

# HESPERIA

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL  
OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

VOLUME 83  
2014



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# HESPERIA

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# THE EARLY HELLADIC II–III TRANSITION AT LERNA AND TIRYNS REVISITED

## CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE OR SYNCHRONOUS VARIABILITY?

### ABSTRACT

Lerna and the Lower Citadel of Tiryns are key sites for understanding the Early Helladic II–III transition in the northeastern Peloponnese. We argue that the differences between the two settlements do not reflect chronological variation, but rather the ways in which each settlement responded to events ca. 2200 B.C. The ceramic and architectural sequences are used to illustrate the divergent strategies practiced by the inhabitants of each site. Lerna III–IV epitomizes the renegotiation of social values during a period when centralized decision-making and coordination of economic activities was disintegrating. Activities in the coeval Lower Citadel of Tiryns, on the other hand, reflect the maintenance of continuity in a domestic setting.

### INTRODUCTION

Periods of profound societal change always contain elements of continuity.<sup>1</sup> What we offer below are some thoughts on elements of change and continuity at Lerna and in the Lower Citadel (“Unterburg”) at Tiryns on the northeastern Peloponnese around the Early Helladic (EH) II–III transition. The transition occurred around 2200 B.C. and parallels societal transformations noted over large parts of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> On the Greek mainland and the northern Cycladic islands these changes include depopulation and settlement abandonment, sometimes after violent destructions by fire. The material culture following these upheavals was significantly altered and suggests a more circumscribed, smaller-scale life

1. We are extremely grateful to Jeremy B. Rutter for sharing his thoughts and offering a critique of an earlier draft of this paper. As it should be, we are not in complete agreement in all interpretations. Elizabeth Banks kindly sent us information on the Lerna III–IV

tumulus pending its publication. We have also benefited greatly from insightful comments by the three anonymous reviewers as well as the editorial team at *Hesperia*. All opinions expressed and any remaining factual errors are our own, as are the translations. The

drawings are by M. Lindblom unless otherwise indicated.

2. E.g., Forsén 1992; Dalfes, Kukla, and Weiss 1997; Maran 1998; Broodbank 2000; Alram-Stern 2004, with extensive references; Weiberg and Finné 2013.

with a lower degree of specialization and social stratification as well as of centralized decision-making.

The settlements of Lerna and Tiryns are located just a couple of hours' walk apart, yet they display some interesting differences in the archaeological record. These differences concern the ceramics in use over the transition phases and the sequential development of architecture at the two places. In the Tirynthian Lower Citadel the transition is characterized by a high level of continuity, while at Lerna it is abrupt, with few survivals of old forms into the ensuing period. The abruptness of the break at Lerna has in many ways shaped the notion of a rapid socioeconomic failure at this time on the Greek mainland.<sup>3</sup> The ceramic sequences at the two sites are directly related to our understanding of the pace of change, and the debate over their interpretation has been the main stimulus for the present study. Our aim is to widen the scope of the research questions relating to these two contexts in order to incorporate more fully the social and economic environments in which the material culture was used and discarded.

The material from Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns constitutes an exemplary opportunity for a discussion of chronological and synchronous variability in archaeological interpretations. In the present study, "chronological difference" refers to differences in the relative timing of events at different sites or contexts, while "synchronous variation" refers to differences in material culture and social practices between different sites or contexts during the same time period. Previous studies, we argue, have posited differences in relative chronology to explain differences in the pace of the EH II–III transition at Lerna and Tiryns without considering the possibility of synchronous variability—namely, that the transition occurred during the same years at both sites, but was accelerated by socioeconomic forces at Lerna.

## CONTESTED CERAMIC SEQUENCES AT LERNA IV AND TIRYNS 9–13

The settlement of Lerna was excavated in the 1950s by the American School of Classical Studies. Under the direction of John Caskey a relative chronological sequence was developed, encompassing both architecture and pottery. It spans the Neolithic (Lerna I–II) to the Mycenaean periods (Lerna VII). Especially for the Early (Lerna III–IV) and Middle Helladic (Lerna V) settlements, the sequence has served as a model to which other ceramic assemblages from settlements on the Greek mainland have been compared.<sup>4</sup> Our prime concern here is the transition from Lerna III (EH II) to Lerna IV (EH III) (Table 1).<sup>5</sup> The end of Lerna III was marked by the destruction by fire of the monumental House of the Tiles. A tumulus was erected upon its burnt remains and new types of buildings appeared

3. See Weiberg and Finné 2013 for an alternative sequence of events around the EH II/III transition.

4. E.g., Walter and Felten 1981; Weisshaar 1981, 1982, 1983; Forsén

1992; Maran 1998; Pullen 2011a.

5. The periods have been thoroughly published in *Lerna III*, *Lerna IV*, and *Lerna VI*.

TABLE 1. LATE EARLY HELLADIC CHRONOLOGIES AND CULTURES WITH PHASES AT LERNA AND TIRYNS

<i>Absolute Chronology</i>	<i>Relative Chronology</i>		<i>Culture</i>	<i>Lerna Phase</i>	<i>Tiryns Phase</i>	
	<i>Maran</i>	<i>Rutter</i>			<i>Weisshaar</i>	<i>Phase</i>
<i>Manning</i> 2450/2350–2200/2150 B.C. (150–300 years)	EH II developed EH II late	EH IIB	Korakou/ Lefkandi I	IIC IIID	Entwickelt	5–7 8a–b
2200/2150–2050/2000 B.C. (100–200 years)	Trans. EH II–III	EH III	Tiryns	IV:1 (hiatus?)	Übergangsphase	9
	EH III			IV:2	Apsidenhorizont	10–13
				IV:3		

Based on Manning 1995, pp. 171–173; Maran 1998, pl. 80; Rutter 2001, p. 106, table 2; Weisshaar 1982, p. 462, fig. 78

in the area, along with a greatly altered material culture. The shift was succinctly described by Caskey in 1960: “Lerna IV began as a quite new settlement. It was an establishment of another kind, and the differences from its predecessor are more obvious than the similarities. . . . The pottery of Lerna IV exhibits a striking new range of wares, shapes, and patterns.”<sup>6</sup>

The contemporary Lower Citadel at Tiryns, on the other hand, serves as a good example of a slower transition characterized by the coexistence of old and new forms of pottery. The area was excavated by Klaus Kilian during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and Hans-Joachim Weisshaar was responsible for the analysis of the EH pottery.<sup>7</sup> As in the case of many other Early Bronze Age (EBA) and Middle Bronze Age settlements, the Lower Citadel’s stratigraphic sequence was interpreted against the background of the results from Lerna. The successive layers were divided into different settlement phases spanning early EH II (phase 1) to late EH III (phase 13). While there are many parallels between the ceramic sequences at Tiryns and Lerna, Weisshaar noted an inconsistency in the transition from EH II to EH III. On the basis of several deposits in the central and eastern parts of the Lower Citadel—e.g., “Room 108,” “Level V,” “Layers below Apsidal Houses,” “Room Complex 142–144,” and “Horizont 9” (henceforth collectively referred to as Tiryns 9)—Weisshaar posited an “Übergangsphase” (transitional phase) at Tiryns intermediate between Lerna III and IV. It was characterized by the first appearance of several ceramic classes (e.g., Solidly Painted and Burnished, Fine Gray Burnished) and forms (e.g., ouzo cups and tankards) generally thought to herald the beginning of EH III. In two important respects, however, the deposits at Tiryns differed. First, a large percentage consisted of ceramic classes—e.g., Dark-Painted (“Urfirnis”) and Light-Painted Fine Polished (“Faience ware”)—and forms—e.g., sauceboats and saucers—that had their origin in EH II. Second, the distinct Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted pottery of EH III type, well represented in the earliest phase of Lerna IV, was lacking (Fig. 1:a).<sup>8</sup> The high survival rate of the EH II wares in phases 9–13,

6. Caskey 1960, pp. 293–295.

7. Kilian 1981, 1982, 1983; Weisshaar 1981, pp. 222, 248; 1982; 1983, pp. 351–354.

8. Weisshaar 1981, pp. 239–244,

figs. 82–87; 1983, pp. 353–354. The Tiryns 9 assemblage found below room 108 contained a few Pattern-Painted sherds (but they may be intrusive), together with a spout from a

Phylakopi I jug. Cf. Rutter 1984, p. 106, n. 2; Manning 1995, p. 56, n. 168; Maran 1998, vol. 1, p. 12, n. 75.

