

Description

In 2015, an untouched Bronze Age tomb was discovered near the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, on the southwestern coast of Greece. The occupant, known as the "Griffin Warrior," was a male in his early 30s with notably strong musculature, as confirmed by biological analysis of sample I13519_d. The burial is the richest Mycenaean grave found in over a century, indicating that its occupant was an aristocrat.



Ruins of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, Greece, near where the Griffin Warrior's tomb was discovered in 2015.

Image by Peulle

The tomb dates to around 1600 B.C.E., at the very emergence of Mycenaean civilization: the first organized Greek civilization, centered around what Homer called the "Kingdom of Nestor." The Palace of Nestor was a sophisticated administrative and financial hub with workshops and a working sewage system, serving a population of 50,000. It would stand for over 4 centuries before being destroyed by fire around 1200 B.C.E.



Foundation of the megaron at Mycenae — the great hall at the heart of Mycenaean palace architecture.

The Griffin Warrior was buried with extraordinary wealth: a griffin-decorated ivory plaque that gave him his name, gold and silver cups, and over 50 stone seals depicting intricate combat scenes. These artifacts suggest cultural synthesis. The Mycenaeans likely sacked Minoan Crete and incorporated their artistic treasures into their own martial funeral rites. The facial reconstruction connects the man to the art found beside him: the face on the gold ring and the reconstructed skull belong to the same individual. These ancient and modern depictions combine to provide a rare, high-resolution view of a Mycenaean ruler at the dawn of Greek civilization, and a direct biological link to one of history's earliest organized societies.

Modern population	Distance
Greek (Cyprus)	8.598
Greek (Dodecanese)	8.874

Modern population	Distance
Italian (Campania)	8.965
Italian Jew	8.993
Italian (Calabria)	9.043
Sephardi Jew (Turkey)	9.078
Sephardi Jew (Bulgaria)	9.182
Ashkenazi Jew (West)	9.266
Greek (Cyclades)	9.274
Italian (Apulia)	9.318

Source

Date: 789–546 BCE

Y-DNA: F

Location: Greece

Research: The genetic history of the Southern Arc: A bridge between West Asia and Europe

Sample(s): I13519_d.AG