

Classical Civilisation

Topic: The Mycenaean Age – Key Sites

This topic covers the following:

- 1 Key Sites: Mycenaean Defences
- 2 Key Sites: Tiryns Defences
- 3 Graves and Tombs of Mycenae
- 4 Palaces at Mycenae and Tiryns
- 5 Key Sites: Troy

Name:

1 Knowledge Map: Mycenaean Age – Key Sites (Overview)

This component is based around life in ancient Greece just over three thousand years ago. The Culture half of the topic covers the ancient civilisation known as the Mycenaean Age. You will study some of the main Mycenaean sites and the items that made these places so remarkable. From tiny objects like rings, to huge, city walls, you will study a variety of source material to find out what life was like at the time.

1

Map of Mycenaean Key Sites

Below is a map of the key Mycenaean Age sites: Mycenae, Tiryns, and Troy.



2

Timeline of Major Events in the Mycenaean Age

Below is a timeline of the major events of the Mycenaean Age, and the periods before and after.

6000-3200 BCE	Stone Age	
	Stone Age hunters came to Greece. Early farmers arrived.	
3200-1100 BCE	Bronze Age	
	Weapons of bronze and other metal-workings gave the name to this age. Three cultures developed, distinct yet related and overlapping. Indo-European was spoken and an early form of Greek.	
3200-2300 BCE	Cycladic Age	
3000-1400 BCE	Minoan Age	
1600-1100 BCE	Mycenaean Age	Phase 1: Early Period (1600-1400 BCE)
		Phase 2: Palatial Period (1400-1250 BCE) Phase 3: Later Period (1250-1100 BCE)
1200-750 BCE	Iron Age	
	A period of wars and invasions. A people called Dorians became dominant on the mainland, using iron weapons. The Greeks developed a simple alphabet. Writing began again and Homer lived. His stories told of events which happened in the Bronze Age and were passed down orally, possibly by bards.	

Concept and Dating of the Mycenaean Age

3	Mycenaean Age	It is a general term that describes the time when many separate city states in the Greek world were powerful. Mycenae was the most powerful.
4	City States	As we have learnt, Ancient Greece was not a unified country but was a collection of separate city states, but they did have shared values around culture, buildings, and administration.
5	Duration of Mycenaean Age	The Mycenaean Age is a period in Ancient Greece that runs from 1600BC to 1150BC.
6	Bronze Age	This period is what is known as the Bronze Age. It is named this period as this was the first time that tin and copper were mixed together to make the alloy bronze, which is a much stronger material than the sum of its parts.
7	Minoan Age	This is a period that preceded the Mycenaean Age, and in fact, crosses over into the early Mycenaean Age. It is a period based on Crete and its influence over neighbouring areas. It ran from around 3500BC to around 1400BC.
8	Dating the Mycenaean Age	In order to date the Mycenaean Age, historians looked at pottery styles in Greece, comparing them to those in Egypt where historical records were kept more accurately. Carbon objects such as wooden objects and timbers, are also dated by measuring the level of radioactivity present.
9	Mycenaean Age: Phase 1	The early period of the Mycenaean Age is from 1600BC to 1400BC. Our focus is on the burial grounds made in shaft graves.
10	Mycenaean Age: Phase 2	The palatial period of the Mycenaean Age is from 1400BC to 1250BC. Our focus will be on the building of the great palaces in this period.
11	Mycenaean Age: Phase 3	The later period of the Mycenaean Age runs from 1250BC to 1100BC. Our focus will be on the decline of the period and its key buildings.
12	Dating the Mycenaean Age	In order to date the Mycenaean Age, historians looked at pottery styles in Greece, comparing them to those in Egypt where historical records were kept more accurately. Carbon objects such as wooden objects and timbers, are also dated by measuring the level of radioactivity present.

Mycenae

13	Mycenae	The most famous city of the Mycenaean Age.
14	King Agamemnon	In mythology, Mycenae was the home of King Agamemnon, the King who led a Greek army against the city of Troy after his brother, King Menelaus of Sparta, lost his wife, Helen, to Paris.
15	Location of Mycenae	The city is built on a hill, which is 40-50m above the plain that it surrounds. It is a small area by modern standards, and has a perimeter of around 900m.
16	Mythical Beginnings (Mycenae)	The Greeks believed that the hero, Perseus, the man who killed Medusa, first founded the city. According to myth, he was given help in building it by the mythical race of giants called the Cyclopes.
17	Famous Mycenae Sites	The Palace, the Sally Port, the passage to the underground cistern, the underground cistern, the Cyclopean walls, the Lion Gate, Grave Circle A, Grave Circle B, Tomb of Clytemnestra, Tomb of Aegisthus, Treasury of Atreus

Tiryns

18	Tiryns	The city of Tiryns is another important Mycenaean site and is just 10 miles from Mycenae.
19	Mythical Beginnings (Tiryns)	The ancients believed Tiryns to be older than Mycenae and founded by Proitos, the brother of Acrisius, who was Perseus' grandfather. It is also supposedly the birthplace of Heracles.
20	Famous Tiryns Sites	The main entrance, the Cyclopean ramp, the galleries, the palace, defences, tholos tomb

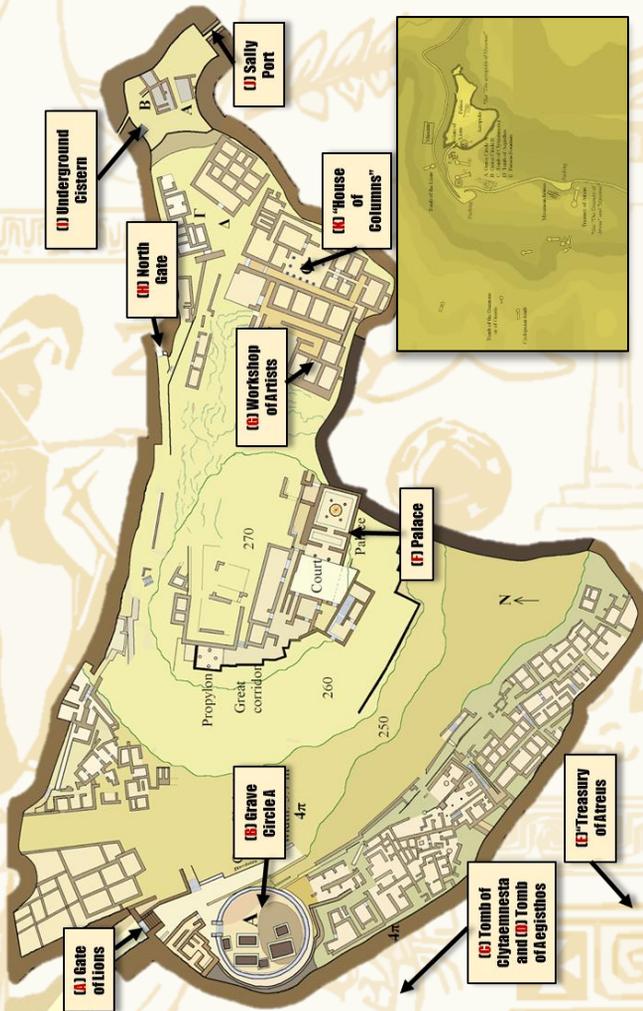
Tier 3 Vocabulary

Mycenae	The name of main city in Mycenaean Age
Mycenaean	The name of the period of Greek history that runs from 1675BC to 1150BC
Tiryns	The name of a Greek city in the Mycenaean Age
Agamemnon	The King of Mycenae
Perseus	Mythical founder of Mycenae

2 Knowledge Map: Mycenaean Age – Mycenae

This component is based around life in ancient Greece just over three thousand years ago. The Culture half of the topic covers the ancient civilisation known as the Mycenaean Age. You will study some of the main Mycenaean sites and the items that made these places so remarkable. From tiny objects like rings, to huge, city walls, you will study a variety of source material to find out what life was like at the time.

1 Plan of Mycenae
Below is a plan of the Mycenae and its key historical sites.



Key Sites

2	(A) Lions Gate	The Lion Gate is probably the most famous feature of Mycenae and is one of the most impressive pieces of masonry in the Ancient world. This was the main entrance into the city and has two lions that dominate the archway at the top.
3	(B) Grave Circle A	Grave Circle A is a circular graveyard that contains tombs and is surrounded by a low wall. It is 28m in diameter and is thought to have been a royal burial site.
4	(C) Tomb of Clytemnestra	This tomb lies outside the city walls and is a tholos tomb in that it is domed. Clytemnestra was the wife of King Agamemnon. In Greek myth, she kills Agamemnon. The tomb is around 13m in diameter, and 13m high.
5	(D) Tomb of Aegisthus	Like the Tomb of Clytemnestra, the Tomb of Aegisthus was a tholos tomb. Aegisthus was the second husband of Clytemnestra. It is similar in size to the tomb of Clytemnestra.
6	(E) Treasury of Atreus	The Treasury of Atreus is also housed outside of the city walls. It is also a tholos tomb, but also acted as a treasury for Mycenae. Atreus was the father of Agamemnon.
7	(F) Palace	The palace sits at the very top of the hill containing Mycenae. The hill did not have a natural flat surface so the top of the hill had to be artificially levelled. There were various terraces cut into the hill making it look even more dramatic.
8	(G) Workshop of Artists	A large art workshop that produced pottery. Art flourished during this period and continued much of the traditions passed on by the Minoan civilisation.
9	(H) North Gate	The North Gate was an additional entrance into the city.

Key Building Features

	Key Building Feature	Reason
13	Hill	Would add height to fortification walls, adding protection.
14	Flat-Topped	Easier to add buildings to a flat summit.
15	Fertile Surrounding Area	For growing crops.
16	Constant Access to Water	Essential for inhabitants.
17	Proximity to Rock Quarries	Easy access to building materials.

10	(I) Underground Cistern	Accessed through an underground passage that goes under the perimeter wall, there is an underground cistern 18m below ground level. It was used as a means to access water should the city be under siege.
11	(J) Sally Port	A Sally Port is an important part of the defensives of the city as they were secret passages that allowed defenders to rush out and attack unsuspecting enemies. There are two in Mycenae at either end of the city. They use a technique known as corbelling .
12	(K) House of Columns	A large building complex east of the Palace on the Acropolis of Mycenae. It is a remarkable piece of architecture as it covers three tiers of terraces.

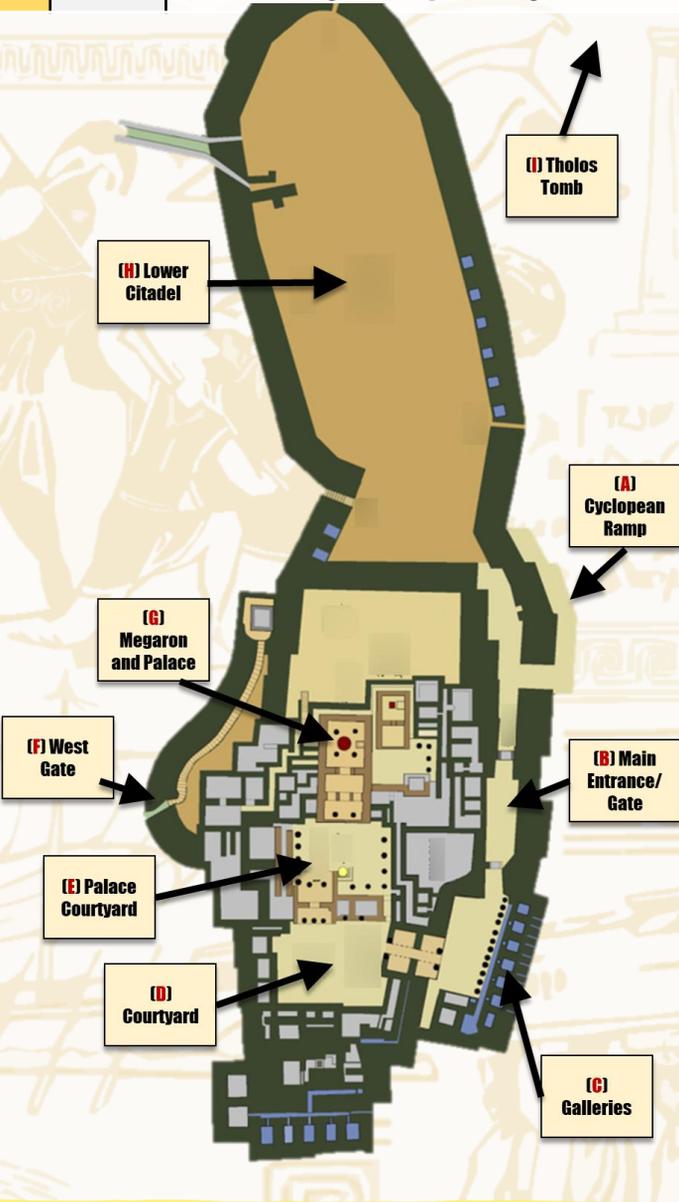
Tier 3 Vocabulary

Masonry	Stone work
Stele	Carved stone tombstones
Tholos	A large domed tomb in the shape of an igloo; also known as a beehive tomb
Cistern	A tank used to store water
Corbelling	A method of spanning two structures by using increasingly larger blocks of stone

3 Knowledge Map: Mycenaean Age – Tiryns

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- 1 **Plan of Tiryns**
Below is a plan of the Tiryns and its key historical sites.
- 2 **Location of Tiryns**
Tiryns is located on a hill 18 metres above the surrounding land. It is 300m long, and between 45 to 100m wide.
- 3 **Age of Tiryns**
The earliest buildings date from around 2500BC, but the main buildings, including the palace, were built around 1400BC – the height of the Mycenaean Age.