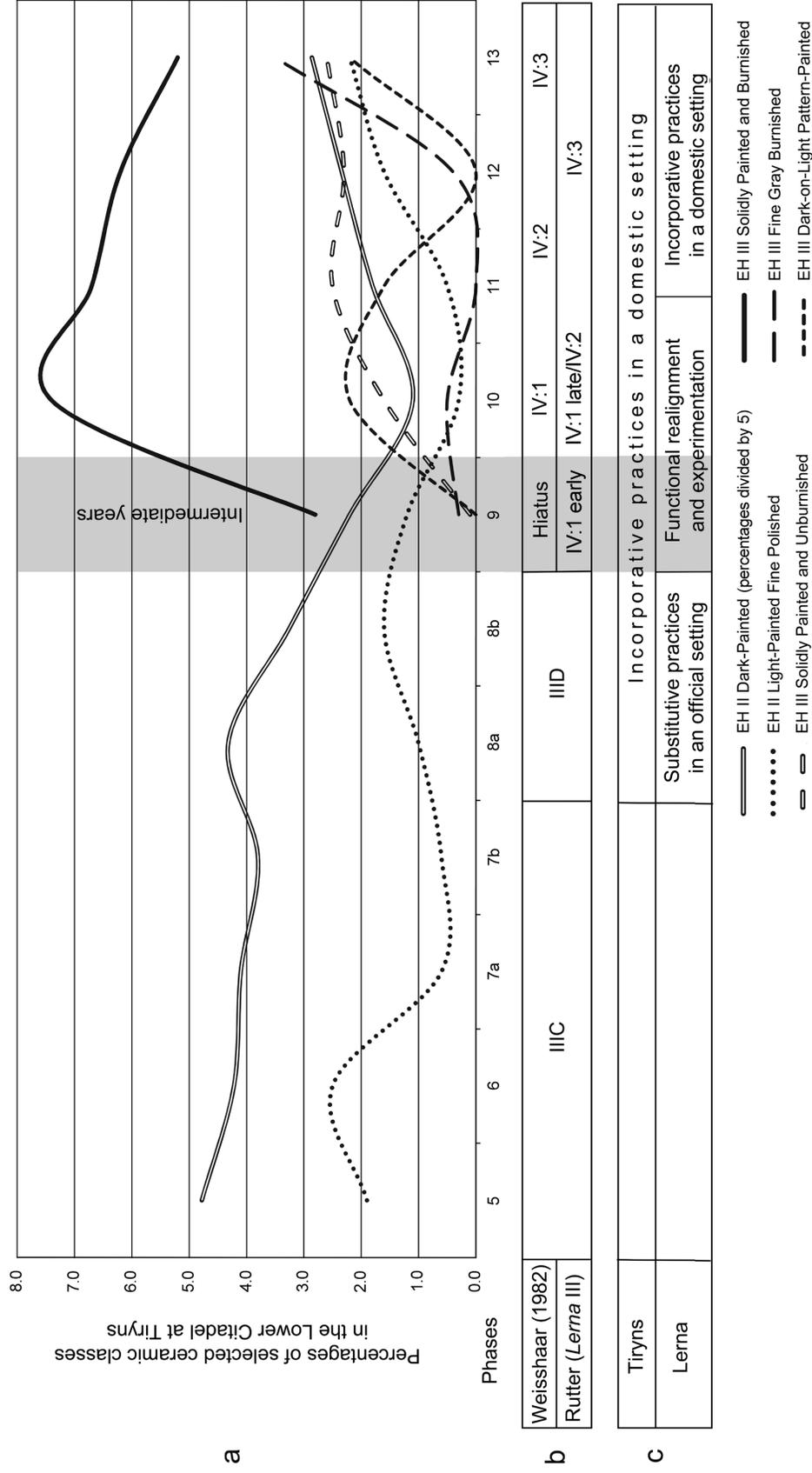


Figure 1. Overview of different interpretations of the late EH II-III ceramic records in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns and at Lerna. The time period at issue here, called the “intermediate years,” is marked in gray. (a) Percentages of selected ceramic classes during phases 5-13 in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns; (b) two competing chronological interpretations of the settlement sequence at Lerna III-IV arranged to correspond to the phases of the Lower Citadel at Tiryns; (c) the proposed different synchronous social contexts and practices at the Lower Citadel in Tiryns and at Lerna. (a) After Weisshaar 1983, p. 333, fig. 1; (b) after Weisshaar 1982, pp. 462-463, fig. 78; *Lerna* III, pp. 645-647

in conjunction with the lack of EH III Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted pottery before phase 10, sets the Tiryns assemblages apart from Lerna IV. Comparing Tiryns with Lerna, Weisshaar suggested “dass Lerna IV einen späteren Abschnitt der Firnismalerei repräsentiert und dass nach der Zerstörung des ‘House of the Tiles’ Entwicklungsphasen in der Keramik fehlen.”<sup>9</sup> Weisshaar thus interpreted the coexistence of old and new elements in the ceramic repertoire at Tiryns as evidence of a chronologically distinct phase following EH II but before the onset of EH III proper.<sup>10</sup> He thereby launched the idea of a settlement hiatus at Lerna (Fig. 1:b).

At the same time that the EH pottery from the Lower Citadel in Tiryns was being published, Rutter was working on the final publication of the pottery from Lerna IV. In 1983, Rutter dismissed the notion of a hiatus at Lerna by paralleling Tiryns 9 with the earliest EH III at Lerna; this phase he called IV:1 early (Fig. 1:b). He further argued that Tiryns 10 was contemporary with Lerna IV:1 late, or Lerna IV:2 early.<sup>11</sup> In trying to resolve the discrepancies between the ceramic repertoires of the two nearby places, Rutter argued for a “bicameral” aspect of the Tirynthian ceramic sequence—i.e., the coeval presence of both EH II and EH III ceramic traditions—by pointing to settlements such as Kolonna on Aigina and Raphina in Attica that upheld both old (“Korakou”) and new (“Lefkandi I”) traditions in late EH II.<sup>12</sup> In his final publication in 1995, Rutter concluded that “the EH III ceramic assemblages of Lerna and Tiryns differ principally in the extent to which EH II ceramic types are present: such survivals are extremely common at Tiryns but very rare at Lerna.”<sup>13</sup>

In a detailed study of late EBA cultural changes on the Greek mainland and the Cyclades, Maran returned to the ceramic differences between Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9.<sup>14</sup> The almost complete absence of Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted sherds in the latter assemblage in conjunction with the coexistence of both EH II and EH III pottery in both assemblages led him to accept Weisshaar’s idea that a transitional phase was not represented at Lerna. However, since no development of the EH II shapes could be traced within Tiryns 9, he argued that the phase must have been of short duration: “Auch wenn wir somit der Ansicht sind, dass der Übergangsphase von Tiryns ein nur episodenhafter Charakter beizumessen ist, werden wir in vorliegender Studie der Interpretation von Weisshaar insofern folgen, als wir in der Übergangsphase einen in Lerna nicht vertretenen chronologischen Abschnitt sehen.”<sup>15</sup>

9. “That Lerna IV represents a later phase of decorated pottery, and that phases of ceramic development are missing following the destruction of the House of the Tiles”: Weisshaar 1981, p. 248 (quoted here); 1982, p. 463.

10. Weisshaar 1982, p. 462, fig. 78.

11. Rutter 1983, pp. 354–355; *Lerna III*, p. 647.

12. See Renfrew (1972, pp. 99–120)

for the initial labeling of Greek mainland cultures (“Korakou,” etc.) during EH II.

13. *Lerna III*, p. 646. See also Manning’s (1995, p. 58, n. 179) summary of chemical analyses that suggest two contemporaneous ceramic traditions at Tiryns, one using EH II clay sources and EH III forms and the other using EH III clay sources

and EH II forms.

14. Maran 1998, vol. 1, pp. 11–13.

15. “Although we are of the opinion that the transitional phase was short-lived, in the present study we will follow Weisshaar’s interpretation, insofar as we regard the transitional phase as a chronological phase not present at Lerna”: Maran 1998, vol. 1, p. 13.

## THE NATURE OF THE CERAMIC DIFFERENCES

The ceramic break between Lerna III and IV is remarkable. If translated into human behavior and experience, such a change must be the exception rather than the rule. Rutter proposed that the profound differences in the ceramic assemblage of EH III were the result of a “multistage process of stylistic fusion,” as Argive traditions melded with Anatolian and Cycladic traditions that were channeled through central Greece during a late phase of EH II.<sup>16</sup> At Lerna IV this resulted in a ceramic makeup of largely foreign derivation. Although Rutter stressed the hypothetical nature of this suggestion, he was inclined to attribute this fusion of ideas to the blending of people of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.<sup>17</sup> He identified four groups of shapes with various ancestries (Fig. 2). While the shapes in Groups 1–3 found their best antecedents in areas outside the northeastern Peloponnese, the fourth group was made up of shapes with antecedents in the previous Lerna III or neighboring EH II settlements. Rutter has, in our opinion, provided an attractive explanation for the composition of the ceramic repertoire of the northeastern Peloponnese in the EH III period. On the other hand, because Rutter places a large emphasis on external influence and change, it is easy to overlook that the local Group 4 constitutes slightly more than a quarter of all the pottery from Lerna IV:1. The number is even higher in the following IV:2–3 phases. So, while it is undeniable that the ceramic repertoire changed at the transition between Lerna III and IV:1, there are examples of continuity also at Lerna.<sup>18</sup> This is especially so in the case of “utilitarian” vessels, i.e., those used for storage and cooking rather than drinking.

Differences between Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9 nevertheless do exist, and a hiatus between the two is an attractive explanation.<sup>19</sup> Weisshaar defined this hiatus as a period when Tiryns, but not Lerna, was settled, during which new shapes were adopted into the existing EH II repertoire and gradually supplanted the old ones. In his view, the first EH III assemblages at Lerna derive from a later stage in this process. The break in the occupational sequence would have begun either immediately after the destruction of the House of the Tiles or after the remains of the house had been covered by the large tumulus, and would have lasted until the first apsidal house was erected in the area.<sup>20</sup> If, however, there was no break, as argued by Rutter, or if this break was short or even episodic (as suggested by Maran) and thus lasted a few years rather than decades, Weisshaar’s proposed relationship between Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9 must be rejected.<sup>21</sup> From the data offered by Weisshaar,<sup>22</sup> it can also be gathered that the coexistence of old and new

16. Rutter 1979; *Lerna III*, pp. 648–649.

17. Rutter 1983, p. 355. Cf. Maran 1998, vol. 1, p. 13, n. 81.

18. The sharp break in the ceramic tradition between Lerna III and IV proposed by Caskey (1960) is nuanced in Rutter 1979.

19. Weisshaar 1982, pp. 462–463; cf. Wünsche 1977, p. 75; Walter and

Felten 1981, p. 107, n. 183.

