Mycenaean Economy

**AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY**

Mycenaeans were self-supporting from corn, crops, stock-raising, and hunting – but raw materials had to be imported. The Mycenaeans proved to be successful traders. They imported metals, including tin and copper. From about 1400BCE, the Mycenaeans replaced the Minoan traders in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Cyprus. Pottery workshops were numerous, and potters were kept very busy supplying domestic needs and storage jars for the palaces and merchants’ houses.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PALACES**

The fortifications and weapons recovered indicate war-like and disturbed conditions, unlike those on Crete. Ruling families occupied the fortified citadels which supported the needs of everyday life through a system of mutual dependence. They also functioned as redistribution points for certain goods. Mycenaean citadels (fortresses) were built inland. Guard towers on the hills were to control movements on roads.

**TRADE AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGE**

Trade and expansion usually went together. From Mycenae, the traders went to Southern Italy and the Aegean Sea. The main line of expansion, including raids and colonisation, followed the Cretan expansion – taking on islands. Useful items such as olive oil, pottery, and animal hides were exchanged for luxury goods such as spices, ivory, and jewellery. They traded with Syria and Asia Minor.

**TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

The Myceneans used the sword, spear, chariot and bow in combat. They quarried stone from the surrounding mountains which provided most raw materials required for building and construction. They adopted new techniques with the use of ashlar masonry – using small, square, thin pieces of stone. Mycenean architecture witnessed the introduction of corbelling, which involved projecting a piece of stone or timber, coming out from a wall, and taking the weight – like a parapet.

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