Key Sites

4	Cyclopean Walls	The walls of Tiryns, like those at Mycenae, were thought to have been built by the Cyclopes. They are around 7m high, and 10m at their peak.
5	(A) Cyclopean Ramp	The main approach to the walls was via the Cyclopean Ramp. This was on the east side of the city and led to the main gate. The ramp was named after the Cyclopes, again, because of its size.
6	(B) Main Entrance/Gate	The eastern gate was the main entrance into the city and is about 3m wide. There is a further inner gate, that would be used to trap attackers in by closing the two gates on them.
7	(C) Galleries	The Galleries are some of the famous features of the city. They are built into the outer walls of the city and are created using the corbelling technique. They were up to 30m long and were used to store grain and/or ammunition.
9	(E and G) Palace Courtyard and Palace	The palace was built on the highest part of the city and it had its own defensive walls. A grand entranceway led to the megaron.
10	(F) West Gate	This gate was added at a later date and was the second entrance, or exit, from the city.
11	(G) Megaron	The megaron was a structure built around 4 huge pillars and contained the king's throne. The floor was plastered and had images of octopi and dolphins on it. The walls were also covered in with plaster, and had frescoes painted onto them of wealthy families and hunting scenes.
12	(H) Lower Citadel	The lower part of the city where houses for the population were built.
13	(I) Tholos Tomb	Just over half a mile from Tiryns there is a tholos tomb built into the hillside. It is about 6m tall and 6m wide, with an entrance 1.5m in height. It has a superb corbelled roof.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

Masonry	Stone work	Corbelling	A method of spanning two structures by using increasingly larger blocks of stone
Stele	Carved stone tombstones	Citadel	Another name for a city; one that is usually walled like a fortress.
Tholos	A large domed tomb in the shape of an igloo; also known as a beehive tomb	Megaron	The central hall of a palace used for banquets, worship, and meetings.
Cistern	A tank used to store water	Fresco	A painting originally made on damp plaster in which the colours become fixed as the plaster dries.

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Burial Customs

1	Burial Customs	We know a lot about death and burial from Topic 7 on the Myth and Religion Paper. The preparation of the body and the funeral processions did not differ greatly in Mycenae but there are some additional things to be aware of.
2	Jewellery	The body, if wealthy, would have been adorned with jewellery. We know this as evidence clearly shows skeletons adorned with all manner of jewellery. The body was almost definitely clothed.
3	Drink Offering	A drink offering to the gods would almost certainly have been made as cups have been found at the entrance to tholos tombs . This is known as a libation .
4	Animal Bones	Animal bones and shellfish shells have also been found suggesting a meal may have been had in honour of the dead. It may also suggest an element of animal sacrifice.
5	Grave and Burial	The body would have been buried and then a raised mound would have covered the area so it is visible from distance. A stele could well have been placed on top. The mound would have been dug up again for another burial.
6	Burial Caskets	There is evidence that some people were buried in clay caskets. These caskets would have been painted and these offer an insight into the customs surrounding a funeral procession as many depict these scenes.
7	Role of Women	The evidence from the burial caskets show women playing the more prominent role in burials. It is they who are depicted near the body with their arms raised in grief and in elaborate clothing.

Grave Types: Cist and Shaft Graves

8	Cist and Shaft Graves	In Mycenae, two types of graves have been discovered: Cist and Shaft graves . They are different in structure and use.
9	Cist Grave: Structure	Cist graves are the most common type of grave found in Mycenaean Age. It is a shallow grave dug in the earth, and the sides were covered in slabs of stone. A pile of stones was then placed at the bottom for the body to lie in.
10	Cist Grave: Body	The body was usually laid in a curved position rather than laid out flat like in modern day graves. This was due to the size of the grave.
11	Cist Graves: Use	Cist graves were intended for single use only. A series of cist graves may be covered in one mound, and it would be this mound that is opened up for a further grave to be added.
12	Shaft Grave: Structure	Shaft graves have also been discovered. It is larger and deeper than a cist grave, usually being 2.5m deep and graves were stacked on top of each other. Low rubble walls were built at the bottom with a roof support above each grave.
13	Shaft Grave: Body	In shaft graves , bodies were usually laid on their backs and at full length due to the bigger size of the grave.
14	Shaft Grave: Use	Multiple bodies could be buried in a shaft grave . Each grave is essentially stacked on top of another, but there are examples of multiple bodies sharing one grave within the shaft.

Grave Types: Tholos and Chamber Tombs

15	Tumulus Tombs	These pre-dated tholos tombs and were what tholos tombs were developed from. A tumulus tomb is a raised mound of earth under which bodies were buried.
16	Tholos Tombs: Structure	Tholos tombs differ greatly in structure to cist and shaft tombs in that they are built out of stone rather dug out of the earth.
17		The domed roof is the most distinctive aspect of the tomb. The ones in Mycenae were the highest domes in the world for over a thousand years.
18		The walls of the tomb were built of stone (usually from the excavated site, and the earth that was dug out to form the tomb was then placed on top of the roof.
19		These tombs were for the most important members of society and may have even been built during their lifetime.
20		The dromos is the long passageway that forms the entrance to the tomb and is built from stone as well. Large stones would have been placed at the entrance to block the entrance.
21		The entrance to any tholos tomb would have been richly decorated. The Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae has survived and has two green limestone columns with a zigzag pattern framing the entrance. Above the entrance would be a large stone and a triangle above that to relieve the pressure on the stone.
22	Chamber Tombs	From the fourteenth century BC, less important Mycenaean nobles were buried in chamber tombs .
23		A chamber tomb is dug from rock in which more than one body was buried in a chamber – usually a family tomb. They were similar in structure to tholos tombs with a dromos, but differed in that they were dug from rock.

Tier 3 Vocabulary

Tholos Tomb	A large domed tomb in the shape of an igloo, roughly circular in its floor space – also known as a beehive tomb.
Libation	A drink offering poured in honour of the gods.
Stele	Stone slabs often with patterns or images carved on them most commonly used as tombstones.
Cist Grave	A grave in the form of a stone-lined pit, dug into the earth, and covered up.
Shaft Grave	A grave in which a deep shaft was dug and a space created at the bottom for a body, often re-used for later burials.
Tumulus Tombs	A raised mound of earth under which bodies were buried.
Dromos	A passageway leading to the tholos tomb.
Chamber Tombs	A tomb, dug from rock, in which a body or bodies would be buried in a chamber.

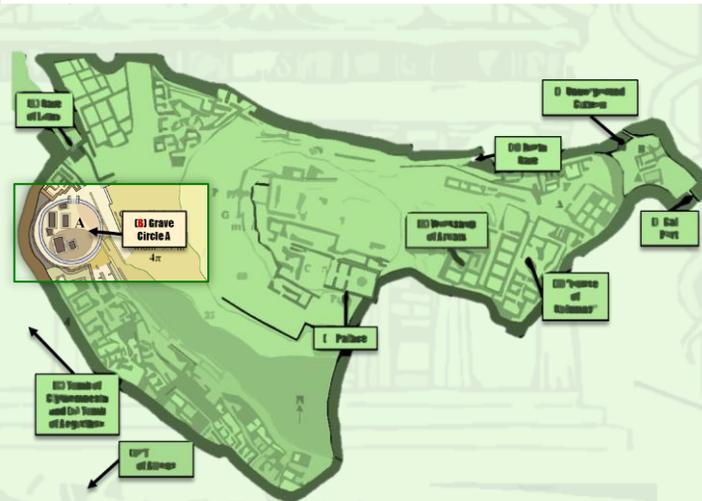
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Funerary Objects

1	Burial Objects	Many of the shaft graves from Mycenaean cities are found to have contained valuable items, reflecting the importance of the people buried in them.
2	Beliefs	Similarly to other ancient societies such as the Egyptians, Greeks believed that dead should be buried with valuable items so they could use them in the afterlife. An alternative view is that they were buried with these items to show off their status.
3	Pottery	The most common item found in graves were pottery items – be they vessels or figurines. At the time of the burial, they would have contained oils, perfumes, and other liquids.
4	Military Equipment	Other graves have found military equipment such as swords and shields, suggesting the deceased was a warrior. Most were made of bronze, but there are exceptions like the Lion Hunt Dagger.
5	Jewellery	Women were often buried with jewellery and expensive boxes that would have contained jewellery, cosmetics or mirrors.

Grave Circles A and B, Mycenae

12	Location	Grave Circle A and B are located in Mycenae. Grave Circle A is located within the city walls, and Grave Circle B further outside the city walls and near the Tomb of Clytemnestra (an example of a tholos tomb).
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Gold Death Mask of Agamemnon

6	Gold Death Mask of Agamemnon	The gold death mask of Agamemnon is perhaps the most iconic image of Mycenae. When Schliemann saw the mask, he is said to have written, 'I have gazed on the face of Agamemnon'.
7	Grave Circle A, Grave V	The mask was found in Grave Circle A, and inside Grave V.



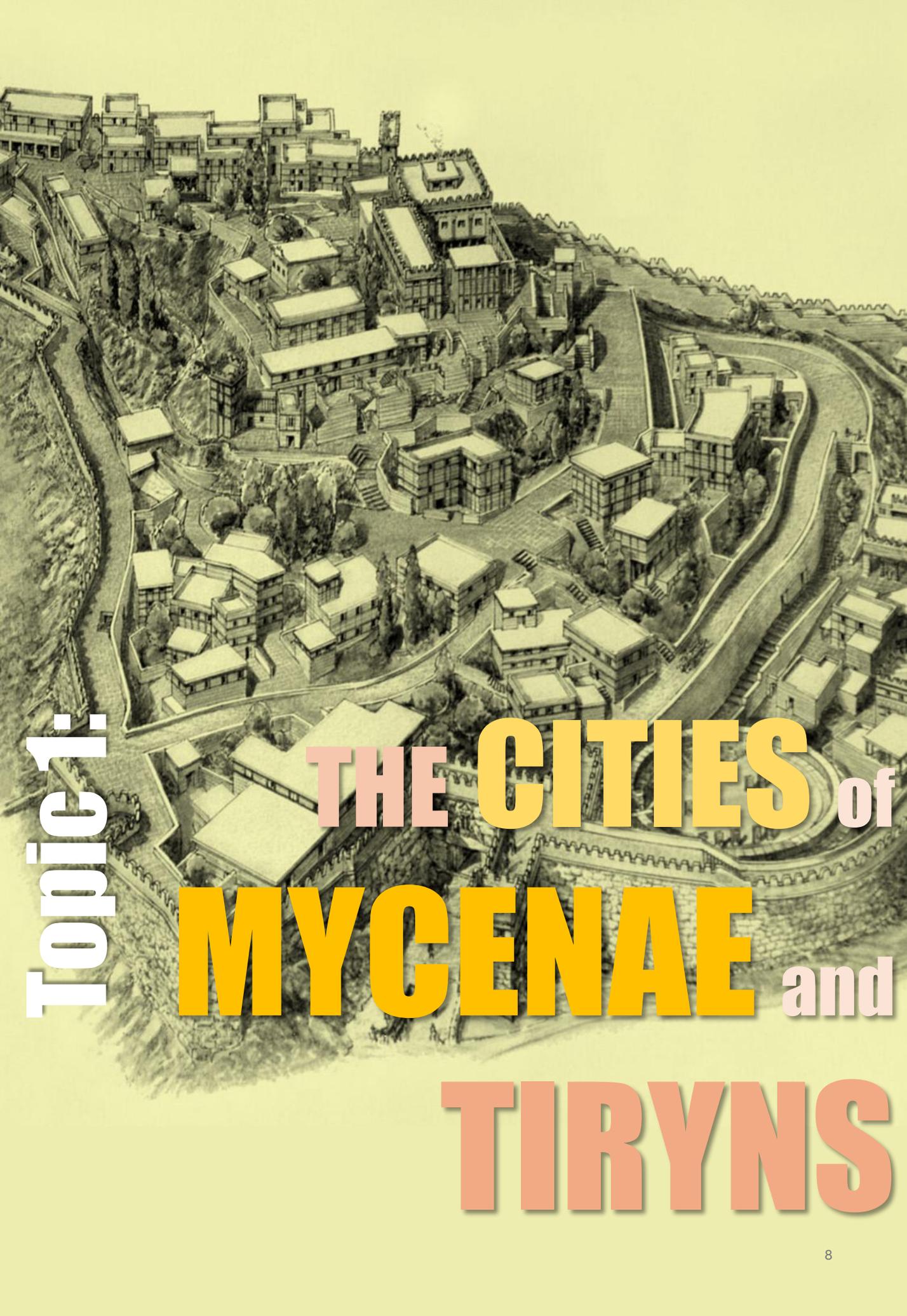
Gold Death of Agamemnon

9	Creation of the Mask	It is made out of a thick sheet of gold. The gold would have been heated to make it softer and workable. It then would have been hammered into shape against a wooden background.
10	Size of the Mask	The mask is 17cm high, 25cm wide and weighs only 168g. As it is so light, it emphasises the skill of the craftsman to produce such precise details on such a thin piece of gold.
11	Repousse Technique	The repousse technique would have been used to create the facial features of the mask. The facial features show an old, dignified, bearded man and of an exceptional quality.