20. Cf. Weisshaar 1982, pp. 462–463.

21. Weisshaar (1982, pp. 459–463) and Warren and Hankey (1989, pp. 35–52) envision a gap of several decades. Caskey (1960) and Rutter (*Lerna III*, pp. 649–650) believe that the architectural reorganization was more or less instantaneous. Manning

(1995, pp. 56–60) and Maran (1998, vol. 1, pp. 11–13) take an intermediate position and interpolate a “short” hiatus. Wünsche (1977, p. 75) and Walter and Felten (1981, p. 107, n. 183) have also suggested a gap of unknown length.

22. Weisshaar 1983, pp. 339–342, figs. 8–11.

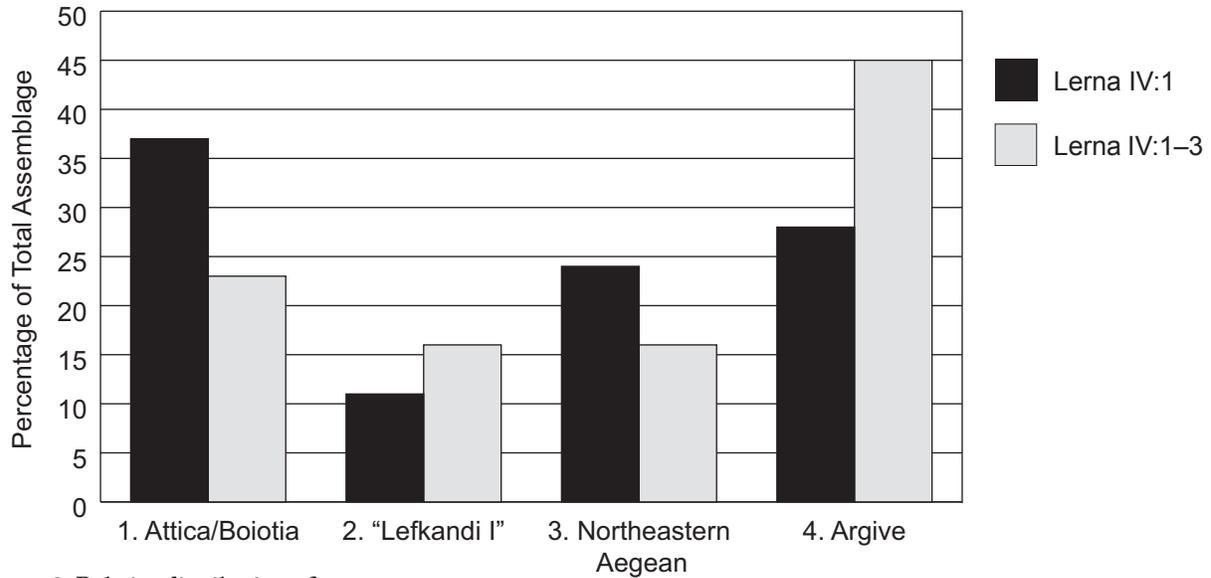


Figure 2. Relative distribution of vessel forms at Lerna with four different ancestries at the beginning of EH III (IV:1) and during the entire EH III period (IV:1–3). After *Lerna III*, pp. 469–470, 475–477, table S.113

forms in the Lower Citadel did not end with phase 9 but continued into the succeeding phases, Tiryns 10–13 (Fig. 1:a).<sup>23</sup> Thus, even a substantial period of low or nonexistent activity on the mound before Lerna IV:1 would not explain the differences between the ceramic profiles at the two sites.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, we believe that Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9 overlap, to the extent that current chronological resolution makes it possible to determine. Tiryns 9 represents the beginning of EH III at that settlement, and it reveals a protracted shift in a ceramic repertoire that included old forms to a greater extent than at Lerna IV. Rutter's identification of a bicameral ceramic tradition at EH III Tiryns is another way of suggesting that people of different cultural backgrounds resided there, with new people bringing their own traditions and fusing them with local ones. However, although he states that different traditions are an integral part of the fusion process behind the EH III assemblage, he does not explain why a bicameral potting tradition would have set Tiryns greatly apart from contemporaneous Lerna, where the ceramics represent the fusion of as many as four separate traditions (Fig. 2). For Rutter it is not the rarity of EH II forms at Lerna IV:1 that needs to be explained, but their abundance at Tiryns 9; from his point of view, it is the Lower Citadel at Tiryns that is the cultural outlier, not Lerna.

In contrast, we suggest that the unequal distribution of old and new ceramic types is largely the result of different practices stemming from the dissimilar functions of the excavated areas, rather than differences in the ethnicity or cultural background of their inhabitants. In this respect, it would certainly have been more appropriate to compare Lerna with the Upper

23. Cf. *Lerna III*, p. 646.

24. There are presently no reasons to suspect that the difference in the pace of the ceramic transition from EH II to EH III at the two settlements is a misperception arising from different documentation practices during and after excavation. Pottery discards at Lerna did not artificially produce

typologically homogenous deposits. Nor can the presence of older ceramic forms in Tiryns 9–13 simply be dismissed as EH II kick-ups or the result of poor contextual control in the excavation procedure. Cf. Rutter 1983, p. 354; *Lerna III*, p. 646. It should be noted, however, that our current understanding relies only on

preliminary reports and that future studies may nuance or even contradict it. One such study is now underway by Martina Riedl, University of Heidelberg, who has begun the full publication of the EH architecture and stratigraphy from the excavations at Tiryns.

Citadel (“Oberburg”) at Tiryns and its monumental “Rundbau,” a building closely related to the Lernean corridor houses (Building BG and the House of the Tiles) in terms of size and building techniques.<sup>25</sup> Such a comparison cannot be made, however, for very little is known about the EH ceramic sequence in the Upper Citadel.<sup>26</sup> All comparisons of the ceramic sequences have instead been made between Lerna as a whole and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns, two contexts that—at least during EH II and the onset of EH III—display clear functional differences.

## SUBSTITUTIVE AND INCORPORATIVE PRACTICES

Our understanding of the diverging histories at Lerna and in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns is based on a juxtaposition of the architectural and ceramic evidence. Together they tell us something about the different functions of the excavated sites and the human strategies at work within a very limited geographical area. Our basic assumption is that material culture is created, used, and discarded in contemporary social settings that may vary immensely, and that both ceramics and architecture find their form and meaning in the daily interactions between the people who use and live in them.<sup>27</sup>

In our view, the differences between Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns reflect the impact of novelties and different ways of balancing change versus continuity. We will use the terms “substitutive” and “incorporative” to describe different practices that seem to have been at work in relation to the architecture and ceramics in use.<sup>28</sup> Although the terms refer to socially embedded choices and the transmission and transformation of cultures, they are primarily descriptive and have a neutral valence. A substitutive practice may be defined as a change, whether undertaken willingly or not, instituted at the expense of established behaviors. Such practices, or strategies, are manifest in the archaeological record as significant changes in material culture—in the present case, in the ceramic repertoire and settlement layout. An incorporative strategy, on the other hand, emphasizes the upholding of certain previously established traditions during periods of change. Such a strategy is indicated in the archaeological record by the maintenance of patterns rooted in the past. The use of the term “incorporation” instead of, for example, “conservatism” or “resistance” is deliberate. There is little point in using the term “conservatism” in discussing the EH II–III transition in the Argolid: an absence of change in material culture, as the term implies, would certainly be misinterpreted as an indication of EH II date rather than the result of actual ceramic conservatism—i.e., the continued use of older forms—in an EH III setting. Resistance, finally, can certainly be manifested through incorporative strategies, but equally well by alternative behaviors that have no precedent in the past or the hegemonic present. Resistance can thus result also in substitution, or the replacement of old values in the face of a new situation.

With the concepts of substitution and incorporation we wish to highlight the different behaviors adopted by people in relation to the changing prerequisites of their surroundings. These variations in behavior are especially important to recognize in times of sociocultural disruption

25. Weiberg 2007, pp. 147–148, fig. 32.

26. Excavations in the Upper Citadel were carried out in the 1910s by Müller (1913) and in 1984–1985 by Kilian. The latter excavation remains, to our knowledge, unpublished, although it is briefly mentioned by Kilian (1986, p. 65) in an article about the Rundbau. The stratigraphy was summarized in a report on archaeology in Greece in 1984 (Touchais 1985, pp. 776–778) that mentions seven layers, one of which was defined as EH II/III transitional.

27. E.g., Dobres and Robb 2000; Ingold 2000; Bradley 2002.

28. Cf. Weiberg 2007, pp. 113–152. The terms should not be confused with the discourse on practices of inscription and incorporation as defined, e.g., by Connerton (1989), which are active in the maintenance of social knowledge and cohesion over time.

when, in at least some parts of life, change seems to be more apparent than continuity. As is the case today, incorporation and substitution were never mutually exclusive; both strategies were integral parts of life in the continuous reformation of its particulars. Differences between and within communities would have affected how these strategies were played out in particular situations. In our discussion we will generalize to some degree about events and their impact on the settlements under study. In terms of chronology, we deal with a time frame spanning from the middle of the EH II period to the end of the EH III period, and the focus of our analysis will be on the excavated portions of the settlement at Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns.

### THE EH II ARCHITECTURE AT LERNA AND IN THE LOWER CITADEL AT TIRYNS

At Lerna III old houses were consistently leveled to make room for new structures that were erected on new foundations and in new alignments. Caskey pointed out that in EH II each successive architectural phase, represented by the remains of superimposed buildings, was characterized by new foundations, “not merely repairs or remodellings” and that “wholly new structures were laid out in each case on new lines.”<sup>29</sup> The maintenance of single building plots was apparently a subordinate concern in this process, and substitution rather than incorporation seems to have been the guiding practice at Lerna. One example is the sequence of buildings, each with increasingly substantial walls, erected at the site of the later Building BG, in the northernmost parts of the excavated area.<sup>30</sup> From late in the IIIB phase the area was covered with a series of stone and pebble pavements. House 36 was constructed partly on top of the uppermost of these pavings and was replaced in early IIIC by House 67. This house was superseded, in turn, by the monumental Building BG during mid-IIIC, and when that corridor house was dismantled the considerably smaller House 113 was constructed on the spot, flanking the House of the Tiles, the new monumental building on the corridor plan. The House of the Tiles was constructed in a new location but overlapped to some extent the plot previously occupied by Building BG.

