HUMANITIES WEST’S 35th ANNIVERSARY SEASON CULMINATES WITH

Bronze Age Greece:
Mycenaeans & the Origins of Western Civilization
Friday & Saturday, May 3 & 4, 2019
Marines’ Memorial Theatre, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (SAN FRANCISCO, 20 February, 2019) Humanities West’s 35th Anniversary Season culminates with Bronze Age Greece: Mycenaeans & the Origins of Western Civilization, a two-day program of presentations uncovering the intriguing story of the existence of Mycenaean culture in prehistoric Greece, along with the latest archaeological finds that are shedding new light on this fascinating society and its influence on the genesis of Western Civilization. The program takes place on Friday, May 3, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm, and Saturday, May 4, from 10am to 4pm, at Marines’ Memorial Theatre, located at 609 Sutter Street in downtown San Francisco.

Tickets for Bronze Age Greece: Mycenaeans & the Origins of Western Civilization, are priced as follows: Single tickets for individual Friday programs are $60 orchestra and $45 balcony and individual Saturday programs are $80 orchestra and $55 balcony, single tickets for both days of each program are $125 orchestra and $90 balcony. Order direct from City Box Office 415-392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. Individual balcony tickets for teachers and students are available for $25/day for any program. Free tickets are available in limited quantities for students age 25 or younger (inquire at info@humanitieswest.org).

Bronze Age Greece: Mycenaeans & the Origins of Western Civilization brings together a panel of noted scholars to present talks and lectures exploring ancient Mycenaean stories and myths, along with the facts and findings of modern archaeologists who have uncovered remnants of Mycenaean culture as recently as 2017. When the Bronze Age collapsed, all signs of state-level society disappeared from
Greece, and Mycenaeans disappeared from history. Only their oral tales remained, composed half a millennium later by Homer into the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Most scholars came to assume that Homeric tales and even the society they described largely were fiction. Then a few 19th-century amateur archaeologists (most memorably Heinrich Schliemann) took those tales seriously and those brilliant predecessors of the ancient Greeks exploded from obscurity. Humanities West presents this two-day program to reveal the Mycenaean story, from ancient tales to the latest archaeological finds, in an effort to deepen our understanding of the roots of Western Civilization.

The program opens Friday evening with a presentation by **Douglas Kenning** *(Sicily Tour)* titled **Once Homer Was Enough.** Kenning’s illustrated talk explores the great Homeric tales of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, along with other Mycenaean-derived myths that provided a unique look into the Late Bronze Age Aegean long before 19-century archaeologist would prove the existence of this extraordinary ancient society.

The Friday program includes a special lecture–performance–demonstration **Mycenaean Literature, Music, and Performance Culture** with **Mark Griffith** *(UC Berkeley)*. This presentation exposes the rich visual, documentary, and literary evidence recovered from Bronze Age Anatolia, from Crete, and from the Levant, that together help to fill in some of the missing pieces of Mycenaean performance culture.

On Saturday, **Ian Morris** *(Stanford)* presents **Bronze Age Myth Morphs into History**, discussing how the Mycenaean legends and stories that people have been reading about for 2,700 years have become real, as science rises to claim authority away from literature through the archaeological findings of Heinrich Schliemann, Evans Blegen, and the rest.

**The Griffin Warrior of Pylos, Bronze Age Archaeology, and Homer Today**, co-presented by **Jack Davis** and **Sharon Stocker** *(University of Cincinnati)* follows. Professors Davis and Stocker discuss the University of Cincinnati’s excavations at Pylos, that resumed in 2015 after Carl Blegen, discoverer of the Palace of Nestor, suspended his campaigns in 1969. Finds from new excavations, including the discovery of the grave of the so-called “Griffin Warrior,” shed light on early Mycenaeans and suggest that the myths and legends incorporated in the Homeric poems were already in circulation at the dawn of the Mycenaean civilization.
The program continues with Daily Life at Mycenae: Work, Worship, and the Wanax, a talk by Kim Shelton (UC Berkeley), demonstrating what life was like at a Mycenaean palatial center during the Late Bronze Age. This talk highlights the everyday experiences of a bustling, energetic world with monumental architecture, large-scale craft production, and religious ritual.

The weekend presentations close with Mycenaedans North and South: Beyond the World of the Palaces, a presentation by Sarah P. Morris (UCLA) This talk shows how findings from new excavations provide a growing picture of a trans-Mycenaean Bronze Age in the north Aegean, where signs of contact with southern Greece long outlast the palatial era. A key feature of this Mycenaean “periphery” is the survival of Bronze Age communities long after the southern Greek collapse, perhaps in part as a result of their very distance from palatial powers.

A panel discussion with the presenters will follow, addressing questions from the audience.

Ancillary programs providing opportunities to learn more about the featured topic and related issues complement this two-day event. For a complete program schedule and additional information about the presenters please visit www.humanitieswest.org

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About Humanities West
Serving the Bay Area since 1983, Humanities West explores history and celebrates the arts through time and across the globe, bringing illuminating lectures and dynamic performances that focus on the people, places, and events that have shaped, and still inform, modern cultures.

Each season Humanities West presents a number of programs in which leading scholars and artists present lectures, performances, readings and discussions to audiences in San Francisco’s Marines’ Memorial Theatre. These one- or two-day events represent an opportunity unique not only to the Bay Area, but also to the entire United States. In cooperation with other institutions, such as the Mechanic’s Institute Library and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, additional public lectures and panels are presented to further expand upon program topics

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CALENDAR LISTING: EVENTS/LECTURES/ARTS & CULTURE
WHAT: Bronze Age Greece: Mycenaedans & the Origins of Western Civilization
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10am to 4pm, Saturday, May 4, 2019
WHERE: Marines’ Memorial Theatre
       609 Sutter Street, San Francisco

TICKETS: $25 - $80
Tickets are available through City Box Office at
415-392-4400 or online at www.cityboxoffice.com
Group tickets: info@humanitieswest.org

PUBLIC INFO: 415/391-9700 or www.humanitieswest.org

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