13	Heinrich Schliemann	Heinrich Schliemann is a pioneer in archaeology and unearthed many of the graves found in Mycenae. A controversial figure who is accused of planting discoveries, including the death mask of Agamemnon.
14	Contents of the Grave Circles	The contents of the graves found in Grave Circle A and B are some of the finest found in graves ever, especially Grave Circle A.
15	Graves in Grave Circle A	The six Graves in Grave Circle A contained the following finds and suggest they were undoubtedly for important and wealthy people, possibly even royalty.
16	Contents of the Graves in Grave Circle A	Two gold death masks, one purportedly of Agamemnon (see left)
17		Gold cup with repousse spirals
18		Gold necklace
19		Bronze dagger with the blade inlaid with gold spirals
20		Amber bead necklace
21		Gold Pyxis (see previous topic on Decorative Arts)
22		Ostrich-egg rhyton with faience (a glazed ceramic) dolphins
23		Swords with handles decorated with gold
24		Bronze sword decorated with griffins
25		Gold octopus brooch
26		Bull rhyton with gold horns, rosette, and muzzle
27	Gold two-handled cup referred to as the 'Cup of Nestor'	
28	Lion Hunt Dagger depicting scene of lion hunt using inlaid metal	

Glossary: The Mycenaean Age – Key Sites

	Keyword	Definition
1	Mycenaean Age	A civilisation that was powerful from around 1600BC to 1150BC, named after the city of Mycenae in southern Greece.
2	Minoan Age	A civilisation based on Crete that influenced neighbouring areas. It lasted from 3500BC until around 1400BC, overlapping in both time and area with the Mycenaean Age.
3	Mycenae	A city on the Greek Peloponnese that the Mycenaean Age was named after.
4	Tiryns	A city on the Greek Peloponnese.
5	Troy	Troy or Ilion was an ancient city located in present-day Turkey. It is best known as the setting for the Greek myth of the Trojan War.
6	Megaron	The central hall in Mycenaean palaces used for banquets, worship and meetings.
7	Sally Port	A gap in the outer wall of a city through which defenders could rush out to surprise attackers.
8	Corbelling	A building technique used to span a gap between two walls by placing increasingly larger blocks of stone onto each other, thereby creating a vaulted roof.
9	Stele	Stone slabs most commonly used as tombstones.
10	Tholos Tomb	A large domed tomb in the shape of an igloo, roughly circular in its floor space.
11	Fresco	A painting originally made on damp plaster in which the colours become fixed as the plaster dries.
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Topic 1:

THE CITIES of
MYCENAE and
TIRYNS

The Mycenaean Age

The Mycenaean Age, named after the city of Mycenae in Greece, is a general term that describes the time when many separate independent cities in the Greek world were powerful. Mycenae was the most famous of those cities. The cities all had a similar culture, similar buildings and structures, and political systems (all were led by kings). However, it is important to remember that they were all independent of each other and the term 'Mycenaean' is a modern one to link those cities that had such similarities.

The Mycenaean Age lasted from approximately 1600 BC to 1150 BC (about 350 years). This period is part of the Bronze Age, because it was a time that tin and copper were first mixed together to make the alloy bronze that would be used to create weapons.

In order to date the Mycenaean Age, historians look at various things to help them date it. They will look at pottery styles, weapon development, and buildings to help date things more accurately. Scientists can now use carbon dating techniques on wooden objects or timbers in buildings.

The Mycenaean Age has been divided into three distinct phases by historians:

- The Early Period (1600 – 1400 BC)
- The Palatial Period (1400 – 1250 BC)
- The Later Period (1250 – 1150 BC)

Mycenae is the most famous city of the Mycenaean Age, and in mythology it was the home of King Agamemnon, who led a Greek army against the city of Troy. The city is built on a hill, which is 40-50m above the plain that it surrounds. It's a small area by modern standards, with a perimeter of around 900m. Hills to the north and south and ravines to the east means it was surrounded on three sides, and a spring less than 400m away supplied water throughout the year.

An ancient city built on a higher ground, and defended by walls is known as a citadel. The term means 'little city', and these were indeed very small by modern standards, being more like small towns. For the sake of convenience, we will always refer to 'city' as the word to describe them.

Evidence for the occupation of the site goes back a few thousand years beyond the Mycenaean Age. Archaeologists have traced the first Mycenaean burials to around 1650 BC, and believe the site reached peak prosperity from around 1400 BC to 1200 BC.

Mycenae is thoroughly connected to Greek mythology. The Greeks believed that the hero Perseus, the man who killed Medusa, first founded the city. According to myth he was given help in building the city by the mythical race of giants called the Cyclopes. The Greeks did not think that any human could have built such huge structures without them. According to legend, Agamemnon led an army gathered from lots of Greek cities and islands against Troy in what would be known as the Trojan War. The evidence that Agamemnon even existed, or indeed, that the Trojan War happened, is limited and debatable.

Mycenae is most famous for the structures, tombs, and the treasures that were found there. Mycenae was excavated by a German archaeologist named Heinrich Schliemann between 1876 and 1878.

Another important Mycenaean site is the city of Tiryns, located around 10 miles from Mycenae. Like Mycenae, it had strong defensive walls and structures, with the walls being up to 8m high and 13m thick. It is perhaps most famous for its palace, throne room, and a series of arched galleries. Numerous frescoes have been found at Tiryns; one of these shows a youth somersaulting over a bull, which was an activity popular in the Minoan Age. The ancients believed that Tiryns was slightly older than Mycenae and was founded by Proitos, whose brother was Acrisius. Acrisius' grandson was Perseus, the founder of Mycenae. It was also thought to be the birthplace of the hero Heracles. Like Mycenae, it seems Tiryns' history and founding is steeped in mythology.

The last site we will look at is Troy, the site of the famous war between the Greeks and the Trojans, and it is found in northwest Turkey. It is a city that has been rebuilt several times in ancient history, with each new version built on top of the previous one. Much debate surrounds which version of the city existed at the time of the Trojan War, and this is something we will examine in this topic. The city has revealed little evidence of the riches that Homer describes in the Iliad and Odyssey, but it is likely that it was an important site in Mycenaean Times.

Other cities that we will refer to in this study are Pylos, home to the famous Greek hero, Nestor, and Akrotiri which is on the island of Santorini.

The Defences of Mycenae

Location of Mycenae

Mycenae is located on the Greek Peloponnese with the main citadel [walled city] on a steep, rocky hill. It is 40-50 metres above the surrounding plain. It also has mountains on three sides of the city acting as natural shields, forcing any army to approach through narrow, predictable routes, and making it difficult for chariots or large forces to manoeuvre. This natural geography means defenders need only focus on a few entry points, attacking armies must fight uphill, and the hill provides excellent visibility of all approaches making surprise attacks almost impossible.



The Lion Gate

The Lion Gate is probably the most famous feature of Mycenae and is one of the most impressive pieces of masonry in the Greek world. This was the main entrance to the city and was built in the thirteenth century BC, when Mycenae was at its most powerful.

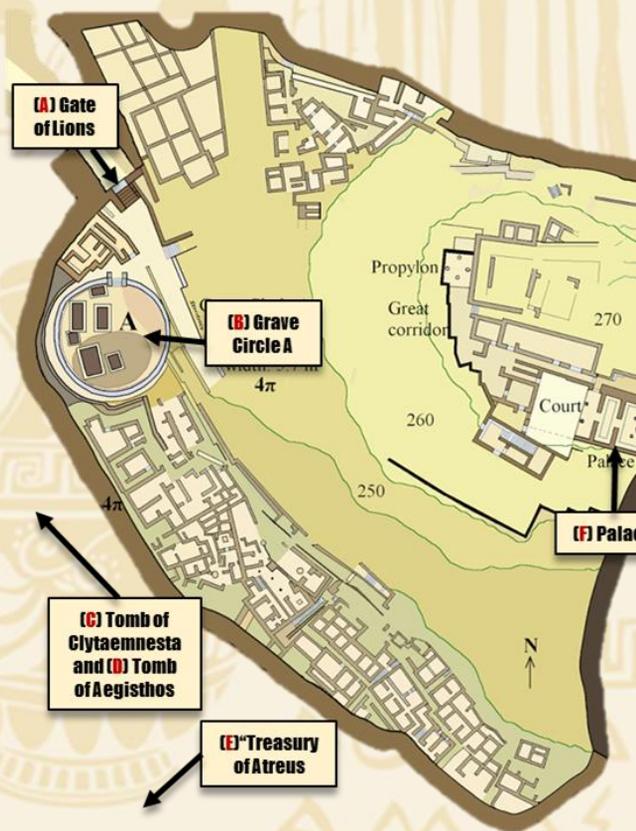
The Lion Gate was not just a grand entrance into the city, it was a carefully engineered defensive choke-point designed to make attacking the city very difficult.

The Lion Gate is at the end of a long passageway and ideal for defence as the approach to the gate was along an uphill path. The gateway itself is a square whose sides are 3m by 3m. This incredibly narrow entrance would make it very difficult for invaders to attack, forcing them into single-file or in small groups at best. This means they would lose the advantage of numbers entering the city. Essentially, the gate becomes a bottleneck for attackers which is one of the strongest defensive features in ancient architecture.

The Lion Gate would be an obvious place for attackers to focus on, but the design of the gate meant defenders had an advantage. The approach to the Lion Gate rises gently and bends so that the attackers' right sides faced the defenders, and as shields were typically carried on the left arm, this exposes the attackers. The gate itself is surrounded by high walls known as bastions from which defenders on the walls would hurl missiles or spears down to try to prevent enemies breaking through.

If they did manage to get through, the secondary trap would slow attackers further. Just inside the gate is a long narrow passage that forced attackers to move slowly and kept them tightly packed.

The design of the gate itself, including the sculpture, meant it was not easy to destroy. Built into the huge Cyclopean walls, the gate was built structurally strong. The relief sculpture of the lions means the load on the lintel, the main beam on top of the gate, was lightened preventing it from collapse.



The Lion Gate



The Cyclopean Walls

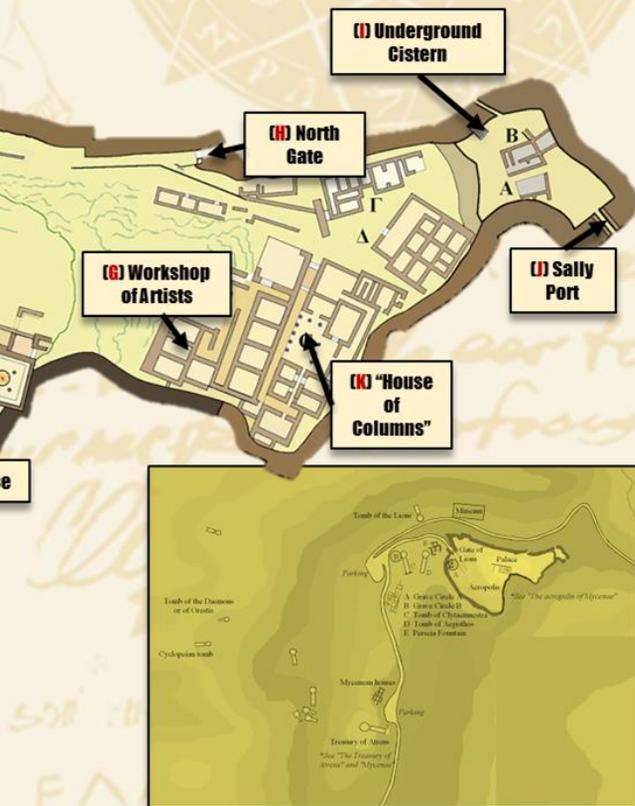


The walls of Mycenae are an impressive feat of engineering and construction. In the first phase of wall building (from approximately 1350BC), the walls only surrounded the top of the city of Mycenae, and little of this survives. The walled area was enlarged a century or so later, until the final perimeter wall was finished around 1200BC, being around 900m long.