The two features that did remain constant throughout the latter half of the EH II period at Lerna were the open space between the front of each of the two successive corridor houses and a main gate in the fortification wall.<sup>31</sup> This open space or terrace grew to its largest extent in late EH II, when a yellow clay paving covered an area of 80–100 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>32</sup> Considerable effort was invested in the construction of the corridor houses that faced this open space. Only in the preservation of the open space was continuity maintained, and it seems that new construction was carried out in accordance with a common plan for the area as a whole.<sup>33</sup> The open space in front of the corridor houses at Lerna was likely used for gatherings and appears to have bound surrounding areas together to form an architectural whole that strengthened the public character of the area.<sup>34</sup> The salient point is that to a large extent, the material remains from Lerna III—including both corridor houses, the open court in front of them, and the fortification—appear to reflect official ideological ideas on display for the public.

29. Caskey 1960, p. 288.

30. *Lerna* IV, pls. 3–8. Several architectural sequences at Lerna III are discussed in detail in Weiberg 2007, pp. 128–134, with references.

31. Weiberg 2007, pp. 142–144.

32. *Lerna* IV, p. 286.

33. Weiberg 2007, pp. 143–144. Rutter (pers. comm.) has noted that the fortified area of Troy I–II presents an interesting parallel: continuously changing building arrangements within a fortification wall with two gates that remained in place throughout the same phases (Mellaart 1959).

34. For discussions of possible official functions of the area in and around the House of the Tiles, see also Nilsson 2004, esp. pp. 34–117; Peperaki 2004; O’Neill 2008; Pullen 2011b.



In EH II, the Lower Citadel in Tiryns, in contrast with Lerna, was a domestic area, defined by incorporative practices (Fig. 1:c). The excavator Kilian noted that new houses were rebuilt on the remaining walls of older structures, more or less copying the existing ground plan.<sup>35</sup> Through the reuse of old walls, the buildings in the Lower Citadel retained basically the same alignment (northwest–southeast) during Tiryns 3–9, i.e., for more than 300 years (Fig. 3). Despite numerous fires, there was a considerable degree of consistency in house placement and alignment, and the general appearance of the area remained very much the same throughout the EH II period. This strategy has contemporaneous parallels elsewhere. Structural continuity over an extended period was a general rule in many EH settlements with aggregated domestic quarters. Although rooms were rearranged, walls built or torn down, and new rooms added, most of the structures and stretches of wall survived and were reused.<sup>36</sup> At Tiryns, an incorporative architectural sequence can be identified at least from phase 7a, when a large complex of rooms was constructed over more or less the full width of the Lower Citadel.<sup>37</sup> Rooms 181–185 were constructed in the west and 197–200 and 205–206 in the east.<sup>38</sup> These rooms remained in use, although somewhat rearranged, until the whole complex was destroyed in a large fire at the end of phase 8a. In the eastern section, the space appears to have

Figure 3. Domestic architecture in the Lower Citadel of Tiryns during the late EH II–III period (phases 7a–13). Individual walls in use over several phases and superimposed walls are indicated by increasingly darker shades and reflect an incorporative practice. The EH III apsidal buildings (phases 10–13) are indicated but because their architectural phases have not been published individually, their reuse cannot be similarly represented. After Kilian 1981, p. 188, fig. 44:a–c; 1982, p. 421, fig. 39; 1983, pp. 312, 313, 315–316, figs. 39:a–c, 40:a–c

35. E.g., Kilian 1981, pp. 189–191; 1983, pp. 318–319.

36. Weiberg 2007, pp. 83–92.

37. For more details on architectural

sequences and further references, see Weiberg 2007, pp. 121–127.

38. Kilian 1983, pp. 312, 314–323, 327, fig. 39:c.

been left unused, while in the western section, the rooms were rebuilt in the intervening phase 8b (rooms 142, 145–148), to be burned again at the end of that phase.<sup>39</sup> In the “Übergangsphase” (Tiryns 9) the rooms were rearranged slightly, but even though only smaller portions of them are preserved, the walls follow the same courses as in the preceding period.

Just like the ceramic differences between Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9, the architectural history of the two sites illustrates the existence of diverging practices.<sup>40</sup> The differences seem to be related to the level on which continuity was preserved: in the case of Lerna, continuity was maintained in the area on top of the fortified mound as a whole, while the Tirynthian Lower Citadel suggests the persistence of behaviors on the level of individual households. We are therefore inclined to see the situation in the Lower Citadel as representing the household-level maintenance of several individual building plots over the generations, while at Lerna the value of the central area seems rather to lie in its history as a space set aside for communal practices. In the latter case, the maintenance of specific plots was of less importance. These notable functional and ideological differences were among the factors that determined how each location responded to events around 2200 B.C. In order to visualize the different reactions, we turn to an analysis of this specific moment at Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns.

## THE INTERMEDIATE YEARS

The time between the conflagration that destroyed the House of the Tiles and the erection of apsidal houses on stone socles both at Lerna IV:2 and Tiryns 10 represents what may be termed “the intermediate years” on the northeastern Peloponnese, a period bridging two arguably very different cultural expressions represented by EH II and EH III. There were certainly shifts of emphasis in the ceramic and architectural sequences thereafter as well, but the affinities between developed EH III and the beginning of the Middle Helladic period are striking.<sup>41</sup>

## CERAMICS

As we have seen, the amount of time that elapsed between the destruction of the House of the Tiles and the appearance of the first material culture assignable to Lerna IV is debated. All arguments concerning a hiatus at the settlement are based on interpretations of the different proportions of vessel types in the ceramic assemblages from Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9. There are no intermediary ceramic classes or shapes attested at the latter site that might define a transitional phase between EH II and III.<sup>42</sup> Besides the large percentage of pottery of EH II derivation at Tiryns 9

39. Plans and reports by Kilian (1981, pp. 188–190, fig. 44:b; 1983, p. 327) suggest that several stretches of wall survived in the successive room complexes, although the intricacy of the arrangement diminishes with time.

40. Weiberg 2007, pp. 147–152.

41. Spencer 2010, with references. See also the study of EH III–LH I architecture by Wiersma (2013, esp. pp. 190–212), which demonstrates similarities but also slow but continuous development.

42. There are no signs of ceramic “hybridization,” i.e., individual vessels composed of features traceable to more than one ceramic tradition, as were noted at late EH II Kolonna, for example. See Rutter 2012, pp. 76–78, fig. 8:3–7.

(present in subsequent phases as well), the only tangible difference between the two sites is that Tiryns 9 lacks the Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted EH III pottery found at Lerna IV:1. Because of the proximity between the two settlements, it is implicitly understood that a regional time lag in the spread of this novel ceramic class can be ruled out as an explanation of the difference.<sup>43</sup> However, given the small amount of this class within the total corpus of EH III pottery at Tiryns,<sup>44</sup> its first appearance is not an unproblematic criterion of date.

Unlike at Tiryns, novel Pattern-Painted pottery, largely in shapes intended for drinking, pouring, and mixing, was already present at the beginning of Lerna IV:1. Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted pottery in roughly 10% frequency was a consistent feature during the first half of the EH III period at Lerna, after which its popularity decreased.<sup>45</sup> Rutter distinguished 25 overarching vessel forms with subtypes and divided the forms into five functional categories: tankards, drinking cups, bowls, pouring/storage, and cooking. The distribution of different categories among the three phases reveals some interesting patterns (Fig. 4). There is a continuous rise in the frequency of cooking pots (Forms V, VII, XXI) from phase 1 to 3. In Lerna IV:3, the percentage of tankards (Forms I–III) was halved while bowls (Forms XII–XIV) increased by almost two-thirds. Already in Lerna IV:2 drinking cups (Forms IV, VIII, X, XI) had decreased by almost two-thirds, while pouring and storage (Forms XV–XX) vessels increased by almost one-third.<sup>46</sup> This decline in drinking cups after Lerna IV:1 is especially noteworthy for three reasons. First, the drinking cups do not seem to have been replaced by something comparable. Second, the popularity of drinking cups at Lerna IV:1 is comparable to circumstances during late EH II (Lerna IIIC–D), when saucers alone constituted 34–44% of the pottery.<sup>47</sup> Third, the high proportion of drinking cups is a feature only during the intermediate years of Lerna IV:1. Overall, the ceramic developments suggest an alteration of activities and reformulation of values over at least one or two generations. The gradual decrease of Pattern-Painted pottery, cups, and tankards used for drinking and pouring suggests to us either a decreased focus on social drinking or a renegotiation of how such activities were to be performed, much in line with what has been suggested by Rutter.<sup>48</sup> In combination with the increased use of storage and cooking vessels, we also believe the

43. Other EH III assemblages lacking Pattern-Painted pottery include the apsidal buildings within the Altis in Olympia (Rutter 1982, pp. 480–488; *Lerna III*, pp. 643–644; cf. Manning 1995, p. 57, n. 177) and Korakou, Trench P, levels IX and X (Rutter 1982, pp. 470–471; cf. Maran 1998, vol. 1, p. 12, n. 75). These instances, however, could more easily be explained in terms of regional variation.

