

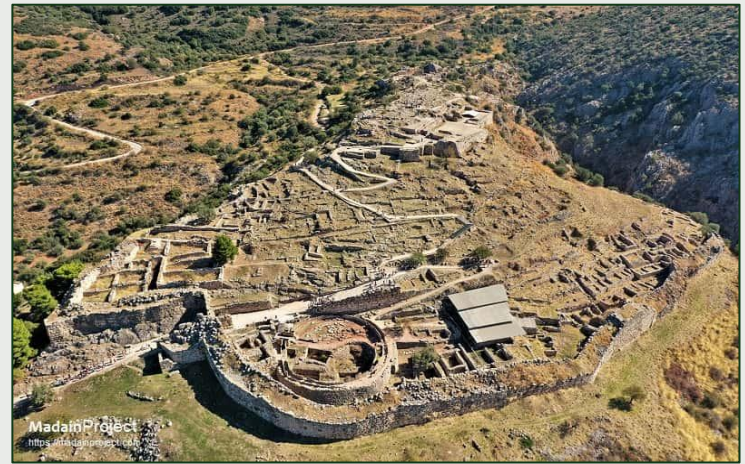
Ancient Mycenaean Burials

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Mycenae

- Greek city in the Peloponnese
- Late Bronze Age, ~1600-1100 BCE
- City expanded several times
- Trading center
- Home of Agamemnon
- Described by Homer as a city “rich in gold”



Tholos tombs

- a.k.a. Beehive tombs
- Large, dome-shaped burial chamber (tholos), and a sloping passageway leading to doorway
- Made of very large blocks of stone
- Impressive engineering feat
- Were built from the 15th to 13th century BCE
- Would have had carvings and may have had relief structures
- Many of the tombs had been robbed when discovered
- Food remains found, suggesting burial rites

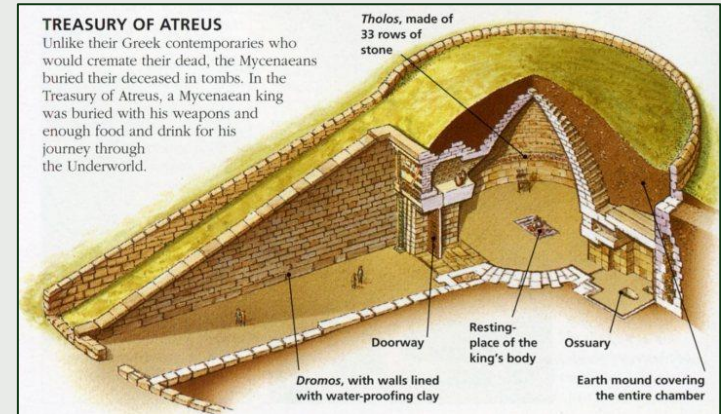
Tomb of Clytemnestra

- Built in the late Helladic III
- Woman's tomb
- Located outside the citadel
- Also a tomb of Aegisthus very close to it



