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Friend or Foe: "Mycenaeanisation" at Phylakopi on Melos in the Late Bronze Age

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Abstract

This paper addresses the stimulus and process(es) of cultural change on the Cycladic island of Melos in the Aegean sea, which sees successive phases of foreign influence and particularly intense Mycenaean interaction during the Late Bronze Age.[1] First, the previous arguments are discussed and reviewed, before the use of interpretative models is rejected. It is argued that interpretative models ascribe uniform behaviour across varying cultures and periods, which does not consider the historical and regional contexts of culture change. Secondly, it is argued that a more contextual approach is required, which asserts the prominent role of Minoan Crete in the transformation of society at Phylakopi. Thirdly, the validity of the process of "Mycenaeanisation" is challenged and it is posited that there was significant negotiation with Mycenaean influence at Phylakopi, as well as a host of other localities in the Aegean.

Introduction

By the end of the Late Bronze Age (LBA) the influence of the Mycenaeans was felt across the Aegean (Fig. 1). The Greek mainland had been relatively isolated during the Middle Bronze Age (MBA), though by the start of LH IIIA a process of social stratification had come to fruition, which resulted in the establishment of administrative palaces across the Greek mainland. Coterminous with this was an expansion of Mycenaean cultural influence in areas adjacent to Greece. The archaeological signature of this influence was Mycenaean pottery, found in a range of locales and contexts, though influence can also be discerned from the architecture, burial customs and social structures of some communities. At the heart of debate is the degree of Mycenaean involvement in these changes. Did Mycenaeans conquer these places

[1] My thanks to Professor Chris Mee, Rebecca O'Sullivan and Dr Gina Muskett for their thoughts, guidance and inspiration. Also thanks to my peer reviewers for their helpful and generous comments, any mistakes are my own.

and encourage the adoption of Mycenaean cultural traits?[2] Or did the Mycenaeans foster trade enclaves to control trade around the Aegean?[3] Alternatively, was change a result of an indigenous strategy to adopt certain elements of Mycenaean culture in self-interest?[4]