The best-preserved section of the wall at the north of the city ranges from 5.5, to 7.5m thick. This thickness is the length of a large room in a house today. None of the walls survives to full height, but it is estimated that they reached around 12m high. The section of wall surrounding the Lion Gate is 8.25m high.

To build these walls was a superhuman feat. Even the ancient Greeks could not work out how any human built them, as each block weighs around two tonnes. The ancient Greeks referred to them as the 'Cyclopean Walls', after the giant that Odysseus blinded, believing that only a huge giant could have moved such blocks.

The walls were made out of huge blocks of limestone piled on top of each other; the area around Mycenae is a good source of stone. Mortar [used to join the blocks] was not used, but smaller pieces of limestone filled out the spaces between the blocks. Some blocks could have been moved from higher parts of the city by placing them on rollers. Other blocks would have been raised through the construction earth ramps. Larger blocks were used for the visible parts of the wall, while the inner core was made from earth and rubble. The wall generally followed the contours of the hill to make it easier to build.



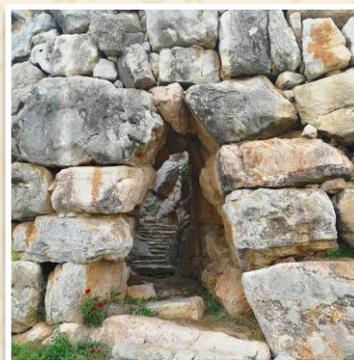
Underground Cistern



Next to the northern sally port is a passage that goes under the perimeter wall and leads to an underground cistern [a tank used to store water]. The cistern itself is 18m below ground level. It collected water through a series of clay pipes in the roof. This water came from the natural spring that lay close to the city. If attackers laid siege to the city and tried to cut off the water supply, the Mycenaean could secretly get to a supply of water to enable them to hold out for a lengthy period.

The Sally Ports

The sally ports were an important part of the defensive structure of the city. There were two of these; one at the north and one at the south of the city. These have been suggested to have been secret passages from which defenders of the city could rush out and attack unsuspecting enemy soldiers. However, the south sally port is visible from a distance, which might question whether it was a defensive measure, or at least how effective it was, especially as the passage is only 2.5m wide.



Task: Answer the following questions using the information about Mycenae's defences.

1. How does the location of Mycenae make it defensively strong? Make three points.

■

■

■

2. Why would it have been so hard for an invader to attack Mycenae through the Lion Gate? Make three points.

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3. What made the Cyclopean Walls so impenetrable to invaders? Make three points.

■

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4. What other defensive features did Mycenae have? Make two points.

■

■

Additional Notes

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.

The Defences of Tiryns

Location of Tiryns

Tiryns is one of the best examples of how the Mycenaeans chose sites that used natural geography to enhance military security. Although its position is different from hilltop citadels like Mycenae, its location still offered major defensive advantages.

Tiryns was constructed on a long, narrow limestone ridge that rises sharply above the surrounding plain. This provided steep sides that made direct assault difficult, a natural "platform" for the massive Cyclopean walls, and a linear shape that naturally forced attackers to approach from a limited number of directions. Though not a mountain peak, the ridge gave height, visibility, and a solid, defensible base.

The citadel had a commanding view over the Argive Plain, meaning soldiers could see enemies from far away, surprise attacks were extremely unlikely, and the rulers of Tiryns could control movement and trade across the plain. Control of the surrounding flatland was a major strategic advantage in the Bronze Age.

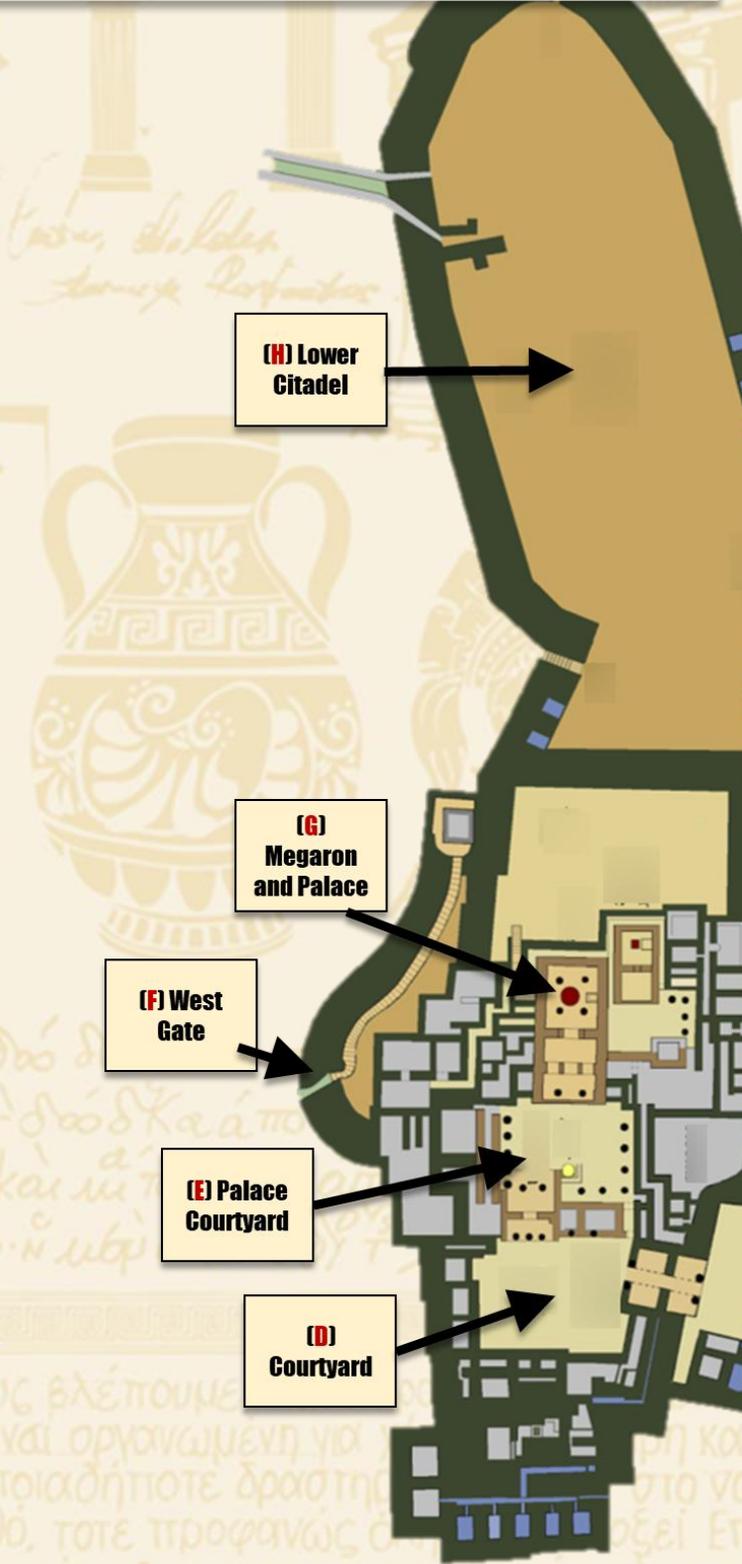
The shape of the ridge creates defensive choke-points. The long, thin shape of the plateau meant that entrances had to be at the ends or in deliberately designed, narrow sections, attackers were funnelled into tight, controlled approach routes, and defenders could concentrate forces instead of spreading troops thinly. This natural layout reduced the number of vulnerable points dramatically.



Cyclopean Ramp



Main Eastern Gate



(H) Lower Citadel

(G) Megaron and Palace

(F) West Gate

(E) Palace Courtyard

(D) Courtyard

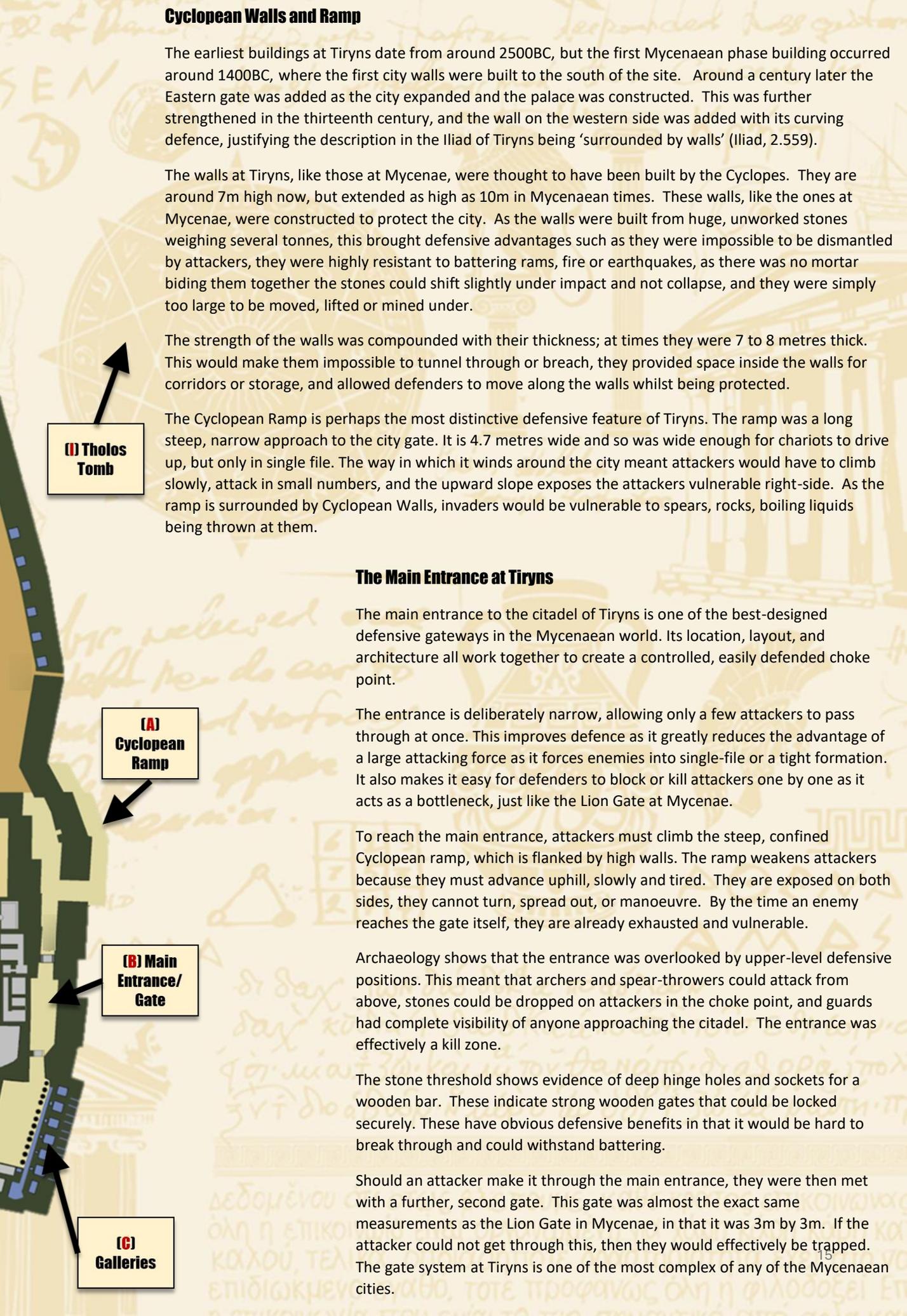
Cyclopean Walls and Ramp

The earliest buildings at Tiryns date from around 2500BC, but the first Mycenaean phase building occurred around 1400BC, where the first city walls were built to the south of the site. Around a century later the Eastern gate was added as the city expanded and the palace was constructed. This was further strengthened in the thirteenth century, and the wall on the western side was added with its curving defence, justifying the description in the Iliad of Tiryns being 'surrounded by walls' (Iliad, 2.559).

The walls at Tiryns, like those at Mycenae, were thought to have been built by the Cyclopes. They are around 7m high now, but extended as high as 10m in Mycenaean times. These walls, like the ones at Mycenae, were constructed to protect the city. As the walls were built from huge, unworked stones weighing several tonnes, this brought defensive advantages such as they were impossible to be dismantled by attackers, they were highly resistant to battering rams, fire or earthquakes, as there was no mortar binding them together the stones could shift slightly under impact and not collapse, and they were simply too large to be moved, lifted or mined under.

The strength of the walls was compounded with their thickness; at times they were 7 to 8 metres thick. This would make them impossible to tunnel through or breach, they provided space inside the walls for corridors or storage, and allowed defenders to move along the walls whilst being protected.

