



THE PRECIOUS STONES

OF MIDEA

by Biliouri Argiri

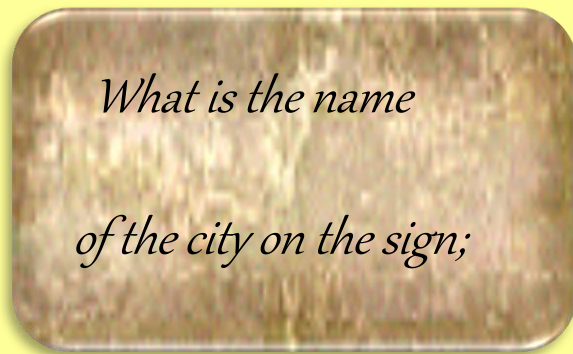
translated by Tzevrentzi Thalia

*We travelled through time and
wandered with the merchant from Phiniki in glorious Midea.*

Come with us!

I started my journey from Phiniki to sell precious stones a long time ago. We had a difficult and tiring voyage because there was a sea storm and the ship was about to sink. When we disembarked in the port of Tirintha we sacrificed to the gods. But difficulties did not end. The cart fell in a hole and one of its wheels broke. Luckily, we were near Tirintha and we fixed it quite quickly.

Straight ahead in the valley the Castle was standing on the top of the mountain. The signs were guiding me. I was very close to my destination I was anxious and afraid of being attacked by thieves because I had a lot of valuable things with me.





As I was walking up the path I was gasping for breath. What an uneven mountain! How did they build their city up there? And then I saw its walls. They looked as they reached the sky. Every time I look at them I feel the same admiration and have the same question. On the walls, in front of the gate, strong warrior in copper armours protect the glorious city from the possible enemies. The armours glow in the sunlight. The helmets with the red tail wave in the wind. The enemies cannot but be afraid when they see those copper armoured **Achaes!**

*Why do you think the Achaes warriors are referred
as copper armoured*

left the horses in the stable and wandered in the narrow streets of the city to find Diomides.

- *Oh, Zeus! What a happen sudden visit was that. It is a long time since your last visit!*
- *I have a lot of work. I could not find what I was asked. When I finally found those things I came.*
- *Very nice! We can talk about all these later. Now, let's go to wash yourself, change, rest eat and tomorrow you can deliver your goods.*

*Why do you think
the hospitaly was so important for Achaes?*

I was amazed when I entered the magnificent Hall of throne with the impressive wall paintings. Respectfully I went close to king who was sitting on a carved throne.

- *Great Anakta of glorious Midea, I am bringing greeting from the king of Phiniki. He asks from you to accept this present as a sign of friendship.*
- *Your gift is accepted and you are welcomed too. What goods are you bringing us this time?*
- *You had asked for precious stones last time. I was tired but I found the best ones to light your magnificence.*
- *That is for the sculptor to say. Guards lead him to the lab.*

*How were they provided with necessary goods
which were not produced in their area?*

As I came out of the castle palace I felt I was at the top of the world and Gods were somewhere around. The plain was under my feet and I took some the king power. Far away I could see the port of Tirintha. The sea was glowing in the sunlight.

*Why do you believe that
their castle was built on a place like that?*

Near me I heard feet walking, jewellery making noise and a flute. A parade showed up. In front of it there are three young women walking in colorful dresses, with jewellery and they had complicated haircuts and black painted eyes. One of them is carrying a glass bottle full of fragrant oil. The other one is bringing a tray full of wheat and the third one carries grapes and figs.

The queen, anassa, is wearing a white gown with a red ribbon. On her head there is a beautiful crown and around her waist gold belt with rings. She is following the three young women holding in her arms beautiful fragrant flowers.

The crops were good this year. The warehouses were full and the sacrifices for thanking the gods had to be a lot.



As I am going down I am passing the anakta' s labs. After passing the guards some sounds prepared me for what I was going to meet...

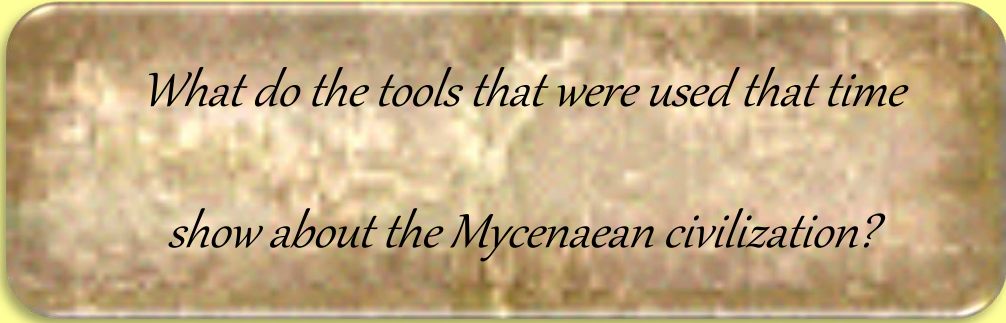
A carpenter is carving a little baby's cot. The potter is making a delicate cylix out of mud. The head painter is giving directions to his students on how to mix colours in order to make the next wall paintings. The writer above a stone is carving quickly and with attention the king's order. The jewellery maker is using delicately the wire to make the spiral in the jewellery. Beside him there is a stamp pot. My final destination.

Why were the labs guarded?

The stampmaker is holding a rectangle piece of steatitis and with skillfulness he is trying to carve a demon or a man. He is choosing another tool among all these small ones with the strange noses on the stall.

Every time I watch such a creation I admire more and more the artist and I mention him for the Gods' blessings and especially from Ifestos.

How lucky he is as his works will remain immortal and will be referred by the next generations.



*What do the tools that were used that time
show about the Mycenaean civilization?*

When the stamp maker noticed me he left his work, welcomed me and with anxiety took the bag with the precious stones. He is taking the stones one by one and checking them to see if they are appropriate. He is looking at them in the sun to see if they have cracks. He is choosing the colors he wants and looking for the appropriate size. He is taking aside a deep red ahati and smiling as he is moving it into his hands and his eyes are sparkling.

“ I had been waiting for this piece such a long time. I ’ll make a unique ring. I will carve a lion killing a bull. The king will be excited”, he is saying to himself.

- *Well, we’ll keep them all. Go to be paid and we are waiting with new pieces next time. Have a nice journey back to your country!*

The time of return has come and I have to leave quicker than I thought because there is not a next stop. I have sold all my stuff. I exchanged it with gold and I am leaving satisfied. I had a good time, I enjoyed my friend's company and I saw the beautiful queen. I will go to the port and wait for the ship to leave.



Answering to the questions:

- 2 Homer refers to Achaeans as copper dressed because of their armours. This is a fact that was confirmed when a copper armour with a toothed helmet was found in a tomb in Dedra.
- 3 The ancient people considered the guests as holy people because Xenios Zeus protected them.
- 4 The products that the Mycenaean cities needed were taken from other countries. Trade was considerably developed.
- 5 Achaea used to build their citadels on hills so that they can protect them easily with walls and in order to be able to monitor the surroundings.
- 6 The labs were guarded because they belonged to the king.
- 7 The delicate work on the jewellery, the swords and generally on the items that were made in Mideas' lab and in other Mycenaean labs, show a very developed civilization.

Match the sentences with the pictures:

Feeding pot



Mycenaean armour



Stamp stones

The feeding pot, the stamp stone, the Mycenaean armour and other findings from Mideas' excavations are in Archeological Museum of Nafplio.