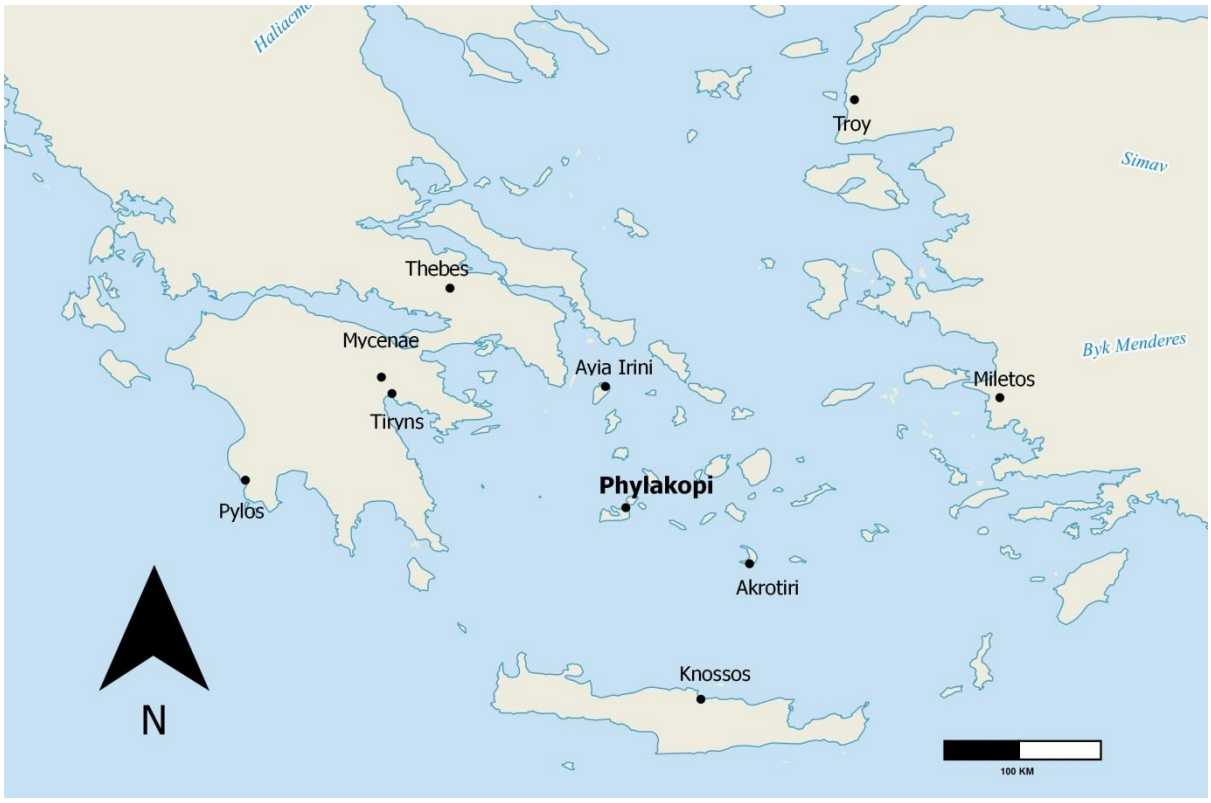

Figure 1 – Map of the Bronze Age Aegean with key sites

The site of Phylakopi on the Cycladic island of Melos is an appropriate case study for several reasons. First, it has a well-established stratigraphic sequence, which aids investigation of change and continuity between periods. Secondly, the geographical setting provides an opportunity to examine the penetration of foreign influence from the sea. Finally, prior to the LBA, Phylakopi had a distinct local culture which was eroded through interaction with the Minoans and, subsequently the Mycenaeans, which provides a suitable point of comparison to the later culture of Phylakopi.

The term 'influence' requires further elaboration in this context. It is altogether vague,

2 Barber 1987: 224.
3 Marthari 1988: 56-7.
4 Schallin 1993.

though at present it is the most applicable term available. By definition, influence indicates the 'power to shape policy or ensure favourable treatment from someone, especially through status, contacts, or wealth'.[5] In the archaeological record, influence is detectable through changes in the nature and style of settlements and artefacts, though to simply argue that there was a 'Mycenaean influence' in the archaeological record is descriptive and does not *explain* developments. The assumption that increasing social complexity leads to an inevitable expansion into adjacent areas is too general a view and considers these adjacent areas to be populated by passive (unthinking) entities. Meaningful study of culture change must take into account the specific cultural context, along with an appreciation of the two-way nature of the process. The issue of culture change and the specific historical narrative at Phylakopi will be addressed towards the end of this paper, after a discussion of previous scholarship on the subject.

Phylakopi: an archaeological survey

At the start of the LBA, the newly constructed Phylakopi III settlement showed signs of considerable Minoan influence in pottery and architecture.[6] After the eruption of the Thera volcano, Minoan influence at Phylakopi and in the Cyclades diminished to be replaced by Mycenaean influence.[7] This was initially concluded on the basis of increasing amounts of LH IIA pottery at Phylakopi, though influence is apparent in architecture and ritual from LC III early.[8] After partial destruction, a *megaron* complex[9] was constructed above a LC I mansion, contemporary with LH IIIA1 pottery.[10] Following this, the 'West Shrine' of the Shrine Complex was constructed in LC III early and the 'East Shrine' completed the Shrine Complex in LC III middle. A number of votive offerings and platforms for the display of figurines were found, which gave rise

5 Oxford Online Dictionary: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/influence

6 Barber 1987: 195.

7 Barber 1987: 200.

8 Late Cycladic (LC) will be the preferred terminology throughout discussion of chronology at Phylakopi, though in reference to developments elsewhere in the Aegean or to imported pottery at Phylakopi, Late Helladic (LH), Late Minoan (LM) or Late Bronze (LB) will be used. I have also decided to use 'LC III early' and 'LC III middle' to denote the periods broadly comparable with LH IIIA and LH IIIB respectively on the mainland. The proliferation of Minoan and Mycenaean imports and imitations during the LC period in general causes difficulty in fine-tuning the LC sequence.

9 An axially aligned rectangular structure with a porch, anteroom and central room with hearth.

10 Renfrew (*et al.*) 2007: 36.

to the interpretation of a ritual function.[11] It has parallels in the Cult Centre at Mycenae and the paraphernalia found within are comparable to those found in Mycenaean shrines. An additional fortification wall was constructed in LC III middle,[12] though this was made in the local style rather than the Cyclopean[13] masonry of the Mycenaean citadel. Perhaps most obvious is the proliferation of Mycenaean pottery, with the apparent abandonment of local repertoires after LC III early. The question is therefore: why did this happen? The explanations will be explored with supporting evidence, before their validity within the context of culture change at Phylakopi is assessed.