44. Weisshaar 1982, p. 441, fig. 59, p. 456, fig. 72, p. 458, fig. 74; 1983, p. 333, fig. 1. The proportion of

Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted pottery in Tiryns 9–13 assemblages is consistently less than 3%.

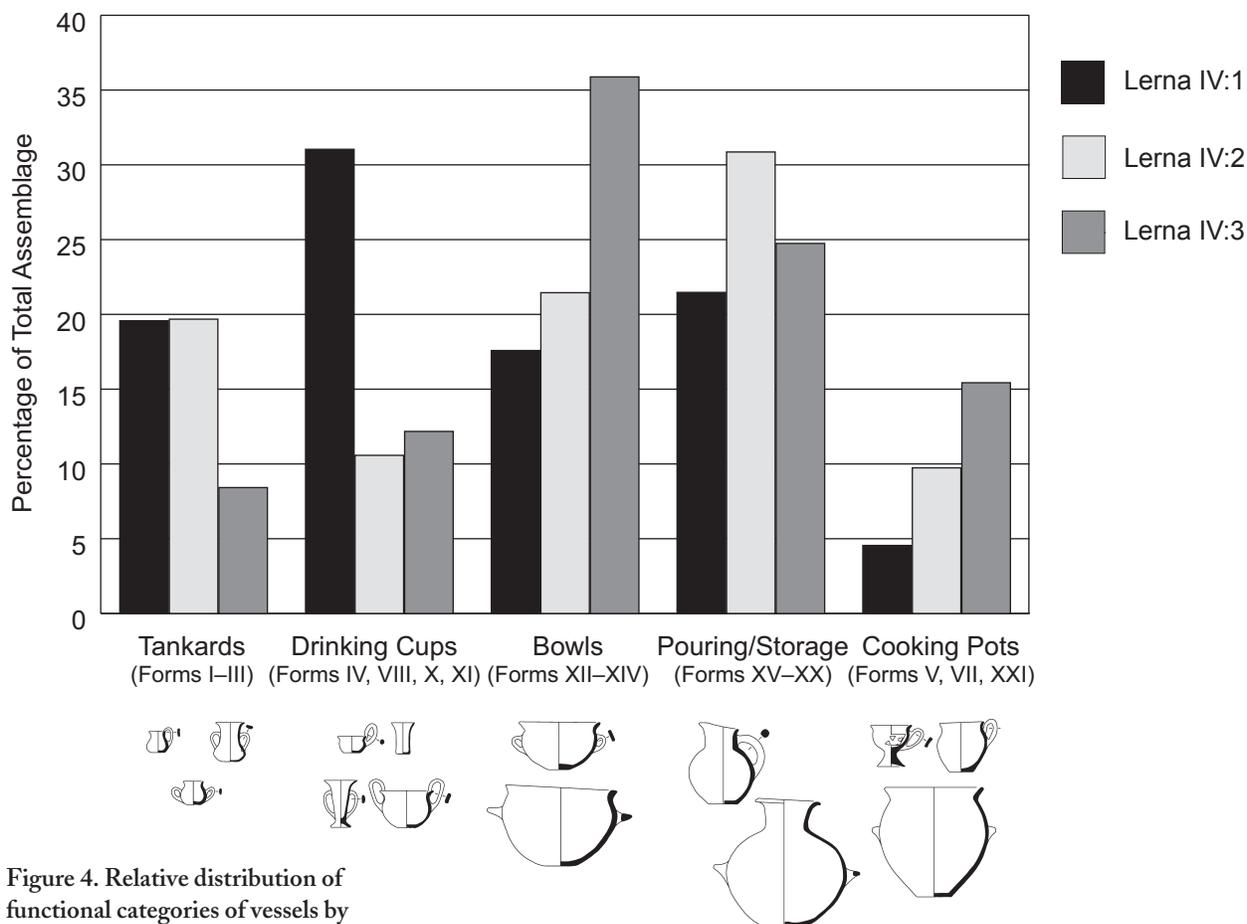
45. For the drop in Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted pottery at Lerna IV:2–3, see *Lerna III*, pp. 16–17. Rutter (*Lerna III*, pp. 1–2, 16–17, n. 3) estimates its original frequency, prior to discard, to be 10%, although it constitutes 60% of the saved and catalogued pottery. See also Pullen 2011a, pp. 475, 478, table 6:7, for a comparison with Tsoungiza.

46. *Lerna III*, pp. 468–477, with tables.

47. *Lerna IV*, p. 715, table 3:b.

In the preceding EH II phases, the total percentage of saucers and sauceboats combined amounts to 30–40% of the catalogued material. These sums are probably somewhat inflated due to early discards, but the tables in *Lerna IV* do give rough outlines and “nevertheless summarize some significant relative proportions”; *Lerna IV*, p. 316.

48. Rutter 2008; see further pp. 400–401, below.



**Figure 4. Relative distribution of functional categories of vessels by the Lerna IV phases with selected forms illustrated below.** Numbers are based on mean values of columns A and B in *Lerna III*, p. 471, table S.115. Drawings courtesy W. Gauss

decline in drinking vessels is indicative of a gradual shift in activities and in the perception of the area from public and communal to domestic and individual. Most importantly, however, it seems as though the first generation or so after the destruction of the House of the Tiles was a time of accentuated social realignment and experimentation that subsided during the following generations.

It is not possible to make a similar comparison based on the published ceramics from Tiryns 9. While Rutter focused on shapes and functions at Lerna, Weisshaar arranged most of his statistics according to wares and decorative schemes. Weisshaar's figures suggest, however, that drinking vessels were less common in the domestic quarters in the Lower Citadel in Tiryns. In Tiryns 7–8b the percentages of EH II saucers were lower than at contemporary Lerna III, and it can be gathered that small open vessels at Tiryns did not exceed 10% in any EH phase.<sup>49</sup> Frequencies comparable to Tiryns have recently been published from Tsoungiza, where drinking vessels made up less than 5% of the total assemblage.<sup>50</sup>

49. Weisshaar 1983, p. 342, fig. 11. The comparison is not straightforward, since little or no pottery was discarded at Tiryns. Wiencke (*Lerna IV*, p. 315),

however, states that household groups of Lerna III were subject to relatively little discard, which suggests that the original number of drinking vessels was

indeed very high in EH II.

50. Pullen 2011a, pp. 475, 477, table 6:6.

As for the introduction of ceramic novelties during the intermediate years, it is worth noting that some EH III ceramic classes and forms were indeed introduced in Tiryns 9. Non-Argive influences were fewer both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Reviewing the information tabulated by Weisshaar (Fig. 1:a),<sup>51</sup> it is striking that new EH III wares did not amount to more than 3.2% in the large assemblages attributed to Tiryns 9. This indicates a very light impact, and although the percentage had tripled in Tiryns 10 to 11.7%, these novelties never amounted to more than 13.5% (in Tiryns 13) of the total over the span of Tiryns 9–13. There is also a continuous increase in cooking ware during Tiryns 8a–10 and a simultaneous decline in Dark-Painted fine ware.<sup>52</sup> The fact that both of the latter trends had already started before Tiryns 9 should probably be seen as an indication of a slow change built on incorporative practices that began in the generations before the actual EH II/III transition. This gradual change is also suggested on a general societal level and signifies a move toward a more household-oriented set of social values.<sup>53</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE

It is unfortunate that the tumulus at Lerna did not contain any reliable dating material; it floats in a contextual twilight between EH II and EH III and cannot be dated more closely.<sup>54</sup> It could have been built immediately after the burning of the House of the Tiles in phase IIID during some kind of clearing operation, but it could also be connected with the IV:1 posthole building.<sup>55</sup> The effort that went into the erection of the tumulus is in itself an indication that the top of the mound remained a focus and continued to serve a purpose for at least a certain group of people after the destruction.<sup>56</sup>

The first apsidal building at Lerna, Building W-1, built early in phase IV:1, was a wattle-and-daub posthole structure that stands in some contrast to the sturdier apsidal houses on stone socles that followed.<sup>57</sup> The

51. Weisshaar 1983, p. 333, fig. 1. It is not self-evident how to compare the ceramic categories from Tiryns 5–13 with those from Lerna phases IIIC–IV:3. Although Figure 1:a presents a selection of quantified ceramic data from Tiryns based on Weisshaar (1983, pp. 329–331, 333, fig. 1), it is grouped and labeled according to the Lerna nomenclature (*Lerna* III, pp. 12–29; *Lerna* IV, pp. 320–328) in the following way: Dark-Painted = “Feinkeramik mit Firnis”; Light-Painted Fine Polished = “Fayenceware”; Solidly Painted and Unburnished = “smear ware” [sic]; Solidly Painted and Burnished = “Schwarz polierte Gebrauchkeramik,” “Braun polierte Gebrauchkeramik,” and “Schwarzminyische Keramik”; Fine Gray Burnished = “Grauminyische

Keramik”; Dark-on-Light Pattern-Painted = “Bemalte Keramik.”

52. Weisshaar 1983, p. 333, fig. 1 (“Grobe Küchenware” and “Feinkeramik mit Firnis”).

53. Weiberg and Finné 2013, esp. pp. 24–27; see also Wiersma (2013, pp. 243–244), who similarly suggests a “fragmentation of the social body.” Other indications of this change may be seen in a formalization of intramural infant burials and in the freestanding nature of the apsidal buildings, which would have been more individual ventures than the closely agglomerated housing complexes of the preceding period.

54. *Lerna* IV, pp. 285, 297–298, p. 310, fig. I.107:b, p. 311, fig. I.108:a; *Lerna* VI, pp. 23–31.

55. Cf. *Lerna* VI, pp. 29–31, where the tumulus is associated with the end of the EH II sequence of events in the area and confirms what has generally been assumed since Forsén’s reinterpretation (1992, pp. 36–37).

