from Tiryns (Nauplion 1953; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 25)
e) Lekythos-Oinochoe from Tiryns (Nauplion 4253; Coldstrea, 2008 Pl. 25)
Plate 8: LG I Pottery

a) Giant Pyxis from Argos (C 209; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 26)

b) Skyphos from Mycenae (Nauplion, Myc. 53-338; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 27)

c) Krater from Mycenae (Ibid. 53-337; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 27)

d) Oinochoe from Mycenae (Ibid. 53-339; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 27)
Plate 9:
LG I Pottery

a) Mug from Argos (C 652; Courbin CGA Pl. 15)  
b) Jug from Argos (C 652; Courbin CGA Pl. 15)

LG II Workshops

c) Large Oinochoe From Asine (Nauplion; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 28)
Plate 10: LG II Workshops

a) Kantharos from Argos, Fence workshop (C 171; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 28)

b) Krater from Tiryns, Painter of the Sparring Horses (Athens 231; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 28)
Plate 11: LG II Workshops

a) Oinochoe (and detail), Miniature style (Athens 843; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 29)

b) Krater from Argos, Schliemann Workshop (C 1; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 29)
Plate 12: LG II Workshops

a) Kantahros from Mycenae, Painter of Athens 877 (Nauplion 1915; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 29)

b) Krater from Argos, Master of Argos C 201 (C 201; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 30)
Plate 13: LG II Workshops

Krater from Corinth (and detail), Dance Painter (Corinth T 2545; Coldstream 2008 Pl. 30)
Plate 14: Unique Scenes from Tirynthian Pottery

a) LG Tirynthian Fragment, Chariot Scene (DAI 75/1352; Foley 1988 Pl. 7)

b) LG Tirynthian Fragment, Men Rowing Boat (Naup. 17167; Foley 1988 Pl. 7)