One line of argument follows that the Mycenaean palaces required ever greater resources to reinforce their legitimacy, which necessitated the expansion of trade routes.[14] Mycenaean pottery has been found across the Mediterranean, from Italy to the Levant, in both settlement and funerary contexts, which would suggest that the Mycenaeans were involved in international trade.[15] Evidence from shipwrecks, such as those at Uluburun[16] and Cape Gelidonya,[17] both off the southern coast of Anatolia, include the personal possessions of the crew, amongst which were Mycenaean vases. The shipwrecks raise the possibility that Mycenaeans were directly involved in international trade, though we have to be careful in ascribing every find-spot of Mycenaean pottery to Mycenaean traders. [18]

Another source of evidence is the Linear B tablets, preserved in the fires that engulfed the Mycenaean palaces during the Bronze Age collapse. Reference to trade is rare, though there are indirect references to imports, e.g. exotic goods and slaves, such as the textile workers at Pylos from Knidos and Miletos in Anatolia (PY Ab 189; PY Ab 573).[19] This has led to the suggestion that international trade may have been

11 Renfrew 1985: 369.
12 Renfrew (*et al*.) 2007: 64.
13 'Cyclopean' masonry is a building technique using large, roughly fitted limestone blocks, which is synonymous with Mycenaean fortifications. The term was coined by later Greeks who believed that the large stones could only have been moved by the mythical Cyclops.
14 Marthari 1988: 56-7.
15 Cline 2009.
16 Bachhuber 2006: 347.
17 Bass 1991: 69.
18 Bass (*et al*.) 1967: 164.
19 Palaima 1991: 279.

undertaken by state-sponsored merchants who left no official records.[20] The Linear B texts, however, do shine a light upon Mycenaean personal names indicating links to maritime activities. To name a few: *na-u-si-ke-re-[we]* 'ship-famous' (KN X 214) and *e-u-po-ro-wo* 'fine-sailing' (PY Jn 601.2).[21] Such personal names suggest that, even if trade was not conducted by the palaces, there were Mycenaeans with nautical connections.

If there was a Mycenaean interest in trade, it is likely to have been facilitated by a desire to obtain prestige goods to indicate status and by a lack of natural resources, such as gold and precious stones.[22] In order to obtain prestige items, however, Mycenaean traders would have to provide desirable commodities for export. Linear B texts suggest that the Mycenaean palaces were involved in the production of textiles, whilst the movement of Mycenaean closed vessels overseas suggests that palaces were involved in the production and export of perfumed oil.[23] It is likely that many trade goods were perishable and are therefore archaeologically invisible.

An alternative theory is that the Mycenaeans expanded into neighbouring regions through conquest.[24] The Mycenaeans seem to have had a strong warlike *ethos*, which is visible in several aspects of material culture. The prevalence of items of the hunt, for example helmets made from boar tusks, as well as weapons, suggest that a defining principle of Mycenaean identity was linked to martial prowess. There are, however, potential textual references to back up Mycenaean expansion. Contemporary Hittite state texts refer to people named *Ahhiyawa,* which has been translated as *Achaia;*[25] the name Homer often ascribes to Greeks in the *Iliad* (II.155). The texts provide a fascinating insight into interstate relations in western Anatolia during the LBA. Though there are several references to the *Ahhiyawa*, the most prominent are in the annals of Muwatalli II, in which an *Ahhiyawa* vassal attacked several Hittite vassal states. Conflict between the *Ahhiyawa* and the Hittites was only

20 Knapp 1991: 48.
21 Palaima 1991: 284.
22 Shelmerdine 2001: 355.
23 Sherratt and Sherratt 1991: 371.
24 Barber 1999: 137.
25 Mountjoy 1998: 33-63.

avoided with the intervention of the *Ahhiyawa* representative at Miletos (*Millawanda*) (C.H.T. 105).[26] Another text, the *Tawagalawa* letter, addressed the king of *Ahhiyawa* as 'my brother Great King, my equal' and shows that the Hittite king believed the kingdom of *Ahhiyawa* to be of considerable military strength (C.H.T. 181).[27]