The Cyclopean Ramp is perhaps the most distinctive defensive feature of Tiryns. The ramp was a long steep, narrow approach to the city gate. It is 4.7 metres wide and so was wide enough for chariots to drive up, but only in single file. The way in which it winds around the city meant attackers would have to climb slowly, attack in small numbers, and the upward slope exposes the attackers vulnerable right-side. As the ramp is surrounded by Cyclopean Walls, invaders would be vulnerable to spears, rocks, boiling liquids being thrown at them.



(D) Tholos Tomb

(A) Cyclopean Ramp

(B) Main Entrance/Gate

(C) Galleries

The Main Entrance at Tiryns

The main entrance to the citadel of Tiryns is one of the best-designed defensive gateways in the Mycenaean world. Its location, layout, and architecture all work together to create a controlled, easily defended choke point.

The entrance is deliberately narrow, allowing only a few attackers to pass through at once. This improves defence as it greatly reduces the advantage of a large attacking force as it forces enemies into single-file or a tight formation. It also makes it easy for defenders to block or kill attackers one by one as it acts as a bottleneck, just like the Lion Gate at Mycenae.

To reach the main entrance, attackers must climb the steep, confined Cyclopean ramp, which is flanked by high walls. The ramp weakens attackers because they must advance uphill, slowly and tired. They are exposed on both sides, they cannot turn, spread out, or manoeuvre. By the time an enemy reaches the gate itself, they are already exhausted and vulnerable.

Archaeology shows that the entrance was overlooked by upper-level defensive positions. This meant that archers and spear-throwers could attack from above, stones could be dropped on attackers in the choke point, and guards had complete visibility of anyone approaching the citadel. The entrance was effectively a kill zone.

The stone threshold shows evidence of deep hinge holes and sockets for a wooden bar. These indicate strong wooden gates that could be locked securely. These have obvious defensive benefits in that it would be hard to break through and could withstand battering.

Should an attacker make it through the main entrance, they were then met with a further, second gate. This gate was almost the exact same measurements as the Lion Gate in Mycenae, in that it was 3m by 3m. If the attacker could not get through this, then they would effectively be trapped. The gate system at Tiryns is one of the most complex of any of the Mycenaean cities.

Task: Answer the following questions using the information about Tiryns' defences.

1. How does the location of Tiryns make it defensively strong? Make three points.

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2. Why would it have been so hard for an invader to attack Tiryns through the main entrance? Make three points.

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3. What made the Cyclopean Walls and Ramp such good defences? Make three points.

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4. What other defensive features did Tiryns have? Make two points.

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The Graves and Tombs of Mycenae

The tombs of Mycenae are probably the most famous in ancient Greece. This is due to the physical structures of the tombs themselves and the lavish treasures that they contained. There are several different areas of the tombs both in Mycenae itself and a short distance from the city walls.

The Myth of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra

According to the story, Agamemnon was a king of Mycenae, the son or grandson of King Atreus of Mycenae. His wife was Clytemnestra and they had five children. When Helen, wife of Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus, was taken to Troy by Paris, Agamemnon commanded Greek forces to undertake the Trojan War. When Agamemnon returned from Troy, and having successfully defeated Troy in war, he was killed by his wife and her lover, Aegisthus. She would then go on to marry Aegisthus.

Tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus

Outside the walls of Mycenae are even grander tombs: the 'so-called' tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and a tomb known as the Treasury of Atreus. These were built around the fourteenth century BC. Such tombs are known as Tholos Tombs, from the Greek word meaning 'domed'.

Despite their names, the tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus never housed these legendary rulers. Clytemnestra was the wife of King Agamemnon in mythology and Aegisthus was her second husband after she killed Agamemnon. The tombs were given their names in relatively recent times by local villagers. Atreus was the father of Agamemnon. It is possible that this was the tomb of Atreus because it might date from the time when he was supposed to have lived, and there was a tomb with this name in ancient times as the Greek writer Pausanias tells us:

In the ruins of Mycenae is a fountain called Persea; there are also underground resting places of Atreus and his children. Their treasure was kept in these chambers. There is the tomb of Atreus, and the tombs of those who came back with Agamemnon from Troy.

Pausanias, The Description of Greece, 2.16.6

The tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are situated just to the west of the city, with the Treasury of Atreus a little further away. The tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus each have a diameter of around 13m, the former also being an impressive 13m high. The roof of the Tomb of Clytemnestra collapsed in 1951 and the roof that can be seen there now is a reconstruction.

No treasure remained in the tombs when they were discovered in the nineteenth century, as they had been robbed of their contents in ancient times.



Tomb of Clytemnestra



Tomb of Aegisthus



Contents of Graves IV and V (Grave Circle A)

The uncovering of Grave IV revealed the largest find of all the graves in Grave Circle A. Some of the contents of the grave is listed below and includes a vast range of different objects. Grave IV is a shaft grave that contained three male and two female bodies; each of the male bodies had a gold death mask. The deceased were all adorned with gold diadems, numerous pieces of jewellery, and contained large objects such as gold rhyta and weapons.

Grave V contained three male bodies. Two of the deceased wore gold death masks, one being known as the 'Mask of Agamemnon'. There were also a large number of gold objects including daggers and jewellery, and various pieces of pottery.



Grave Circle B

The oldest tombs are those that are found in the area known as Grave Circle B (so called because it was discovered in 1952, while Grave Circle A had been discovered and named in 1876). Grave Circle B is an area around 200m to the west of the city walls, and contains twenty-four graves, dated to the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BC. It is enclosed within a stone wall, which had a diameter of 28m. Just over half of the graves are thought to have been members of the royal family, owing to the objects that were found within them. Part of the Tomb of Clytemnestra was built over Grave Circle B around 300 years later.

Around thirty-five bodies of men, women and children have been found. The location of some of these are marked with upright stone stelai. An uncarved stele indicates the burial of a female, while carved ones indicate male burials.



Grave Circle A

Grave Circle A

Grave Circle A, situated in the south west area of the city, is similar in many respects to Grave Circle B. It is also 28m in diameter, and was originally surrounded by a low wall. It is thought to have been a royal burial site since the sixteenth century BC because the rich contents found within it were similar to those that had been dated to this time in Egypt. When the Lion Gate was built next to it, it was rebuilt with a new wall and the level of the ground was raised. At the time of the rebuilding, rulers were being buried in even grander tombs, and so it is thought the improvements to Grave Circle A were carried out to honour previous rulers. The original wall of smaller stones can be seen near the top enclosed within the later double perimeter wall.

The area contained six shaft graves, in which a total of nine women, eight men and two children were buried at the bottom of shafts. These shafts are deeper and larger than those of Grave Circle B. The dead were buried with a vast quantity of precious objects, including gold objects weighing 14kg, together with silver, amber, glass, and ivory. Stelai, often elaborately carved, were set over the burials. Three of these depict chariot scenes. It is not surprising that Homer called Mycenae, 'rich in gold' (Iliad, 11.25).



Gold Pyxis



Various Rhyta



Gold Jewellery



Gold Octopus Brooch



Gold Swirl Brooch



Various Drinking Vessels made from Ivory and Crystal

Various Decorated Storage Vessels



Gold Face Masks (including the Mask of Agamemnon)



Gold Drinking Vessels



Various Daggers with Decorative Blades

Task: Answer the following questions using the information about Tiryns' defences.

1. Who were Agamemnon and Clytemnestra?

2. What does the word 'tholos' mean?

3. The Tombs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus have domed roofs. How high was the dome for each of the tombs?

4. Grave Circle A is situated within the walls of Mycenae and was said to be a royal burial site. How many graves were contained within the grave circle?

5. Describe some of the contents found in Gave Circle A and explain why this would suggest it is a royal burial ground.

6. Describe the graves that were found in Grave Circle B.

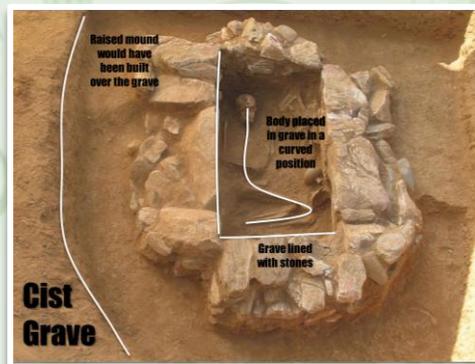
The Different Types of Graves and Tombs in the Mycenaean Age

Honouring the dead was an important part of Mycenaean life. A significant area of Mycenae and the surrounding area is devoted to burial spaces, and the places where bodies were buried could be very grand constructions. There were many different types of graves found in Mycenae, and we need to have a knowledge of them.

Cist Graves

In the Mycenaean Age, the most basic type of burial was one in a cist grave. These were used before the Mycenaean Age, but continued to be used at sites until the end of the period. In a cist grave, a shallow pit was dug in the earth, and the sides were covered in slabs of stone. A pile of stones was then placed at the bottom for the body to lie on. These pits were so small that the body had to be placed in a curved position.

Before the Mycenaean Age, these tombs were intended for single use only. At the start of the Mycenaean Age they began to be grouped together with a mound of earth raised on top. The mound was opened up when a new body needed to be buried. These might be placed in pithoi (large storage jars), or in fresh pits, or in re-dug earth beside the original burial.



Shaft Graves

A second type of grave, known as a shaft grave, was also used at the start of the Mycenaean Age. Grave Circle B contained fourteen shaft graves, together with ten cist graves.

A shaft grave is a natural development of a cist grave, but is larger and deeper. A narrow shaft is dug up to 2.5m deep. The largest grave (Grave Zeta) measures 3.4 x 3.9m, the size of a typical bedroom today. At the bottom, a chamber with low rubble walls was created with a roof support. The pit of Grave Zeta has four posts in the corners for beams to hold up the roof, which is also rested on a rock ledge. Finally, the shaft that had been previously dug was filled in.



Bodies in shaft graves were usually laid on their backs. Multiple burials in the same chambers were common. When a second body was buried, the first was often pushed aside or moved to a corner to make room for a new one. A new stele might be erected, but this was not universal practice. Significant grave goods appear for the first time with the use of shaft graves.

Burial Customs

Although the form of Mycenaean tombs changed, burial customs probably did not differ that greatly. The Mycenaean believed in some form of life after death. Until the body has disintegrated, they believed that the person needed lots of things which they had when they were alive; the person passed from this world to the next only when the skeleton remained. Therefore, they buried the objects needed with them. These are called grave goods or funerary objects.

We know a lot about burial customs from what has been left behind in graves, but the issue is that much of what we have left behind is from the graves of the wealthy; we are unsure if this is replicated for all citizens, irrespective of wealth.

We know that the body, if wealthy, would have been dressed and adorned with jewellery, as this has been found on the necks and wrists of skeletons uncovered.

A drink offering was almost certainly made to the gods as metal cups have been found badly damaged on the floor at the entrance to the tholos tombs, but not as part of any buried goods.

Bones of animals and sea-shells have also been found, suggesting a meal was eaten in honour of the dead. Gifts would have been offered, although these have often either decayed or were robbed in ancient times. A pair of Horses was found slaughtered in tombs in Marathon and Dendra, but there is not much evidence to suggest this was common practice. However, in the *Iliad*, the killing of animals did happen as two of Patroclus' dogs were slaughtered at his funeral by Achilles.

What we do know is that graves were often covered in a raised mound of earth and that bodies were often interred in the same area, sometimes same grave. This would mean that graves were regularly dug up and re-covered.