56. For discussions of the symbolic content of this and other similar tumuli, see, e.g., Forsén 1992, pp. 36–37, 232–237; Weiberg 2007, pp. 153–185, with further references; *Lerna* VI, pp. 30–31.

57. *Lerna* VI, pp. 37–42. The small Building W-4 (pp. 44–46) is described as a possible outbuilding connected with Building W-1. In addition to the main buildings of *Lerna* IV:1, there are several fragmentary and presumably short-lived structures associated with the phase. Cf. *Lerna* VI, p. 24, plan 4.

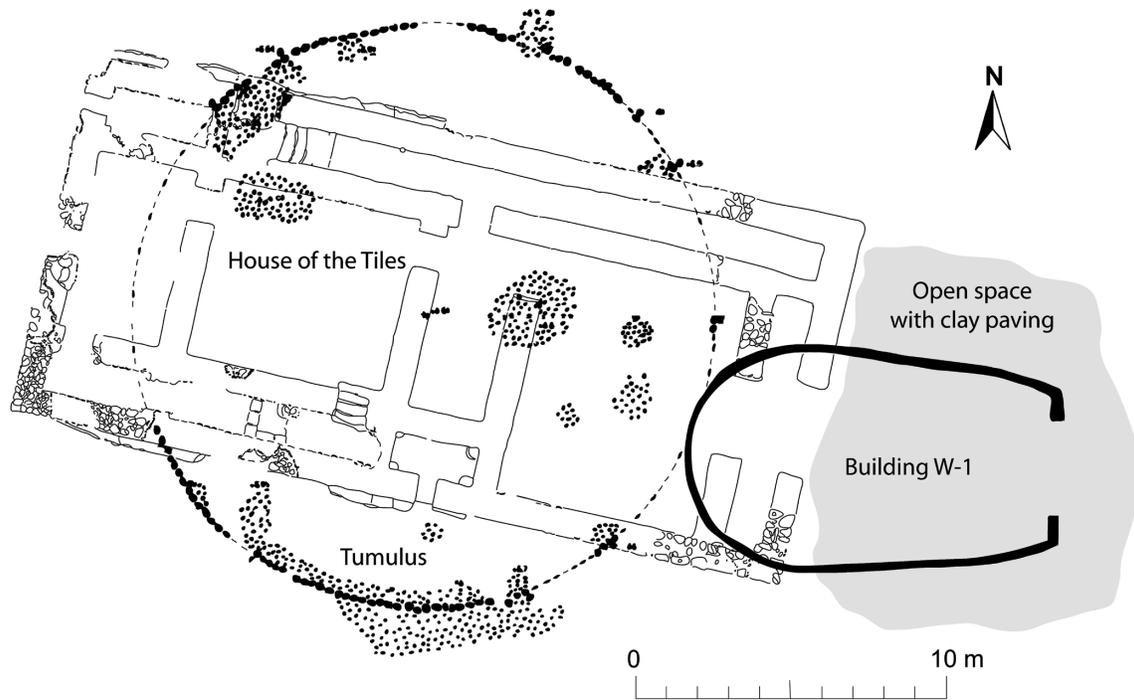


Figure 5. Relationship between the House of the Tiles (IID), the tumulus (III/IV), Building W-1 (IV:1 early), and the open space (IIIC–IV:1) at Lerna. After *Lerna IV*, pp. 17, 310, plan 8, fig. I.107:b; *Lerna VI*, p. 38, plan 5

building, alternatively referred to as the “Chieftain’s House,” was located in the center of the excavated area on top of the artificial mound, with its rear wall tangent to the eastern edge of the tumulus that capped the remains of the House of the Tiles.<sup>58</sup> It was located in the paved space in front of the corridor house that had been kept open for several centuries. One could even argue that its western end was intentionally fitted into the eastern entrance of the House of the Tiles, as the burnt foundation of the corridor house was probably still exposed (Fig. 5).<sup>59</sup> The house was short-lived and represents a period of relatively low activity on the mound as gauged by the material assemblages associated with it. Soon thereafter a trapezoidal house with a large terrace to its south—Building W-9—was built over the southern part of the posthole structure.<sup>60</sup> Contemporary with this structure were the smaller and successive Buildings W-21 and W-24, the latter possibly a special-purpose building, judging from its restricted repertoire of shapes connected to drinking and serving,<sup>61</sup> as well as a complex consisting of plastered basins, a hearth, and an oven.<sup>62</sup> The trapezoidal structure W-9

58. Banks (*Lerna VI*, pp. 41, 345) identifies Building W-1 as the home of a headman whose authority possibly rested on the control of metallurgical activities (p. 169), and as the gathering place of the newly established community at Lerna.

59. Wall 144 of the vestibule of the House of the Tiles was even incorporated into Building W-1 (*Lerna VI*, pp. 37, 39, fig. 7; cf. Fig. 5). The southern part of Building W-1 is not

preserved, but it seems likely that it also incorporated a second wall (W-145) of the vestibule, as this second wall also projects into the apse of Building W-1 at a level of at least 0.20 m above the floor level of that room (cf. *Lerna IV*, p. 244, plan 32; *Lerna VI*, pp. 37–38, plan 5).

60. *Lerna VI*, pp. 46–55.

61. *Lerna VI*, pp. 66–76.

62. *Lerna VI*, pp. 57–60.

did not last to the end of Lerna IV:1 but was likely partly contemporaneous with the large apsidal Building W-36 constructed in the later part of IV:1 over the north part of the early posthole structure.<sup>63</sup> The time after the destruction by fire of Building W-9 was associated with a series of “dumps” in the southeastern parts of the excavated area, deposits that have been interpreted as the remains of clearing operations.<sup>64</sup> Building W-36, however, together with a poorly preserved apsidal structure to the north, probably remained in use throughout much of the following phase IV:2 and was the first in a more established pattern of densely arranged apsidal structures.<sup>65</sup> The later part of phase IV:1 is equivalent to the beginning of the “Apsidenhorizont” (apsidal building phase) in Tiryns 10.

In contrast with the “Apsidenhorizont” at Tiryns (phases 10–13), the preceding phase 9 in the Lower Citadel contained a rectangular (not apsidal) building complex (rooms 142–144).<sup>66</sup> Apparently there was also some reuse of the space in the eastern section, suggested by a yellow clay floor laid out on a level above the rooms of phase 8a.<sup>67</sup> In comparison with the many preserved rooms of phase 8a (roughly comparable to Lerna IIIC late), the complexity of the room arrangement seems to have diminished over time (from phase 8a through 8b to phase 9), but that may be due to incomplete preservation. No complete rooms are preserved from the “Übergangsphase,” but there is clearly continuity with EH II architectural sequences. All of the walls from the preceding Tiryns 8b remained in use and there are no indications of a functional change. Hearths are noted in rooms 142 and 143, two pithoi were set into the floor of the corridor-like room 144, and an accumulation of clay spools, indicative of weaving in situ, was found in room 143.<sup>68</sup> In all, the north–south length of the complex is about 20 m; Kilian compares the complex with the corridor houses at Lerna and Akovitika.<sup>69</sup> Despite this comparison, there is nothing that sets this complex apart from the preceding aggregated residential quarters at Tiryns or many other EH II settlements, such as nearby Zygouries. It should also be noted that although the houses changed from rectangular to apsidal after the fire at the end of Tiryns 9, a tradition of reuse and superimposed walls continued in Tiryns 10–13 as well. In the apsidal House 168, for example, excavations defined no fewer than five phases during which houses reused the same stretches of wall.<sup>70</sup>

## SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

Societies are constantly in transition, but at times the pace of change seems to intensify when approached from an archaeological perspective. The generation(s) during the intermediate years on the northeastern Peloponnese experienced the culmination of cultural and socioeconomic transformations that had already begun in the late EBA II Aegean.<sup>71</sup> Not only present in social memory, these events were manifest in settlement abandonment and nucleation, the disappearance of monumental buildings, the discontinuation of the use of sealings for administrative purposes, and the dwindling and/or alterations of supraregional exchange networks. At the end of the intermediate years there was already a higher degree of

63. *Lerna VI*, pp. 89–96. Buildings W-9 and W-36 were separated by a narrow street (*Lerna VI*, p. 90, plan 13).

64. Banks in *Lerna III*, p. 4; cf. *Lerna VI*, pp. 55–57, 64–66.

65. See *Lerna VI*, pp. 346–367, for a detailed and chronologically arranged discussion of architecture and finds throughout Lerna IV.

66. Kilian 1981, pp. 189–190, fig. 45; 1983, p. 327; Maran 1998, vol. 1, pp. 177–178.

67. Kilian 1982, p. 420; 1983, p. 312, fig. 39:a.

68. Kilian 1981, p. 189.

69. Kilian 1981, p. 189.

70. Kilian 1982, p. 420.

71. A transitional period (“Wendezeit”) was postulated by Maran (1998, vol. 2, p. 460) to incorporate the period equivalent to Lerna IIID–Lerna IV:1.

ceramic regionalism and a reformulated concept of housing based mainly on apsidal buildings. What is mirrored in the archaeological record is the flexibility and capacity of people to adapt to changing requirements of life. Thus, what we glimpse is the level and functioning of social resilience in the face of change.