Linear B tablets reinforce the image of Mycenaean expansion. The Mycenaean palace at Pylos seems to have controlled much of the area west of the Aigaleon mountain range (Fig. 2) by LH IIIA1 (Vn 493; On 300; Jn 829).[28] Integrating texts with archaeological evidence from Nichoria, another regional settlement in Messenia, it seems that Pylos extended its power eastwards over the Aigaleon range in LH IIIA2. When the *megaron* at Nichoria went out of use, it suggested that the power-base of the local ruler was supplanted by Pylos.[29] This newly acquired territory was referred to as the 'further province', whilst the base territory was referred to as the 'hither province'.[30] This is suggestive of an expansionist Pylian state, even if the division between 'hither' and 'further' provinces was a feature of administrative division. The fact remains that Pylian power extended across Messenia by LH IIIB, not at the start of LH IIIA. We, however, must be careful in applying this model of expansion in a general fashion to other Mycenaean states, as Pylian expansion may have been the result of a rather specific context.

Is there any evidence that could suggest Mycenaean expansion in the Cyclades? There are destruction layers at Ayia Irini on Keos and Phylakopi in LC II, as well as fortification walls, increasing quantities of Mycenaean pottery and *tholos* tombs on Mykonos and Tenos that were built during subsequent years,[31] which certainly represents a shift towards Mycenaean influence. At first glance, the evidence for the

26 Bryce 1998: 245-6.
27 Bryce 1998: 245-6.
28 Bennet 1995: 587-601.
29 Bennet 1995: 587-601.
30 Cosmopoulos 2006.
31 Barber 1987.

Figure 2 – Map of Messenia

significance of martial prowess in Mycenaean society would lend credence to the theory that the Mycenaean states expanded into the Aegean. Whilst it is likely that Mycenaean state(s) had the military capability to attack Phylakopi, there are doubts over whether Mycenaeans settled *en masse* at Phylakopi to account for the culture change. The appearance of the *Ahhiyawa* in Hittite texts may also not be an appropriate indication of Mycenaean expansion across the Aegean Sea, it could only indicate an independent polity in the eastern Aegean that had become expansionist.[32] The expansion of the Pylian state in Messenia may also be an isolated case. There are also serious logistical issues with administering Phylakopi from the Greek mainland, not least of all the difficulty of communication and maintaining control in a pre-modern world. There is also no evidence of a garrison; in fact, the domestic architecture remains distinctly Cycladic, which suggests that there was no major influx of Mycenaeans to the settlement.

If not conquest, then why would Mycenaeans be interested in Phylakopi for trade? Melos does not have much to offer agriculturally, though its good harbour would be

[32] Mountjoy 1998: 51.

desirable, due to its capacity for facilitating trade in the direction of both Crete and Anatolia.[33] There are, however, a number of issues with such an interpretation. Perceiving trade as a vehicle for social change divorces the goods and relations between people from the archaeological record. It seeks evidence for commercialisation and trade for profit, which is a modern and Eurocentric perception.[34] It also denies the islanders agency, by portraying the expanding Mycenaean 'commercial empire' as trampling over passive islanders. The lack of reference to international trade in state texts, contrasted with meticulous recording of agricultural and ritual matters, suggests that trade was not institutionalised.[35]

Both of the theories mentioned, however, only account for *how* Mycenaean influence spread to the island of Melos and not *why*. There is little doubt that exchange would have taken place between Melos and some of the Greek mainland communities, though we have to try to understand the social developments, which led to the communities of the Greek mainland venturing out to procure items. In a similar fashion, we must look to societal developments at Phylakopi, which led to the acceptance of foreign influence and the desire to embark upon a reciprocal exchange relationship with the mainland communities. In order to achieve this level of analysis, the specific historical context of both communities will be discussed.

An integrated historical context: culture change and Aegean geopolitics

Original work on culture change in the Aegean tried to counter diffusionist explanations. One example[36] saw the vehicle for change as the adoption of redistributive systems and centralisation. In this model, the adoption of poly-culture meant that specialisation and intensification of production was possible. This allowed the redistribution of goods and the ability to support itinerant craftspeople, which ascending elites could manipulate to procure prestige items, reinforcing their social position. Increasing competition for prestige led to new technological developments and continuous growth in trade, social relations and ritual, culminating in a stratified

33 Papageorgiou 2008: 11.
34 Polanyi 1957.
35 Mee 2008: 363.
36 Renfrew 1972.

society. Though pioneering work, there are a number of criticisms. Poly-culture cannot be guaranteed to generate a surplus[37] or specialisation.[38] It has been argued that centralisation is an obvious solution to increasingly complex exchange networks,[39] though there is little evidence of this in the ethnographic record, despite the existence of complex exchange networks.[40] A good example of this is the Kula exchange network of the Trobriand islanders of Polynesia,[41] in which, a complex and hierarchical network of exchange of curated items between islands exists, without having become centralised.