Tholos and Chamber Tombs

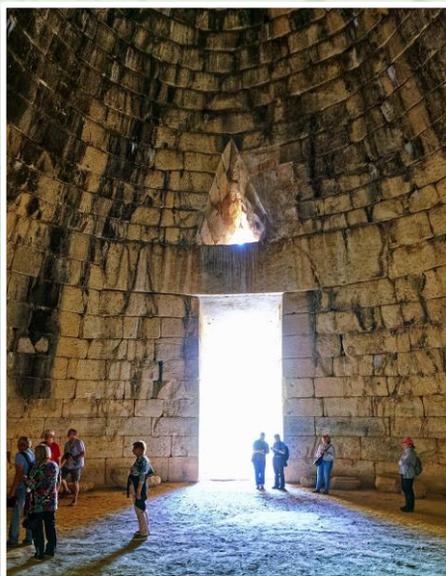
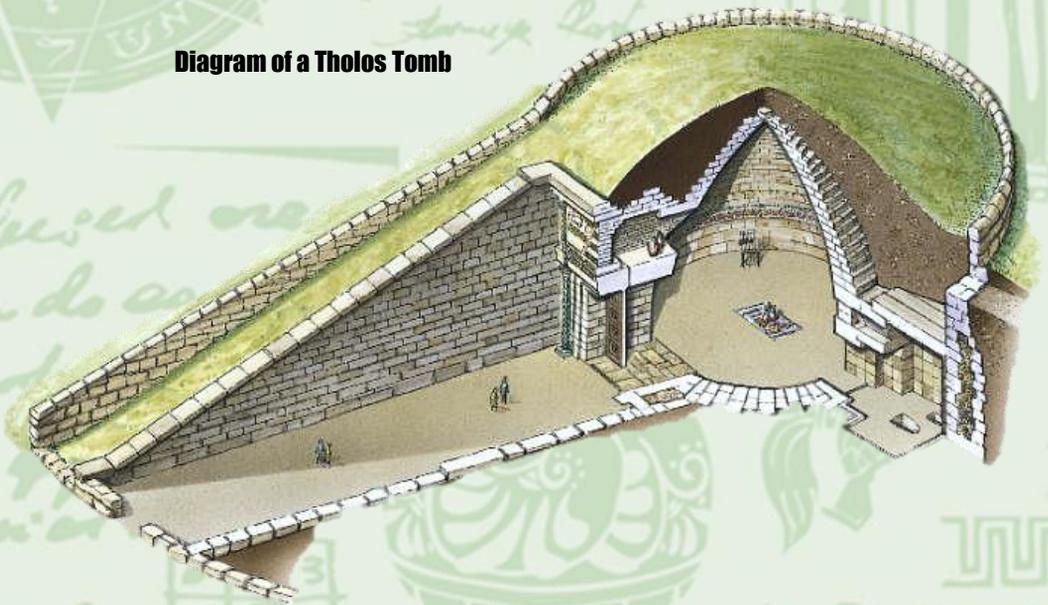
After the emergence of Grave Circle A, a new style of burial occurred in the fourteenth century BC, known as the tholos tomb. Tholos tombs were different to previous tombs as they were built from stone, rather than dug out of the earth. As they are so monumental, they could have been built for the most important members of a city and society.

The main parts the tomb consisted of a high-roofed dome (those at Mycenae were the tallest known domes in the world for over a thousand years), which would have been dug down from the top of a hill. A side chamber sometimes was dug to house the body. The stone at the bottom of the excavated area would then have been used to make the walls and roof of the structure, and the excavated earth would then have been placed on top of the roof. These may have been constructed during the lifetime of the person intended to be buried in it, as the construction of these tombs would have been a huge and time-consuming undertaking.

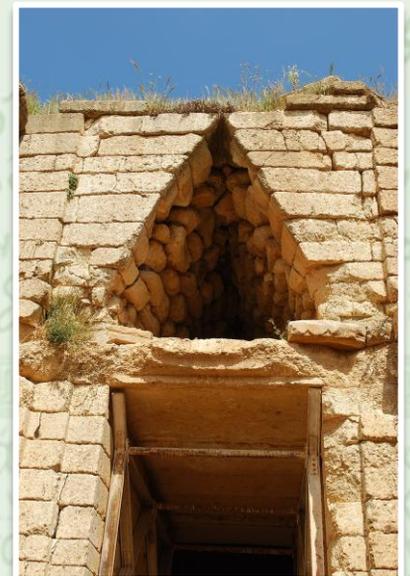
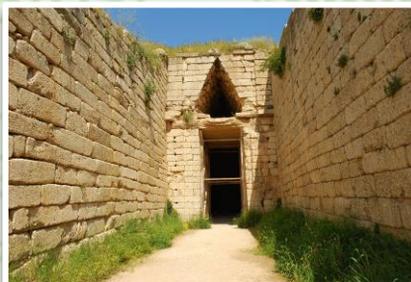
In front of the tholos was a long passageway with stone walls, known as a dromos. When a body had been buried, large stones would have been placed at the end of the dromos to block off the entrance. Earth would then be put on the dromos to create an elevated slope.

At the end of the dromos was a richly decorated entrance, although no one would have been permitted to enter it after the burial. Some of the entrance from the Treasury of Atreus has survived. There, two green limestone columns with a zigzag pattern framed the entranceway, and about the entrance there would have been a triangle of red stone where a triangular space now exists. This would have relieved the weight on the large block of stone above the doorway.

Diagram of a Tholos Tomb



Tomb of Clytemnestra



Entrances to Tomb of Clytemnestra and the Treasury of Atreus

Task: Answer the following questions using the information about the different types of graves found in Mycenae.

1. Describe how a cist grave was constructed.

2. Describe how a shaft grave was constructed.

3. Describe the features of a Tholos Tomb. Make three points.

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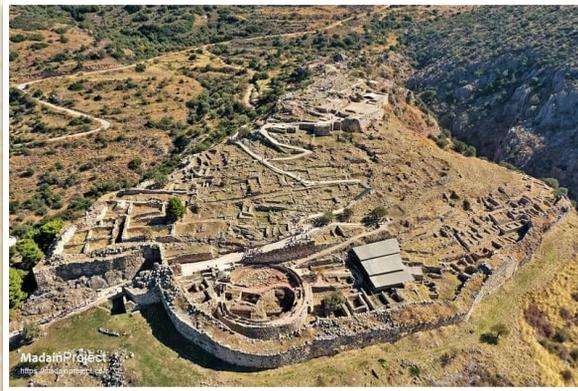
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4. Why do you think they stopped constructing tholos tombs after the 13th century BC?

The Palaces of Mycenae and Tiryns

The kings or overlords who lived in Mycenaean cities occupied these sites not just as fortifications but as somewhere to live as well. The placement of the palace complexes was usually at the highest point of the city. This was not just for defensive reasons but because the royalty who lived there wanted literally to show their own higher status. Therefore, Mycenaean palaces dominate their sites.

The most important part of the palace was the megaron. This was often in the highest part of the city, dominating the area. In many ways, it had a similar design to a Greek temple as it was usually rectangular in shape and had an entrance porch with two columns. The palace centred around the megaron, an important part of the palace which was divided into three. The largest part was a space with a roof supported by four pillars, outlines of which can be seen in the picture.



Mycenae – Palace at Top of City

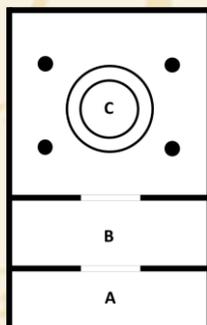


Panoramic of the Royal Palace at Mycenae

The king's throne would have been to the back or right. The ring in the middle is for an open fire, called a hearth. The hearth was a stone area, usually circular in shape, on which a fire would be lit for religious purposes or cooking.



Hearth at the Palace of Pylos



Plan of a typical megaron:

A: Entrance Porch

B: Front Room (Waiting Area)

C: Hearth



Reconstruction of the Palace at Mycenae

Scholars do not agree on what was above the fire. Some say a flat or sloping raised roof to let smoke escape and to protect the decorations. Some say a small open hole. In front of the throne room was a front room, an anteroom, and then a porch. This room would also be where the king's throne would have been. The megaron would have been used for feasts, religious purposes such as sacrifice, royal functions, court meetings, meeting with foreign dignitaries, and as living quarters.



Reconstruction of the Megaron at Mycenae

The walls of the throne room were thicker at the bottom to support the rest of the wall, so that created a sort of high ledge that ran around the megaron. The ledge was quite high at about 1.5m and it is likely that along this ledge ran a door that was accessible through steps, and acted as a service door to be used by servants when the main doors were shut. Pierced into the top of the walls of the megaron were probably portholes or skylights, and these would have given some light to the corridor.

The women's quarters were probably up some stairs behind. In general, women's quarters were behind the megaron but did not open onto the main room so there was a corridor running around, so a person could get to the rest of the palace without passing through the megaron. Other rooms off the corridor were used as storerooms.



Task: Answer the following questions using the information about the palaces at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos.

1. Why was the palace in a city often situated on the highest point. Make two points.

■

■

2. What was the megaron in the palace, and how was it constructed?

3. What was the megaron used for?

4. How does the building of palaces prove that the Mycenaean were master builders?

Mycenaean Cities: Troy

Troy was a city which was in existence during the Bronze Age and the Mycenaean period. However, it was not a Mycenaean citadel like Mycenae and Tiryns. We have no real proof that it was even called 'Troy'. Some ancient documents called it 'Wilusa', and according to Homer, the people were Greek. However, some scholars think that it more likely they spoke Hittite, being in an area which was part of the Hittite empire. How Greek they were is debatable as it would be unusual for the Greeks to sail across the sea to attack another Greek citadel, and many Mycenaean sites kept documents called Linear B tablets, and no such documents have been found for Troy, suggesting their language was different.

Heinrich Schliemann

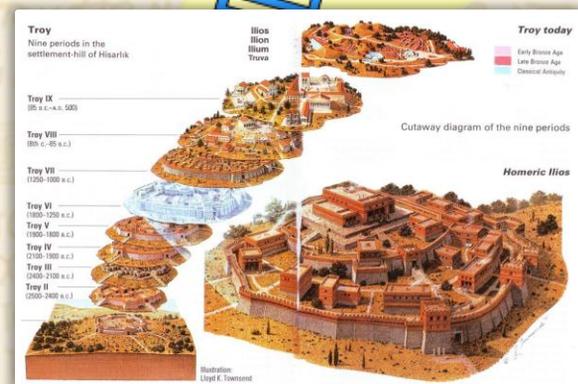
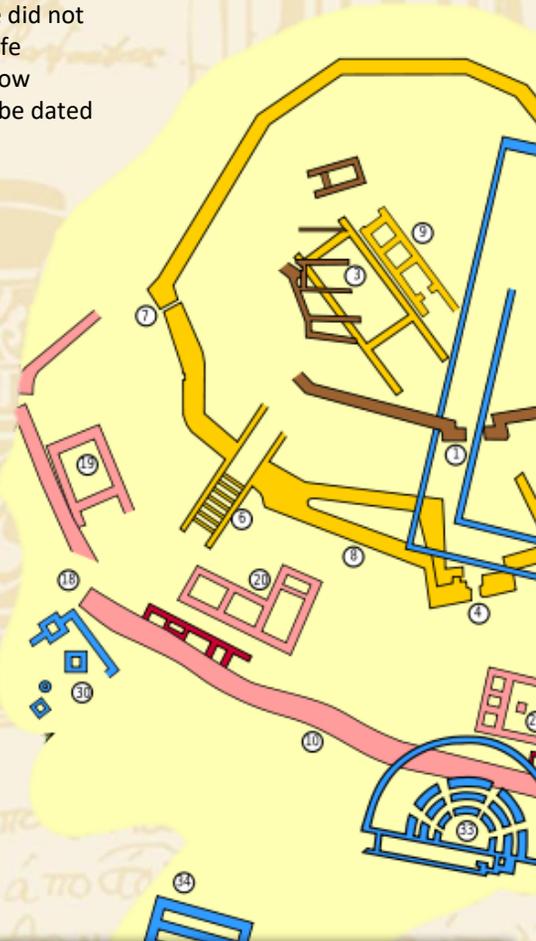
Heinrich Schliemann, 1822 – 1890, was a German businessman turned amateur archaeologist, who was obsessed with searching for Troy, believing it to be a real place. He used Homer's descriptions and geographical references in the *Iliad* to form his decisions and eventually found a site in Turkey known as Hissarlik. From a series of excavations, we now know that people lived in Hissarlik during the Mycenaean period but they also lived there before and afterwards. Archaeologists have removed the many layers of Troy and found different 'versions' of this settlement.



He is a controversial figure with his motivation, accuracy and methods and being questioned. In digging through the layers of the settlement, many archaeologists believe he caused much damage as it was done quickly and with very rough methods. He did not keep any detailed records nor map his findings. Indeed, it is suggested that his wife smuggled findings out of Troy without officially declaring their findings, and it is now suggested that the 'Priam Treasure' Schliemann claimed proved Troy existed can be dated to almost a thousand years before.

Excavations at Troy

Settlement	Date Range	Information
Troy I	3000BC	Oldest settlement. Walls of small stones and clay still visible today.
Troy II Schliemann's Homeric Troy	2500-2200BC	Like early Mycenaean fortifications: ramparts, towers, palace, houses.
Troy III	2200-2100BC	Successive villages built on the debris of Troy II. Decline in prosperity.
Troy IV, Troy V	2100BC-1900BC	Fortress, huge walls, towers, gates, houses.
Troy VI	1900-1300BC	Possible Homeric Troy.
Troy VIIa, b1, b2, b3	1300BC – 950BC	Possible Homeric Troy; favoured by many scholars.
Troy VIII, Troy IX	750BC – 500AD	Iron Age Troy to Roman Troy.



Did the Troy in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* ever really exist?

While people were certainly living in the settlement that many believe was Troy during the Mycenaean Age, it is highly debatable this site formed the historical basis of the Trojan War. We no longer think that there was a Trojan War in the way the myths of Homer describe. However, these stories may recall an actual historical siege of Troy. We know from archaeology that there were several wars fought at Troy in Mycenaean times, which might have been merged together, but the evidence for each of these does not match in their entirety what is in the myths of Homer. It may be there was no single war as described by Homer, but a series of conflicts over a much longer timespan, which Homer merged into one narrative.