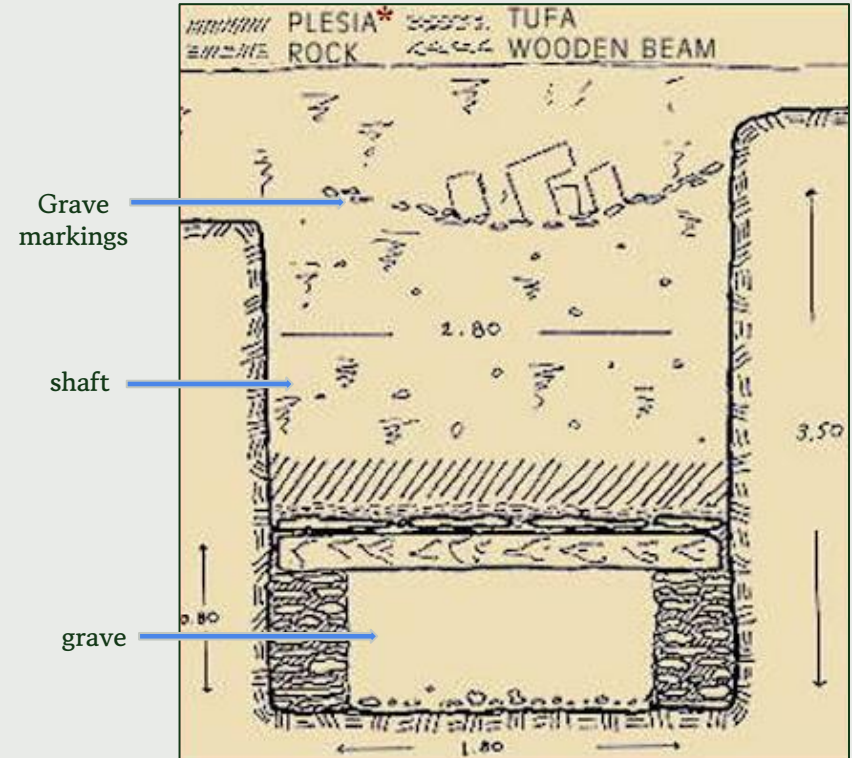
Treasury of Atreus

- A.k.a. Tomb of Agamemnon
- Also built in late Helladic times
- Largest and best preserved
- Included a main and side chamber



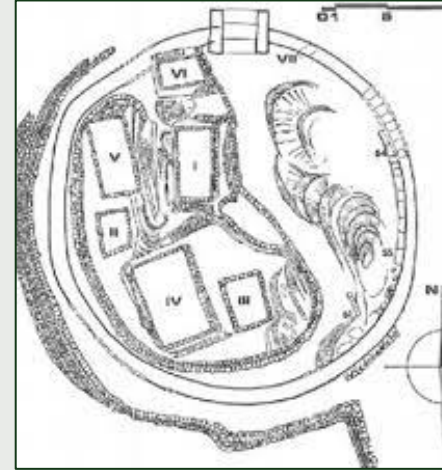
Shaft graves

- Earliest type of tomb in Mycenae
- Rectangular graves, deep shafts cut into rock, lead to underground burial chamber
 - Depth of 3-13 feet
- Had stelae and stone markings above the shafts
- Graves were for royal and leading Greek families
- Most used for multiple burials
- Food remains- i.e. beef bones, oyster shells



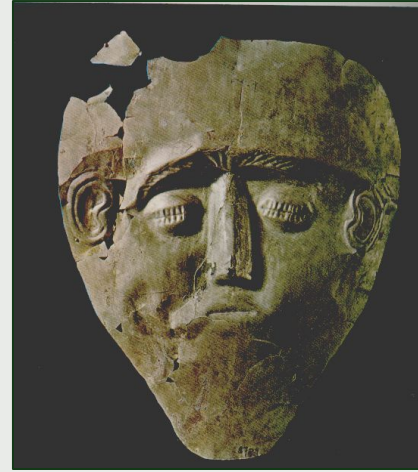
Grave Circles

- Grave Circle A:
 - Built/used during end of the Middle Helladic to the Late Helladic III, ~1600-1500 BCE
 - Enclosed within city walls
 - Includes 6 shaft graves, from which 19 bodies were found
 - Stelae were more common
- Grave Circle B:
 - Used at the end of the Middle Helladic to the Late Helladic II, ~1650-1550 BCE
 - Has the earliest burials
 - Further outside the city, near the Tomb of Clytemnestra (c)
 - Includes 14 shaft graves and 12 cist graves, from which 35 bodies were found
 - most graves were marked with stones
- Abundance of gold artifacts found, especially in Circle A
 - Suggests high status



Death masks

- Six masks found; five made from gold in Circle A, one made from electrum in Circle B
 - Electrum mask is more “primitive”
- Of the six, 4 were “flat” and 2 were “round”
- Mask of Agamemnon is most artistically advanced
- All seem to have been made for males
- Debate about whether or not they were portraits
- May have been a way to show the acquisition of divinity with death
 - possibly a ritual identification between the body and supernatural being

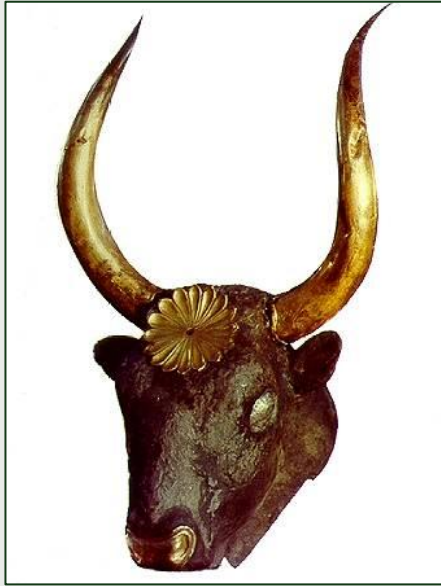


Other artifacts

- Women buried with jewelry and other ornaments
 - Diadems, earrings, necklaces, gold bands, etc.
- Men buried with weapons next to body, remnants suggest they were dressed in armor



Other artifacts



Bull- and lion-head rhyton



Gold-plated wooden box



Cup of Nestor



pottery