Analysis of culture change has moved on from universal models and pioneering work by Voutsaki has stressed change as a result of social discontinuity.[42] In Middle Helladic Greek culture there is little sign of social differentiation, with communities organised by kinship principles. In kinship-structured communities, cohesion is created through consumption.[43] Consumption is usually associated with communal feasts, which celebrate rites of passage for community members and are hosted by community leaders. They serve as a mechanism for the pooling and redistribution of resources and create interdependence between the leaders and the community.[44] Leaders seemed to have gained predominance through their martial skill, judging by the preponderance of items pertaining to hunting and warfare in the early Mycenaean period.[45] There is, however, nothing to suggest that these elevated positions were hereditary.

Culture change occurs in principle due to the reorganisation of kinship relations in the face of ambiguous social practices, though change can only occur through traditional

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37 Cherry 1984: 28.
38 Forbes 1976: 5-11.
39 Halstead 1981: 192.
40 Voutsaki 1993: 46.
41 Malinowski 1922.
42 Voutsaki 1993: 50.
43 Voutsaki 1993: 49.
44 See Wright 2004, though the majority of the evidence for feasting is from the LH III period. There is, however, no viable basis to suggest that such feasting did not take place in prior periods and absence of such evidence in the archaeological record may reflect a lacuna in our understanding of its context.
45 Wright 2008: 243.

schemes.[46] The new practices thus counter traditional ones, whilst being dependent on them at the same time.[47] The vast amounts of wealth deposited in the shaft graves at Mycenae mark a sudden shift in practice, which may represent the use of conspicuous consumption as a tool for the creation of social differentiation.[48] It is key, however, that conspicuous consumption in this context may still be linked to existing rites of passage.[49] There is, however, a clear shift in emphasis, which can be characterised by the destruction of prestige items through deposition with deceased kin, thus converting them into symbols of social distinction and family ownership.[50]

This is the mechanism by which change can occur, though there has to be an initial stimulus. In this instance, the timing suggests that change was generated by contact with the expanding Minoan state(s). Contact brought new items, strategies and ideas to the Greek mainland, though it would be unfounded to suggest that the early Mycenaeans came under a Minoan hegemony. Goods and ideas flowed through Aegean exchange networks, perhaps facilitated by the Cyclades or Aegina, and became the stimulus for social change. Exposure to this new material culture may have initially rested on the Mycenaean predisposition for warfare. Mycenaeans may have been hired as mercenaries by the palaces of Crete, providing initial access to prestige goods. Those who returned clad with new goods gained higher status and it is plausible that these people could become 'middle men' between the Early Mycenaean communities and Minoan palaces, supplying mercenaries in exchange for items of prestige.[51]

These items created new avenues for social strategies, which caused disruption to the traditional order. The deposition of these status goods with kin can be seen as an attempt to preserve the primacy of the kin order.[52] Through this traditional practice ownership and lineage were stressed and social change generated, as prestige items

46 Voutsaki 1993: 51.
47 Giddens 1984: 196.
48 Voutsaki 1993: 51.
49 Bourdieu 1977.
50 Voutsaki 1993: 51.
51 Driessen & Macdonald 1997: 108-111.
52 Appadurai 1986: 25.

became indicators of differentiation separate from kin.[53] Those who could gain and maintain access to prestige items were in a good position to assert their elevated positions over the community. These asymmetrical relationships set the basis for the increasing expression of social differentiation, eventually culminating in the formation of Mycenaean palaces.