Responses to these events in different social contexts would have varied, and are at best only partly distinguishable in the archaeological record. Weiberg and Finné argue that the EH I–II Argolid was characterized by a strong regional identity that worked to slow down, or at times even halt, the incorporation of new influences such as, for example, the “Lefkandi I”-type drinking vessels. It was eventually a corrosion of this regional identity that caused the broad cultural transformation at the end of the EH II period in the Argolid.<sup>72</sup> The changes would have been especially felt at places where some of the principal values of the preceding period had been anchored. The corridor house complex at Lerna would have been one such locale, as it was more or less custom-made for the sociopolitical climate of late EH II. The destruction of the House of the Tiles at Lerna IIID was an event that left an architectural as well as a sociopolitical vacuum to be filled.<sup>73</sup> The corridor houses had outlived their use and there was no incentive to rebuild them.<sup>74</sup> In this location both architecture and ceramics changed rapidly; it was an opportunity for renewal. In a similar way, Maran has argued for the presence of “cultural codes” that lead to varying levels of acceptance of novelties in different regions.<sup>75</sup> The apparent new flair for certain material expressions around the EH II/III transition may be seen as a transition of cultural codes, or the reformulation of social identities. The construction of the posthole building should probably be interpreted as an expression of changes in society at large and in this location in particular. Indeed, the spot selected for the first EH III house at Lerna seems symbolic.<sup>76</sup> Considering the flimsy structure of the posthole building, probably provisionally constructed, and its position within the main opening into the House of the Tiles, we believe that this house and the tumulus were most likely connected and part of the same sequence of events, whether we choose to assign it to EH II or EH III. The extraordinary placement of the new house must have been intentional, and we believe that the intent was an effort to somehow uphold the official character of the area. The new structure should thus be seen as connected to activities that took place in relation to the tumulus and the open space.

The transition from Lerna III to IV, we suggest, consisted largely of a functional shift from public and communal to private and individual that was played out over a few generations. The Lower Citadel of Tiryns 5–13, on the other hand, essentially reflects domestic and private values during the same time span. The difference made the activities in these areas unequally sensitive to sociopolitical changes.<sup>77</sup> Continued incorporative practices in the residential area of Tiryns and values connected to household activities are significant and resulted in a higher degree of traditionalism in the ceramic repertoire during phases 9–13. At Lerna, however, the discontinuation of activities inside and around the corridor house after a period when centralized functions and the coordination of economic activities disintegrated left a functional vacuum that was filled with new

72. Weiberg and Finné 2013.

73. Cf. Maran (1998, vol. 2, pp. 452–453), who stresses a power vacuum and proposes that the change was the result of new population elements taking advantage of this vacuum to introduce themselves and their traditions.

74. All but one of the handful of known corridor houses were disused during EH IIB: at Kolonna on Aigina the last corridor house (“Weisses Haus”) was reused after the second story had collapsed or been dismantled; it housed a metal furnace in early EH III (Walter and Felten 1981, pp. 23–28).

75. Maran 1998, vol. 1, pp. 273–274.

76. Contra Banks (*Lerna* VI, p. 31), who considers the location of Building W-1 “a practical matter” for the newcomers searching for a place to erect their first building.

77. As realized by Caskey (1986, p. 20), functional differences between various settlement contexts need to be included in any interpretation.

social values and actions, some of which were disassociated from and unlike those of the preceding period. During the generation or so following this transition, the function of the excavated part of Lerna was slowly being reformulated. We believe that the results of this process can be seen at the end of Lerna IV:2, when most of the differences between this area and that of the Lower Citadel at Tiryns had been dissolved.

There is no need, in our opinion, to populate Lerna IV:1 with persons of ethnic or cultural origins very different from the families living at contemporary Tiryns 9, or those who lived at Lerna IIID. Already in late EH II, many persons on the northeastern Peloponnese must have had knowledge or direct experience of alternative ways to structure their living. Not far to the north and east, in the Saronic Gulf and the northern Cyclades and along the coast of Attica and on Euboea, changes in architecture and ceramics suggest a blend of old and new ideas. The northeastern Peloponnese was part of the same network of ideas, goods, and people. The fact that the ceramic repertoire of the northeastern Peloponnese remained more or less unaltered in late EH II should perhaps best be seen as a testament to the traditional and incorporative strategies of the people in this area in general. What we do know is that the people engaged in early EH III activities at Lerna used a different repertoire of ceramics, and we can infer that the change means that they no longer conformed to ideas previously connected with activities carried out inside and around the corridor house complex. The result was a ceramic assemblage with new features, especially those connected to drinking and possibly dining.

These new drinking activities, as argued by Rutter, probably included only a small number of persons, which strengthens the impression of a society that placed a greater emphasis on the household than on large communal events.<sup>78</sup> The fact that this shift of focus is witnessed at Lerna more or less immediately after the destruction of the House of the Tiles is suggestive. Considering the history of the settlement sketched above, it was perhaps a different, but not necessarily nonlocal group of people who resumed activity in the area after the destruction of the House of the Tiles. The change in drinking traditions could be the outcome of lapsed sociopolitical structures and the presence of “new” people choosing to reformulate activities according to new circumstances. As suggested by the architectural as well as the ceramic record from the ensuing phases of Lerna IV, however, these circumstances changed again.

One significant step in this development seems to be the clearing operation at the end of Lerna IV:1. The event seems to us to represent the decisive moment in the transformation of the area. The trapezoidal building with its associated terrace and the basin complex predating this clearing should therefore be grouped with the posthole building. Perhaps the features of the trapezoidal building reflect the formalization of activities first provisionally instituted by those who built the posthole structure. The presence of a terrace, plastered basins, a hearth, and an oven is suggestive of a small social arena, including places for food preparation and meetings. The small special-purpose Building W-24 supports this impression. Furthermore, a bothros dug through one of the foundation trenches for the posthole building contained a unique marble bell-shaped cup of “Lefkandi I” type.<sup>79</sup> The bottom of this clearly imported cup was equipped with a

78. Rutter 2008, p. 468. Formalized eating and drinking behavior at Lerna IIIC–D inside and around the corridor houses is discussed by Pullen 2011b, pp. 220–225.

79. Bothros B-15: Banks 1967, pp. 227–230 (then provisionally labeled Bothros B-Bs); *Lerna* VI, p. 94; Rutter 2008, p. 465, p. 481, figs. 16, 17.

removable plug, giving the cup the function of a rhyton. As Rutter suggested, this item may very well have been an heirloom and not an early EH III production,<sup>80</sup> but the mere presence of this remarkable piece hints at the exclusive nature of the practices on the mound that would have entailed the handling of this cup. The bothros is associated with Building W-36 and is therefore dated to late IV:1, but the cup may have been in use also in earlier stages of EH III.<sup>81</sup>

Rutter characterizes the ceramic development of Lerna IV:1–2 as gradual, while it is difficult to discern any development at all during the much longer Lerna IV:3 period.<sup>82</sup> This gradual change is, we believe, indicative of a continuous process of change. Building on Rutter's observations, it seems that a new phase of relative socioeconomic stability may have been reached within the excavated portion of Lerna IV around the middle of the EH III period, just prior to the beginning of IV:3, when "a relatively sudden episode of cultural change detectable both architecturally and ceramically took place."<sup>83</sup> This change was marked by the disappearance or drastic reduction in number of certain shapes such as drinking cups and tankards, which is suggestive of "a basic change in the nature of what is probably to be interpreted as some sort of communal drinking ceremony" and points to "some sort of internally generated cultural reorganization at this time."<sup>84</sup> The basis for this cultural reorganization at Lerna was, in our opinion, the reformulation of the area from an official and communal undertaking to a residential quarter with individual households. This transformation is characterized by the increasing use of cooking vessels in the area and a decrease in the amount of space between apsidal houses. The first step in this process is attested in Lerna IV:1 by the appearance of the posthole structure and the trapezoidal building, together with a smaller scale but materially accentuated drinking ceremony.

Interestingly, these structures were cleared away and the first stone-socle apsidal houses were built around the same time that the apsidal buildings were constructed at Tiryns 10. The change in house form appears to be the only real "event" during an otherwise more or less smooth continuation of practices in the Tirynthian Lower Citadel.<sup>85</sup> The decline in the quantity of drinking cups at this time in Lerna suggests that the need for these ceremonies had diminished or that their form was being altered. In all, Lerna IV:2 seems to be a time when the first upsurge of new practices begins to die down. According to Rutter, however, the gradual change continued and this slow process ended at the onset of IV:3, which is marked by intensified building activities and a real formalization of apsidal architecture as well as the disappearance of several ceramic shapes and decorative modes characteristic of phases IV:1–2. At this point, some two to four generations

80. Rutter 2008, p. 465, n. 16; *Lerna VI*, p. 345.

81. Banks (*Lerna VI*, p. 94) associated Bothros B-15 with the first apsidal structure (Building W-36: *Lerna VI*, pp. 89–94) following on the IV:1 late clearing, an association based primarily on the fact that it was located in front of this building; she dated the

deposition of the cup to the very latest phase of Lerna IV:1, judging from the pottery from the bothros (*Lerna III*, pp. 105–106), although the apsidal structure may have continued in use throughout IV:2.

82. *Lerna III*, p. 641.

83. *Lerna III*, p. 641.

84. *Lerna III*, pp. 650–651.

