



FAR LEFT Careful research has led scholars to conclude that this 50kg block is the seat from the site's only known royal throne, which must have crashed to the ground during the earthquake of c1200 BC. Pictured *in situ* in the Chavos riverbed.

LEFT Artist's initial reconstruction of how the block would have sat within the original throne. Carved fragments found elsewhere at the site may have formed the base.

'Throne of Agamemnon' found

Archaeologists working in Mycenae, seat of the mythical King Agamemnon, have discovered what they believe to be the site's only known royal throne.

The international team, led by president of the Mycenaean Foundation, Prof. Christofilis Maggidis of Dickinson College, USA, made the find in June 2014. Erik DeMarche and Dan Fallu were taking palaeo-hydrological measurements from the now-dry riverbed of the Chavos River within the city's 'Lower Town' when they discovered a 50kg polished stone block. Measuring 23cm high, 50cm deep, and 30-35cm wide, its identification as a royal throne has been the result of a full year of intensive scientific study. With the results due to be announced to the world's press this June, CWA was given a special preview.

Among the main findings was an analysis of impact marks on the stone, which confirm that it fell from a great height before rolling into the river Chavos. Since it was found directly below Mycenae's royal palace, which had partially collapsed as a result of a massive earthquake around 1200 BC, it is highly feasible that the block originated from the palace. The morphology of the block is also consistent with known contemporary Minoan and Mycenaean throne

seats. For example, the depth of its seat depression (3cm), and the way in which it slightly deepens towards its rear ledge, are almost identical to the Knossos Throne. The stone's composition is also significant, for it possesses the same combination of limestone conglomerate and green marble/serpentine as the decorated stone façades of contemporary (mid-13th century BC) royal *tholos* tombs at Mycenae, and the façade of the contemporary Lion Gate at Mycenae. Interestingly, three more fragments, hewn in green serpentine and decorated with a spiral relief, found elsewhere in the city, are thought to have formed part of the base or the decoration of the throne, comparable to the surviving throne base at Tiryns.

Taken together, this intensive, multifaceted examination strongly indicates that the hefty block is a royal seat, or throne. 'Its scientific importance is huge, given that this is the only Mycenaean throne yet found on the site or indeed anywhere on mainland Greece. Its symbolic role as the "throne of Agamemnon", the last legendary king of Mycenae, is also undeniably immense,' Maggidis told CWA.

For more details, please see <http://mycenaeanfoundation.com> or <http://mycenae-excavations.org>

LEFT The throne seat after cleaning.



DATING ROCK ART

A recent debate among researchers as to which dating method is best for cave art has pitched radiocarbon dating of charcoal against Uranium-Thorium dating of calcites. A new paper in *Quaternary International* shows how the Uranium-Thorium method, which dates stalactites overlying art to produce minimum ages, will become the standard method in future. It requires minuscule samples and, unlike radiocarbon, does not damage the art itself.

RIGHT A view of the rock art of Chauvet.



PHOTO: Brunel, Chauvet, and Hillard