As items of foreign origin became defining aspects of status, there was a shift towards securing exchange relations, which can be evinced by the appearance of LH I Mycenaean pottery in the central Mediterranean.[54] Foreign ventures may have bestowed prestige for the act itself, as well as the control of foreign exotica. Shortly before the collapse of Minoan influence in the southern Aegean, Mycenaean pottery appears in the Cyclades and elsewhere in the Aegean.[55] This may represent the formative stages of outward expansion into the Aegean through securing of exchange relations. Minoan influence collapsed dramatically after the eruption of the Thera volcano,[56] which paved the way for the Mycenaeans' unrestricted access to the southern Aegean. Access to the southern Aegean and Near East exchange routes were swiftly followed by the formation of a palatial society.[57] It may be possible that internal political competition had escalated to the point at which there were opportunities to consolidate power, as the formation of the palaces drastically cut the number of agents vying for power.[58] Whereas previously there had been elite kin groups competing for predominance, implied by the deposited wealth of Grave Circle B at Mycenae,[59] it became the case that there was only room for a limited number of elites in the palatial system, with rule apparently concentrated in just one person; the *wanax*. The process is likely to have led to a significant number of disenfranchised elites who, in a society ingrained with a warrior *ethos*, could have found more success in raiding the southern Aegean, perhaps accounting for destruction layers across the Cyclades and Crete in LB II.[60]

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53 Voutsaki 1993: 51.
54 van Wijngaarden 2002.
55 Mountjoy & Ponting 2000.
56 Driessen & Macdonald 1997.
57 Cline 2009.
58 Mee 1988: 303.
59 Dickinson 1977: 53.
60 Mee 1988: 303.

We have discussed at length the stimulus for expanding Mycenaean cultural influence in the Aegean, though what of the developments at Phylakopi in the intervening period? By the start of the MBA, the 'international spirit'[61] of the Early Cycladic period had ended and advances in seafaring technology allowed longer voyages with larger ships, which put an end to inter-island canoe navigation. Phylakopi, along with other nodal centres in the Cyclades, saw increasing nucleation, which is likely to have been either a response to climatic conditions[62] or the new risk of raiding that the advances in seafaring technology brought.[63] Later in the MBA, Minoan Crete began to exert its influence in the Cyclades. It was previously believed that the Minoans had militarily dominated the Cyclades owing to the literary spectre of the 'Minoan Thalassocracy',[64] though recent surveys tend to play down the militaristic role of the Minoans in the Aegean.[65] At Phylakopi, there is certainly a shift towards Minoan ideas and culture,[66] though it is evident that across the Cyclades, particularly at Ayia Irini on Keos and Akrotiri on Thera, there is a differential penetration of Minoan influence.[67] This is suggestive of a more indirect spread of influence and negotiation by communities with the Minoan culture.

From the start of the LC I period onwards, Minoan influence became stronger in the Cyclades, which may suggest that previous exchange networks were transformed into avenues for Minoan politics,[68] with Cycladic elites adopting aspects of Minoan culture for local strategies. A tablet fragment bearing Linear A, the administrative script of the Minoan palaces, was found in association with a LC I mansion at Phylakopi.[69] The so-called Pillar Crypt was also constructed in this period and was thought to be heavily influenced by Minoan pillar room architecture.[70] Though some Minoan pottery reached

61 Renfrew 1972. 'International Spirit' is a term coined by Renfrew to describe a period of intensive maritime contact in the Aegean, particularly between coastal and island communities.
62 Dalfes, Kukla and Weiss 1997.
63 Broodbank 2008: 69.
64 Thucydides, I.4.
65 Wiener 1991; Davis 2001: 25.
66 Davis 2008: 197.
67 Berg 2006: 141.
68 Davis 2001: 26-27.
69 Renfrew and Brice 1977.
70 Barber 1987: 164.

Phylakopi in the MBA, pottery was largely influenced by local styles, such as stylised plants and animals furnishing a burnished background.[71] By LC I however, the local repertoire had largely been abandoned in favour of imitations of Minoan pottery.[72] Minoan influence created new pathways, but, in contrast to the Greek mainland, contact was direct. An acceleration of Minoan influence may reflect the simultaneous processes of increasing Minoan contact and increasing acculturation of the islanders. At first, this may have been resisted, though the increasing social differentiation indicated by the use of prestige objects, such as Minoan pottery, belies the start of a similar process to that seen in the communities of the Greek mainland. The construction of both the LC I mansion and the Pillar Crypt may have been the result of emulative strategies of leading members of the community at Phylakopi, who adopted Minoan fashions to gain prestige. It may have been possible that exchange led to the movement of craftspeople such as potters, whose efforts would have ensured that Minoan ideas became more popular.