85. It is perhaps of more than passing interest that the inland settlement of Tsoungiza was extensively reoccupied at this date as well (Pullen 2011a, pp. 543–544). Although there is some evidence of earlier activity at this place, the bulk of the ceramic material is of a date corresponding to Lerna IV:1–2 and 3.

after the destruction of the House of the Tiles,<sup>86</sup> we see the full transformation of the excavated portion of Lerna into a residential quarter.<sup>87</sup>

In stark contrast, the intermediate years in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns 9 appear to have been a rather uneventful period. Rectangular houses remained the rule throughout the “Übergangsphase,” a trend paralleled by the continuation of many EH II ceramic forms. Still, the gradual introduction of new shapes and types of decoration into the ceramic repertoire signifies a time when people, or society in general, appear to have been more open to new influences. This was probably true with respect to architecture as well, but it was only after a fire put an end to phase 9 that apsidal houses were first built. Until then, it seems, the people of Tiryns were quite happy with how things were. The relatively low percentages of distinct EH III ceramic classes and the fact that EH II ceramic styles continued to dominate the repertoire in use during much of the EH III period suggests that this was an attitude that persisted. The lack of previous changes makes the introduction of apsidal houses at Tiryns 10 appear quite profound. The lack of accompanying ceramic novelties, however, should caution us not to read too much into it. The Lower Citadel was a residential area before the intermediate years and continued to be so until the end of the EBA. The change in architecture is in our view outweighed by the continuities in practice in terms of ceramics and area function. It should be noted that the change in house form appeared only in Tiryns 10, sometime after the end of EH II, and so there was time for new ideas to take root in the area. Maran has argued that a fire that is followed by cultural change should be given more scholarly weight than one that is not.<sup>88</sup> In the case of Tiryns after phase 9, the reorganization of the settlement plan must certainly have involved some reformulation of traditional ways of life. The fact that so much of the EH II ceramic repertoire was continued, however, must in our opinion mean that the same people who occupied the area prior to the fire were responsible for any renegotiations that took place.

## DISCUSSION

Both Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns are better published than most other EH II–III settlements on the Peloponnese.<sup>89</sup> They are also among the few sites that were actually occupied over the EH II/III transition. Most well-documented settlements on the northeastern Peloponnese appear to have been already abandoned at this time, such as Zygouries (probably abandoned before Lerna IIID),<sup>90</sup> Corinth (abandoned before EH II Late),<sup>91</sup> and Tsoungiza (abandoned after Lerna IIIB or early in IIIC).<sup>92</sup> Pullen points out specifically how Tsoungiza “cannot help answer questions

86. Rutter (*Lerna III*, p. 641) estimates a duration of 25–50 years each (or one to two generations) for Lerna IV:1–2, and twice as long (50–100, two to four generations) for phase IV:3.

87. Pullen (2011a, p. 544) proposes that a similar reorganization and

formalization halfway into EH III, corresponding to Lerna IV:3, may be inferred from the Tsoungiza material, where the earlier settlement was “succeeded by a newer and enlarged EH III settlement.”

88. Maran 1998, vol. 1, pp. 222–223.

89. The recently published EH levels at Tsoungiza represent the only exception (Pullen 2011a).

90. Forsén 1992, pp. 68–69; Maran 1998, vol. 1, pp. 163–165, 179–180.

91. Lavezzi 2003, p. 73.

92. Pullen 2011a, pp. 375–378.

about the ceramic changes between EH II and EH III.<sup>93</sup> Kolonna on Aigina was settled over the crucial period,<sup>94</sup> but the ceramic makeup of phases C–D does not correspond to that of Tiryns 9.<sup>95</sup>

Two settlements that were indeed occupied during the transition are Mastos in the Berbati Valley and Asine by the coast of the Argolic Gulf, neither of them far afield from Lerna and Tiryns. When Weisshaar first argued for a hiatus between Lerna III and IV, he referred to pottery deposits from these settlements—House R at Asine and House A at Berbati—as additional representatives of a transitional EH II/III phase in the area.<sup>96</sup> Some years later, however, Pullen restudied these materials and made a good case for the mixed character of the deposits from Asine and Berbati. He pointed out that “the problem under consideration, then, becomes one of establishing the existence of a material culture group which contains elements of both EH II and EH III groups (as defined at Lerna) and which has validity as a chronological phase between EB 2 and EB 3 (as defined at Lerna).”<sup>97</sup> In his opinion, neither of the two settlements provided conclusive evidence of a transitional phase, as the assemblages contained intrusive material. Until other deposits are available to support either the Tirynthian or Lernean EH II–III ceramic sequence, he concluded, “we must entertain two competing hypotheses to explain the sequence of events of the later Early Bronze Age in Greece.”<sup>98</sup>

In our view, these hypotheses are not mutually exclusive; rather, they represent different synchronous social contexts within a society in transition. The history of EH Lerna is to a large extent biased by the absence of domestic architecture at the III/IV transition. It is possible, or even likely, that continued excavations in other areas of the settlement would nuance the picture significantly.<sup>99</sup> Our present state of knowledge concerning Lerna and the Lower Citadel at Tiryns has been shaped by the exceptional circumstances in play at each site that has produced the material evidence that is now at our disposal. Whether a residential area below the Lernean mound would present evidence of a ceramic sequence more like that of the Lower Citadel at Tiryns, or whether a more detailed ceramic sequence from the Tirynthian Upper Citadel would parallel that of Lerna, is beyond conjecture. The differences between their architectural and ceramic records pose the question of which site better represents the EH II–III transition.

Ceramic change is generally a process, not an event. It occurs at different rates in various regions, but it may also occur at different rates in different social contexts within a region. The current understanding of the EH II/III transition on the Greek mainland has been so heavily influenced by Caskey’s observations at Lerna that ceramic assemblages from elsewhere on the Peloponnese that do not display similar characteristics are felt to be in need of an explanation. The lack of readily identifiable EH III pottery in large areas of Messenia and Laconia is perhaps the most salient example of our inability to recognize possible synchronous ceramic variability, in this case the persistence of EH II forms into the EH III period.<sup>100</sup>

In this article we have deliberately chosen to focus on functional and social variation rather than chronological differences at Lerna and in the Lower Citadel in Tiryns. At the latter location the process of replacement

93. Pullen 2011a, p. 543.

94. E.g., Walter and Felten 1981, pp. 97–107; Berger 2003; Gauss and Smetana 2008, pp. 326–329.

95. Gauss 2010, p. 743.

96. Weisshaar 1982, pp. 462–463, fig. 78.

97. Pullen 1987, pp. 536–537.

98. Pullen 1987, p. 544.

99. Cf. Manning 1995, p. 59, n. 184.

100. Cf. Rutter 2001, p. 123; Cavanagh and Mee 2011.

was protracted, due to the strong functional and conceptual continuity in the area. The large survival of EH II shapes into the next era signifies a sense of tradition. At Lerna, on the other hand, the material remains reflect a situation where official traditions were initially put on display, later renegotiated, and eventually transformed, yielding something similar to the situation in the Lower Citadel in Tiryns. This transformation at Lerna marked a fresh start, in the sense that many of the material manifestations of the previous official sphere were discontinued. The choices that were made may have been colored by outright disapproval of old social structures, but we believe they were more likely guided by a willingness to formulate new working structures. Initially, the material culture appears to have been significantly accentuated. The inclusion of new shapes and decorative syntaxes should perhaps be interpreted as an effort to uphold the official character of the area. As for the prominence of Pattern-Painted pottery at Lerna—the single largest inconsistency between the two areas under discussion—the early on-site manufacture of Pattern-Painted pottery at Lerna IV is an interesting possibility.<sup>101</sup> A contributing factor to the quick acceptance and relative prominence of this ceramic class at the settlement is likely to be found in the new beginning that the area went through.

Change and continuity always involve human choice. Even within the same micro-region, like the Argive plain in the northeastern Peloponnese, we should be prepared to identify and discuss synchronous variability in practices at different sites rather than automatically assuming chronological differences. The gradual diffusion of new material culture cannot be calculated using a simple algorithm because it is filtered through human meanings and desires along the way. Instead, we have emphasized that different historically conditioned situations, functions, and actions determine the content of the material record retrieved in excavations. These contingencies can vary significantly for a number of reasons even within a very limited area. All contextual analysis works on different levels to the extent that each context is the outcome of different practices, e.g., on the individual, household, settlement, regional, or supraregional level. It goes without saying that inferring from single archaeological contexts—which may support a multitude of different and possibly divergent interpretations—characteristic practices of more general validity poses difficulties. The question of contemporaneity, e.g., Lerna IV:1 and Tiryns 9, is important, but surely such a consideration is only one step in the disentanglement of possible reasons for similarities and differences. There is a break between Lerna III and IV, but it is due more to changing functional and social circumstances than to the mere passage of time or an occupational hiatus.<sup>102</sup>

To summarize, we have argued above that the differences between the two sites can be explained by the operation over time of substitutive practices at Lerna III–IV and incorporative practices at Tiryns 5–13 (Fig. 1:c). The excavated portion of Lerna IIIc–IV:2 epitomizes the constant renegotiation or substitution of values during a period of crumbling socioeconomic hierarchies. The Lower Citadel of Tiryns 5–13, on the other hand, essentially reflects basic incorporative values in a domestic setting during the same time span. These differences find physical expression at Lerna in

101. Cf. *Lerna III*, p. 647.

102. Cf. Forsén (1992, p. 257), who concluded that “what happened at Lerna [IV] seems to be a local phenomenon which has unjustly influenced much later scholarly work, and possibly emanated from the old belief in the ‘coming of the Greeks.’” Renfrew (1998) diminishes or even eliminates arguments for a chronologically pre-Greek element in the Greek language and thus weakens the association between changes in language and material culture. See also Maran 1998, vol. 2, pp. 456–457.

the relocation (phase IIIC–D) and ultimate abandonment of a monumental house and the ideological content associated with it, followed by the reappropriation of the place after the construction of the tumulus, with a tentative phase of socially fluid realignment (IV:1–2) before the place was invested with ideas and concepts more similar to those at contemporary Tiryns (IV:3). In the Lower Citadel at Tiryns 5–13 upheavals were certainly felt as well, as manifested in the numerous attested fires and programs of rebuilding. However, because of the primary function of the area, which contained households engaged in day-to-day activities, a sense of continuity likely existed or was consciously maintained amid the turmoil. Houses were repeatedly rebuilt on the foundations of old ones and the ceramics that were produced displayed considerably larger affinities with the past than at Lerna IV.

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