The oldest settlement at Troy, called Troy I, dates back to 3000BC, and the Mycenaean period at Troy occurs in the ruins of Troy VI and Troy VIIa (1900-950BC).

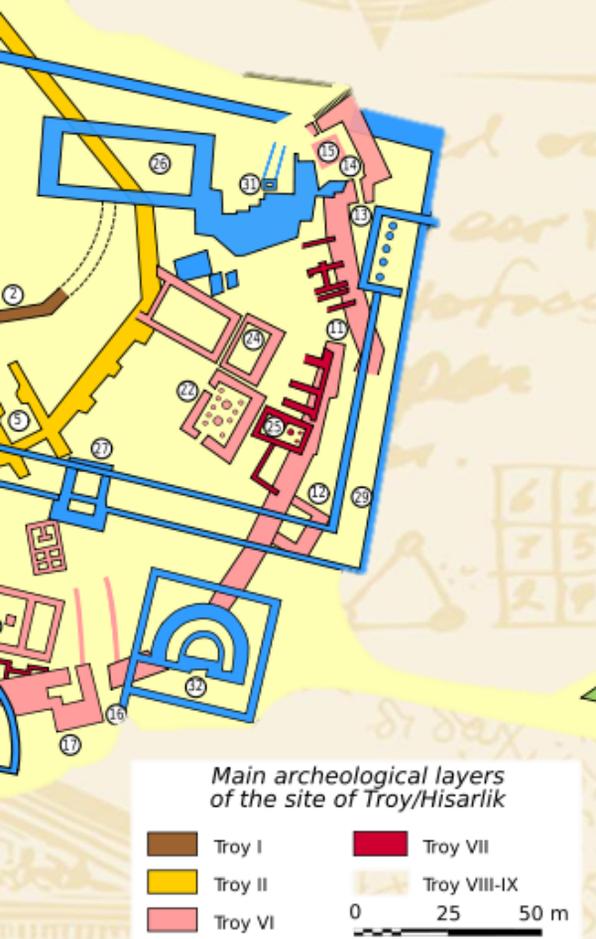
Troy VI

There are several reasons why archaeologists think Troy VI could have been the site of Homer's Troy:

- It was destroyed around 1250BC, with the Trojan War traditionally dated to 1200BC.
- It seems to have been a rich city with numerous large houses.
- Its stone walls were over 7 metres high, and the *Iliad* refers to the high walls of Troy.
- These walls seem to have had towers, with towers a feature of Troy in the *Iliad*.
- It extended over quite a large area with a suggested population of 10,000, which would indicate a thriving city as in the *Iliad*.

However, there is also some evidence that seems to contradict the mythological legend, including:

- Archaeologists also believe it was destroyed by an earthquake, not the fire that ancient literature suggests.



Troy VIIa

It was then succeeded by Troy VIIa, which seems to have been a settlement that existed for only around 30-40 years. There are several pieces of evidence that Troy VIIa could have been the site of the legendary war:

- It too had large towers.
- It had single-storey houses, which were relatively crowded together and built in a short-period.
- This would fit in with the idea of emergency housing for the Trojans when the Greeks were attacking the city.
- Storage jars were sunk deep into the ground. Were the people trying to store up food when under siege?
- It was destroyed by a large fire. The writings of the Roman poet, Virgil, describe the fires started by the Greeks when they destroyed Troy.
- Partial human remains of individuals have been found (possibly killed in warfare).
- Three bronze arrowheads have been found.

All of this, while hardly conclusive, might seem to back up the view that this was the site of the actual war between the Greeks and the Trojans. However:

- The houses were crammed together, which suggests the city was not rich, unlike the one described by Homer.
- The sunken jars might not indicate a siege, but simply a lack of space that people had in which to keep food.

All that can be said for sure is that there is no certain answer as to which of the two layers might have been Homer's Troy, although there has been more support from scholars in recent decades in favour of it being Troy VIIa.

Task: Answer the following questions using the information about the discovery of Troy.

1. Who was Heinrich Schliemann?

2. Why was Heinrich Schliemann so controversial as an archaeologist? Make three points.

3. It is widely agreed amongst scholars that only Troy VI and Troy VIIa could be the Troy found in Homer's the Iliad and the Odyssey. What evidence is there for both? Complete the table below.

Evidence for Troy VI	Evidence for Troy VIIa
Evidence against Troy VI	Evidence against Troy VIIa

Classical Civilisation

Topic: The Mycenaean Age – Key Sites

EXAM

QUESTIONS

Source B: The Lion Gate and City Walls



4 Suggest three reasons why it would have been hard for an invader to approach the gate.

- -----

- -----

- -----

(3)

5 Explain how two other features of Mycenae, **not** shown in the picture, made it easier for the inhabitants of the city to defend the city. Make **two** points.

- -----

- -----

(4)

Source A: An area on the site of Mycenae



Study Source A:

1(a) Where did this staircase lead to?

..... (1)

(b) Apart from being underground, give one detail of the place the staircase led to.

..... (1)

(c) Why was this place underground?

..... (1)

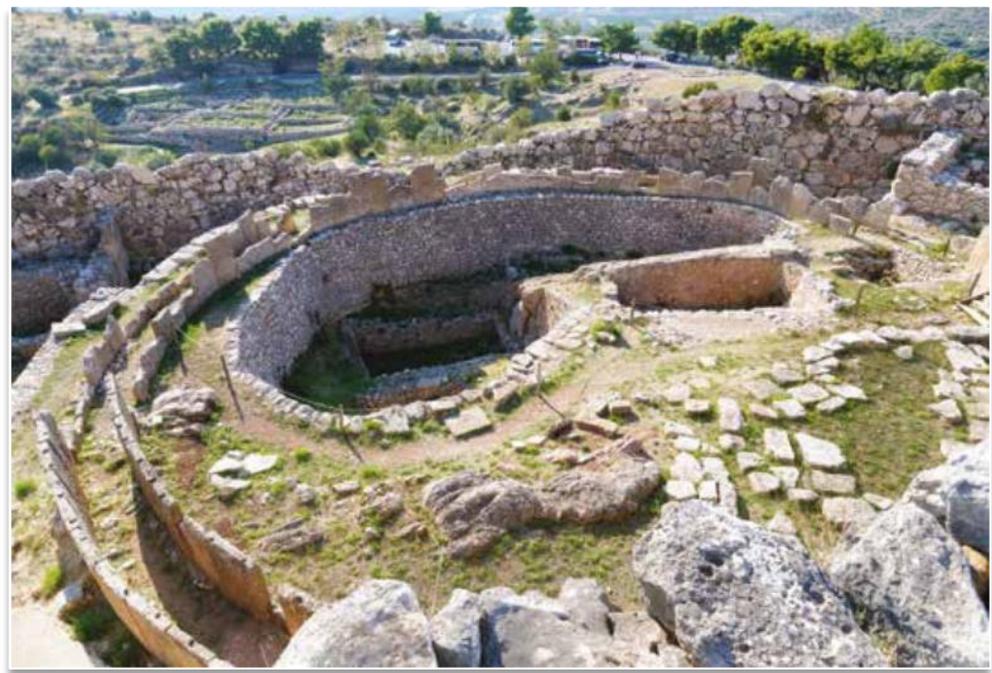
2(a) Name the building technique that was used to create the roof.

..... (1)

(b) What did this technique involve?

..... (1)

Source A: A burial site



Study Source A:

1 By what name is this burial site known?

----- (1)

2 What type of graves did it contain?

----- (1)

3 Explain the location of Mycenaean graves in relation to the city walls. Make **two** points.

■ -----

■ -----

Source A: A Mycenaean Grave



Study Source A:

1(a) What type of grave is shown in Source A?

..... **(1)**

1(b) Describe how the Mycenaeans buried their dead in this type of grave.

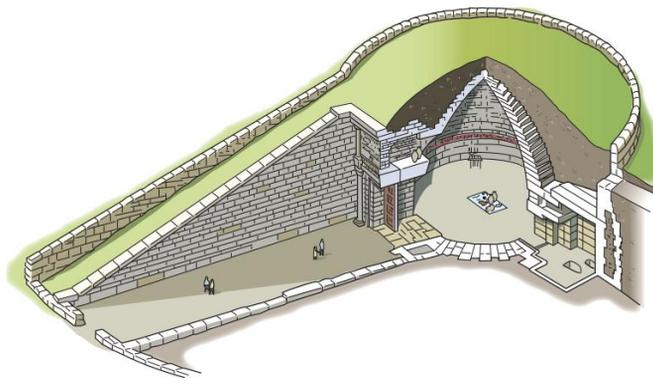
.....
.....
.....

2 Why were there different types of burials and graves in the Mycenaean Age? **(2)**

-
.....
.....

-
.....
.....

Source C: A drawing of a burial site



Study Source C

7 What type of burial site is shown in **Source C**?

..... **(1)**

8 Describe three customs that would have been part of a Mycenaean burial.

1

.....

2

.....

3

..... **(6)**

9 How were burial sites, like the one shown in **Source C**, created by Mycenaean?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Source A: An area on the site of Mycenae



Study Source A:

1(a) Which Mycenaean building is shown in Source A?

..... (1)

2(a) Describe the precise location of this building within the city of Mycenae.