It is worth, briefly considering just why Minoan influence in the Cyclades had become much stronger at the start of LC I. Though the 'international spirit' of EC II had ended with the advent of deep hulled sailing ships, it was not until the later part of the MBA that Minoan Crete started to begin exerting its power in the Cyclades. During the gap between the start of the MC early and the MC late, there was very little contract between the Cyclades and Crete.[73] This period was typified by a lively maritime island exchange network, of which duck vases for liquid transport became an important feature, with one production centre being posited at Phylakopi.[74] While contemporary Crete had undergone state formation with the emergence of the palaces, the Cyclades were operating on a decentralised network of exchange, which Broodbank has argued were incompatible with each other or even antagonistic.[75] Metals were the desired resource,[76] particularly for the Cretan elites attempting to emulate Near Eastern elites.

71 Barber 2008: 76.
72 Barber 1987: 169.
73 Broodbank 2000: 357.
74 Barber 1987.
75 Broodbank 2000: 356.
76 Davis 2001: 26.

The establishment of Minoan influenced sites such as Kastri on Kythera[77] suggest Minoan elites were expanding their operations into the south Aegean. Minoan access to the Lavrion metal resources seems to have been blocked for much of the early MBA, as the region was more integrated into the Cycladic island network.[78]

The state of affairs therefore may have led to a situation in which the Minoan palaces actively forged access to the metal resources. Broodbank would advocate violent expansion in the Cyclades by interpreting destruction of the Phylakopi I settlement as evidence for attack.[79] Barbers assertion of earthquake devastation at Phylakopi[80], however, need not be incompatible with aspects of Broodbanks Minoan expansion model. Earthquake devastation at the site would have rendered a key obstacle to Minoan elite interests out of action and may have allowed Minoan traders access to the resources unimpeded. By the time the Phylakopi II settlement had been built, it would have become a useful stopping point along the way, which perhaps accounts for the small amounts of Minoan pottery at Phylakopi during the MBA.

Exploitation of the Lavrion metal resources rested on good relations with the islands of the 'western string' of the Cyclades.[81] It seems no coincidence that the two major access settlements into the Cyclades, Phylakopi and Akrotiri, both take on significant Minoan characteristics, along with the resettled Ayia Irini, which is located at the metal resources at Lavrion. Minoan items could have been adopted into local strategies, which could have led to the attribution of value to Minoan culture, leading to greater integration with Minoan culture over the course of the MBA. Though again it has to be stressed that it seems unlikely that the Minoans truly dominated the islands, even commercially, and much of the perceived Minoan influence has to be allocated to Cycladic islanders 'Minoanising' in self-interest.

Enter Mycenaeans

77 Coldstream and Huxley 1972.
78 Broodbank 2000: 356.
79 Broodbank 2000: 360.
80 Barber 1978: 368.
81 Davis 1979; Schofield 1982: 22.

By the time Minoan influence expired in the southern Aegean, the community at Phylakopi had changed from an egalitarian society to a more hierarchical society based on status.[82] Increasing Mycenaean contact carried on where the Minoans left off. Local Cycladic pottery styles had long since died out and, just as Minoan pottery had been fashionable previously, Mycenaean pottery became the dominant type at Phylakopi.[83] *Megaron* structures are the embodiment of Mycenaean identity and reflect the developed needs of communities of the mainland.[84] These *megara* were the major focus of the centralised political and economic units of the Mycenaean palaces.[85] At Phylakopi, however, the construction of a *megaron* may reflect more of an emulative ideal than a Mycenaean reality. The LC I mansion, likely to have been the seat of the rulers at Phylakopi, had been destroyed. The construction of a *megaron*, therefore, reflected the process of greater centralisation that was taking place at Phylakopi. There was a space in which the community leaders could perform inclusive rituals, store goods and display prestige items. Its choice would imply some Mycenaean contact, though to suggest that Mycenaean state(s) ruled Melos is a stretch. The appeal of the *megaron* would have been its facilitation of elite identity,[86] in a Mycenaean form that had elevated prestige currency throughout the Aegean. It may be that society at Phylakopi had become hierarchical to such an extent that there was only one ruler or lineage in power.