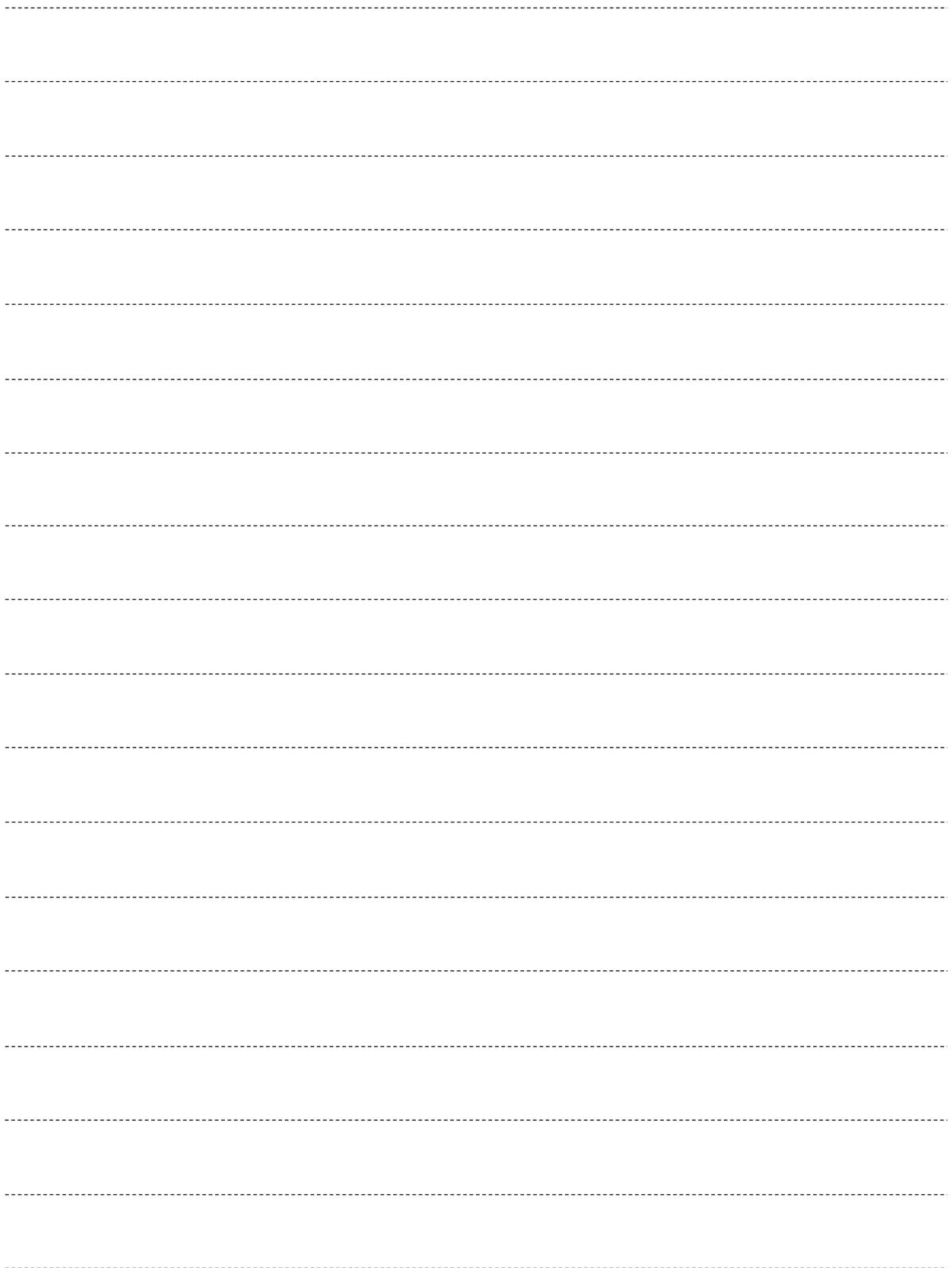
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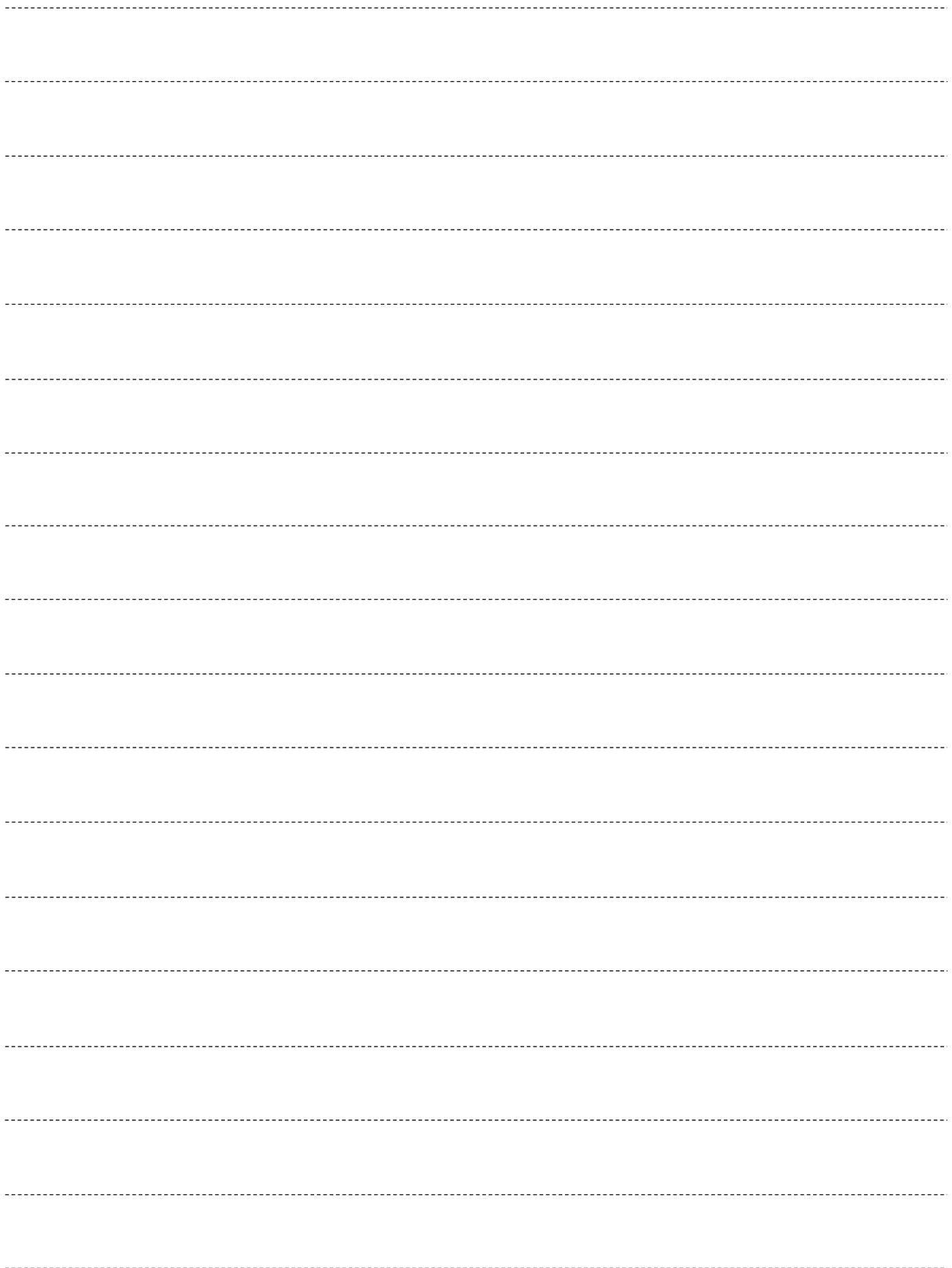
(b) Give two reasons why it was situated here.

-
-

3 State two different uses for the area of the building shown in Source A.

-
-





10 'Honouring the dead was a vital part of Mycenaean life.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

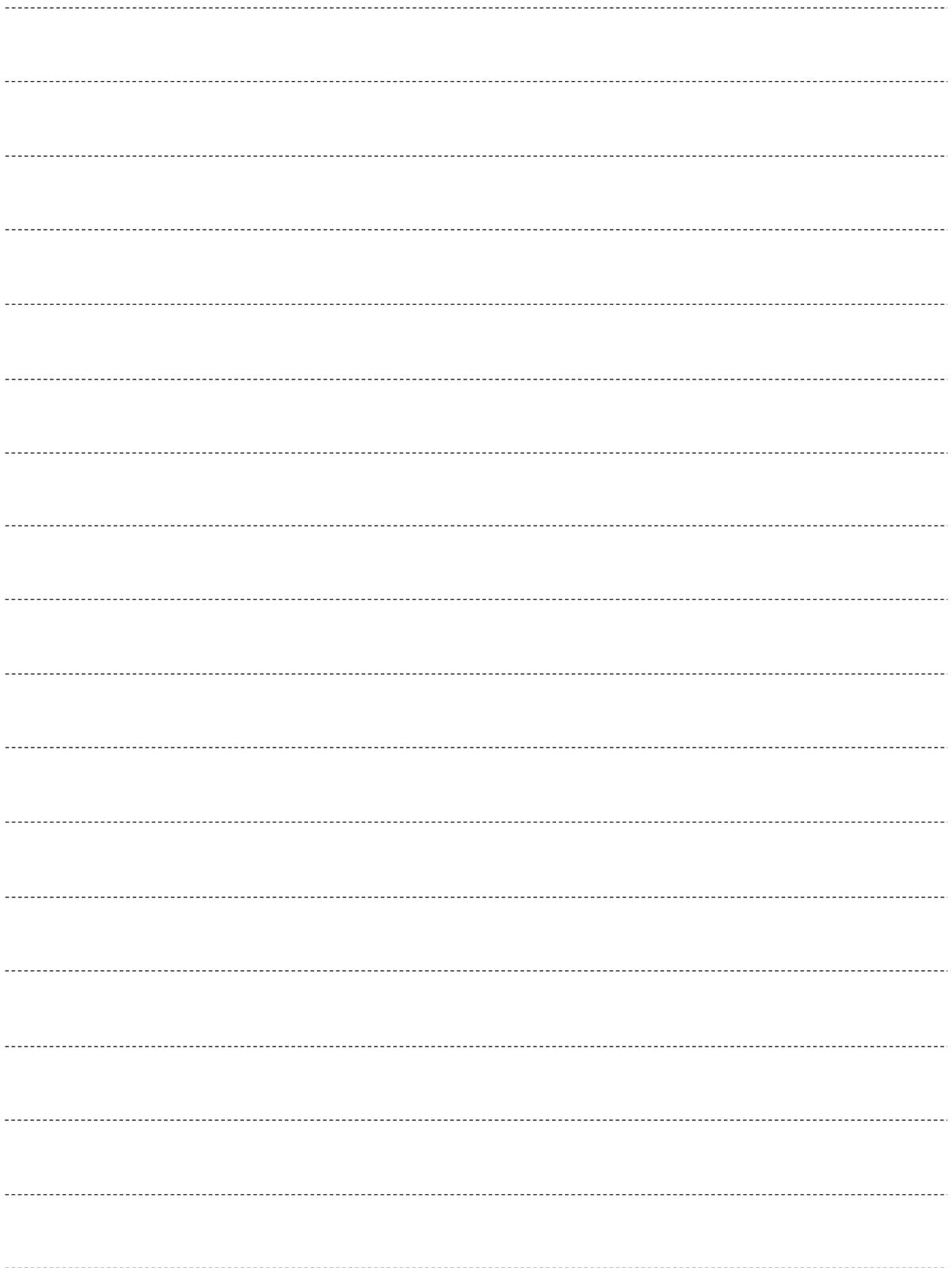
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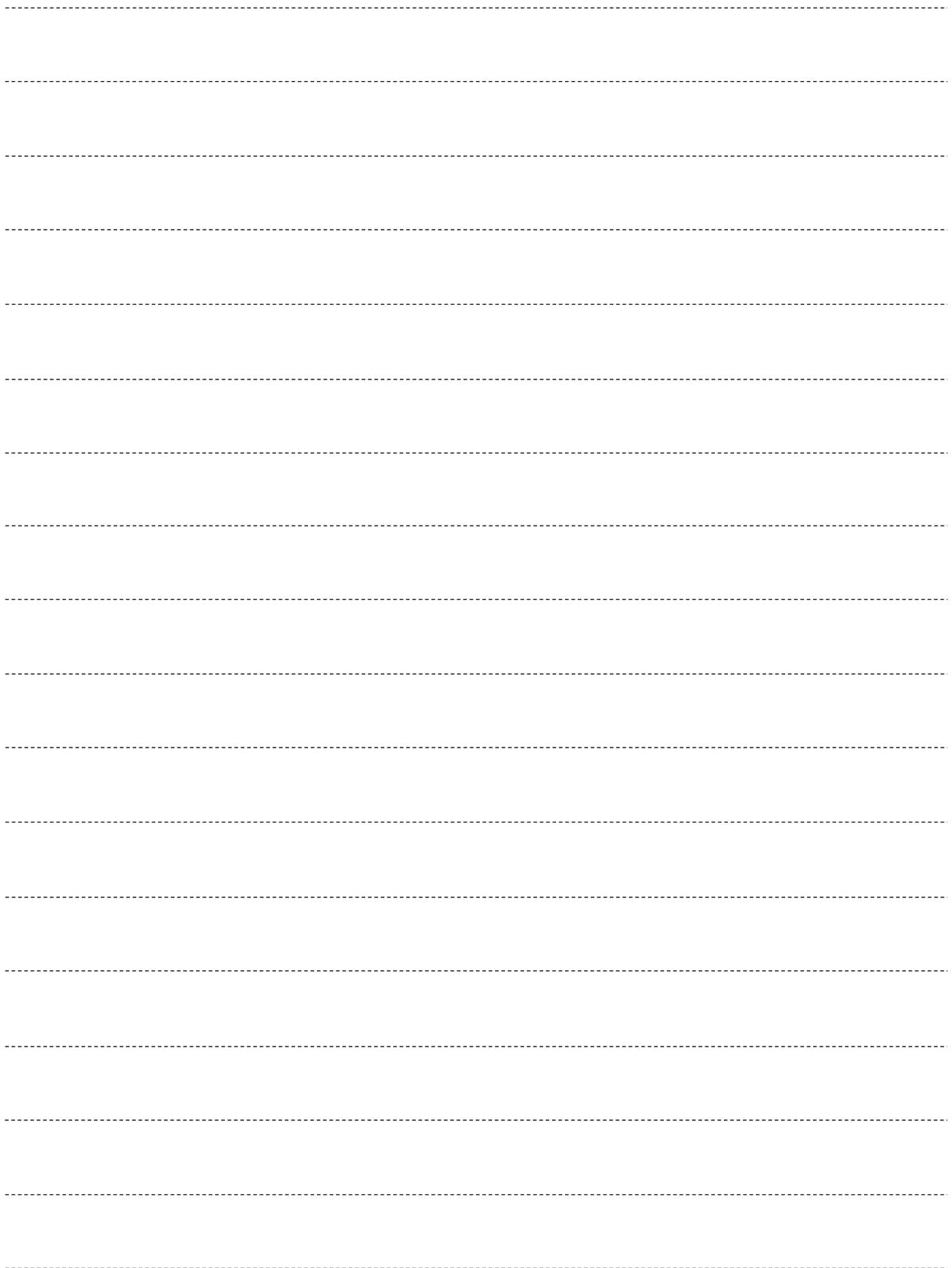
To a very large extent, honouring the dead was a vital part of Mycenaean life with plenty of evidence of examples to support this assertion. For example, **there were customs and rituals about how the deceased were buried, that considerable parts of the city and surrounding areas were given over to tombs and graves, the care in the construction of these tombs and graves, and the contents found within them all** suggest a culture that honoured their dead. Yet, there is some small examples whereby this may not be so true. Much of the evidence we have is from graves that were set aside for the wealthy, we don't have much evidence for how the poor were buried perhaps suggesting a culture that valued the dead of the rich over the dead of the poor.

Your task:

Write the next paragraph on one of the arguments set out in the opening paragraph:

- **The customs and rituals carried out by Mycenaean shows how they honoured their dead.**
- **The areas of the city and surrounding areas that were given over to graves and tombs, and how that shows that Mycenaean honoured their dead.**
- **The different types of graves and tombs found in Mycenae and how the construction of these shows the Mycenaean honoured their dead.**
- **The contents of the graves and tombs and how that suggests the Mycenaean honoured their dead.**





Additional Notes Section

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