The construction of fortification walls in the local style was a sign of both the need for defence and the power of the rulers at Phylakopi, while the addition of a shrine complex with associated Mycenaean-style iconographic themes may similarly represent the power of the rulers, as an expression of legitimacy. There are some similarities with iconographic artefacts found in the Mycenaean shrines, such as figurines and the arrangement of objects within the shrine.[87] On the Greek mainland, the figurines recovered from Mycenaean shrines predominantly represent females and

82 Davis 2008: 203.
83 Barber 1987: 229.
84 Wright 2008: 250.
85 Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008: 290.
86 Werner 1993: 112.
87 These features include: platforms upon which *in situ* figurines were placed, as well as niches and stone baetyls: see Renfrew 1985.

animals, though it is not known whether these represent the supplicants or deities.[88] At the Phylakopi shrine complex, however, there are also male figurines which are rare on the mainland[89] and may hint at significant negotiation with aspects of iconographic imagery and perhaps survival of a more local tradition.[90]

This raises an important point: had the appearance of Mycenaean-style material culture and influence been more akin to that seen on the Greek mainland, then it would be much easier to ascribe a population movement. As the evidence is, it appears that there was considerable negotiation with Mycenaean influence, which created a form of hybrid Mycenaean-Melian culture. The subtle differences in this spread of Mycenaean influence across the Aegean also signals regional negotiation. For example, in the Dodecanese, Mycenaean burial rites appear to have been adopted,[91] whilst there are markedly fewer Mycenaean style chamber tombs in the Cyclades.[92] Knossos appears to have had a hybrid Mycenaean-Minoan culture after LM IB[93] and, though we treat the Greek mainland as a stable and uniform Mycenaean *koine*, there are more regional variations than have previously been stressed.[94] In fact, it now seems unlikely that there ever was a 'package' of Mycenaean traits, the development of Mycenaean culture taking subtly different trajectories in different regions.

Another point of note is the inherent bias with which we as archaeologists view the archaeological record. Mycenaean pottery is very distinctive, as well as diagnostic and therefore more likely to be retained during excavation. Often, a relatively small amount of Mycenaean material is enough to ascribe Mycenaean influence or even settlement. In the Cyclades, the infiltration of Mycenaean pottery suggests that it fulfilled a cultural role and it is worth noting that the clay sources on Melos are particularly unsuited for

88 French 1985.

89 One fragment is known from unstratified deposits at Tiryns (see French 1985: 233), whilst two fragmentary male heads are asserted at Mycenae (see French 1972: 148; Mylonas 1937: 237-247).

90 The male figurines are argued to have a Near Eastern/Anatolian connection, being associated with the 'Reshef' smiting deity (Renfrew 1985: 303). They may represent an, as yet, unidentified aspect of iconographic representation at Phylakopi. It must also be stated that cult/ritual has been discussed in relation to Phylakopi and Aegean archaeology, however, worship in the LBA is difficult to decode and we are not yet in a position to state aspects of 'religion' with any certainty.

91 Mee 1982.

92 Unlikely to be a lacuna in the Cycladic archaeological record: Mee 2008.

93 Rehak and Younger 2001: 440-441.

94 *Contra* Feuer 2011.

the manufacture of fine-ware pottery,[95] perhaps accounting for the local adoption of prestige Minoan and Mycenaean wares as markers of social differentiation.

In conclusion, it has been argued here that previous interpretations of culture change at Phylakopi have focused too much on the *mechanisms* behind culture change, rather than the *stimulus*. The use of interpretative models has been rejected, as they ascribe uniform human behaviour across varying cultures and periods, which does not consider the historical and regional contexts of culture change. The Mycenaeans gained predominance in the Aegean during the LBA, though to ascribe Mycenaean takeovers to each area of the Aegean is to overestimate the capabilities of ancient states. Leaders of these communities may have wanted to become Mycenaean, due to the stability and power of the Mycenaean centres on the mainland. Similarities to Mycenaean material culture were likely to have been the result of patronisation by local elites and local adoption of specific Mycenaean traits to fulfil cultural roles. Regional differences suggest negotiation and adoption of desirable traits, which would imply that the local populations were not as passive in adopting Mycenaean culture as has previously been assumed. The community at Phylakopi had been embarking on a process of stratification and centralisation since the intensification of Minoan contact at the start of the LBA and contact with the Mycenaeans only accelerated that process. Mycenaean identity became desirable, though due more to its incorporation in existing social strategies, than its being more 'advanced' than what had gone before.

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95 Mountjoy 2008: 469.

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